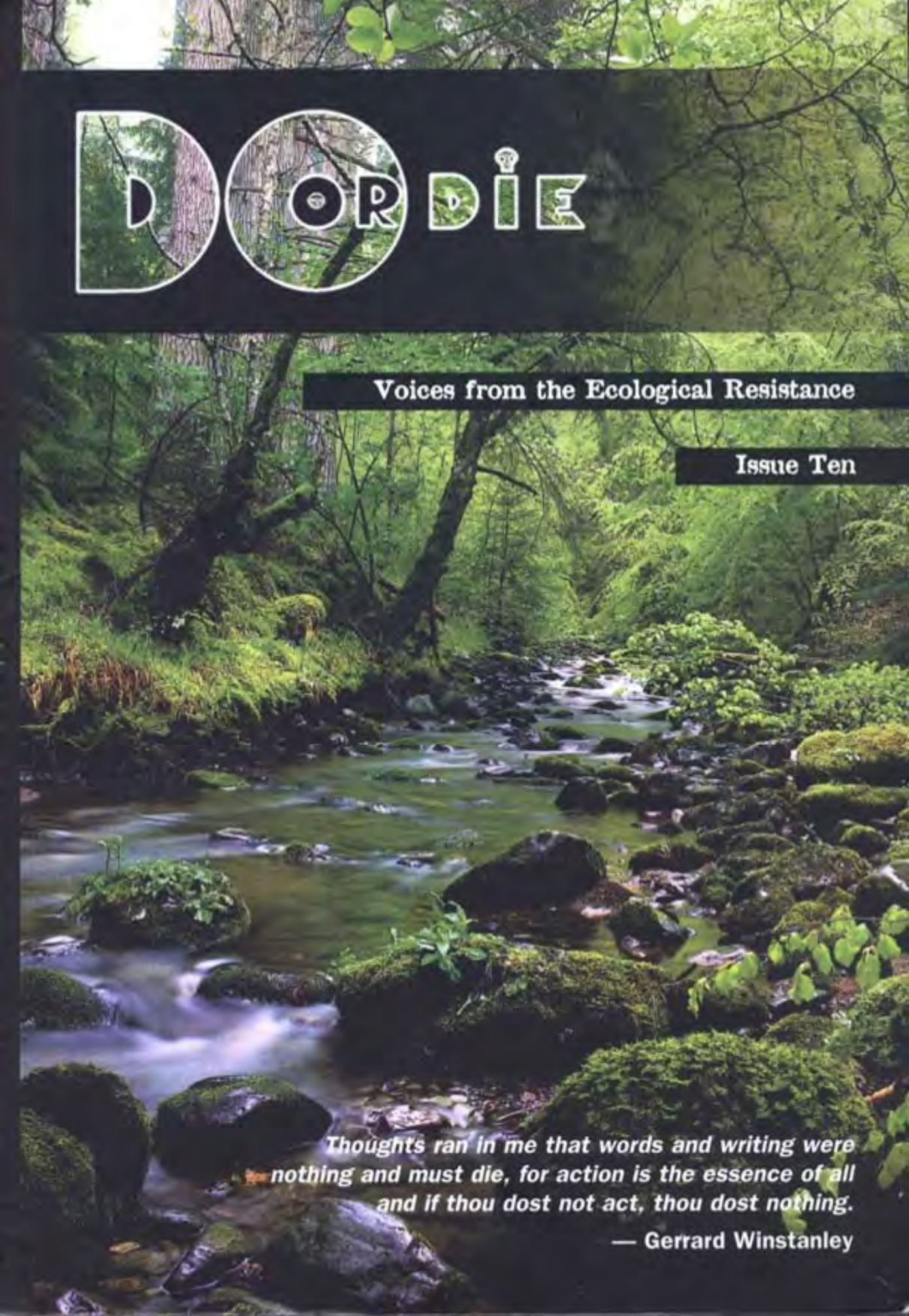
DO OR DIE

Voices from the Ecological Resistance

Issue Ten



Thoughts ran in me that words and writing were nothing and must die, for action is the essence of all and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing.

— Gerrard Winstanley

A Collective Suicide Note...

For various very compelling reasons we have decided that this is the last ever issue of Do or Die that will be produced. We'll continue to work on the distribution of this issue, and are engaged in maintaining the web site and dealing with general requests—as well as various other radical projects. As this is the last ever issue we are not taking any subscribers, submissions or pre-orders, but donations to help us clear our huge printing debts of about £6,000 would be very gratefully received. Any extra (HA!) will be put towards radical ecological direct action.

Ten years, gone in a flash...

The black helicopters are circling our compound.
With our glasses of poison, we salute you, comrades!

"Do or Die—Digging out the avalanche of capitalism with the spatula of activism since 1992."

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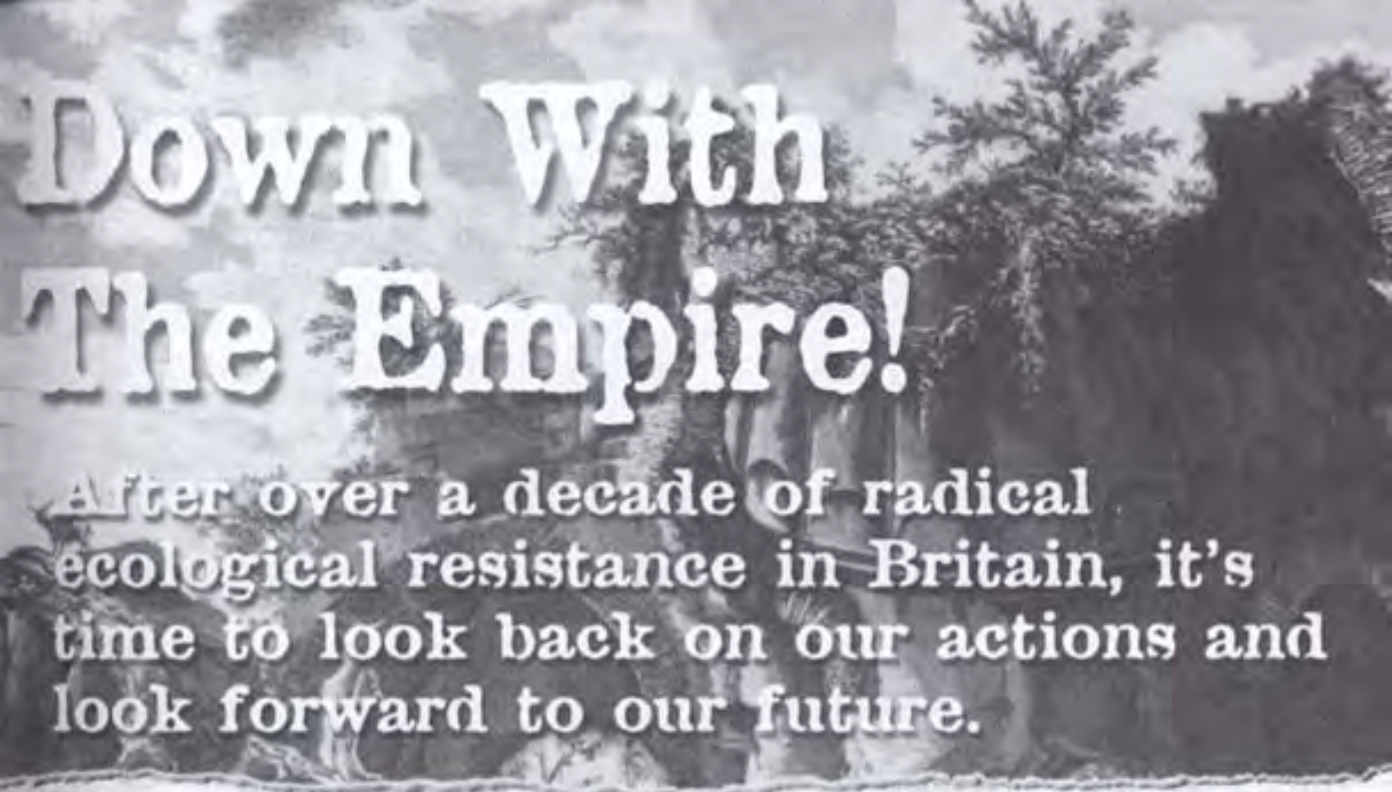
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"We are free from today... Paralyse the country, you are your own leaders. Do or Die."
—MK Gandhi



Down With The Empire!

After over a decade of radical ecological resistance in Britain, it's time to look back on our actions and look forward to our future.

It's time to **celebrate** our resistance: digger diving, window smashing, pleasant picnicking, office occupying, hoody wearing, GM crop trashing, squat cracking, sun lit lovin', machine burning, treeliving—total fucking anarchy. It's time to **mourn** for our moment. Over the last decade thousands of species have been wiped out of existence. Vast forests—charred stumps. Coral reefs bleached dead by warmed seas. Millions starved within the prison of civilisation. Wild peoples massacred, enslaved and pauperised. It's time to **strategise** how to make a real impact on this apocalypse. Look seriously at our strengths and weaknesses and pull together to **resist.** The empire is powerful but the spring is growing. It's a challenge like no other, but with love, luck and hard resolve we can **transcend.**



Up With The Spring!



Part One: Recent Pre-History

An Insurgency of Dreams

"Defend the Collective Imagination. Beneath the cobblestones, the beach"
—Slogan daubed in Paris, May 1968

The radical ecological movement was born from the world-wide revolutionary upsurge of the 1960s and '70s. Love of the earth and for each other has always been with us, but in that period these feelings exploded across the world in a way they hadn't for decades. In nearly every land people came together and resisted. In some areas there were decisive victories for people in the battle against power; in others, power won hands down.

The epic struggle of the Vietnamese people and the anti-Vietnam war actions across the world; urban guerrillas across Europe; barricades in Paris; the European squatting movement, the brutal end of the Prague Spring; the rise of the Black Power movement.

This upsurge brought with it the (re)birth of the feminist, ecological, indigenous and libertarian ideas that now form the basis of our worldview.

Authoritarian Communism had dominated the radical movements ever since the Bolshevik counter-revolution. After having been physically exterminated in country after country, anarchist/libertarian groups started once again to grow.

Industrial development accelerated in the 'Third World' following World War Two. The global elite extended its tentacles, attempting to assimilate or exterminate tribes and band societies outside its control. In turn 'indigenous' peoples fought back. In the 1970s the American Indian Movement (AIM) re-launched indigenous armed resistance in North America, reminding us that even the capitalist core countries were always colonies.



Seeing the horrors inflicted on our imprisoned non-human relations—in laboratories, abattoirs and factory farms—the animal liberation movement was born with sabotage at its centre.

New generations took up the standard of Women's Liberation, challenging not only the dominant society but also its patriarchal (loyal) opposition that forever sidelined women's lives in the cause of the (male) workers struggle.

After decades of almost universal techno-worship, not least by radicals, many people began to see that the earth was being destroyed, and started trying both to defend it and regain understanding.

The Rise of Environmentalism

"It's time for a warrior society to rise up out of the Earth and throw itself in front of the juggernaut of destruction." —Dave Foreman, US EF! co-founder.



The Western environmental movement grew as part of the upsurge, but also in large part as a postscript. When the barricades—both actual and metaphorical—were cleared, a generation of Western radicals looked to new fronts while many others retreated to rural idylls and communes. What they both found was strength in nature and a burning urge to defend it. This early environmental movement fundamentally challenged the established conservation organisations which for so long had acted as mere (ineffective) park keepers.

At sea a raw energy propelled tiny dinghies to confront the nuclear and whaling industries. On land new organisations were forming, fighting toxic waste dumps, logging, mining and other essentials of industry. Scientists were uncovering huge cataclysms facing the earth and—to elite horror—breaking ranks. This environmentalism had a threatening potential that had to be defused—an army of hacks, cops, advertisers and ideologues got to work.

Capital and state both attacked environmentalists while simultaneously funding counter-tendencies to steer the movement away from confrontation and towards co-operation. This carrot and stick approach co-opted many; groups which had looked promising succumbed to respectability and corporate funding. Environmentalists were given a seat at the table but the talk was not of nature but of compromise, techno-fix and corporate greenwash. Assimilation.

In fact, as early as 1972, *The Ecologist* magazine (at the time printing articles on the links between ecology and anarchy) carried an editorial entitled 'Down with Environmentalism' saying: "We must repudiate the term environmental. It is too far gone to be rescued."[1]

All through the '70s environmental groups were gaining increased support and membership lists were expanding dramatically. By building **mass** based organisations environmentalism was split into campaigners and supporters. Bigger offices and bigger salaries were needed to **manage** the movement. This division—a creation of scale—acted (and still acts) as a terrible internal pressure crushing the radical content and practical usefulness of groups.

Those attracted to 'campaign' jobs were often exactly the wrong **class** of people (inclined to paper pushing rather than physical action) while most of the support their 'supporters' gave was the annual return of cheques and membership forms—conscience-salving exercises. When serious people got involved in groups their action was often curtailed by other 'campaigners' (or the cop in their own head) reminding them that it could alienate the 'public' and thus cut into membership and funding.

This process was as prevalent in what was then the most radical of the environmental groups—Greenpeace (GP). In 1977 Paul Watson one of GPs directors (who became an icon when he drove a dinghy straight into the path of a whaling harpoon) was heading an expedition to the Newfoundland ice floes. At one point he grabbed a club used to kill baby harp seals and threw it into the waters. The sealers dunked and nearly drowned him yet worse was to come on return to the office—betrayal. Throwing the club into the sea was criminal damage and he was told by a faceless lawyer, "I don't think you understand what Greenpeace is all about." He was expelled from the corporation.

Watson went on to found the whaler-sinking Sea Shepherd (more of them later) while Greenpeace just got bigger, gaining millions of members while all the time becoming more symbolic and less of a threat. As GP's founder Bob Hunter said with an air of depression. "Nothing could be done to stop it from growing. It'll keep growing and growing, a juggernaut that is out of control."[2]

Meanwhile the global attack on the wild was left largely unabated. Christopher Maines in *Green Rage* put it well:

"Like the Youth movement, the women's movement, and rock and roll, the reform environmental movement suffered from its own success. It entered the '70s as a vague critic of our society and exited as an institution, wrapped in the consumerism and political ambitions it once condemned. In their drive to win credibility with the government agencies and corporations... the new professional environmentalists seemed to have wandered into the ambiguous world of George Orwell's Animal Farm, where it was increasingly difficult to tell the farmers from the pigs."[3]

The Birth of Earth First!

"So, from the vast sea of raging moderation, irresponsible compromise, knee-jerk rhetorical Sierra Club dogma, and unknowing (OK, sometimes knowing) duplicity in the systematic destruction of the earth, a small seed of sanity sprouts: Earth First!"
—Howie Wolke, EF! co-founder.



In 1980 five friends hiked into the desert. All long term activists sick with careerism, legality and failure, they knew a new kind of group was needed. One that would break the law, push open the envelope, hit the corporations where it hurt (in the pocket) and most of all never EVER compromise in defence of mother earth. Around their camp fire Earth First! was born.

EF!s first act was one of sarcastic symbolism—and defection. In a land full of memorials to the genocidal victor, EF! raised a plaque commemorating Victorio, an Apache who wiped out a mining camp.

"Victorio, Outstanding Preservationist and Great American.This monument celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the great Apache chief, Victorio's, raid on the Cooney mining camp near Mogollon, New Mexico, on April 28, 1880. Victorio strove to protect these mountains from mining and other destructive activities of the white race. The present Gila Wilderness is partly a fruit of his efforts. Erected by the New Mexico Patriotic Heritage Society"



The next action EF! pulled off was at the Glen Canyon Dam, where a three hundred foot polythene banner was unfurled down the side of the dam, looking for all the world like a vast crack opening up. The demonstrators chanted RAZE THE DAM. People had campaigned in the past against new dams but no one had ever had the audacity to campaign to pull down those already built. The Glen Canyon Dam in fact held special significance. In a sickening deal the big environmental groups had accepted the damming of the canyon in return for the cancellation of a dam elsewhere. This was exactly the kind of compromise EF! was founded to resist.

Thus from the very beginning EF!ers set themselves not only the task of defending the last fragments but of reversing the process: pulling down the dams and the powerlines. EF! launched its proposal for a network of vast wilderness preserves—half of Nevada for instance would be declared "off limits to industrial human civilisation, as preserves for the free flow of natural processes." EF! didn't want people to wait for the state to set them up. Instead the people themselves should make them happen—direct action. If logging needed stopping—stop it, blockade it, trash the machines. If a road needed digging up—DIG IT UP! This militancy was a touchstone of even early EF!, but it wasn't just its militancy that made it stand out globally (though it shocked Americans). All around the world groups were turning to direct action in environmental struggles. In both Britain and Germany, for example, anti-nuclear mass action had been growing apace. What was really unique in the

environmental movement was EF!s militant *biocentrism*.

The wilderness proposals preamble stated: "the central idea of EF! is that humans have no divine right to subdue the Earth, that we are merely one of several million forms of life on this planet. We reject even the notion of benevolent stewardship as that implies dominance. Instead we believe that we should be plain citizens of the Land community."

Echoing *The Ecologist*'s earlier denunciation of environmentalism Dave Foreman goes one step further.

"Wilderness is the essence of everything we're after. We aren't an environmental group. Environmental groups worry about environmental health hazards to human beings, they worry about clean air and water for the benefit of people and ask us why we're so wrapped up in something as irrelevant and tangential and elitist as wilderness. Well, I can tell you a wolf or a redwood or a grizzly bear doesn't think wilderness is elitist. Wilderness is the essence of everything. It's the real world."[4]



Corporate/state repression of EF! led to its logical conclusion with the car bombing of California EF! activists Judi Bari and Daryll Cherney. They were targeted during the successful Redwood Summer forest blockades. The bomb exploded directly below Judi, who awoke in hospital with major injuries. The police then attempted to frame her for her own bombing. Judi is now dead, but her estate has continued to drag the FBI through the courts.

Within a year EF! moved beyond symbolism to direct struggle. Around the country a combination of civil disobedience and sabotage halted logging and oil drilling. Groups were setting up all over. What many in industry had originally written off as a joke was quickly becoming a nightmare. In 1985 EF!ers published *Ecodefence: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching*. This was unashamed, heads held high 350 page manual on how to trash pretty much any machine with which civilisation attacks the wild. Written by over 100 contributors to the *Earth First! Journal*, this book was information for action.

Diggers trashed, forests occupied, billboards subverted, logging roads dug up, trees spiked, offices invaded, windows smashed, snares disabled, computers scrapped—EF! was on the move.

But so now was the state.

The FBI wasn't about to let a crew of hippies, feminists, cowboys and desert anarchists continue to hammer company profits. The late '80s onwards saw a wave of reaction that included infiltration, set ups, conspiracy trials, raids, corporate directed anti-environmental hate groups and even assassination attempts on 'leading' EF!ers. This was a continuation of the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counter Insurgency Programme) previously unleashed in the '60s/'70s upsurge against the Weather Underground, the New Left, the American Indian Movement, the Black Panthers and the Puertorican liberation movement. Now some of the same agents that had destroyed those movements were overseeing the attack on EF!

Pre-existing divisions over philosophy, tactics and not least of all personality were exacerbated by the crisis that engulfed EF! A split begun to emerge between supporters of EF! co-founder Dave Foreman and long term California organiser Judi Bari. All the while both were under serious corporate/state attack. Foreman was woken up one morning with an FBI gun to his head and charged with conspiracy to down power lines. Bari was carbombed.

The split and state attacks seriously weakened US EF! and it would never fully recover its accelerating drive. Nevertheless, survive it did and at the beginning of the '90s it was still *the* kick ass environmental movement of the developed world. Its actions, ideas and attitude would inspire a massive wave of action across the Atlantic.

EF! Crosses the Atlantic

The climate in Britain in 1991 was similar to that which had given birth to US EF! Organisations that had started off quite radical in the '70s were well and truly assimilated. Big offices, good salaries, lobbying and little else.

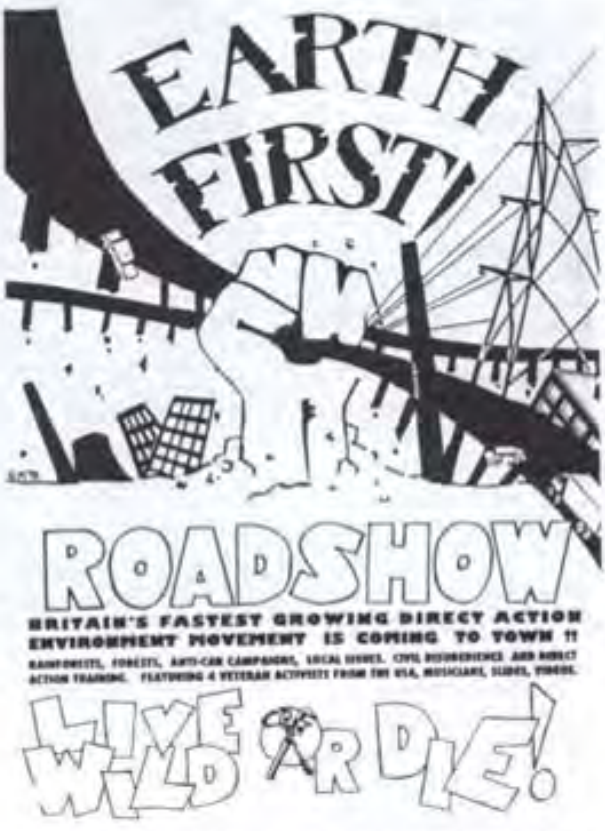
Back in 1972, in its first ever newsletter, FoE UK stated:

"We want to avoid the centre-periphery situation, whereby an organisation's forces and resources tend to be drawn to the centre, to 'head office' while patently the strength of the group... is derived from experience in the field."[5]

By the '90s FoE had undeniably FAILED to avoid the 'centre-periphery situation' (to put it politely). Greenpeace was even more centrist—its local groups simply fundraisers.[6] The late '80s had seen a massive increase in support for environmental groups yet nothing real was happening. Something more radical—and practical—was needed.

On the south coast in the seedy kiss-me-quick seaside town of Hastings some sixth form students were plotting. They were bored out of their minds by A-levels and disillusioned with FoE. In contrast the biocentric approach of US EF! and its victorious direct action tactics were inspiring. The wild was calling...

They formed Britain's first EF! group with a handful of people and no resources. Within a few months they would be making headlines—for now they spray painted Hastings. A year later they had kick-started the biggest wave of ecological defence Britain has seen since the vanquishing of the peasantry...[7]



So as to cover the last decade relatively briefly I'm going to have to paint with big strokes. The time covered divides (pretty) neatly into three overlapping stages:

- Earth First! Birth Period (1991-1993)
- Land Struggle Period (1993—1998)
- Consolidation and Global Resistance Period (1998—2002)

EF! Birth Period (1991-1993)

Earth First! hit the headlines when two EF!ers flew from Britain to the rainforests of Sarawak. At the time the Penan tribes were barricading logging roads and standing up to the corporate attack on their home—the forest. The two joined the blockades and for their efforts were locked up for two months in a stinking Malay jail. This news story went through the roof—much to the annoyance of both the Malaysian government and the UK's leading environmental groups.

FoE Central Office publicly denounced EF!, arguing that by taking action in Sarawak the EF!ers AIDED the Malaysian government who wanted to paint all opposition as emanating from the West. This position ignored that the Penan had requested that people join them and that the Malaysian government was unlikely to halt the destruction without increased PHYSICAL opposition. As one of the imprisoned EF!ers said:

"In our absence from Britain we had been tried and convicted by the mainstream groups. They have convicted us of a crime they themselves could never be accused of: action. With friends like these, the Earth doesn't need enemies."

This was the first of many public attacks on the new generation of radical ecological activists by the

headquarters of the environmental NGOs. The difference between the two tendencies was shown in July 1991. While the Sarawak Two were in prison the annual meeting of the G7 (worlds seven leading state powers) came to London. EFIers with no money and few numbers carried out a number of actions—banner drops outside and disruption of meetings inside. The NGOs submitted reports. This mobilisation by EF! was small but a portent of things to come. The next time the G7 came to Britain the radical ecological movement would field not dozens but thousands...

Thanks to the Sarawak campaign the Hastings lot quickly began to make links with people around the country from a variety of pre-existing networks: Green Anarchist, the (embryonic) Rainforest Action Network, ALF, Green Student groups, peace groups, local FoE and the hunt saboteurs. Out of a generation largely consisting of students and dolies disillusioned with mainstream environmentalism, groups sprang up in London, Brighton, Glastonbury, Liverpool, Oxford, Manchester and Norwich.

Roads, Rebels and Rainforests

Inspired by abroad the handful of new activists went about importing the North American/Australian model. What this meant was a combination of non-violent civil disobedience, media stunts, and monkey-wrenching. Actions were organised as part of international rainforest days co-ordinated in the US and Australia. Australia had seen some recent big dock blockades and the tactic was quickly brought to Britain.

On 4th December 1991, in what was EF!'s first really successful action, 200 people invaded Tilbury docks in London. That month the *EF! Action Update* also reported under the headline 'Reclaim the Streets' a small roadblock done by South Downs EF! More was to be heard of Reclaim the Streets...

Tilbury was followed by a 400 strong protest at Liverpool docks.

"On the first day we stormed the fences, occupied cranes, piles of dead rainforest, observation towers and machinery; we hung banners off everything and blocked the busy dock road... Police relations were good; because of full liaison work, violence on both sides was prevented and we all got on like good mates. This was helped with good legal backup, and non-violence training from experienced CND activists... People stayed up the cranes all night... The second day saw a complete change in attitude by the authorities. They'd let us have our fun on the first day and they were determined that the ship would dock on the Wednesday. Under fear of violence, our press office got the media straight down there—our strongest weapon against foul play, but already the police



(Above) Penan logging blockade. Without either large numbers or decent arms the Penan were always unlikely to win. However they might have had a better chance had they been given direct aid by Western environmental groups—which at the time were bringing in MILLIONS on the back of rainforest imagery. Bar EF!/RAN no-one provided any meaningful aid. Many of those who manned the logging barricades in 1991 were forced into becoming loggers due to the destitution their struggle's defeat left them in. Some rebel tribespeople continue to hide out in the forest remnants. (Below) EF! organises 400 people to blockade entrances and occupy cranes, closing Liverpool docks as a shipment of rainforest timber arrives.



were wading in and holding people in a big cage."[10]

The description of state force as 'foul play' and our greatest protection from it being the media illustrates well the startlingly naive views held by many at the time. The dock-workers refused to unload the shipment while EF!ers were still running around in danger. Eventually the police cleared the dock and the shipment was unloaded.

February saw the first anti-road direct action at Twyford Down. FoE held a symbolic chaining up of the site which they ended when injucted. At the request of the Twyford Down Association EF!ers from all over the country started a wave of site actions, sabotage and blockades.

Offices started to be targeted around this time with an example being the chaining up of the Malaysian airline office by 29 activists in solidarity with 31 Penan on trial.[11]

While the national days of actions at Twyford continued down south, up north the campaign to stop peat extraction from Thorne Moors hotted up.




Earth First!
No.2
30p
ACTION UPDATE (UK)
Winter Solstice 91.

RECLAIM THE STREETS

ARMAGEDDON

Upcoming...Upcoming...Upcoming...Upcoming..Upcoming

LIVERPOOL TIMBER SHIP BLOCKADE
27th Feb.
see page 5

SAVE CANADIAN OLD GROWTH
22nd Feb.
see page 5

PROTECT TWYFORD DOWN
1st March.
see page 3

On Monday 13th April £100,000 of damage was done to Fisons machinery. A telephone call to the media claimed the action for Earth First! FoE central office quickly condemned the action on television.

In many ways the first few months of 1992 set a pattern of activism prevalent for much of the next decade—a cycle of national actions, anti-road campaigns, office occupations, night-time sabotage and street blockades.

The South Downs hosted Britains first EF! gathering in April 1992. Around 60 people turned up to discuss direction, aims and plan future actions. While EF! was quite unified at the time, divisions were definitely present. The recent Moors sabotage and unwise interviews to the press concerning the future environmental use of explosives caused quite a stir. Most agreed that if EF! itself was seen to do criminal damage then it would put groups at risk. A line of 'We neither condemn nor condone' was agreed upon. For some this was simply a legal technicality—in reality EF!ers would still be doing damage. For the less militant faction it was seen as meaning civil disobedience was *the* tactic for EF! while sabotage was secondary, separate and something done by others. Though I'd still say that the wet faction was wrong, it was understandable given the widespread paranoia following the then recent Arizona conspiracy trial and the FBI bombing of EF!ers.

In this period EF! was primarily involved nationally in two campaigns: rainforests and anti-roads. While similar tactics were used for both they had fundamentally different characters. While rainforest days of action would trail off, anti-road action would get bigger and bigger.

While the rainforest actions were often very successful—on their own terms—they rarely lasted more than a day. On May 11th '92 over 100 invaded the yard of Britain's biggest mahogany importer. Though a successful action in itself, it remained in the whole a media stunt. The site remained operative, the offices weren't trashed and next day it opened up again as usual. We all felt empowered by the action, but there was a different feeling at Twyford Down. At Twyford the movement could engage in protracted physical resistance. It was a land struggle. You could feel the land you were struggling over with your hands and your soul. When people started to move onto the land itself they connected with it, became part of it. Standing in the sun, grass between your toes looking to the diggers on the horizon *the rage grew.* It wasn't a single issue—it was war.

On an entirely practical level it was a focus; an easily accessible battleground local groups could drive their vans to. In this struggle EF! grew and evolved. Most actions through '92 were done by

Friend or FoE?

In the early 1990s Friends of the Earth (FoE) central office made a concerted effort to restrict the growth of the new movement. Negative public statements about EF! were issued (most notably about the Sarawak jailings) but it wasn't until the April 1992 Thorne Moors sabotage that FoE central office showed its true colours when Andrew Lees—then head of FoE—condemned the action on TV.

"We have to be very careful that this style of anti-environmental action does not actually get misrepresented as something the environment movement support. We decry, we deny it. It has no place in a democracy which relies, and must rely, on public demanding the politicians deliver the goods."[8]

This public condemnation of the very essence of direct action showed how far FoE central office had come from its early radical days. Contrast it with a statement by FoE's first director twenty years previously.

"Whilst it is the case that the Japanese experience of people physically fighting the construction of an airport or motorway has not been repeated in Britain that is not to say that it will not occur here. Indeed... it is almost inconceivable that clashes... will be avoided... When patience runs out we won't really be—what's the word?—militant. After all is said and done, putting sugar in a bulldozer's petrol tank is relatively undramatic compared with blowing up a mountain."[9]

After slagging the action publicly Lees got to work on his own members. Worried (correctly) that many local FoE groups were showing interest in direct action an edict was issued banning them from working with EF! It even went as far as to warn FoE groups that if they demonstrated with EF! their right to use the FoE Ltd. name might be revoked. This intimidation was too much for some of the FoE grassroots. At FoE National Conference local groups led by Birmingham and Brighton challenged Lees on this and defeated him.

Lees and others at FoE Central had seen the new movement as a potential threat to power. They thought they could nip it in the bud—they couldn't. It would grow much bigger and gain vast public sympathy. The strategy of FoE changed—from one of strength to one of weakness. By the mid-'90s a new director was trying to court EF!—even turning up to an EF! Gathering with a large block of dope (whisky for the natives). He invisaged a series of meetings at which he and two or three other top staff could meet a similar number of EF! 'representatives' behind closed doors. This was of course out of the question. Just as no-one could represent EF! at a national level, EF! could not represent everyone involved in eco-direct action. Over twenty EF!ers came to the first meeting, most to make this point and make sure no one could sell the movement down the river. FoE said it had learnt from its past mistakes—most EF!ers looked sceptical.

At the same time the Newbury Bypass saw FoE central's biggest push to capitalise on direct action. It even managed to take over the campaign's media liaison, (resulting in a major increase in its media profile and resultant subs money). Promises not to publicly slag direct action were hastily forgotten when over a hundred stormed an office throwing computers out of the window. When hundreds took part in the festive burning of diggers, FoE Central once again condemned the resistance.

The experience of dealing with FoE Central would be just the first of its kind. A few years later, following the J18 global day of action, the Socialist Workers Party (another reformist hierarchical racket) would try to boost its membership by fronting itself as the backbone of the movement. Just like FoE it condemned militant and genuine resistance while trying to build bridges to mainstream groups.

NGOs, political parties. These professional priests of assimilation are simply vampires—let's do some staking.



Reformist groups organise a symbolic 'vote' at Twyford in the run up to the 1992 general election. After the photo opportunity, the crowd goes down the hill, many spontaneously joining an EF! road blockade, pickaxing a dam and flooding the site, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage. Sunny sabotage—a far better message to send the politicians.

between 10-50 people and commonly resulted in minor arrests for breach of the peace. Sabotage commenced almost immediately. The site was regularly flooded by redirecting the River Itchens water and machines were wrenched. Just as it was new for us so too it was for the state, who were suprisingly unprepared. In these first few months it would be case of running onto site, climbing a crane or locking onto a digger. An hour or so later the state's most regular foot-soldier would arrive—Bill Aud, a copper with a sideline in mobile disco.

The Camps Begin...

The need for groups to have somewhere to sleep after travelling distances for days of action was the catalyst that set up Britains first ever ecological direct action camp. A traveller site had long graced one side of the hill, but in June an obviously separate action camp was set up on the dongas—an area of threatened downland furrowed deep with sheep droves. This became a base for action against the road-building that was going on further down the hill. On the dongas a real feeling of tribe developed as many more were attracted to the site by summer beauty and direct action.

While some travellers had early on got involved in EF!,[12] it was at Twyford that a real mix started to develop between (predominately urban) EF!/Animal lib types and (predominately rural) travellers. Each threw different ingredients into the campfire cauldron (of veggie slop). The activists—action techniques. The Travellers—on the land living skills. Teepees and benders sprung up, machines were trashed. This crossover would propel ecological direct action into a potent cycle of struggle with big numbers and big successes.

However while both sides complimented each other it would be ridiculous to iron over the very real family squabbles. As the summer progressed there was tension within the Dongas Tribe over what offensive actions should be taken and what defensive measures should be put in place. Discussion of how to resist the (obviously imminent) eviction was silenced with the classic hippy refrain: 'If you think negative things, negative things will happen'. It was even suggested, in a basically religious formulation, that mother earth would simply not 'allow' the destruction of the dongas to happen. This tendency grew as the months went on until by autumn serious conflict reared up. Following a threat by security to repeat an earlier arson attack on the camp in retaliation for site sabotage, offensive action was actually 'banned' by a 'meeting of the tribe'. Hippie authoritarian pacifists[13] practically 'banished' EF!ers who had been involved from the start. Predictably, however, the state wasn't standing idle—it was preparing.

Elsewhere the campaign against roads was building apace. New road openings were disrupted and the newspapers were already talking about the 'next Twyford'—the battle for Oxleas Wood in London. Across the country the government boasted it was building the biggest road programme since the Romans. These roads smashed through some of the most biologically important areas—SSSIs (Special Sites of Scientific Interest) and so it was obvious that by fighting roads one could take on Thatchers 'Great Car Economy', while directly defending important habitat. Direct action was starting to spread beyond roads. At Golden Hill in Bristol an impressive community resistance against Tesco destroying local green space resulted in arrests and mass policing. A new air was definitely abroad.

Back at Twyford the inevitable eviction came brutally on the 9th of December—Yellow Wednesday. A hundred flouro-jacketed Group 4 security guards escorted bulldozers in to trash the camp. Throwing themselves in front of the landrovers and machines those in the camp slowed the eviction—suffering arrests and injuries. Two

were rendered unconscious by cops; lines of coiled razor wire crossed the down. The drama appearing live on television brought local ramblers, environmentalists, kids and the simply shocked to the site, many of whom without hesitation joined the resistance. Others came from around the country, making the eviction last three days. The eviction was an important moment—deeply depressing to most involved, it nevertheless captured the imagination of thousands.



"Many, particularly the media, who like a nice neat story—will see the move of the Dongas Camp as the closing act of the Twyford drama, but the battle has not ended—it's beginning. If they think they can stop us with threats and violence, we've got to make damn sure they don't. Hunt sabs regularly get hassle but carry on regardless—let's learn from their example. Obstruction on site needs to be co-ordinated and supported. The number of days work lost is what counts. To broaden it out nationally, every Tarmac and associated subcontractors office, depots and sites in the country should be targeted. Every leaflet produced should contain the information needed for a cell to wreak £10,000 of havoc against the contractors and even put smaller sub-contractors out of business. No Compromise in Defence of Planet Earth!"—*Do or Die* No.1, Jan 1993

From the Ashes... Twyford Rising!

In February following an eventful invasion of Whatley Quarry, a new camp was set up at Twyford. Off route and up on the hill overlooking the cutting, this camp, and those that followed it, would have a very different attitude than the one on the dongas. Not defence, ATTACK!

Starting with half a dozen campers (Camelot EF!) the site steadily grew through spring with direct action practically everyday—and many nights too! Some actions were carried out by a handful of people locking onto machines, others were mass invasions by hundreds. Diggers were trashed, offices invaded. A sunrise circle-dance was followed by an eight car sabotage convoy.

The state response to these actions grew more organised: hordes of guards, private investigators and cops were stationed daily to stop the actions. They failed. Endless arrests, restrictive bail conditions, camp evictions and harassment only hardened resolve. By late April the Department of Transport was in the High Court pushing for an injunction on 76 named individuals. To back up their case they produced evidence nearly a foot thick with hilarious daily reports from Twyford. A not unusual entry read thus:

"At 0845hrs a group of protestors raided one of the small earthmoving operations at Shawford Down and did some very severe damage to the excavator before making off. There were between 35-50 of them and they seemed to know exactly what to do to cause the most damage to the machines."[14]

Unsurprisingly the High Court backed the DoT and injuncted the 76. The reaction from our side was swift, two days after the hearing 500 joined a Mass Trespass at the cutting. In a moving sign of multi-generational resistance the crowd was addressed by Benny Rothman, one of the leaders of the 1932 Kinder Scout Trespass. The mass injunction breaking resulted in six being sent to jail for a month—the first of many to end up in the clink for fighting road building. On the day of their release they were greeted by friends, smiles, hugs and... sabotage. In Collingham, Linconshire, under the spray painted title 'For the Prisoners of Twyford Down', the following was wrenched: 3 buildozers, 3 Tarmac Trucks, 2 Diesel Pumps, 1 Work Shed and a Control Station.[15]

Tarmac PLC was feeling the pressure. Across the country many of its offices were occupied, its machines targeted. When its AGM was disrupted the directors made their fears known. Thanks to good corporate research their home addresses had

been uncovered and published. Some had been freaked enough to hire security guards—their apprehension heightened by past targeting of directors by Animal Liberationists. Considering the relatively few 'radical eco' home visits since, this may seem surprising. However at this time the movement was influenced by quite divergent groups. The fact that directors were largely left unscathed in the years to come was not a given—it was a choice.

During that summer everything from Druid curses to burning tarmac was hurled at the contractors in a hectic campaign which was; "a symbol of resistance, a training ground, a life changer and a kick up the arse to the British green movement."[16] Nevertheless, though it slowed it, the M3 was not stopped. 'The cutting at Twyford Down gets ever deeper and the down, the water-



meadows and of course most of the dongas are now destroyed, but it's destruction has given birth to a movement and the fight goes on."[17]

As the resistance at Twyford waned anti-road actions were spreading across the country like wildfire. Digger diving was organised on a near daily basis at Wymondham near Norwich, and in Newcastle hammocks were strewn in the trees at Jesmond Dene. Like Twyford, once again it was local EFlers and residents that catalysed the intial actions that burgenoned into widescale *tribal* resistance on the land.

Further north, action was hotting up in Scotland with tree and crane sits, some lasting days, connected to the M74 in Glasgow. Even further north was the campaign against the Skye Bridge, a monstrosity cutting across the Kyle of Lockash, immortalised in the environmental classic, *The Ring of Bright Water*. The bridge not only affected the direct habitat (famous for its otters) but connected the Hebrides into the mainland infrastructure, endangering the whole regions ecology by exposing it to further development.

Unfortunately at the time there was only limited active local support for resistance. The first and only day of action against the building was carried out by around a dozen, who, bar a few from Skye and Glasgow EFl, were all from 'south of the border'. As cops stationed on the island could be counted on one hand, reinforcements were brought in. Inflatables were launched as the main work was being carried out off barges. The reaction of the construction firm was brutal—industrial hoses were used as water-cannons in an attempt to knock those up floating cranes into the sea. The Scottish press were present in numbers and also enjoyed some corporate PR. The front page of *The Scotsman* put it like this:

"Journalistic objectivity is a wonderful thing. However, it is easily damaged, especially by people trying to ram your boat, sink you, throw rocks at you, then threatening you first with a crowbar and then a grappling hook, not to mention attacking you with a tracked excavator."[18]

The boats were impounded and most were arrested. Bussed a hundred miles away, the group was given strict bail by an all-powerful 'Roving Sheriff' (another great colonial legacy) not to return to the Highlands and Islands for over a year. Police escorted the van most of the way to the border. Elsewhere actions were taken against the projects funders, The Bank of America, but the campaign was effectively stillborn by low local involvement and immediate corporate/state 'direct action'.

A very different situation had produced a very different result at Oxleas Wood in London. These woods in SE London were widely believed to be the next big battle and 3,000 people had signed a pledge to 'Beat the Bulldozers'. After over a year of

direct action at Twyford and with resistance spreading the government knew it couldn't risk hitting such a beautiful place within 'recruitment distance' of millions. The summer of 1993 saw this £300 million scheme dropped, a major victory after just a year of sustained action against infrastructural growth.

Not Single Issues, Just One War

This success was all the more impressive considering that this campaign, though then becoming the dominant terrain of struggle for the movement, was still only one of the battles it was involved in. The daily fight on the land was interspersed with national and local days of action across the country on a range of issues.

Timber depots in Oxford, Rochdale and London were all targeted by days of action. One national week of action against mahogany saw 'ethical shoplifting' (the seizure of illegally logged timber from shops), in towns across the country; and abroad the simultaneous total destruction of logging equipment by the Amazonian Parkana Indians![19] Other actions included bank occupations (against Third World debt), an ICI factory invasion (to highlight continued ozone depletion), road blockades (against car culture) and regular quarry blockades at Whatley in Somerset. These different battles were all viewed as part of the same war by EFlers. Many of the hundreds that invaded Oxford Timbnet for the second time had come direct from a weekend of action at Twyford. The next day a cavalcade moved onto Bristol to help disrupt the opening of the disputed Golden Hill Tesco. Then, as now (maybe more so) many EFlers were also also involved in the animal liberation movement.

The campaigns were carried out in a global context of escalating radical ecological resistance. Anti-road campaigns in the (French) Pyranees, anti-whaling action by Sea Shepherd (around Norway), the campaign against the Narmada Dam (in India), the Ogoni struggle against Shell (Nigeria), EF! defence of the Danube (in Slovakia), biotech companies bombed (in Switzerland), GM crop experiments dug up (in the Netherlands), and of course anti-logging battles (in N. America, the Pacific, the Amazon and Australia).

It's a long way from North America to Newcastle but in 1993 the tactic of protracted tree-sits crossed the Atlantic. Following demos earlier in the year the bulldozers had gone into Jesmond Dene unannounced on June 16th. The state, however, hadn't factored in skiving Geordie kids, who stopped the machines working while the alarm went out. The next morning protestors barricaded the site entrance. More kids came back and shovelled earth with plastic flowerpots to build up the barricade—the Flowerpot Tribe was born. The campfire was set burning and a strong community formed. A combination of 'local talent' and reinforcements from Twyford and elsewhere, made the next five months an avalanche of site occupations, tree-sitting, piss-taking and nightly sabotage. The legendary winds of Newcastle seemed to blow down the construction site fencing again and again! The kids sang: "The Chainsaws, the Chainsaws—they cut down all out trees. The Pixies, the Pixies, trashed their JCBs." Of course despite the laughs it was hard.

"Everyone is getting very knackerd and pissed off—tree sitting is saving the trees that are hammocked, but it's tiring, cold, stressful and often boring. Ground support people face prison for breaking injunctions as they take food to trees. It's GRIM for sitters when the trees are felled near them. Local people sab a Cement mixer under the copper beech by throwing rock salt into it—a workman goes berserk and tries attacking the beech with a JCB, trying to knock the tree-sitters out. He survived but the copper beech loses another couple of branches."[20]


Triumph at Oxleas wood brings back green power

In 1991 EF!'s handful of activists *were* the radical ecological movement. By the end of the summer of 1993, EF! not only had 45 local groups but had catalysed thousands to take direct action—mostly not under the EF! banner. Now one could really begin to talk about a movement. After the Jesmond Dene camps were evicted one of the Flowerpot Tribe wrote:

"Those who've been involved are also gearing up to fight other schemes... What we've learnt will spread out to other road and environmental protests... it just gets bigger and bigger. If we can't stop the bastards totally we can COST them, show them there's no easy profit in earth rape. They've already been cost millions—let's cost them some more."[21]

Land struggles were infectious, the next period seeing an explosion of activity. The winning combination was relatively solid networks of long term anti-road campaigners (ALARM UK), a nationwide network of EF! groups and most importantly a swelling 'tribe' willing to travel across the land.



Welcome to the Autonomous Zones

While the state had backed down at Oxleas it intended to go full steam ahead with the M11 link through East London. DoT bureaucrats and politicians probably thought the movement wouldn't pull together over the destruction of a small amount of trees and hundreds of working class homes. They were wrong.

Hundreds of the houses were already squatted, long since having been compulsorily purchased. This vibrant scene was joined by others from Jesmond and Twyford. With much of the road smashing through a long-term squatting community and a solidly working class area, this more than any previous anti-road campaign was a defence of human lives as well as wildlife. Nevertheless, there were beautiful patches of overgrown gardens and copses, and the struggle was also understood in the national ecological context.

"By halting the road in London we can save woodlands, rivers and heathlands all the way to Scotland, without endangering their ecology by having mud fights with hundreds of security guards and police in their midst."[22]

The first real flashpoint came at a chestnut tree on George Green, common land in the heart of Wanstead. The 10ft hoardings which had been erected to enclose the common were trashed by a jolly mob of kids, activists and local people. On the Green a hunched woman in her eighties was crying. She had always felt powerless, but when she pushed the fences down with hundreds of others, she said she felt powerful for the first time in her life. Empowerment is direct action's magic, and the spell was spreading.

"A treehouse was built in the branches of the chestnut tree... For the following month the campfire became a focal point... People from different backgrounds began to get to know one another, spending long evenings together, talking, forming new friendships. Something new and beautiful had been created in the community. Many local people talk of their lives having been completely changed by the experience."[23]

The eviction came in December and was carried out by 400 police. With 150 people resisting it took nine hours to bring down one tree! Sabotage also played a part—both of the contractor's hydraulic platforms had been wrenched the night before.

New green army rises up against roads

"The eviction had forced the DoT to humiliate itself in a very public way. The loss of the tree was a tragic day, and yet also a truly wonderful day. It had hammered another huge nail in the coffin of the roads programme."[24]

The state hoped this was the end of No M11, but it was just the beginning. Other areas had already been occupied, and regular action against the contractors continued. It was a fitting end to the second year of concerted action against roads.

On January 1st 1994 the Indigenous Zapatistas of Mexico launched themselves on to the stage of world history. Liberating town after town, freeing prisoners, re-distributing food, declaring

themselves autonomous of the new economic order. They didn't just redistribute food; they redistributed hope worldwide, and were to have a significant impact on the movement here.

Meanwhile in Britain the year nearly started off with a big bang. In January a very small amount of broadsheet coverage reported the police detonation of an explosive device under the main bridge at Twyford Down. Coverage also reported a bomb found at Tarmac's HQ.[25]

The Spring saw camps sprout up against the Wymondham Bypass near Norwich, the Leadenham Bypass in Lincolnshire, the Batheastern-Swainswick Bypasses outside Bath and the Blackburn Bypass in Lancashire. In inner-city Manchester, a threatened local park got a dose of eco-action at Abbey Pond.

Back in the East End, Spring saw vast defensive and offensive road-resisting. A row of large Edwardian houses were next en route—they were barricaded, and Wanstonia was born: "it was declared an autonomous free zone. People made joke passports and the like. We were digging this huge trench all the way around the site. Doing that probably had zero tactical effectiveness but it really made us feel that this was where the UK ended and our space started."[26]

The State does not take well to losing territory.

"In a scene reminiscent of a medieval siege, around 800 police and bailiffs supported by cherry-pickers and diggers besieged the independent state of Wanstonia. After cordoning off the area the invaders preceded to storm the five houses. The police had to break through the barricades to enter only to find the staircases removed thus forcing them to get in through roofs or upper floors. Some protestors were on the roofs having chained themselves to the chimneys, the contractors preceded to destroy the houses while many people were still occupying them... It took ten hours to remove 300 people."[27]

This impressive and costly eviction was followed up by Operation Roadblock—a month of rota-based daily direct action, where groups booked in which days they would take action. It worked remarkably well, with sizeable disruption every day through March. Elsewhere many of the resistance techniques developed at the M11, both for the defence of houses and trees, were now being used against other schemes.

Progress, Yuck—Time to Go Back to the Trees

Tactics were evolving fast. At Jesmond, temporary hammocks had graced the branches; at George Green a single treehouse had been built; at Bath the first real network of treehouses hit the skyline; in Blackburn there was a full-on Ewok-style Tree Village. Unable to defeat the bailiffs on the ground, resistance had moved skyward.

"You'd be standing at the fire at night, and it would be the first time you'd been down on the ground all day. You'd look up and there would be all these little twinkles from candles up above you... How were they going to get us out?... I don't think I can describe here how special it is to sleep and wake in the branches of a tree. To see the stars and the moon. To feel the sunshine and feel the rain."[28]

Hundreds were now living on-site across the country, with many, many more 'weekending' or visiting for days of action. Most campaigns were now setting up multiple camps, each taking a slightly different form according to the lay of the land. Previously, barricades had been built around houses and woodlands—now they themselves were transformed into barricades—complex networks of walkways, treehouses, lock-ons, concrete and determination.

Solsbury Hill's fourth site eviction at Whitecroft was the first full-on, all-treetop eviction. Using cherry-pickers and standard chainsaw men, the Sheriff failed to take down a single tree; the camp had defeated him... for now. The cost was high;

Utter Contempt for the Court



During Jesmond Dene, people were still being picked up for having broken the Twyford injunction. 'Quolobolox' knew the cops would nick him sooner or later at the Dene and send him down to the High Court, but he was prepared. When the inevitable arrest came he gave the High Court quite a surprise. Stripping off to orange suspenders, worn all summer under his trousers especially for this occasion, he goosestepped up and down in front of the judge sieg-heiling. The judge closed the court in horror. This was a not-so-subtle reference to the recent death of Steven Milligan, the Tory MP for Eastleigh (near Twyford). Milligan, (who had once memorably described the Dongas Tribe as "weirdoes") was found dead hanging from the ceiling after an erotic auto-asphyxiation disaster, wearing nothing but suspenders with an amyl nitrate-soaked orange in his mouth. Unsurprisingly the judge added weeks to Quolobolox's sentence for 'contempt of court'.



one protestor hospitalised with spinal injuries and a collapsed lung. Ten days later the Sheriff returned, this time with madder baliffs—Equity card-holding stunt men. These were more crazy, muscular and willing to take risks with their own lives as well as of those in the trees. By the end of the day Whitecroft was no more. This—the most spectacular at the time—was only one of the many conflicts countrywide. These evictions were becoming hugely costly—to the contractors, to the state, and to social stability. Most sites at this time continued offensive action as well, using the by then standard formula; digger diving, office occupations and crane-sits, alongside overt and covert sabotage. The state was being challenged—it would soon escalate its response.

With every campaign the movement seemed to be going from strength to strength, with one exception, Leadenham. A camp had set up, and the DoT said it was putting the scheme into review, but victory was not to be. The contractors launched a surprise attack—during the 'reprieve'—while those still on site were 'dealt with' a few weeks later by local thugs. Vigilante attacks on sites had always been an occasional occurrence, but they were usually minor in scale. At Leadenham though there was a sizeable group of pro-road locals willing to take direct action.

"The attack happened following a demo by local people in favour of the bypass. Leadenham villagers decided in their infinite wisdom that a road was preferable to a 'few trees'. Masked vigilantes arrived at the camp at 5am armed with chainsaws. They proceeded to hack down trees protestors had been sitting in. Anyone getting in their way was punched and violently assaulted."[29]

This basically put an end to site occupation at the scheme, though days of action still followed. What Leadenham showed was the absolute necessity of having significant community support IF a camp was set up. Without it, there was a danger of being sitting/sleeping targets. Thankfully, through this period no other sites were mass attacked by local vigilantes in this way.[30]

While in this article I'll give an overview of this period, from so high up one can't hope to focus on the detail—and it's the detail that counts. The incredible moments, the passion, the exhilaration, the waiting, the amazing people, the occasional twat—the tribe. Not to mention the holy trinity: dogs, mud and cider. On site and in the trees, this feeling of togetherness and otherness grew. Leaving site to get food or giros, the harshness and speed of the industrial world hit you; but by living a daily existence of resistance we were hitting back.

Hunting the Machines

Every month brought news of an increase in sabotage despite minimal coverage in either mainstream or radical press, not least because communiqués were rarely sent. Sabotage largely centred around projects where ongoing daytime campaigns were underway, but some was done in solidarity with campaigns further afield. With so many groups fighting multiple schemes by the same companies actions often ended fulfilling both roles. ARC, for instance, had supplied roadstone to Twyford Down and was trying to expand quarries in North Wales and Somerset.



"After forcing their way into the control room [of ARC Penmaemawr

quarry) the intruders smashed a glass partition and then caused £10,000 worth of damage to computer equipment."[31]

The scale of sabotage carried out during the '90s land struggles is often forgotten. Altogether the direct costs of replacement and repair at construction sites must have easily run into the tens of millions. Fantasists may dream that this was the work of highly organised anonymous cells, striking and then disappearing[32], but in truth most trashings were carried out by those camping onsite; either subtley during digger diving, raucously as a mob, or covertly after heavy drinking sessions around the campfire. Basically, whenever it was possible, people fucked shit up. The sensible and commendable desire not to boast has left these actions hidden behind newspaper images of smiling 'tree-people'. The grins though were often those of mischievous machine wreckers; near campfires no yellow monster was safe from the hunt.

Some celebrity liberals[33] argued 'criminal damage' should not have a place in campaigns as it would put off 'normal everyday people'. This ridiculous idea was even stupider considering one of the main groups consistently carrying out sabotage were those locals with jobs and families who didn't have available (day)time to live on site, and for whom arrests for minor digger-diving could lead to unemployment and family problems. For many 'normal everyday people' covert sabotage was less risky than overt 'civil disobedience'. Another group of locals that always took to 'environmental vandalism' like ducks to water were kids, nearly always the most rebellious section of any community, often with the most intimate relationship to the local environment.

Of course despite what I say above, some ecotage was carried out entirely covertly with modus operandi borrowed from the Animal Liberation Front.

"Police believe a £2 million blaze at an Essex construction site could be the work of Green Activists. The fire swept through Cory Environment's aggregates and waste disposal site at Barling, near Southend, ruining four bulldozers, two diggers, and a fleet of six trucks owned by the main contractor. The police say that forensic evidence confirms arson."[34]

There is no Justice, Just Us!

It was becoming obvious that the ecological land struggles were really getting in the way of 'progress'.

The government (correctly) saw the movement as part of a social fabric (travelling culture, festivals, squatting, hunt sabbing) born of the '60s/'70s upsurge. With the Criminal Justice Bill it sought to tear this fabric apart. No more toleration,



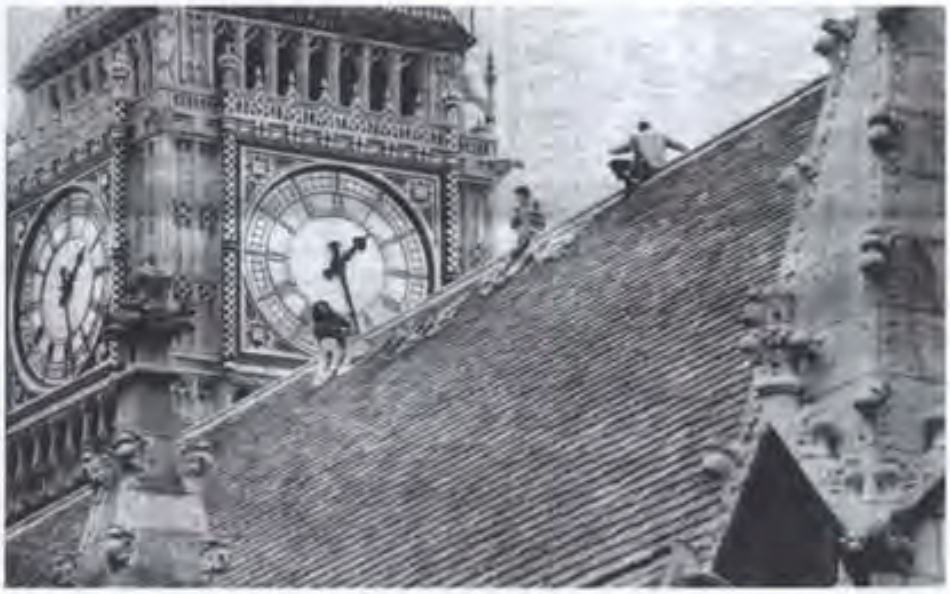
the government announced; it was giving itself new powers to close free parties, ban demonstrations, create huge exclusion zones, evict squats and jail persistent road-protest 'trespassers'. Unsurprisingly this challenge was met with a sudden flurry of activity. High street squat info centres around the country; local and national demos. Thousands turned up for marches in London. Rather than deterring people the new laws brought people together—'Unity in Diversity' the call of the day.

On October the 9th a demo of 75,000 ended in Hyde Park for the normal ritual of platform speakers. When a sound-system tried to get in at Speakers Corner to turn it into an illegal 'party in the park', it was attacked by police. In turn people fought back. The call went out across the Park—Defend the System; thousands ran from the speeches to the action—the Hyde Park Riot had begun.

"Although some people faced up to the police in Park Lane itself, most of the crowd ended up inside the park separated by the metal railings from the riot cops. This made it difficult for the police to launch baton charges or send in the horses, and when they tried to force their way



Police advances were defeated time after time at Hyde Park. In a sign of mass defiance the planned rally of the bored was abandoned in favour of a festive insurrectionary battle.



through the small gates in the railings they were repelled with sticks, bottles and whatever was to hand."

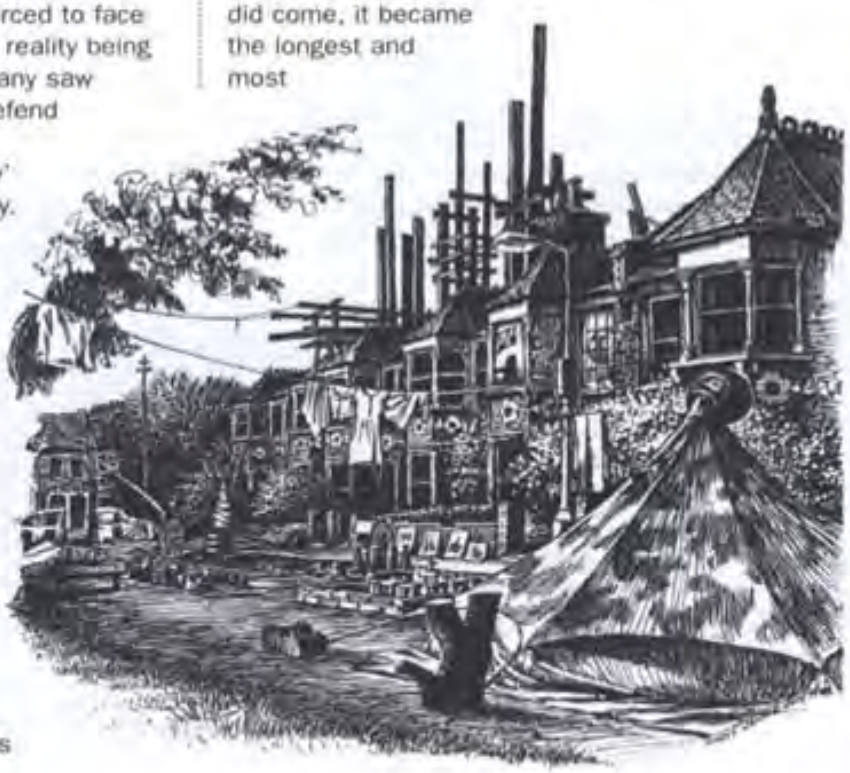
"There were some very surreal touches while all this was going on: people dancing not far from the police lines, a unicyclist weaving his way through the riot cops, a man fire-breathing. Some people have argued that the police deliberately provoked a riot to make sure the Criminal Justice Bill was passed, but this ignores the fact that there was never any danger of the CJB not being passed, as there had never been any serious opposition within parliament."[35]

Hyde Park—like the eviction of the Dongas—was a landmark confrontation. At Twyford the movement was forced to face up to the reality of state violence. At Hyde Park it was forced to face the reality of movement violence, the reality being simple—when faced with riot cops many saw nothing wrong with fighting back to defend temporarily liberated space. At the beginning of the march 'Keep it Fluffy' stickers had been handed out liberally. Later as the helicopter floodlights shone down on a riot, the sight of a crusty with a rainbow jumper emblazoned with one of the stickers—throwing a bit of paving slab at the cops—showed how moments of collective power can change people. The following months would see an intensification of 'violence/nonviolence' discussions around the country.

When the Bill became an Act in November everyone understood that the only way to defeat a possible 'crackdown' was by defying it. As the *EFI Action Update* put it: "As far as it affects Earth Firstlers... its purpose is not so much to imprison us as to intimidate us—and we mustn't let that work."[36] The day the Act went through on November 4th, activists from No M11 climbed onto the roof of Parliament and unfurled a banner—Defy The Act. Hunt sabs went out in bigger numbers, more road protest camps were established, free parties flourished. By the end of the month a big confrontation came that would test whether the government had succeeded in intimidating the resistance.

A Street Reclaimed

Throughout the Summer, evictions and resistance on the M11 had continued and most of the route was rubble. One major obstacle lay in the path of the bulldozers—Claremont Road, an entire squatted street had been transformed into a surreal otherworld. Turned inside-out, the road itself became the collective living room, the remaining cars flowerbeds. Above the sofa, huge chess board and open fire a vast scaffolding tower reached daily further up to the sky. This 'state of the art' reclaimed street was not going to take eviction easy. When it did come, it became the longest and most



expensive in English history—5 days, 700 police, 200 bailiffs and 400 security guards, costing £2 million.

"When the bailiffs arrived they were met by 500 people using every delay tactic possible. A concrete filled car with protruding scaffold poles stopping the cherry pickers moving in. People locked on to the road. Others hung in nets strung across the street. People in bunkers, others huddled on rooftops and in treehouses. Lastly, 12 people scrambled up the 100ft scaffold tower painted with grease and tied with pink ribbons."[17]

One by one, minute by costly minute, the state forces removed the 500—taking the best part of a week. The sheer ingenuity of the tactics, the resolve of the people involved and the incredible barricading techniques made this an amazing moment. Like the Chestnut Tree, Solsbury Hill and a dozen other evictions, the state won the battle—but they were losing the war. With every hugely expensive eviction, every trashed machine, every delayed contract, every citizen turned subversive, every tree occupied—the social and economic cost of pushing through the roads programme was becoming unbearable.

Yet Claremont—like all anti-roads sites—wasn't simply a reaction to destruction, it was also a reaffirmation of life, of autonomy. It was an experience that changed hundreds of people; its memory would remain precious and propel a whole new wave of streets to be reclaimed. Reclaim the Streets had been formed by EFlers in '92 to combat the car culture on the city streets. With the expansion of anti-road resistance the idea had gone into hibernation, but many who had seen the topsy-turvey, inside-out world of Claremont Road wanted to feel the like again. After the end of the M11 campaign, RTS was reformed. The state had foolishly thought Claremont Road lay in rubble; in fact it haunted those who'd been there and its festive rebel spectre would reappear on streets across the country.

It started with a reclamation of that bastion of consumption, Camden High Street.

"Two cars entered the high street and to the astonishment of passing shoppers ceremoniously piled into each other—crash! Thirty radical pedestrians jumped on top and started trashing them—soon joined by kids. An instant café was set up distributing free food to all and sundry, rainbow carpets unrolled, smothering the tarmac, and a host of alternative street décor... A plethora of entertainment



followed including live music, fire-breathing... and the Rinky-Dink bike powered sound system."[38]

A month later and the action was much bigger; word had got around—1,500 met at the meet-up point, jumped the Tube and arrived at Islington High Street.

"They swarmed across the dual carriageway as five 25ft tripods were erected blocking all the access roads. Half a ton of sand was dumped on the tarmac for kids of all ages to build sand castles with. An armoured personnel carrier blasting out rave set up, fire hydrants were opened up—spraying the ravers dancing in the sunshine. All the cops could do was stand to the side and sweat."[39]

While the Claremont eviction was the first major sign of the failure of the CJA, street parties spreading across the country were basically dancing on its grave. With the Act's implementation resistance became a bit more difficult, but its deterrent effect was dead in the water. The rebellion against the CJA had brought together different alternative culture currents and coalesced them into a serious counter-culture; now RTS was making more connections. Above the wonderful spectacle of the Islington Street Party flew a banner declaring solidarity with the Tubeworkers.



Like most materials on road protests, these scaffold poles were all nicked. What a world we could build with shopping trolleys, polyprop, pallets and cement!

Back on the Farm

While London events got the lion's share of media coverage, people were defying the CJA all over, most by simply carrying on with actions—'business as usual'. The eviction of urban camps at Pollock in Glasgow against the M77 involved hundreds—250 kids even broke out of school to help stop one eviction. The act had been meant to neuter direct action. Instead in the climate of opposition, whole new struggles



(Above) The involvement of well-known climbers in state evictions inspired a major reaction in the climbing community: they were seen for what they were—scabs. As a result, many climbers joined the protests at Newbury. Leading climbing writer Jim Perrin wrote: "The collaborator's traditional fate awaits you: rigorous denunciation, vehement haranguing, exclusion from social venues, arctic contempt. I want to ask this, of you who have betrayed your community, friends and fellow human beings: how long will your money last? And when it's gone, remember when he faced what he'd done, Judas had a rope too..." (Climber magazine, May 1996) True to the threat, the state climbers were ostracised and even forced off rock faces. (Below) Fearing a similar reaction, state tunnellers made sure to hide their identities.



opened up, such as those against the live export of sheep and calves, involving thousands more in direct action.

In the Southwest the one year anniversary gathering at Solsbury Hill went off with a bang. An Anti-CJA event on the hill ended with lots of fencing pulled down, trashed machinery and security thugs in hospital. As one woman from the local Avon Gorge EF! group put it: "I guess people had had enough of being used as punch bags."[40] This was followed by a day of action with 200 people—stopping most of the work along the route.

Up North the campaign against the M65 saw a major shift in tactics by both those in the trees and those who'd taken the job of getting them out. Three camps had already been evicted, but the crescendo came at Stanworth Valley, an amazing network of walkways, platforms, nets and over 40 treehouses. Through the valley surged the River Ribblesworth. It was truly a village in the sky, which was lucky as the ground was pure quagmire half the time. You've never seen such mud!

As well as new people and local activists there was now a dedicated nomadic tribe, seasoned at many previous evictions. After over a year of life in the branches, some were agile and confident at height—at home in the trees. The state realised that it needed a new force that was as confident on the ropes—Stanworth became the first place where members of the climbing community took sides against nature.

"Upon entering the treetops they were quite shocked to find the people were not just passive spectators to their own removal. A gentle but firm push with the foot often kept them out of a treehouse. Two climbers tried to manhandle an activist out of the trees, mistakenly thinking they were alone. The calls for help were quickly answered and to the climbers' astonishment out of the thick shroud of leaves above, activists abseiled down, others painered up from below and yet more appeared from both sides running along the walkways and branches. The climbers could be forgiven for thinking they were caught in a spiders web."[41]

Eventually after five days, all 120 people had been ripped from the trees—bringing the total contract cost increased by the No M65 campaign to £12.2 million. The climbers had found new lucrative employment but they would do their best to avoid ever repeating an eviction under leaf cover. From now on most evictions would be when the leaves were off the trees; the combined factor of nature's abundance and activist up-for-it attitude a severe deterrent.

The spread of anti-road camps was by now incredible with '95 probably the highpoint in terms of national spread. On top of the established camps, new areas were occupied in Berkshire, Kent, Devon and Somerset. Over the next year the struggle moved well beyond just fighting roads. Camps were set up to protect land from open-cast mining in South Wales, leisure development in Kent and quarrying in the South West. No surprise then that one of the major voices spurring on this 'culture of resistance' got some special attention from some special people.

Green Anarchist magazine in the mid '90s was a meeting point of movements. Its readership included significant numbers of travellers, hunt sabs, class struggle anarchos, Green Party members, 'eco-warriors', and animal liberationists. It was an obvious target for the secret state. A set of 17 raids aimed at *Green Anarchist* and the ALF resulted in the jailing of a number of its editors.

This repression, like the CJA, backfired. Instead of marginalising *GA* it actually made them far more well known; an alliance of largely liberal publications swung behind them, motions of support were even brought up at the Green Party and FoE annual conferences. This increased exposure, combined with M15 fears about court documents released in appeal hearings compromising their agents, secured their release. A major aim of the repression against *GA* had been to deter sabotage, while large parts of the CJA were aimed at stopping 'Aggravated Trespass'. Their absolute failure to deter the radical ecological direct action movement was shown clearly one morning in Somerset.



Whatley Quarry—Yee Ha!

"The 'national' EF! action to shut down Whatley Quarry was an even greater success than expected. A week later the owners hadn't managed to restart work. At 5.30am, 400 activists descended on the quarry. Small teams ensured gates were blockaded and all plant and machinery occupied... Detailed maps and a predetermined plan ensured police and security were out manoeuvred. Tripods were carried 9 miles overnight and set up on the quarry's rail line whilst lorries were turned away. Press reports state that £250,000 worth of damage was caused—not counting the cost of a week's lost production, for a quarry normally selling 11,000 tonnes per day! Twenty metres of railway track leading out of the quarry 'disappeared'; the control panel for video monitoring of the plant fell apart; a two storey crane pulled itself to bits; three control rooms dismantled themselves; and several diggers and conveyor belts broke down."[42]

The police managed to arrest 64 people, mostly under the CJA for aggravated trespass. In time, most of the cases were dropped. All through the land struggle period EF! had been organising national actions—this was by far the most effective. It had come on the back of four years of concerted actions at Whatley and showed what can be achieved by good organisation and the element of surprise. While the cops had prepared in their hundreds, they simply hadn't factored in that 'hippies' could get up at 4am. This action really set the mood for the next year.

"An Adrenaline Junkie's Idea of Heaven"

"Police on the Newbury Bypass site today condemned the tactics of those who last night took a heavy tractor from road-works and drove to a construction area, where they damaged compound fencing, lighting equipment and a portacabin building. Police were called but the offenders ran away before they arrived at the scene."[43]

The Newbury bypass was the big battle. The scale was immense. Nine miles long, over 30 camps, ten thousand trees, over a thousand arrests. A daily struggle with up to 1,600 security guards[44], hundreds of police, private detectives, and state climbers lined up against tribes of hundreds of committed, mud-living activists. Day after relentless day, evictions and resistance. "Every morning, cider and flies".

I don't have space to cover all the campaigns across the country, so I am focusing on those which saw important changes. Equally, I can't hope to give a true impression of what it was like to be living on site, at Newbury least of all. Crazy and medieval—in both good ways and bad—is all I'll say. (The book *Copse* captures the spirit of those







times best, with a mix of photos, interviews and cartoons. VERY highly recommended!)

The state had by this time learnt from some of its previous mistakes; no longer would it try to clear the road in stages at the same time as building works progressed. In the past this allowed a healthy mix of offensive action against construction as well as defensive action against clearance. At Newbury the chainsaws were given five months to clear the site. Initially when protests had started the massive increased cost of clearence had pushed up costs—billed straight to the corporations, destroying any profits. Now when the contracts were tendered these millions were factored in—billed straight to the state. This made the campaigns of this period increasingly defensive in nature. Though there were attempts to move beyond this, to a certain extent it was an inevitable result of a change in 'terrain'. Yet the costs of keeping a force capable of clearing a route dotted with camps, with highly evolved defence techniques, needing highly paid specialist climbers to evict, was now immense.



Fort Trollheim on the A30. Temporary Autonomous Zones don't get more autonomous than this. Where the barricades rise, the state ends.



After a hard day digging tunnels at Fairmile there's nothing quite like a perfect cuppa and a subterranean knitting session.

Newbury, more than any other, was a national campaign in one locale. Practically everyone who had been heavily involved in radical eco stuff over the preceding five years bumped into each other in the wasteland. This was no accident—everyone knew that at Newbury the state wanted to break the movement. In reply people were determined to break the state's resolve to build roads beyond Newbury. Glorious defeats for us meant economic defeat for the Department of Transport. This war of attrition had been rolling now for years but at Newbury both sides wanted to put in the death blow. After over a year of building defences, five months of fighting evictions, night after night of sabotage and a lifetime of manic moments, the clearance was finished; but in the aftermath so was the roads programme. Of course it took a while to die. Some projects were still in the pipeline and others were continuing, but after Newbury the conclusion was not in doubt.

A year after the clearance work had started, hundreds arrived at Newbury for the anniversary, now known as the Reunion Rampage. After minor scuffles and tedious speeches from the likes of FoE leadership, fencing surrounding a major construction compound was cut, and the crowd surged in.

"So we put sand in the fuel tanks of generators, took spanners to the motor of the crane. As we were leaving the site, a tipper truck on fire to my left and the crane on fire down to my right, there was one man standing straight in front of me, silhouetted against the bright billowing flames rolling up out of the portacabin. He stood in an X shape, his hands in victory V signs, shouting 'YES! YES! YES!' It wasn't chaotic, there was a sense of purpose, of collective will, of carnival, celebration, strong magic, triumph of people power, of a small but very real piece of justice being done."[45]

After Defeats, Victories!

If this kind of disorder freaked the nation state, local government was terrified. At Guildford, Surrey Council cancelled a scheme where five camps had been set up—it simply couldn't afford the economic and social costs of taking on the movement. Opencast mines were shelved in South


Road-building plan collapses amid chaos

Wales thanks to the sterling resistance at the evictions of the Selar and Brynhennlys camps. Camps saved nature reserves from destruction by agribusiness in Sussex. Camps stopped supermarket developments. Camps stopped leisure developments in Kent, and quarries were put on hold in the Southwest after costly evictions at Dead Woman's Bottom.

If Newbury put the final nail in the coffin of the 'Roads to Prosperity' building programme, the A30 camps were shovelling in the soil. Put into full use for the first time, tunnels became another tactic of delay. Tree defence and complex subterranean networks made the eviction at Fairmile last longer than every previous eviction—with the tunnels staying occupied six days in. While the resistance to the A30 was amazing it was also a waymarker. Following the evictions there was NO daytime offensive action against the construction contract, though a one day camp and some impressive 'night-work' did get done. The amazing community had evolved over two and half years of occupation—its effect would last far longer.

By mid 1997 Road Alert! could happily report the demise of the national roads programme.

"It has been sliced from about £23 billion to a few £billion since 1992; nearly 500 out of the 600 road schemes have been scrapped; that's 500 places untrashed, saved—for now. These are massive cuts; *Construction News* wrote '...the major road-building programme has virtually been destroyed'... It seems fair to link the rise of direct action with the diminishing budget, down every year since 1993, the year of the big Twyford actions."[46]

On TV even the ex-Transport Minister Stephen Norris, of all people, presented a documentary on how 'the protesters were right' and he was wrong. Contractor newspapers sounded more and more like obituary columns every week.

The unlikely had happened, the movement's main immediate objective had been largely attained, and the 'threat capacity' generated by the struggle now deterred developments in other fields. More sites were still being set up—now against disparate targets; logging in Caledonia, housing in Essex, an airport extension at Manchester.

Fly, Fly into the Streets!

While most camps were in the countryside, contestation was also spreading in the streets. After the success of the London '95 street parties, RTS followed up with an 8,000 strong take over of the M41; across the country RTSs were held in dozens of towns often more than once. Some were amazing revelatory moments—windows into future worlds—others were just crap. In '96/'97 RTS London had mobilised the alternative culture ghetto—now it was organising a break out, first making connections with the striking tube-workers, then with the locked-out Liverpool Dockers. In an inspiring act of solidarity radical eco-types climbed cranes, blockaded entrances and occupied roofs at the Docks. Around 800 protestors and dockers mingled on the action and a strong feeling of connection was born.

Following on the back of this action came a massive mobilisation just before the May election, around 20,000 marched and partied with the Dockers at the 'March for Social Justice.' The plan had been to occupy the then empty Department of


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REPAIR THE STREETS - THE TAKING OF THE M41

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As the AU reports, 8,000 take over the M41. A giant pantomime dame promenades. Under her skirt, a pneumatic drill digs up the road to the rhythm of the soundsystems' beat.



Environment building in Whitehall. Though the police succeeded in stopping this happening, the march ended in a huge party/riot at Trafalgar Square, above the crowd a massive banner—'Never Mind the Ballots, Reclaim the Streets'. More and more street parties were continuing around the country.

National Actions

After Whatley had been such a success, people wanted more. Unfortunately, the police were once bitten, twice shy. Any whiff of an EF! national mobilisation resulted in massive policing that made most actions just impossible. While the cops were still often outfoxed, mostly by moving location (an action in North Wales moved to Manchester, an action at an oil refinery moved to an open-cast site), it was largely making the best of a bad situation.

Yet it wasn't just the state that caused problems here. The big Whatley action had come out of discussion at an EF! national gathering, with groups all over committing themselves to both turning up and organising it. Other 'national actions' that followed were often organised by local groups who wanted an injection of collective power into their campaign. This meant that effectively they were local campaigns calling on the national movement for support—very different from the national movement organising to support a local campaign.

One of the biggest failures came when a local group—Cardigan Bay EF!—declared a national day of action on the anniversary of the Milford Haven oil spill. This was to be followed by actions against opencast in the Welsh valleys.

Vans arrived from around the country to find little local work had been done by CBEF! (not even accommodation had been sorted) and no decent plans were in place, the 'organising group' not even turning up to sort out the mess. Meanwhile hundreds of cops waited at the port. Thankfully, the wonderful Reclaim the Valleys stepped in days before they were due to and sorted a squat and a few decent actions. Nevertheless, it was a disempowering experience to say the least.

It was followed by an action at Shoreham Docks that drew 60 people... and 800 cops. Like at Milford Haven where the refinery had been closed despite no action, all work at Shoreham stopped for the day. On one level these actions were successful, in that they stopped work comprehensively, but disempowerment meant they stifled any chance of long term organising around the issue.

Public defeats also resulted in a loss to the movement 'threat capacity'—something which had the power to stall developments before they started. Though even successful national actions (such as that at Doe Hill opencast in Yorkshire, which turned into a smorgasbord of criminal damage) did not result in local campaign numbers swelling, the threat capacity factor meant that local groups looked a whole lot scarier to the target involved. This fear was a factor in many developments not going ahead.

Attempts to go beyond individual land struggles to get 'at the root of the problem' usually meant taking a step backwards to occasional, media-centric events with no easily winnable immediate objectives. National direct action campaigns against the oil industry and ruling class land ownership both died early on.

A Shift from the Local to the Global

In 1997 a major shift of emphasis happened in the movement. At the time it wasn't so obvious, but after a while it would become seismic. The last massive eviction-based land struggle with multiple camps was the resistance at Manchester airport. This was near Newbury in scale and saw weeks of sieges and evictions, scraps in the trees, night-time fence pulling and underground tunnel occupations: "What Newbury did for the South, Manchester Airport did for the North in terms of attracting thousands of new people and cementing the network"[47]

Both sides of the conflict were now highly evolved, with complex delay tactics and well-trained state tunnel and tree specialists; on one level it became a clash of professionals. Manchester probably continues to have an impact on the speed at which the government is prepared to build new airports, but the campaign—unlike that against roads or quarries—was not easily reproducible.

After all, there wasn't any major expansions elsewhere happening at the time.

Once the evictions had finished, some moved onto smaller camps around the country—but many of those who remained active moved off site and onto new terrains of struggle. Britain's higgeldy-piggeldy mix of land occupations, office invasions and national actions were happening in a global context, and that context was changing. In 1997 two landmark events happened, one in Cambridgeshire and one in Southern Spain; both would shape the next period.

The Mexican Zapatista rebels had inspired strugglers around the world and in 1996 held an *encuentro* of movements for 'land, liberty and democracy' in their Lacandon rainforest home. A diverse mix of 6,000 turned up. The following year in 1997 a second global *encuentro* was held in Spain. Attended by many from Britain, this proposed the formation of the Peoples' Global Action (PGA). It seemed a new global movement was being born and EF!ers wanted in. At the same time it turned out that the 'globe' was soon coming to Britain.

"In the Autumn of 1997 a handful of activists started to talk about the May 1998 G8 summit. It seemed an opportunity not to be missed—world leaders meeting in the UK and the chance to kick-start the debate on globalisation."[48]

On the continent there was increasing resistance to genetic engineering; but in Britain, none. In the summer of '97 in a potato field somewhere in Cambridgeshire activists carried out the first sabotage of a GM test site in Britain. It was the first of hundreds to come.

Land Struggles—though still useful and active—would soon no longer be the main 'hook' the movement hung on. Camps would continue to be set up and many victories (and some defeats) were



yet to come but the radical ecological movement was definitely now going in a new direction. The Land Struggle Period had inspired, involved and trained thousands. Let's make no mistake—it played the major role in the cancellation of 500 new roads, numerous quarry/open cast expansions, and many house building projects. An amazing coming together of rebel subcultures (travellers, animal liberationists, EF!ers, city squatters, Welsh ex-miners, ravers, local FoE activists and the mad) forged the biggest wave of struggle for the land Industrial Britain had ever seen.

Consolidation and Global Resistance Period (1998—2002)

The spectacular growth of our action through much of the '90s was in part thanks to the clear ecological priority of the moment—stop roads. While many camps continued after Newbury against other developments, without the obvious and nationally unifying factor of major road-building the movement was a bit lost. We had never had to really think about what to defend before; the Department of Transport did that job for us. By moving into a period of Consolidation and Global Resistance we could pretty much sidestep this question—for a time anyway.

Tribal Gatherings

Throughout the '90s EF! gatherings were the main place that activists from all over got together to discuss and organise. While most that attended felt some allegiance to the EF! banner, many were not active in listed EF! groups and would not consider themselves 'EF!ers'. More, the gatherings were/are a place:

"...where people involved in radical ecological direct action—or those who want to be—get together for four days of time and space to talk, walk, share skills, learn, play, rant, find out what's



High street squat centres spread across the country, helping group outreach and consolidation. Open and accessible political spaces challenged popular perceptions: "ooh, I didn't know anarchists cleaned windows" said one little old lady to a sponge-wielding squatter.



on, find out what's next, live outside, strategise, hang out, incite, laugh and conspire."[49]

At the 1997 gathering near Glasgow, attended by around 400 people in total, it was obvious that with the roads programme massively scaled down, some major things were going to change. While there were many discussions throughout the week, these were some of the key points:

- The national roads programme would continue to create individual aberrations (such as Birmingham Northern Relief Road) but it would not provide so many sites for resistance nationwide.
- The road campaigns had been very successful as struggles, but had largely failed to leave solid groups or communities of activists behind after the 'direct action camp roadshow' moved on.
- Most of those present saw the radical ecological movement (and EF! in particular) as a network of revolutionaries, part of a global libertarian, ecological movement of movements.

Of course these things converged. Given that revolution wasn't looking immediate that week, as revolutionaries we had to be in it for 'the long haul'. The '90s had seen rapid growth, thousands had taken action but the movement, being relatively new, didn't have the infrastructure to support long term participation. With less major land struggles, less people would get involved in direct action. There was a high risk that established groups might entropy when activists got disillusioned. 'Non-aligned' individuals who had been active against roads, yet who hadn't become part of any network, might simply drift into reformist politics/work/drugs/mental asylums.[50]

Unsurprisingly the gathering didn't cook up any magical formulae, but it did throw together something passable. To tackle a drop in 'recruitment' concerted outreach would be done and to keep what activists the movement did have, local groups would consolidate. The fight against GM test sites was enthusiastically accepted as a new terrain of action.[51] The keynote evening talk on the weekend was done by a woman recently returned from the Zapatista autonomous territories. With the first congress of Peoples Global Action (PGA) coming up the following Spring it looked like despite the drop in *sizeable* confrontations on the land, we were in for an exciting few years...

Local Consolidation and Outreach

Squat cafés were nothing new, but 1998 saw a sudden proliferation around the country, as groups took over buildings in highly prominent locations, creating autonomous spaces where people interested in direct action could mix and conspire. In January, Manchester EF! opened up the first of many OKasional Cafés: "The squats were intended mainly to get political ideas across through socialising, as political groups in Manchester were quite inaccessible."[52] Similar projects were carried out in Brighton, London, North Wales, Leeds, Worthing and Nottingham. In Norwich a squat café was opened because the local group "thought it would be a good idea to do a squat centre as a form of outreach and as a group building exercise."[53] In this period 'direct action forums' sprung up all over—regular town meetings for mischief making miscreants. Both the forums and the centres were essentially attempts to bring together the diverse scenes of animal liberationists, class struggle anarchists, forest gardeners, EFlers and the like.

In parallel with this outreach, many radical eco circles were working to give themselves permanent bases and support mechanisms—needed for the long haul.[54] The number of towns with activist housing co-ops would increase substantially over the next four years. In the countryside quite a few communities of ex-road protesters would consolidate in bought or occupied land/housing from the Scottish Highlands, to Yorkshire and through to Devon. Others went onto the water in narrow boats. Following the last evictions at

Manchester airport dozens moved into the Hulme redbricks in inner-city Manchester. Other needed 'supports' such as vans, printing machines, a mobile action kitchen, prisoner support groups and propaganda distribution were slowly built up. This process of consolidating local direct action communities has paid a large part in making sure that the radical ecological movement hasn't been a one hit wonder: dying off after the victory against the roads programme. At its centre was the obvious truth; what's the point in trying to get more people involved if you can't keep those who already are?

On the Streets, In the Fields

This period saw an escalation of crowd action on the streets and covert sabotage in the fields: both types of action increasingly *seen* as part of a global struggle.

In February '98 the first ever meeting of the PGA was held in Geneva, home of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The congress, despite in-built problems, was an amazing coming together of over 300 people from movements across the globe:

"There's a woman from the Peruvian guerrilla group Tupac Amaru chatting to an Russian environmentalist. Nearby, activists from the Brazilian land squatters movement are doing some funky moves on the dancefloor with a guy from the Filipino seafarers union. Then some Brits brashly challenge a bunch of Maori indigenous activists to a drinking contest."[55]

Needless to say, the Brits lost. Ideas were swapped, arguments had and plans were laid to take action around two events coming up in May—the annual G8 meeting and the second ministerial of the WTO a day later. Back in Britain Reclaim the Streets parties were continuing around the country—Leeds' fourth RTS was typical:

"West Yorkshire coppers threatened to ruin the party before it had started, petulantly waving around side handled batons and vigorously wrestling the not-yet-inflated bouncy castle from the vigorously bouncy crowd. But after half an hour of unrest the police suddenly withdrew. Then a full on 600-strong party: bouncy castle, billowing banners, free food and techno... At the end of the afternoon everyone escorted the system safely away, whilst the police sent a few cheeky snatch squads into the crowd's dwindling remainder; one person was run down and then beaten with truncheons. 22 arrests."[56]

Meanwhile sabotage of GM sites was on the up. The first action against a test site may have been in '97, but by the end of '98, thirty-six had been done over. Most were destroyed by small groups acting at night—covert, anonymous, prepared and loving every minute. Others were carried out by hundreds in festive daytime trashings. GM sabotage by this time was becoming an international pursuit with actions throughout the 'Global South' and trashings in four other European countries. One of the best aspects of test-site sabotage is that it has been a lot less intimidating for people to do if they have had no experience of sabotage. After all, you don't need to know your way around a JCB engine (or an incendiary device) to work out how to dig up sugar beet. Alongside sabotage, other actions against GM proliferated, ranging from office occupations to the squatting of a (recently trashed) test site.

Activists were getting more sorted, as *Police Review* attested: "The protesters are ingenious, organised, articulate... They use inventive tactics to achieve their aims. Forces are having to deploy increasingly sophisticated techniques in the policing of environmental protests."[57] These 'sophisticated techniques' were often quite comical: "Undercover cops who'd set up a secret camera in a Tayside farmer's barn and parked up in their unmarked car, hoping to catch some of the Scottish folk who are decontaminating their country by removing genetic test crops, had to run for their lives when the car exhaust set the barn on fire. Both the barn and the car were destroyed."[58]

On May 16th the annual G8 meeting came to Britain. The last time it had been here in 1991, half a dozen EFlers had caused trouble. In 1998 things were a bit different—5,000 people paralysed central Birmingham in Britain's





contribution to the Global Street Party. Tripods, sound-systems and banners were all smuggled into the area.

"There were some great comic scenes of police incompetence, including them surrounding the small soundsystem (disguised as a family car) and escorting it into the middle of the party. They never once asked why the 'frightened family' inside wanted to escape by deliberately driving the wrong way around the roundabout towards the crowd. By the time they realised their mistake it was all too late... *the decks were under the travel blankets, boys*. What threw you off the scent? The baby seat, or the toys?"[59]

The party, populated by ranks of scary clowns and gurning ravers, lasted for hours, the normal strange combination of ruck and rave. Unamused, the leaders of the most powerful nations on earth fled the city for the day to a country manor. This being their showpiece, the day was a major victory.

Simultaneously other PGA affiliates were on the streets in the first International Day of Action. In India 200,000 peasant farmers called for the death of the WTO, in Brasilia, landless peasants and unemployed workers joined forces and 50,000 took to the streets. Across the world over 30 Reclaim the Streets parties took place, from Finland to Sydney, San Francisco to Toronto, Lyon to Berlin.



Following the Global Street Party, thousands of people from all over Europe bring fire to the streets of Geneva.

The world leaders flew off our island, no doubt with TV images of dancing rioters on their minds, thinking 'Ah now to genteel Geneva and wine by the lake at the WTO'. On arrival a huge (molotov) cocktail party welcomed them, the car of the WTO Director General was turned over and three days of heavy rioting followed. While the movement against power was always global, now it was networking and co-ordinating at a speed and depth rarely seen before.

Street parties and GM sabotage continued throughout the Summer. No longer content with holding one massive street party, RTS London organised two on the same day—in both North and South London. By now state counter-action was a real problem; following the M41 action, the RTS office had been raided and activists arrested for conspiracy. Despite the surveillance, the parties were both pulled off beautifully, with 4,000 in Tottenham and a similar number in Brixton.

"I remember two of us standing at Tottenham in the hot sun, getting drenched by a hose directed at us by a laughing local in a flat above. North London RTS had entirely outfoxed the cops and we knew so had South London. Three sound-systems, thousands of people —all blocking some of London's main arteries. It felt wonderful.



"A couple of nights before, seven oil seed rape test sites had been destroyed across the country on one night. I mean, both of us were usually pretty positive about the movement, yet if a couple of years before someone had predicted that one night multiple affinity groups would covertly hit seven different targets and that that would be almost immediately followed by the simultaneous take-over of two main streets in the capital; well both of us would have thought they were a nutter. Thinking about those actions and looking around us at the smiling crowd we both cracked up, our dreams were becoming reality, we were getting stronger, the music was thumping and the party even had tented pissoirs over the drains!"[60]

The Struggle is Global, The Struggle is Local

The PGA International Day of Action and the Global Street Party catalysed a wave of actions across the globe, unprecedented in recent times in terms of both scale and interconnection.

Hundreds of Indian farmers from PGA affiliated organisations travelled across Europe holding meetings and demos and carrying out anti-GM actions. Strange occasions proliferated. A squatted ex-test site in Essex hosted a visit from the farmers, one of which (to much applause) sang an old Indian song about killing the English. The farmers' organisations had destroyed test sites and a laboratory in India, so despite the huge cultural differences, this was a meeting of comrades. As one Indian put it: "Together we, the peasants, and you, the poor of Europe, will fight the multinationals with our sweat and together we will succeed in defeating them." That month nine test sites were destroyed in one night and a major research organisation pulled out of GM due to being constantly attacked by direct action.[61] The year would see over 50 experiments trashed.



Next came J18, bringing actions in 27 countries by over a hundred groups. Thousands closing down the centre of the capital in Nigeria, besieging Shell, and 12,000 storming the City of London—one of the hearts of the global financial system—were just two of the highlights. J18 in London was more successful than anyone could have imagined. Many offices were closed for the day in fear of the action. Many of those that weren't probably wished they had been. As the soundsytems played, a festive masked crowd (9,000 had been handed out) took advantage of their control of a slice of the city to dance and destroy.

"I ran into the LIFFE building [the Futures Exchange], smashing a few mirrors in the foyer and then looked round to see this masked up figure light a distress flare and hurl it up the escalators towards the offices. Fuck I thought, this is really full on."

"I was nicked... so I was in the police station... one cop came in drenched from head to toe in white paint. I really had to control myself to stop laughing—it looked like he'd been shat on by a huge bird."[62]



The HQ of the GM food giant Cargill had its foyer trashed as were the fronts of countless other banks, posh car showrooms and the like. The police were solidly defeated on the day. Above the crowd glittered beautiful banners, one proclaiming 'Resist, Refuse, Reclaim, Revolt'; and to back up the statement, hidden inside the banner were half a dozen broom handles—seen the next day on front covers being used against the cops to great effect. Another banner high above the street declared—'Our Resistance is as Global as Capital', with a huge list of places where actions were happening across the planet. June 18th, more than any event before it, saw the coming together of generations of radical opposition in a celebration of our power to create another world—unified around the planet by action.

The success of the first two days of action had now created a global cycle of inspiration. In November 1999, N30 saw more action. Timed once again to coincide with the meeting of the WTO, actions happened in Britain but undoubtedly the main event was in the US—Seattle. Tens of thousands brought the city to a standstill and in three incredible days forced the meeting to close. This was understandably seen as an amazing victory, especially considering the paucity and





assimilated nature of much of American opposition. The victory in America was mirrored in Britain by what many saw as a defeat. RTS London were now in a pickle. People expected them to organise big mass events, but apart from being very busy many were worried about the (violent) genie they had let out of the bottle on J18. N30 in London was a static rally, masks were not handed out. Despite the burning cop van (always a pretty sight) N30 London remained contained by the police, and to a certain extent by the organisers. For good or bad you can't turn the clock back—from now on any RTS style event in the capital would see massive policing and people coming expecting a major ruck.

Of course, resistance was not only centred around GM and the International Days of Action, or for that matter around internationalism; the local was still at the forefront for many. While the big days got the column inches, everywhere activists were fighting small local land struggles and increasingly getting stuck into community organising. In fact, in the twelve months following the Global Street Party, there were 34 direct action camps across the country.[63] Most of these were now a combination of tree-houses, benders and tunnels and set up against a diverse set of developments. While most were populated by what The Sun described as the 'tribe of treepeople', some were almost entirely done by locals—the type of people who before the 'road wars' might have simply written to their MP. Direct action was so big in the '90s that it was/is seen as a normal tactic for fighting projects.

This generalisation of direct action is one of the many hidden but hugely important victories the movement has had.

While there were no major technical innovations in camps over this period (Nine Ladies in 2002 looked pretty like Manchester Airport in 1997—but smaller) there were many victories. Simply the threat of a site stopped many developments and many camps had to 'tat down' after victories, usually against local authorities or developers. Even evicted camps sometimes resulted in victory. In London a camp ran for a year against a major leisure complex in Crystal Palace Park. The eviction came at the cost of over £1 million.

"Bailiffs, accompanied by around 350 police, moved on to the site and began removing the fifty people present from the various tree and bunker defences. The eviction was completed a record breaking 19 days later when the last two occupants came out of the bunker they had been in since the beginning of the eviction."[64]

This campaign won. The eviction cost, and the prospect of more trouble, freaked out the council no end. Though this period saw far less victories than the fight against the national roads programme, it saw many more victories where camps themselves actually won there and then. Despite this, without the unifying nature of the previous period (and with many activists both 'looking to the global' and not willing to go to sites), camps decreased in number.

Other factors also included increased police harassment (especially following J18) and of course 'defeat through victory'. In the South Downs during this time, two major developments, the Hastings Bypass and a house building project in Peacehaven[65] were both halted (for now) after direct action pledges were launched. Many other groups have been in this situation, which, while a cause for jubilation, has meant that 'the culture of camps' has suffered set-backs while its spectre wins victories. The year and a half between July '99 and January '01 saw only 10 camps operate, a quarter of the number that had been active in the previous year and a half. Since January '02 there have never been more than four ecological direct action camps at any given time.

Other local struggles such as those against casualised workplaces or for access to the land have continued, never though really become period-setting events.[66] One major area that many have



A cherry picker hoists an activist out of the trees at Crystal Palace. The development was shelved—just one of many of the victories on the land in this period.

moved into—often at the same time as night-time sabotage and irregular 'big days out'—has been community organising. From helping run women's refuges and self defence, to doing ecological education with kids and sorting out local food projects, this work has been an important extension of direct action.[67] While these actions don't directly defend ecologies they (hopefully) work to grow libertarian and ecological tendencies in society, an integral part of the revolutionary process.[68]

Guerrilla Gardening

The next PGA International Day of Action was Mayday 2000. Once again there were actions all over the globe. Across Britain events happened in quite a few established 'activist towns', many very successfully; unfortunately overshadowing them was the mess that was the London 'Guerrilla Gardening' event.

The idea of doing another big national action was mooted at an EF! gathering in Oxford the previous winter—nearly everyone thought it a terrible concept. The state would massively prepare, the number of imprisoned activists would no doubt increase. As has been argued elsewhere,[69] Mayday 2000—and most of its follow ups—were essentially attempts to copy J18 minus the street violence and sound-systems.

J18 had come from a momentum built up by street parties and anti-road protests, and it worked in part because it involved groups all over the country and had the element of surprise. As with national EF! actions after Whatley, the police were once bitten, twice shy. Containment of the crowd by both the cops, and in part by the organisers, created what most saw as both a rubbish party and a rubbish riot. Up until this event there had



A doomed tree in a sterile wasteland

always been quite a strong 'working relationship' between radical eco groups nationwide and activists in London. Following Mayday this would sadly decrease.

Ironically, the symbolic 'guerrilla gardening' at Parliament Square only succeeded in reminding activists across the country why they liked actual guerrilla action, like covert GM sabotage; and actual gardening, on their allotments. The next year's London Mayday was hardly better. The double whammy of N30 followed by Mayday resulted in RTS London losing its 'great party' reputation, at the same time as street parties were happening less and less regularly across the country.

Meanwhile actions against GM continued to increase in scale, some involving up to 800 people. The vast majority, however, continued to be



Many more were jailed after the minor fracas on Mayday than on the far more destructive and festive J18.





carried out covertly at night. Globally, GM sabotage was now spreading even more. Across the world shadows in the moonlight were razing GM crops trials to the ground. Spades, sticks, scythes, sickles and fire brought in the harvest. Doors splintered as labs were broken into. Pies were aimed at the arrogance of the powerful. Harassment and disruption greeted the biotech industry wherever it gathered. The deputy head of the American Treasury said in a statement to the Senate that the campaign against genetic engineering in Europe "is the greatest block to global economic liberalisation presently in existence."

The actions were hugely successful in frightening institutions into not extending GM research and forcing many supermarkets to withdraw from pushing GM food. Sadly though, 'pure research' was rarely attacked in Britain. Apart from the major successes the campaign achieved/is achieving, GM sabotage schooled hundreds in covert cell-structured sabotage—a capacity which will no doubt become ever more useful.

Channel Hopping

Given the decrease in day-to-day struggle and the failure of the London street actions, there was a sharp turn towards international riot tourism. The biggest 'workshops' at the 2000 EF! Summer gathering were for those preparing to go to the next meeting of the World Bank and the IMF in Prague. Hundreds went from Britain, experiencing an exciting range of success and failure.

Divisions over violence and symbolism that were always present in the British scene were thrown into relief by the extremes of the situation. Some joined the street-fighting international black block, others (both pro- and anti- violent attacks on the summit), formed together in the Pink and Silver Block. This 'Barmy Army' was a contradictory group of people with quite divergent views, pulled together by a desire for 'national unity'. Diversity in this case, was definitely NOT strength. Putting the problems aside (dealt with well elsewhere[70]), Prague was immensely inspiring. Thousands from



all over Europe converged and forced the conferences to close early, creating a surreal, almost civil war atmosphere. Though the crowds failed to break into the conference, they shattered the desire of future cities to host these events. Previously, a visit from one of these august ruling class bodies was the dream of any town bureaucrat or politician—now it was their nightmare.

The following year, many more from the movement would go to Genoa in Italy where an unparalleled number of people on the street would clash with the state (and sometimes each other). Many also went to the anti-summit actions in Scandinavia, Switzerland and France. Only three years after the Global Street Party and the riot in Geneva started the wave of summit actions, the global elite was having to organise massive defence operations to stay safe behind their barricades. This wave of action not only inspired thousands, and spread the wildfire of resistance worldwide, it also forced many of these meetings to cut down the length of their events, move to ever less accessible fortresses and in some cases cancel their roving showcases all together.[71]

Beyond the big street spectaculars many British activists were increasingly spending time abroad, inspired by the often more up-for-it squatting scenes. This acted as a further drain on the movement, but it also brought new experiences into 'the collective mind', aided future action, made real human links across borders and just as importantly gave some amazing moments to those involved. The move to the territory of other nations, temporary for most, comes as no surprise in a period defined by its internationalism.

International Solidarity

Back in Britain, the radical ecological scene was increasingly involved in solidarity with (largely 'Third World') groups abroad. As the Malaysia campaign showed, this had always been a major part of the movement. Following the '95 EF! gathering, activists invaded a factory that built Hawk aircraft and hoisted the East Timorese flag. Throughout the land struggle period, office actions, AGM actions, embassy blockades, petrol station pickets and home visits to corporate directors had all been used to support the Ogoni/Ijaw struggle in Nigeria and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army in Papua New Guinea. Yet in this period solidarity with struggling communities beyond the capitalist core became a much bigger part of the movement. This was part and parcel of the shift in emphasis towards people seeing the radical ecological movement as part of a global revolutionary movement.

On the first business day of 1999, three groups barricaded themselves into two senior management offices and the corporate library in Shell-Mex House in London.

"January 4th was Ogoni Day, celebrated since Shell was forced out of Ogoni through massive resistance. The concerned individuals seized three key locations in the building, some of which had a pleasing view of Waterloo bridge and the banner being hung across—by others—reading 'Shell: Filthy Thieving Murderers.'"[72]

In 1999 the keynote speech at the EF! Summer gathering was made by a visiting Papuan tribesman from the OPM. His inspirational talk resulted in actions across the country that Autumn against various corporations involved. Sporadic actions would continue in solidarity with this South Pacific struggle, as well as financial support for refugees and medical aid for prisoners, both actions which literally kept people alive.

Less theory, it was more lived experience abroad that inspired solidarity work back at home. By 2001, most towns listed with EF! groups had at least one returnee from the jungles of the Mexican South West. In 2001 a steady stream of activists going to Palestine started, many doing valuable on-the-ground solidarity work in the heat of the second Intifada—and the Israeli crackdown.

Those returning from abroad wanted to 'bring the war home' with a range of actions, speaking tours and fundraising pushes. Of course GM actions are also in part solidarity actions with Third World peasants. From benefit gigs to demos at the Argentinian embassy—solidarity work was increasingly filling the gap a lack of land struggles left behind.

Then and Now

This decade-long retrospective ends at the end of 2001. I did think of extending it when this issue of *Do or Die* became ever later and later but I





In the Peak District, the Nine Ladies camps have weathered three winters, deterred new quarries, and kept camp culture alive.

thought better of it for a number of reasons. Firstly it seemed a neat end point; secondly much of this issue of *Do or Die* covers the next year and a half to Summer 2003; and thirdly Part Two of this article was released in January 2002 and some of what the movement has engaged in since then has been, at least partially, as a result of its suggestions. For good or bad I'll leave it to others to use hindsight to judge whether some proposals were blind alleys or blinding campaigns. To analyse them here would be definitely to put the cart before the horse.

Nevertheless, I'll say a little about where we find ourselves. Looking at the first *EF! AU* of 2002, it seems strange, slightly worrying, but also inspiring that 10 years on there is an obvious continuity of action through the decade: a new protest site, night-time sabotage actions, actions against summits, anti-war demos. The centre spread is a briefing for the campaign to defend Northern peat bogs, a struggle from right back in 1991 (and further) that re-started in 2001 and is covered elsewhere in this issue.

In a way the last year or so has reminded me of the film *Back to the Future* (now I'm showing my age); not only was the peat campaign back up and running, but also there was an anti-road gathering in Nottingham, and actions were announced to aid tribal groups in the Pacific.

There are now far fewer EF! groups listed than in the mid '90s, and the travelling culture many site activists came from has been largely destroyed by state force and drugs. Nevertheless, the radical ecological movement is in a surprisingly healthy state and has succeeded in not being assimilated into the mainstream. Ten years on and we're still more likely to be interviewed by the police than a marketing consult or academic (remember to say "No Comment" to all three!). The movement is still active and still raw. Many places continue to be saved by ecological direct action, our threat potential still puts the willies up developers, and people are still getting involved and inspired.

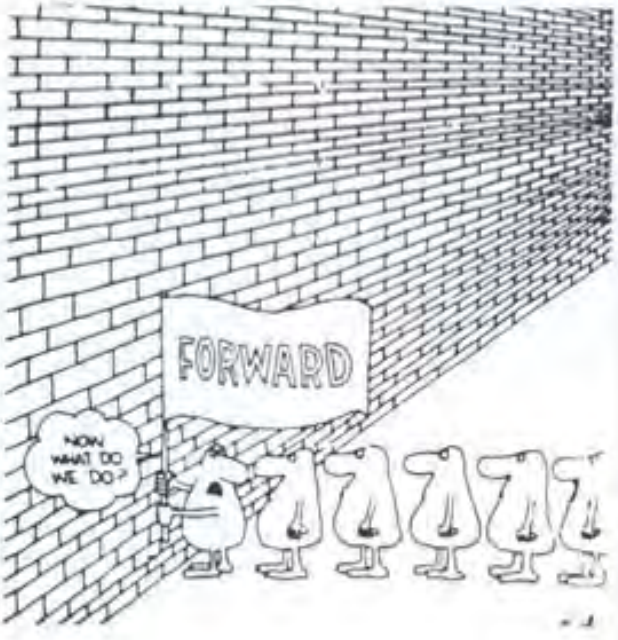
Our gathering this year will probably be attended by around 350-400 in total—the same kind of number it has been since 1996. While we don't want to build up the movement like a Leninist party—'more members, please more members'—the fact that we have stayed at this number despite catalysing situations of struggle involving thousands should give us some pause for thought.

Two prime contradictions have haunted the radical ecological resistance on this island. British EF! was born as a wilderness defence movement with no wilderness, and evolved into a network of revolutionaries in non-revolutionary times. The process of consolidation that was started in 1997 enabled radical ecological circles to survive the slowdown of domestic land struggles after the victory against national roadbuilding. This process combined with the upsurge in 'global resistance' enabled us in part to side-step the questions posed by the above contradictions.

If we want to see the wildlands defended and any chance of libertarian, ecological (r)evolution increase then practical action is needed. Much is already underway, but more is needed and without a clear strategy we are bound to fail. 'Part Two: The Four Tasks' aims to provide some pointers towards a unified strategy and attempt to resolve, or at least overcome, some of the contradictions of our movement.

On a personal note the 'Ten years of radical ecological action' documented here have been immensely inspiring to me. It's been an honour to stand on the frontlines (as well as lounge about in lounges) with some lovely, brave, insightful and amazing people.

Thank you.★



Notes

1) *The Ecologist*, Vol. 2, No. 12, December 1972
2) *Eco-Warriors* by Rik Scarce, (ISBN 0 9622683 3 X), p. 103
3) *Green Rage*, Christopher Manes, p. 65
4) Speech by Dave Foreman, Grand Canyon, 7/7/87
5) *FoE Newsletter* No. 1, Jan 1972
6) While FoE and GP remain centrist, both groups increasingly try to engage their membership AS activists not just as supporters. This, as many of their staff admit, is due to the influence of the '90s land struggles.
7) A ridiculous statement I admit—but true!
8) *Direct Action Video*, Oxford EF!
9) 'Militancy', *FoE Newsletter*, No. 10, Oct 1972
10) *EF! Action Update*, No. 3
11) *Ibid.*
12) Noticibly South Somerset EF! who organised the early Whatley Quarry actions.
13) This description is no joke—one described herself on more than one occasion as 'the queen of the tribe'!
14) Dept of Transport Affidavit concerning May 1st 1993
15) 'Welcome Back Twyford Six, *Do or Die* No. 3, p. 45
16) 'Car Chases, Sabotage and Arthur Dent! Twyford Diary', Pt. 2, *Do or Die*, No. 3, p. 21
17) *Ibid.*, p. 22
18) 'Skye Campaign Soaked in Sea of Anger', *Do or Die*, No. 3, p. 11
19) *EF! Action Update*, No. 5
20) 'For Flapjack and Mother Earth: Earth Warriors At Jesmond Dene', www.eco-action.org/dt/jesmond.html
21) *Ibid.*
22) 'News From The Autonomous Zones', *Do or Die* No. 4, p. 21
23) *Ibid.*, p. 22
24) *Ibid.*, p. 23
25) These were not police smear stories. There was only a few sentences ever mentioning them and no tabloid 'eco-terrorist' horror stories. If anything the state probably enforced a 'quieting strategy' on the situation as they did to the ALF at its height of support.
26) *Copse: The Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting* by Kate Evans, (ISBN 0 9532674 07), p. 32
27) *EF! Action Update*, No. 9
28) *Copse*, p. 20
29) 'Leadenham', *Do or Die* No. 4, p. 6
30) Fash threatened a number of sites through the '90s. At Jesmond they were chased off, running for their lives (which is what they do best)—mostly they didn't even turn up (with the one major exception of the M11). Far more dangerous were random individual loonies. Arson attacks on camps happened right from the beginning—both at Twyford and the M11. Of course the police paid little notice. On one occasion when some posh student arsonists were nicked at Newbury (after they had put a petrol bomb through a truck window and into a sleeping child's bedroom) they got off—the magistrates viewed them as drunken pranksters.
31) *Daily Post* (North Wales), 9/1/94
32) *Green Anarchist* was undoubtedly a great influence on this period. One big gripe though—again and again one would read *GA* reports of actions which said the Earth Liberation Front had done this or that. Some may have been true but most of these claimed actions were often simply done by crowds or 'camp warparties'. In fact on a number of occasions people have been arrested for criminal damage only to read later in *GA* that 'the ELF' had carried out their action. This is both dishonest and dangerous.
33) Jonathan Dimbelby at Solsbury Hill for instance.
34) *Construction News*
35) 'The Battle For Hyde Park: Ruffians, Radicals and Ravers, 1855-1994', (Practical History)
36) 'CJB: Business As Usual', *EF! Action Update*, No. 12
37) *Schnews*, No. 3
38) 'London Regional Report', *Do or Die*, No. 5, p. 23
39) *Ibid.*, p. 25
40) 'Meanwhile Down in the West-Country', *Do or Die*, No. 5, p. 18
41) 'It's (Not Really That) Grim Up North!', *Do or Die*, No. 5, p. 12
42) *EF! Action Update*, No. 23
43) Thames Valley Police Press Release 11/11/96
44) *Copse*, p. 105
45) *There's A Riot Going On* by Merrick (Godhaven Press)
46) 'Direct Action, Six Years Down the Line', *Do or Die*, No. 7, p. 1
47) *EF! Action Update*, No. 40
48) *Global Street Party—Birmingham and the G8*, p. 3
49) EF! Summer Gathering 2003 leaflet.
50) This reference to Mental Asylums is no joke—over a dozen people were sectioned from Newbury alone, prompting the setting up of the 'Head State Support Group'. Land Struggles had been immensely therapeutic for many, but for some they became the catalyst for mental breakdown. On sites the intense connection to other people and the land was amazing. Feeling the land being ripped all around you and having your community broken up was unbearable for many. Some would have been broken by industry either way, but it was the movement's duty to provide support for those who were asked to risk all. It mostly failed in that duty.
51) It's worth pointing out that EF! is a network of autonomous groups and individuals. Gatherings can be the place where people decide what *they* are going to do, but they cannot decide what others should or shouldn't do. After a number of bad experiences with people representing the movement in outside publications and stating that 'EF! has said the...' it was decided that gatherings would mostly not distribute written reports—too often the writer's own political dogma misrepresented the consensus—or lack of one. Here, I am trying to sum up some of the points the '97 gathering came up with in consensus. I have asked around to check that my memory is correct, but I may too have clouded the reality of the discussion with the fog of my own particular dogma. I apologise if this is so.
52) 'Autonomous Spaces', *Do or Die* No. 6, p. 130
53) *Ibid.*
54) Fears that the giro checks would soon stop arriving, bringing an end to the dole autonomy that, along with student grants and crime, had been the main economic backbone of movements here for generations was also a major factor. Resistance to the introduction of the Jobseekers Allowance and the New Deal did occur—but with most claimants not joining in with collective efforts to repel the squeeze, the campaign was doomed. By individualising their problem people were collectively defeated.
55) *Schnews*, No. 156
56) *Schnews*, No. 167
57) *Police Review*, quoted in 'Surveillance Watch', *Schnews Survival Handbook*
58) *EF! Action Update*, No. 50
59) *Global Street Party: Birmingham and the G8* pamphlet.
60) The reference—me and a mate on a glorious day!
61) *EF! Action Update*, No. 59
62) 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting Capital and Smashing the State', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 20
63) 'Carry on Camping', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 148
64) *EF! Action Update*, No. 57
65) *EF! Action Update*, No. 48
66) For a short while it looked like The Land Is Ours might successfully set off a wave of action around the country. However the entrenched nature of the problem and the spectacular, media-centric style of some of the main 'occupations' cut that possibility short.
67) There is always a danger here of merely becoming unpaid social workers. For too many in the past community organising has been a way back into the mainstream. That this is a danger should not stop people doing these bread and butter activities—but should remind us to be ever vigilant against assimilation.
68) One argument put forward for community organising over ecological defence, is that only the working class can defeat capitalism so 'real work' needs to be done 'in' the working class to strengthen 'it' and radicalise it. Apart from the obvious patronising missionary attitude this view ignores the fact that the Land Struggle Period saw large actions with and by working class communities across the country; a level of joint action most traditional class struggle anarchos could only dream of. While many of the places '90s land struggles happened in were 'Tory shires' others were in the old 'barracks of the labour movement'—the East End, South Wales, Glasgow, inner-city Manchester and the Yorkshire mining areas!
69) For a good analysis of this debacle see—'May Day Guerrilla? Gardening?', *Do or Die* No. 9, p. 69
70) 'Here Comes the Barmy Army!', *Do or Die* No. 9, p. 12
71) This years EU summit in Greece is likely to be the last outside of the EU Fortress in Brussels.
72) *EF! Action Update*, No. 55



Part Two: The Four Tasks

In Part One we looked at some of radical ecology's recent history; now it's time to stop looking back and start looking forward. I called Part One 'Recent Pre-History' because the past is prologue. An understanding of our own movement's evolution so far is essential when discussing in which direction(s) we want to evolve.

For if we are going to help catalyse a movement that can "confront, stop and eventually reverse the forces responsible for the destruction of the earth and its inhabitants," we are going to need good strategy.

We live in important times. This moment does not allow us much margin of error.

This is an attempt to solidify my ideas on our strategy and put them across in a digestible form. Though I am doing the typing and the mental filing, the ideas are by no means mine alone. Some are very common in our circles, in the last few years having reached the point of cross-group consensus. I will state them nonetheless as it's useful for those who've recently entered our arcane world, who may not know the subtext. They are also worth clarifying for those of us whose minds, filled with the subtext, become murkier every day. Many of the ideas are not in any way cross-group consensus. They are offered up and can be treated as delicacies or dogfood depending on your taste.

This is a strategy document written to promote discussion in Britain's radical ecological direct action movement. Much of it may be useful for people from other circles and countries. BUT it is NOT an attempt to build some overriding strategy for 'the emerging global resistance' or any similar abstraction. While it may be useful for readers in the global North, I reckon it's largely out of context in the Majority World. Even within Western Europe, culture, terrains of struggle and movements vary a lot. It's worth reiterating the obvious. Strategy should be informed by the global context but primarily shaped by the local conditions.

A Small Editorial Note

'Part Two: The Four Tasks' was pre-published for the EF! Winter Moot in 2002 where 150 copies were given out free. I did this for two reasons. Firstly I wanted to get feedback with an aim to improvement, and secondly I feared that *DoD* No. 10 would not come out for months... or years. *DoD* No. 10 came out 17 months later and I got quite a lot of wise responses. Many of those thoughts from good warriors and friends have been incorporated in the re-written text printed here. In large part this project, despite its meglomaniacal undertones, was always a collective effort—a bringing together of many of the strands that bind us together as movements. The many helpful suggestions, criticisms and funny chats that resulted have made it all the more so.

As a strategy document it is 'of its time' more that most writings, maybe. As you are reading this well over a year after it was written, action has moved on. One glaring example is the peat campaign, mentioned as an embryonic campaign, when in fact it has now succeeded in most of its original objectives. Some recommendations in this 'Part Two' have been taken up, others ignored. While some increased activity in some areas may seem—in hindsight—a result of this text, it would mostly be more true to see the four tasks as mirroring existing trends, not necessarily inspiring them. In some places I have updated the text to take consideration of this time lag, mostly though I have just left the text unchanged with the occasional [editorial intermission].

I

Growing Counter-Cultures



We need to catalyse living, loving, fighting counter-cultures that can sustain rebellion across generations. In both collective struggle and our everyday lives we must try to live our ecological and libertarian principles. Our counter-cultures must be glimmers of ecological anarchy—fertiliser for the growth of collective imagination. Fulfilling this task is what will enable the others to be fulfilled over the long haul. The counter-cultures must be bases from which to carry out 'thumb in the dam' actions and give support to rebellions beyond the core. In times of crisis they should act decisively against authoritarian groups. The counter-culture's eventual aim should be total social transcendence—(r)evolution.

"[An anarchist society] can hardly come about when isolated groups follow a policy of resistance for the sake of resistance. Unless we can first prove that anarchism works through creating libertarian communities, the critical level of support that we need will never materialise, for the mass of workers will otherwise continue to be influenced by authoritarian propaganda..."

"[One] reason for developing a libertarian social and work structure is that it is a bulwark against authoritarian groups when the upheaval comes. If we have not yet learnt the lessons of the Russian and Spanish revolutions when the communists savagely attacked the freedom of anarchism, then we do not deserve to survive as a movement. We start at a severe disadvantage vis-à-vis our authoritarian 'comrades', and they will easily destroy us again unless the shoots of libertarianism are already pushing through the crumbling remains of the old society."

—Stuart Christie, *Towards A Citizens Militia*.

Map Reading in the Social Desert

Things are going to shit. They have been for a long while (10,000 years) but now it's getting really serious. Social solidarity is imploding and ecological systems are being ravaged as never before. What is needed is an entire change of direction for global human society. We need to find each other and together find our way back to nature.

We must totally dismantle the technological web of slavery and dependence that we have been born into. For the earth's remaining forests to stay up, the world's factories have to come down. To do this we will have to take on the most murderous ruling classes ever to disgrace the earth.

Of course, within the realm of contemporary politics, these solutions are not only unrealistic, but also unintelligible. That hardly matters. The biological meltdown is fast making the logic of industrial society irrelevant.

Reformist manoeuvres in this context resemble rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Global ecological and libertarian revolution, though incredibly unlikely, is a far more realistic strategy for defeating apocalypse and global slavery than recycling or voting for the Socialist Alliance.

A consensus in plenary at the 1997 EF! Gathering was that 'the movement' saw itself as an ecological revolutionary network.[1] This is a considerable change from the past radical ecological view that sees no hope for positive social change this side of industrial collapse.



So, if we set ourselves the task of advancing (r)evolution here in the core, how are we going to go about it? We are talking vast change here. Lefties just want to change the rules of the game leaving hierarchy, ideology and industry intact. We want to stop the game and start living. While they want to build workers power (power for lefty ex-students mostly) we want to destroy power and abolish work. This is a massive (though not a mass[2]) undertaking.

The mythical Revolution is not something that will just happen suddenly one day after we've polished some ideology long enough. (R)evolution is a process of individuals and collectives reclaiming what has been taken from us, rediscovering our power and creativity together. Sometimes gradually, sometimes in huge leaps during times of greater struggle.

Expand the Cultural Oases

"If we are to actually change things then there are some things we have to do: We have to build our own economic, justice and social systems. We have to do this all the while maintaining an equal emphasis towards destroying the existing culture and its fucked up systems"—*Making Punk A Threat Again*[3]

(R)evolution is about practical change in everyday life, class consciousness, solidarity, love and imagination.

(R)evolution is the evolutionary process of the creation of new worlds.

Ecological direct action could be just an exciting holiday of autonomy between leaving school and entering the world of work and parenting. If that's all it ends up being, then it has still given me and thousands of others some of the most beautiful, exhilarating and just plain weird moments in our lives.

However if we really want to kick this system in and grow a new world we have got to build a multigenerational culture that can sustain us for the long haul.

In growing ecological libertarian counter-cultures it is worth looking at past experiences of anarchist (r)evolution. Probably the best example in the West remains that of the historical Spanish anarchist movement.

The Spanish Anarchist Counter-Society

Us anarchists have a tendency to fetishise Spain 1936. In the non-insurrectionary times that we live, looking back to a 'golden age of anarchism' can seriously get in the way of analysing and struggling in the here and now. We are a long way off from the cataclysm and clashes of the Spanish civil war. However there is a lot to learn from the Spanish experience—less in the trenches of Aragon and more in the movement that gave them birth.

A simplistic view sees the Spanish revolution as starting in 1936 and ending with Franco's victory. In fact the (r)evolution had started decades before. Franco's attempted *coup d'etat* and the ensuing civil war was the rich's (eventually successful) attempt to stall the growth of a culture that was reaching transcendent levels in many parts of Spain. Increasingly class conscious and combatative workers organising in (largely) anarchist unions were immersed in a multigenerational culture which not only opposed, but replaced, much of Spain's state/church backed infrastructure; they were maturing into a movement that given a few more years, would have been almost impossible to destroy. In learning about the movement that Franco had to unleash a sea of blood to wash away we can see in part what needs to be done in our own times.

In his brilliant book about the pre-civil war anarchist movement Murray Bookchin has this to say:

"The Spanish anarchists left behind them a tangible reality that has considerable relevance for social radicalism today. Their movements 'heroic years' 1868-1936 were marked by a fascinating process of experimentation... [They] had evolved an astonishingly well organised subculture within Spanish society that fostered enormous freedom of action..."[4]

"What these Spanish anarchists aimed for, in effect, was a 'counter-society' to the old one. It is easy to mistake this for an 'alternate society', one that would co-exist with capitalism as an enclave of purity and freedom, however, nothing could be further from the truth. The Spanish anarchists expressly rejected the concept of an 'alternate society' with its hope of peaceful reconstruction and its privileged position in a world of general misery... Since social or personal freedom could not be acquired within the established order, they viewed a 'countersociety' as terrain in which to remake themselves into revolutionaries and remove their interests from any stake in bourgeois society... The bureaucracy, state, and church were the anarchists mortal enemies; any voluntary dealings with these institutions were to be avoided. Children were sent to libertarian or union schools."

"Wherever the [anarchist movement] had a substantial following it established *Centro Obreros*, which functioned not merely as union headquarters but as cultural centres. Depending upon its resources, the *Centro Obrero* might provide literature, books, classes, and meeting halls for discussion on a wide variety of subjects. This institution exercised a profound influence on the personal life of the worker who belonged to anarchist influenced unions... Ricardo Mella recalls Seville "with its enormous *Centro Obrero*, capable of holding thousands of people."[5]

"Far more important than the episodic revolutionary uprisings, individual atentados [assassination of bosses or bosses men], or the daring escapes of small circles of comrades was the ability of the Spanish anarchists to patiently knit together highly independent groups (united by 'social conviviality' as well as by social views) into sizeable, coherent organisations, to coordinate them into effective social forces when crises emerged, and to develop an informed mode of spontaneity that fuelled the most valuable traits of group discipline with personal initiative."

"Out of this process emerged an organic community and a sense of mutual aid unequalled by any workers movement of that era."[6]

We are in a very different situation today and we are quite different people. The Spanish counter-culture was an expression of a transitional class captivated by an ideal that reflected its rural communal past and its harrowing social present.[7] Yet we should take inspiration and practical guidance from their example.

In Britain a similar—but significantly different—working-class culture of mutual aid grew in nineteenth-century industrial communities. This culture sought to resist the intrusions of an industrial system into every aspect of people's lives and was the domestic flipside of defensive workplace struggles.

People endeavoured to mitigate for each other visitations of sickness, the death of children, the perishing of women in childbirth and a continuing inadequacy of basic resources. Much of this was the work of women, and was possible thorough networks of kinship and neighbourhood, as well as the associations in the workplace, through trade unions, co-operative societies, burial clubs and friendly societies.

Many radicals saw in this lived working class solidarity culture an embryo of a non-capitalist society, but thanks to industry and ideology it never embraced libertarian insurrectionry fervour like its Spanish relative; in fact, the opposite. Despite—or perhaps because of—the monumental mistakes made, we can learn a lot from the still warm corpse of the British labour movement.

Love's Labours Lost

In Britain—birth place of industry—the transitional class came much earlier than elsewhere. Defeated in a bitter class struggle Britain's poor had internalised industrial logic and embraced social democratic ideas even in the midst of continuing struggle. The working class (under significant influence from marxist socialists) created the hopelessly reformist Labour movement which in turn institutionalised the culture of working class mutual aid in the welfare state.

Thus whereas Spanish working class solidarity grew anarchist (r)evolution and the CNT, British working class solidarity produced the welfare state and the Labour Party. The post war 'triumph' of the labour movement and the founding of the welfare state was the near total subsumption of the working class by the state, not the other way round as lefties choose to believe.

The welfare state produced a security for capitalism which enabled it to set out on a period of expansion such as had not been seen since the exuberance of the early nineteenth century. An expansion which is bringing life to the brink.

The inter-generational culture of the British labour movement has now been destroyed over the last 20 years or so by Thatcherism/ Neoliberalism. With the decimation of heavy industry and the restructuring of the economy most of the old strongholds of the British workers movement no longer exist—e.g. mining, shipbuilding, the docks and the nationalised industries.

Its continuation into the relatively recent past underlines what many libertarians have pointed out. Under the veneer of illusory command it is voluntary co-operation, mutual aid, nurturing, human solidarity and love that keeps society from imploding. Here though we are concerned with something grander than mere survival—living free.

30 Years of Temporary Counter-Cultures

Beyond the 'First World' significant counter-cultures are arising. Yet here in the capitalist core since the 'proletarian glory days' there have been no (r)evolutionary counter cultures on the kind of seismic scale that evolved in Spain. This is no surprise given that the 'class in transition' that defended the barricades of Paris, Barcelona and Kronstadt is largely no longer found in the core.

Since the '60s upheaval Britain has seen quite number of anarchist/ecological counter-cultures form then dissipate through inertia, state repression, or simply assimilation. These autonomous cultures—squatting, feminism, travelling, punk, back to the land, ecological direct action camps, animal liberation, anarchism etc.—have all predominantly been youth movements operating in the heady (and vanishing) space of dole autonomy.

They have remained temporary because they have largely been generational: failing to either accommodate the changing needs of their ageing members or having any ability to involve younger generations. The one major exception has been travelling which has evolved into a multigenerational culture—there are now three generations of 'new travellers' on the road together. Unfortunately travellers have suffered more state repression then anyone—resulting in a mass exodus from Britain of tens of thousands.

The temporary nature of these counter-cultures—though not invalidating them—does significantly limit their scope from a (r)evolutionary perspective. The struggle then is to first join the dots, link up these generations of libertarians by creating multigenerational counter-cultures.

To a certain extent we have been going down this road for a few years. The inspiring actions of the '90s have brought many different age ranges together. Yet our radical ecological circles still remain very much 'Club 18-30'. [I first wrote the previous sentence around four years ago and it may be truer now to say 'Club 21-33'! Rather worrying considering the next paragraph... ho hum.]

The next few years will show whether our movement will share the fate of the Trots (who, bar students, are mostly in their late 40s having been in their 20s in the '60/'70s upsurge)—an isolated political generation moving through time shrinking with every year.

The creation of multi-generational counter-cultures is essential simply from the perspective of our network survival.

Opening Up Space

More than anything else we need to open up space for (r)evolution to grow. Keeping ourselves undigested within the bowels of the system is going to be difficult. Later in Task II I will talk about biological meltdown and some of the steps we must take to combat it. Yet just as civilisation is destroying nature all over the globe so too it is haemorrhaging our internal nature. ("The best kept state secret is the misery of everyday life."—Raoul Vaneigem) This ever speeding emotional meltdown is resulting in an epidemic of depression, self-harm and violence. Without hope the oppressed will always turn their violence on themselves and each other. Ever more people in the core are turning to damaging pseudo-escapism; alcoholism, drug addiction and even religion are all on the rise.

These panaceas only further poison society. Those without hope but also without the ability to fool themselves turn in larger numbers to an escapism that is in no way pseudo—suicide.

"Suicide is now the single biggest killer of men under 35... The rate—three times that of women of the same age—has nearly doubled since 1971. Working class men are at particular risk, with suicide rates four times those of men in professional occupations... The Samaritans believe the figures could be much worse as examination of road-traffic accidents involving just one driver suggests that some of them may well have been deliberate."[8] Although women—especially the young—lag behind men as 'successful' suicides, they are way ahead when it comes to attempts.



South Downs Mass Trespass: Radical ramblers on a subversive stroll across stolen land. Illegal picnics liberate space for those otherwise stuck in the city. Kids play as plans are plotted over packed lunches.

Speaking personally I have already lost too many friends and comrades to death, depression and drugs. Many of these were great warriors and brave, good people who shone during the '90s land struggles. But after these struggles and the culture it spawned ended, their shield from the world was gone. Soon after, so were many of them—if not in body then in spirit. I believe that for quite a few the temporary counter-culture of land struggle put off for years their NOT inevitable descent. It is from this that I take the belief that the growth of counter-cultures can go some way to re-instilling—and sustaining—hope and authentic human behaviour. Yet if we are to make these cultures (at least Semi-) Permanent Autonomous Zones then we need radical spaces and communities that will hold. To a large extent we have already started building (well, buying or breaking into mostly) the structures we need:

Communes: Housing co-ops, traveller sites, big shared houses, farms, squats, direct action camps and land projects.

Social Centres: Squats, members clubs, resource centres.

Our strength is in our ability to take action ourselves and by doing so inspire others to take action. To a large extent both the Land Struggle Period and the Global Resitance Period were catalysed initially by a very small number of people. Our network's strategy has been one of empowering others to replicate our activity rather than expand ourselves as such. It is both a duty and a pleasure to live our ecological and libertarian principles and if we do so as coherently and consistently as possible I believe it is quite infectious. Most of us, after all, got hooked on the laughs and commitment of others.

While counter-cultures should act as partial sanctuaries we should never forget the importance of defence through attack. In the words of the SPK (the '70s armed German psychological 'self-help group'): "Civilisation: This sick society has made us sick. Let us strike a death blow at this sick society."

Changing Change

Too often radicals decry others' inability to face up to the desperate need for change. A few years back Jeremy Seabrook interviewed many radicals in an attempt to find the root of *their* failure to change society:

"We were becoming uneasy about the recurring theme that 'people must change'. We began to wonder if the reason why the parties advocating radical change were so unsuccessful was because they were striking against the resistance of people who had changed, who had been compelled to change, too much. The experience of industrialisation had been driven and relentless change, and continues to be so. Even countries which pride themselves on having reached an advanced stage of development, of being post-industrial, of being 'developed', constantly require accelerating change from their privileged populations. So why should we expect that exhortations to change will be welcomed by those



Children learn to grow their own on allotments—the people's land.

who have known little else for at least two centuries? In this context, the desire to conserve, to protect, to safeguard, to rescue, to resist, becomes the heart of a radical project."[9]

In the capitalist core, development is simply renamed progress and the ground is always moving from under our feet. Our 'thumb in the dam' defence of ecologies over the last decade has garnered vast levels of support. A similar but far more subtle process must be carried out to defend threatened positive social relationships.

We must first root ourselves in surviving communal and ecological practises, preserve them, extend them and link them with the emerging counter-culture.

In this way the base for (r)evolution is not merely 'new' relationships fostered by 'radicals' but age old radical (in the original meaning) relationships. One example is allotments and the connection to the land and sense of autonomy they breed—under constant threat from development.

The oppressed multitude needs to wrest control of change from the elite, becoming no longer change's subjects but its agents.

Counter (R)evolution

The elite pre-empt counter-cultural transcendence with civil war.
To attempt to seriously change the world is to put realism in the attic, a worthy piece of Spring cleaning. Yet to embark on a project of change without taking heed of the likely reaction is not merely idiotic but terribly irresponsible.

"A truly revolutionary culture that is effective (demonstrating realistic, sincere designs aimed at the overthrow of established power) will be attacked by the built in automatic survival instincts of the established power complex creating a need to counter-poise the violence of power. Without the ability to organise a counterforce to neutralise the violence of established power, antithesis dies. We are not contending with fools."—George Jackson[10]

The rich will try to pre-empt and destroy by military means any movements of the multitude which have the potential to transcend and destroy power. In Spain, Hungry, Latin America, Indochina—social threats and state massacres.

Relatively peaceful social struggle and construction is only possible up to a point—the point at which it begins to seriously undermine elite power.

It is of course most likely that we will never get anywhere and therefore fail to bring the roof down on ourselves. However if we believe radical social change is at all possible than we must think and prepare for the reaction.

The leaflets for June 18th 1999 proclaimed that: "To work for delight and authentic festivity is barely distinguishable from preparing for general insurrection". I'm a bit of a sucker for Situationist semantics but I have to say that pretty banners and samba bands do not armed militias make! Don't get me wrong, I like a good street party as much as the next twenty something; but let's call a spade a spade.

Situ slogans like this have been made common radical currency by the events of France 1968: rioting students in the Sorbonne, factory occupations, red and black flags in the sunshine.

France '68 is often used as justification for the idea that spontaneous revolution can succeed without the need for significant (r)evolutionary



One million march through Paris in support of De Gaulle's declaration of war on the movement and spirit of '68. Thousands chant for the well known anarchist Cohn Bendit to be sent to Dachau. He is a German Jew.



Troops storm Free Derry in Northern Ireland. The Bogside had been barricaded by the community to protect itself from unionist attacks and to create a functioning autonomous zone.

preparation. In fact the failure of France '68 proves the opposite.

From the boredom and misery of everyday life a momentous social upsurge swept across France without warning. President De Gaulle was freaked out and doubting the loyalty of the French army left French soil for the relative safety of troops stationed in Germany. Great! But just as the upsurge had appeared, suddenly so too it dissipated. Why?

There are a number of reasons—the Stalinist stranglehold on the unions chief among them. One simple factor, often ignored, was De Gaulle's appearance on national television to basically proclaim 'if you want civil war I'll give it to you'.[11] He insinuated he had the loyalty of a large part of the army while 'revolutionaries' could claim the loyalty of none. While this was not entirely true (action committees had been formed within camps of conscripted soldiers to organise break outs), it was mostly true. Trusted regiments were deployed around Paris and widely photographed.

A near million strong mass march of the forces of reaction took to the streets. Faced by this threat and sizing up the fight a large section of the working class, already disorganised by the Stalinists, understood its own weakness and abandoned the moment. Skirmishes at factories continued but De Gaulle's broadcast really was the turning point. Imagination is Power but the power of imagination is not enough when confronted with the armed might of the state. What is needed is class strength—an armed people.

The failure of France in '68 was that coming so suddenly, the rebellion never really went beyond negative opposition to move to positive social growth and defence.

When offered civil war—the blood and the horror—many workers couldn't envision a future worth it. They also knew that they didn't have the class strength to get through a civil war. The lack of a decade by decade counter-culture left those who occupied the factories nothing tangible to defend and expand and not enough weapons to do it with.

By resigning itself to the resumption of party politics instead of engaging in a bloody slug fest it would lose, the French working class was entirely logical. The failure of many radicals to size up fights—and as a result see the centrality of an armed class in (r)evolution—says more about their class background than anything else. Stuart Christie, long term British anarchist, founder of *Black Flag* magazine and attempted assassin of Franco, puts it well:

"One of the fundamental rules of guerrilla warfare is to spread the struggle to every piece of territory and to every facet of life. Unless the seeds of anarchist freedom have already been sown there, we are doomed to perish however good our military preparation might be."[12]



Any area declared free from state control will feel the might of government attack. As the graffiti illustrates, (r)evolution—the politics of the people—needs armed struggle to survive.

Surplus Baggage

Despite our professed militancy and radicalism we still carry a lot of baggage from the political terrain many of us first got involved in—single issue campaigns. As has been pointed out elsewhere, our move into 'revolutionary politics' has often been carried out by pressure group methods.

Our responsibility to any (r)evolutionary process is *not to make revolution*, but to evolve counter-cultures that can *make revolutionaries*.

Ideally counter-cultures can have enough time to evolve, through struggle, to a point at which social transcendence, total (r)evolution, is possible. By such a time it would be able to field considerable armed class strength and possibly defeat elite attempts to drown it in bloody counter (r)evolution.

Of course history rarely leaves anyone alone with their plans and this is just such a case. Here lies the rub, in the words of a Canadian army military historian:

"Revolutions are not, in fact made by revolutionaries. The professional agitators, the terrible exiles of history have seldom succeeded in raising even the smallest revolutionary mob. The best they can hope for is to seize control of the course of the revolution once it has started. The thing itself is caused by the persistent stupidities and brutalities of government."[13]

That 'revolutionaries' don't make revolution is no bad thing considering those who executed most of the last century's revolutionary hopes were the very people who described themselves as revolutionaries—socialists like Lenin and Hitler. As libertarians a large part of 'our job' is to stop these murderous parasites from seizing control of the course of tidal waves of change. How far we are away from crises of this scale is unknowable but discussed in Task III—Preparing for Crises.

By strolling on to the terrain of revolution (at least theoretically) we are confronted by a plethora of leftist ideologies. Thankfully as libertarians we are inoculated against infection from some of most virulent—and stupid— authoritarian dogmas. For instance we have rightly rejected out of hand much of the (ridiculous) party building and fetishism of organisation which characterise the 'revolutionary (HA!) left' in particular and capitalism in general.

There is an opposing left tendency that disagrees with almost any activity aimed at preparing for the tumultuous events that punctuate history. In times of social crisis faith is put in the 'revolutionary impulse of the proletariat'. One can sum up the theory of this tendency as 'It'll be alright on the night'. There is unfortunately little evidence from history that the working class—never mind anyone else—is intrinsicly predisposed to *libertarian* or *ecological* revolution. Thousands of years of authoritarian socialisation favour the jackboot and this is the very reason why libertarian counter-cultures are so important.

Some Proposals



The practical work involved in this task is far more than all the others.

It means growing real friendships which can weather the storms of struggles and relationships.

It means creating our lives so parenting and activism neither conflict with each other or are seen as separate things.

It means growing food on our allotments and rebuilding the land community.

It means consolidating locally.

It means if forced into jobs continuing the struggle in the workplace.

It means solidarity between groups.

It means being vigilant against cultural assimilation, patriarchy and depression.

It means safe houses.

It means acting together informally in our shared interest. Your mates landlord won't return her deposit—a short office visit by her mates should sort that out.

It means demolishing authoritarian socialists in general and Nazis and Stalinists in particular.

It means not allowing us to drift apart.[14]

It means training.

It means laughing together as we fight together.



In 2002 the 1 in 12 club in Bradford celebrated 20 years as a libertarian social centre. Formed out of a claimants' union in 1981, it hosts a bar, café and infoshop. Offshoots range from Mayday festivities to a Peasants' Collective. Today, with hundreds of members, it's part of a growing network of legal and illegal centres across Britain.

Really the list is too long to go through. I will not even attempt to catalogue what ingredients good counter-cultures needs—social evolution and the individual situation will do that.

The two primary divisions in this society that need to be overcome are our disconnection from each other and our disconnection from the land. Practically there are some very obvious things we can do now as an evolving counter-culture.

Reconnecting with each Other

1) Build a British Social Centre Network

Social centres—which place politics where they should be, in friendship—are the key to viable counter-cultures. Probably because of the post '70s travelling culture Britain is unusual in not developing a social centre network. Across Europe social centres are at the very heart of anarchist counter-cultures. (This is also true incidentally of Irish Republicanism and Basque separatism). This process has begun and from this one act of organisation a thousand acts of resistance will follow. [Since this was first published a London Social Centres Network has formed and plans are afoot for one nationwide.]

2) Prepare for Strike Support

Our circles, despite inhabiting a economically peripheral social position (casual labour, dole, single parenthood) have a far better record in the last 10 years in supporting strikes than the left. To quote a shop steward from the Liverpool Dockers: "others talk, these people do!" A small amount of thought can make our ability to use direct action to intervene in workplace struggles much easier. Solidarity among the poor—the very basis of counter-cultures and anarchy.

3) Resist Together, Train Together

While a (r)evolutionary culture can include everything from cabbage growing to hip-hop, without active resistance a culture will not hold. We need to be up against it to make sure both that the petty things don't split us and the big things bring us together. Living in a mundane world you can know someone for years and not truly know them as you do after a day of struggle.

Acts of purposeful resistance build our collective strength but we shouldn't just rely on events but train to grow our power. *Run Faster*—go running with a mate. *Trash Better*—learn sabotage skills before you need them. *Find Direction*—go orienteering at night. *Get Fitter*—give up smoking collectively. *Hit Harder*—spar with friends. Strength is infectious.

Reconnecting with the Land

1) Grow the Land Community

Allotments are available to us all thanks to Nineteenth Century arson, but hundreds of sites every year are being destroyed by developers. More direct action is needed to stop this haemorrhaging of an inheritance born of struggle. More work allotments in Britain than work in farming and it is only from this land community that any hope for ecological autonomy can grow. The experience of growing your own food is (r)evolutionary.

Allotments also offer a jump point for those committed to leaving the cities and towns. On these small patches we can learn many of the skills in miniature needed if we are to grow out of our dependency on the industrial. From farm communities in Cornwall to land projects in the Scottish Highlands many of our circles have gone 'back to the land' in the last decade. Many more will follow. The call of the soil cannot be drowned by the cacophony of traffic.[15]

"In the final analysis, all revolutions are fought over the question of land."—Malcolm X[16]

2)Rewild Ourselves

Get out beyond the streetlights and join the stars. Hear the darkness and see the sounds of the night. Learn skills, light fires. Discover wild foods. Sit quietly in a wood and wait. Guide kids to the true joy of mud and spiders. Wear down the soles of your walking boots, harden the soles of your feet. Get naked in the sun and snow. Pack a heavy rucksack with everything you'll need for a weekend camping, then leave it on the bed and walk out the door. Nurture saplings, plant the

spring. Improvise shelters, get nifty with a knife. Don't go to work—fuck in forests.

3)Continue Ecological Land Struggles

In Britain our struggles over ecology and wildness are powerful theatres for the growth of ecological sensibility. In living on, for and in defence of the land, one forges an immensely strong connection. Fluorescent bibbed cops grappling with tree defenders brings out into the open the age old conflict. On one side the property/state axis, on the other wildness, diversity, freedom. By creating these situations of struggle, mythic discourse is shattered with a power no essay or clever turn of phrase will ever have. Unleashing these revelatory (r)evolutionary moments is at the heart of our action. With every broken illusion we take a step back from the abyss.[17]



Task Conclusion: Grow and Live

For new worlds of land, liberty and love there will be both kisses and gunfire.

Taking responsibility for our own lives and those around us is daunting. It's not just the cops, the bosses, the scabs and the poverty that keeps people working for the man. It's the terror of the blank page. We are schooled to be dependent on fictions and commands, not to believe in ourselves. Growing and defending new worlds is a daunting task, yet the alternative is far worse. An acceptence of a tide of void that consumes species and peoples while it daily drains us of dignity.

The aim of our counter-cultures should be total social transcendence—(r)evolution. That (r)evolution is extremely unlikely (there is no point pretending otherwise) does not fundamentally question the need for counter-cultural growth. Counter-cultures are not only new worlds for the future but barracks and sanctuaries for today.★

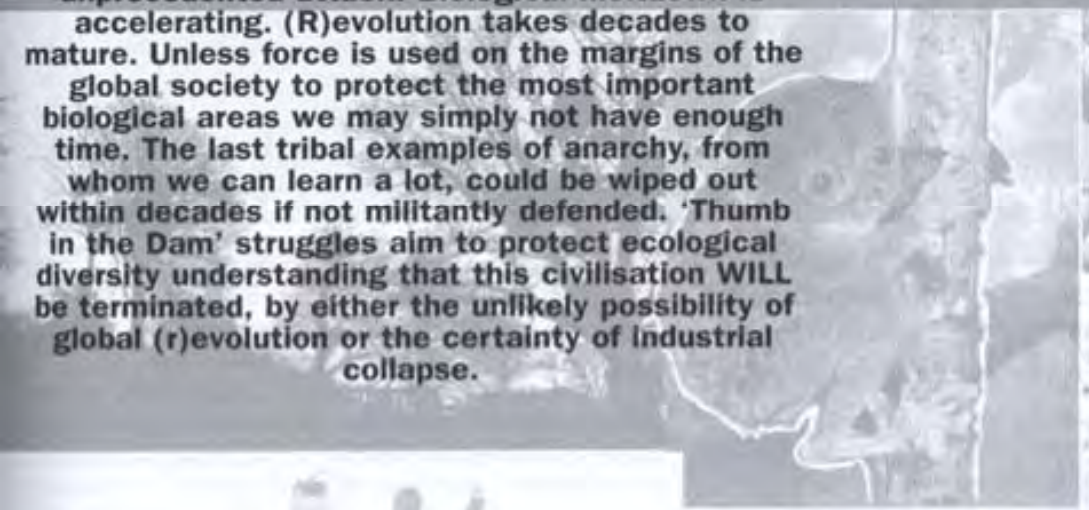
Notes

1) Simply wishing this doesn't make it a reality. It may be truer to say that we aspire to become ecological revolutionaries.
2) Civilisation needs us all to become increasingly isolated individuals that can only exist as part of a mass. Authoritarian 'revolutionaries' and reformists alike often talk of the need for a 'mass movement' to create change, yet libertarian change only happens in 'everyday life'. Check out the pamphlet: *Anti-Mass—Methods of Organising for Collectives.*
3) *Making Punk A Threat Again* by Profane Existence.
4) *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* by Murray Bookchin (AK Press, 19XX) ISBN 187317604 X. p. 288
5) *Ibid.* p. 146
6) *Ibid.* p. 288
7) 'Peasants and the Transitional Class' at the end of Task IV explains this further.
8) 'It's Good to Talk', *Observer Magazine*, 09/06/02.
9) *The Revolt Against Change* by Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook, ISBN 0 0993 090 17, p. 3
10) *Blood in My Eye* by George Jackson (Penguin Books, 1975) p. 50. Black Liberation fighter Jackson was killed by the screws inside San Quentin prison only a few days after finishing this book.
11) *Enrages and the Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* by Rene Vienet, ISBN 094606105X, p. 94
12) *Towards a Citizens' Militia* (Cienfuegos Press, 1980).
13) 'The Coup D'Etat' by Lt-Colonel DJ Goodspeed in the interesting, but slightly weird, *Civilian Resistance as a National Defence* edited by Adam Roberts (Pelican).
14) A good point from another *DoD* editor: "In some ways, I really don't like the extrapolation of the 'personal is political' that some of these proposals represent. Instead of all social relations being subsumed/made subordinate to capital, they are subsumed to the task of building the counter culture/revolution. Have you not considered that people drift apart because they realise that they simply don't like each other any more—and that it might be unhealthy to stay together for the sake of the revolution?"

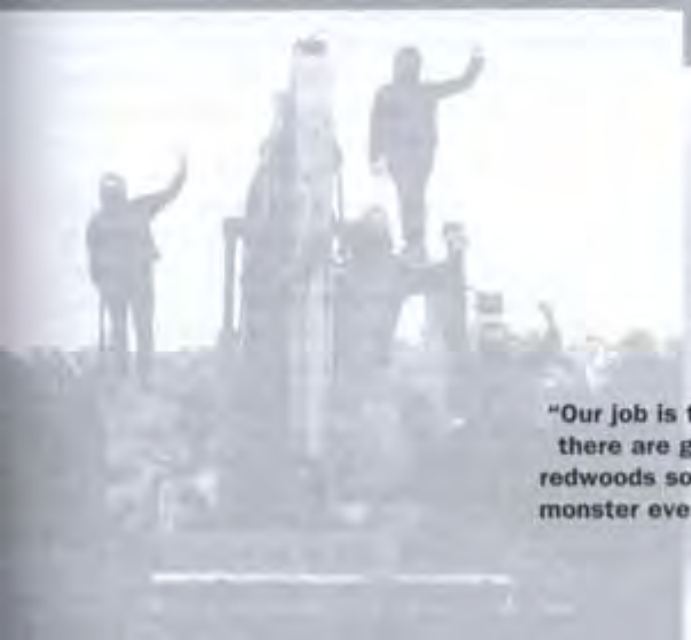
    A danger correctly spotted. This is why it important to grow substantive cultures made up of interlinked small human sized groups. A good example was the Newbury Bypass Campaign. One of the factors that made it so good was that there were over thirty camps—each with a different atmosphere. Living in many different bands enabled us to be a strong temporary tribe. If we had all been part of one ORGANISATION we could never have held together at all. 'Affinity groups structures' (read: groups of friends!) grow counter-cultural unity by separating people as much as bringing them together. Here lies another major difference with authoritarians. In large organisations personal clashes are channelled into competitive scrambles for dominance over the mass membership.
15) In the cities isolation from the land can drive you mad, in the countryside isolation from other people can have the same affect. For this reason it is important that those moving onto the land do so collectively and/or stay in regular contact with those elsewhere. The take-over of land—legal or illegal—should be seen as an extension of the counter-culture not a flight from it. For more on allotment history, forest gardening and land struggle see 'Farmageddon: Confronting Industrial Agriculture', *Do or Die* No. 7, p. 40
16) Quoted by Stokely Carmichael (ex-prez of SNCC) in *Black Poets and Prophets: A Bold, Uncompromising Clear Blueprint for Black Liberation* edited by Woodie King and Earl Anthony, (New American Library, 1972).
17) "Or maybe a step closer to despair and the loony bin"—says another *DoD* editor.

II
Putting Our Thumb in the Dam

Just as counter-cultures must open up space for (r)evolution to grow we must also open up time. The life support systems of the earth are under unprecedented attack. Biological meltdown is accelerating. (R)evolution takes decades to mature. Unless force is used on the margins of the global society to protect the most important biological areas we may simply not have enough time. The last tribal examples of anarchy, from whom we can learn a lot, could be wiped out within decades if not militantly defended. 'Thumb in the Dam' struggles aim to protect ecological diversity understanding that this civilisation WILL be terminated, by either the unlikely possibility of global (r)evolution or the certainty of industrial collapse.







"What would the world be, once bereft,
Of wet and of wilderness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet"
—Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Inversnaid*.

"Our job is to save the evolutionary building blocks and to make sure there are grizzly bears and great blue whales and rainforests and redwoods somewhere, so that in the final thrashing of the industrial monster everything else that's good on this planet isn't destroyed."
—Dave Foreman, Earth First! co-founder.

Here Come the End Days



The aim of this piece is to help prioritise and direct our action and organising. However our absolute action priorities are not left to us to determine. They have been decided for us by the point in history in which we live. For this reason I have made this task section considerably longer than the others.

Industrial Capitalism has continued civilisation's age-old attack on the wild and free—resulting in unparalleled biological and cultural meltdown. The decimation of wild peoples (cultural meltdown) and the devastation of ecological diversity (biological meltdown) are now reaching truly apocalyptic proportions.

Biological Meltdown

"Indeed, all the indications are that we are standing at the opening phase of a mass extinction event that will be comparable in scale to the five great extinction episodes that have taken place in the history of life on earth, the most recent being the loss of the dinosaurs some 65 million years ago. Impending extinction rates are at least four orders of magnitude than is found in the fossil record. That means in the order of 10,000 times greater, a frightening prospect to say the least. If allowed to continue the current extinction episode, could well eliminate between a third and two thirds of all species... [within this] century."[1]

One third to two thirds of all species on earth—GONE! Stop a while, attempt to conceptualise the magnitude of the moment.

Nothing in the history of humankind has prepared us for this appalling event, but OUR generation will probably witness the disappearance of a third to one half of the earth's rich and subtle forms of life, which have been evolving for billions of years. In the early 1990s Michael Soule, founder of the Society for Conservation Biology, made this chilling assessment of the status of the earth's biosphere:

"For the first time in hundreds of million of years significant evolutionary change in most higher organisms is coming to a screeching halt... Vertebrate evolution may be at an end."[2] Soule is

saying that humanity's disruption of the environment has been so systematic and profound that it has halted the same natural processes that have brought everything we know into existence, including our very bodies and minds.

Cultural Meltdown

It is tempting when facing this scale of doom to think of humanity as an intrinsically ecocidal organism. A pox on the earth. This however lets us and our society—city culture—off the hook.

Numerous cultures have developed a sustainable and harmonious relationship with their surroundings: the Mbuti, the Penan, the !Kung, to name but a few. These societies chose not to dominate nature. In the larger history of humankind, they are the norm and we are the exception.

On civilisation's periphery, some of these wild peoples live on. Their very existence is a serious threat to city culture; simply in the fact that they show that there is a reality outside our world. Defending their autonomy and the land of which they are a part, they are the best protectors of some of the earth's wildest places.

Just as wild nature is being denuded and domesticated, so too is wild humanity. This century will probably be the last for many cultures ages old. Civilisation aims to wipe out their other worlds. Men of money and men of god conspire. If these tribes are wiped out by our culture, it will be the first time in millions of years that no human communities have lived in harmony with nature.

Guns, gold, god and diseases could make Homo Sapiens extinct in our lifetime. For when the last gatherer-hunters are hunted down, all that will be left of humanity will be in the entrails of Leviathan—having the potential for life but unliving.

'Land, the mother earth from which we are born and to which we die, on whom our lives depend, through which our spiritual ways remain intact. To impose changes on this ancient order would serve to destroy our dignity and identity as Indigenous people. Without the land, the peoples are lost. Without the Indigenous peoples the land is lost.'—Declaration of Indigenous Peoples, 1987

A Critical Moment

It is in this context that we must see ourselves. Not simply as rebels against empire, like so many before us, but rebels at the most critical moment in human history.

Our generation will likely see the decimation of remaining ecological/anarchic cultures and the haemorrhaging of the earth's life support systems. As I outlined in Task I reformist strategies are irrelevant but (r)evolution is not only unlikely but also takes time. This has often been acknowledged by radicals in the past. Emma Goldman in her last years wrote that she believed anarchy was too huge an idea for her age to move to in one step. She looked to future generations, seeing in them hope for the spring. Her feelings echo that of many over the aeons. Looking back, an example arises from the ashes and war cries of arson and insurrection in early 19th century England. One rebel anthem sung with gusto at the time resonates.

"A hundred years, a thousand years,
We're marching on the road.
The going isn't easy yet,
We've got a heavy load.
The way is blind with blood and sweat,
And death sings in our ears.
But time is marching on our side.
We will defeat the years."[3]

They fought, but like many before and after, failed to get to the promised land. Yet they took solace in believing their path was right and others would follow, reaching where they had not. Their belief in an almost endless future of possibility, in the unswerving progressive march of humanity through and with time gave hope to the weary.

We no longer have that luxury.

It is in this context that we must see ourselves. Not simply as rebels against empire, like so many before us, but rebels at the most critical moment in human history.

Today time is not marching on our side, but against us. We must fight all the faster. We cannot pass the gauntlet of defending the wild to unborn generations. It is that wildness and those unborn generations that are in peril today. What we do in our lives, in this moment, is of utmost importance. For no other generation has the weight of the future rested so heavily on the present.

Given the urgency, the pain, the horror and the magnitude of the unfolding catastrophe, the questions what to do and where to start are daunting ones. Thankfully the way has been charted in part by the last 25 years of radical ecological action. 'Thumb in the Dam' struggles have been at the very centre of our activity.

How can one best defend wild areas and cultures? In the absence of significant (r)evolution the answer lies in a combination of conservation, direct action and the strengthening of ecological cultures. Groups such as the Wildlife Trusts (in Britain) and Conservation International (globally) have adopted land purchase as their main tactic.

This has its place but the times call for a more militant attitude. Most of us have little money to protect habitats by buying them up, while 'protected' areas are often far from safe. Direct action on the other hand puts the costs onto those who attack nature not those who wish to defend it. Trashing a digger poised to level a copse feels like a far more authentic reaction to ecological destruction than any amount of paper shuffling. For most of us, well targeted direct action is the most effective and efficient use of our limited time and resources. In the early '80s the failure of reform environmentalism made this clear and the radical ecological resistance was born. Militant direct action by warrior societies putting the earth first!

What objectives and strategy can we base our actions around, given the vast scale of the attack and the minute scale of the resistance? This Task section will hopefully give at least a partial answer.

Defending the Living Land

Though it was from an understanding of the *global* ecological crisis that our movement was born it was in *local* ecological land struggles that our movement grew. As stated earlier, we can take pride in the beauty and vitality of habitats throughout Britain that are alive today because of our resistance to infrastructure growth (roads), resource extraction (quarrying, opencast coal mining, peat digging, timber cutting) and city expansion (house building).

These struggles have changed forever all of us who have taken part in them. They have connected us to the earth in a deeply emotional and meaningful way. Exhilaration, fear, empowerment, true human communication, anger, love, homes and a feeling of belonging in both communities and the land; these are just some of what we have been given by these struggles. I emphasise this so that what I say next is *not* taken as a disavowal of British *local* ecological land struggles.

To those of us brought up in Britain's woodlands, copses, downland and dales these habitats have an immense importance—reaching deep into our soul. However, from a *global* perspective how important are these ecologies given the accelerating biological meltdown?

We must direct our action where it will have most effect. Trauma medics use triage to sort casualties according to priority—which lives are most threatened, which lives are most saveable. In this way they can put their resources where they will have most effect. What we need then is a form of global habitat triage for the biological casualties of civilisations war on the wild. Thankfully in the last 15 years such a system has taken shape, in the form of the Hotspot Theory.

Hotspot Theory was first conceived by British ecologist Norman Myers. First, it makes the task of defending biodiversity more 'approachable' by demonstrating that we can conserve a major share of terrestrial biodiversity in a relatively small portion of the planet. Secondly, it demonstrates specifically where these areas are located, and why they are so important, entering into considerable detail on what each of them contains. Third, it elucidates the different threats faced by each of the hotspots.

Myers Hotspot priority system uses vascular plants as the main determinant, given that plants are the primary fixers of energy from the sun and are necessary for the survival of most other organisms.

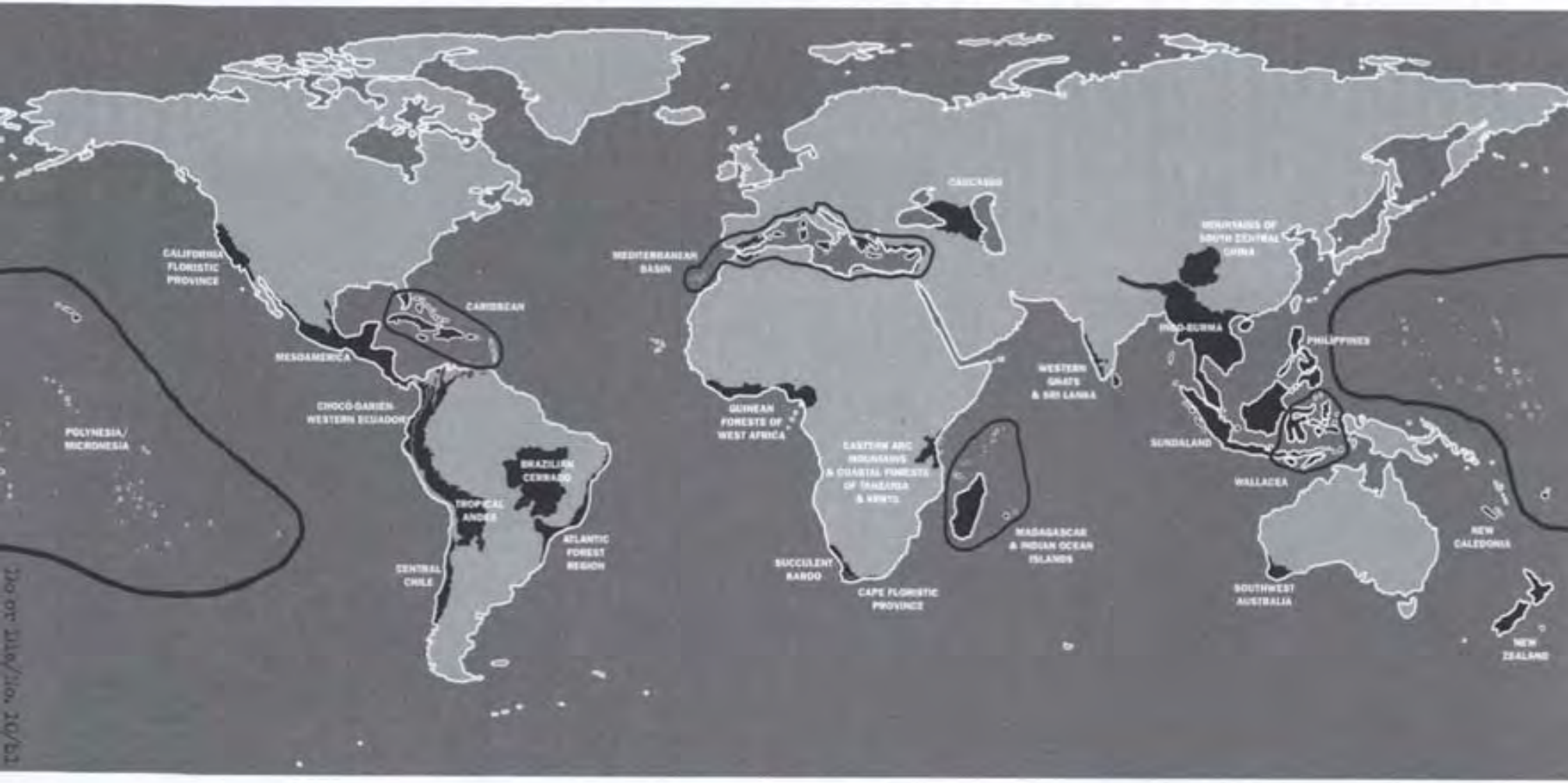
Hotspots are defined with two criteria. First, biological diversity. Secondly, degree of threat. A minimum of 0.5% of total global vascular plant diversity *endemic* to the area in question is the primary cut-off point for inclusion on the hotspot list. The theory uses the most current estimate of vascular plants as 300,000 i.e. the cut off is an area must have 1,500 endemic vascular plants within its borders. Also bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian diversity is taken into account, in that order of importance. The second criteria, degree of threat, has a cut off measure that is; a hotspot should have 25% or less of its original primary natural vegetation cover remaining intact.

Hotspot analysis carried out between 1996-1998 resulted in a list of 25 hotspots and two exceptional mini-hotspots (the Galapagos and Juan Fernadez islands). The hotspots are:

Tropical Andes, Meso-america, Caribbean, Choco Darien, Atlantic Forest Region, Brazilian Cerrado, Central Chile, California Floristic Province, Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands, Easter Arc Mountains, Cape Floristic Province, Succulent Karoo, Guinean forests of West Africa, Mediterranean Basin, Caucasus, Sundaland, Wallacea, Philippines, Indo-Burma, Mountains of Central China, Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Polynesia, South West Australia.

Cumulatively, these 25 areas plus the mini-hotspots have almost 88% of their original area destroyed or denuded with only 12.28% remaining

The Hotspots: Earth's Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Terrestrial Eco-Regions





intact. This intact percentage amounts to just 1.44% of the land surface of the planet—a little smaller than the EU!!!

A staggering 131,399 vascular plants are endemic to the hotspots representing 43.8% of all plants on earth. Adding in estimations of non-endemic plant species found within the hotspots brings us to an even larger figure.

"At least 65.7% and more likely 70% or more of all vascular plants occur within the 1.44% of earth's land surface occupied by the hotspots."[4]

This indicates a vast percentage of all life in other species groups—mammals, avi-fauna etc. In fact 35.5% of the global total of non-fish vertebrates are endemic to the hotspots. Once again, adding in estimations of non-endemic non-fish vertebrates, we come to a figure of at least 62%. Maybe perhaps 70% or more of all non-fish vertebrates occurring in the hotspots. As the authors of Hotspots say themselves:

"If 60% or more of all terrestrial biodiversity occurs in the most threatened 1.44% of the land surface of the planet, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these areas deserve a lion's share of our attention over the next few decades. Indeed, if... we are at risk of losing one third to two thirds of all species within the foreseeable future, and if almost two thirds of at least the terrestrial species are in the hotspots, then it seems fairly obvious that we may make a major dent in the entire endangered species/mass extinction problem by placing very heavy emphasis on the hotspots."[5]

This analysis is immensely useful, and has been refined further. Lots of number crunching later leads to a 'top 9' Hotspot list:

Tropical Andes, Sundaland, Meso-America, Indo-Burma, Caribbean, Atlantic Forest Region of Brazil, Madagascar, Mediterranean Basin & Choco-Darien (Western Ecuador).

These 9 areas account for 29.5% of all vascular plants and 24.9% of non-fish vertebrates. This in just 0.73% of the planet's land surface—around half of the size of the EU!!

Further analysis on threat highlights three hotspots; the hottest of the hot. They are:

The Caribbean, the Philippines[6] and Madagascar.

If this theory is correct, and there is every reason to think it is, some solid conclusions can be drawn:

1) At this moment in time radical ecologists around the world must do everything in our power to defend the 25 Hotspots.
2) Serious action must be taken to halt or slow the destruction of the three hottest hotspots.
3) Northern Europe appears nowhere on the hotspot list. In fact it has a relatively low level of biological diversity thanks to a combination of climate, past glaciation and human habitat destruction. We should obviously continue to defend Northern European habitats. *However in the context of the global biological meltdown, struggles to defend Northern European habitats are entirely peripheral.*
4) The appearance in the hotspots list of the Mediterranean Basin should focus us in Europe. The fact that a hotspot covers parts of the EU is a surprising revelation and one that has serious repercussions.
5) Given serious action, the preservation of significant sections of global biodiversity is a real possibility, if only because it could involve such a small percentage of global land surface.

These conclusions combined with a sensible analysis of our powers (as radical ecologists primarily in Northern



70% of the Philippines' 500 species of endemic land vertebrates are endangered. Only quick, strong action will save species like the kitten-sized Tarsier.

Europe) begin to give us answers to the urgent question posed earlier. Where to start?

A hierarchy of *global* priority setting can follow the pattern: global > regional > national > local > specific sites. Obviously, given our location and limited powers, the priorities set by such a system cannot be transferred immediately to a list of practically realisable objectives. Beyond this we can also set a hierarchy of priorities for *local* habitat defence here on our island and its environs—understanding all the time these struggles' largely peripheral role in the global *direct* defence of diversity. For now I will talk of the global terrain. What follows is a hierarchy of top priorities for terrestrial habitat defence set in light of the hotspot theory.

The Hottest of the Hot

At the moment the three hottest are *undeniably* the global priority areas for defence. Unfortunately, facing reality we can have very little direct effect on these areas—at present. This is likely to remain so for the medium term at least. Let's not fool ourselves. We often ignore threatened habitats in Britain because they're more than a few hours drive from an 'activist centre'. The Caribbean, Madagascar and the Philippines. I don't see any of our ropey vans getting there any time soon. However, let's look at them one by one.

Madagascar: This amazing island has been at the centre of global conservation concern for decades. A number of British companies are involved in trashing it, our old friends RTZ for example. Actions against them would be very, very good. It is here, if anywhere, that the global conservation NGOs have some chance of using big money to big effect. Like it or not, they are probably the islands greatest hope. Many of them are using the Hotspot Theory to set their priorities so their targeting of Madagascar is increasing.

Philippines: Of the three hottest hotspots it is in the Philippines that we have most extensive contacts. A number of EF! groups are active. Growing out of anarcho-punk there is a small but growing active eco-minded anarchist scene. Peoples' Global Action (PGA) called international days saw sizeable mobilisations, and anti-GM direct action by peasants is on the up. A number of communities are resisting the logging and mining that is destroying their areas. A remnant of the original gatherer-hunter population of the Philippines survives. We need to talk more to Filipino groups to find out how we can best help. Solidarity actions, communication and funds should all be disproportionately channelled their way. UK based companies are active and possibilities for joint action should be pursued. While this responsibility belongs to us all, some people from our scene need to take on acting as primary



intermediaries and push this forward—catalysing communication and action.

The Caribbean: To put it lightly, many more people in Britain have links with the Caribbean than with either the Philippines or Madagascar! At a guess I'd say that of the Majority World hotspots it is with the Caribbean that Britain has most personal (rather than corporate) connections. Unfortunately environmentalism, for reasons around race and class, is almost devoid of British Afro-Caribbean involvement. Thus ecological struggles are happening in the region but are largely off our radar.

While steps must be taken to remedy this,[7] our potential as a (predominantly white) movement to support this region is much smaller than that of the Afro-Caribbean communities. Some within these communities are working on the issue. It'll be nothing to do with us if any major expansion of activity happens, so there is little point going into detail here. One thing is worth emphasising though. Mobilisation by Afro-Caribbean groups has the potential to be the most meaningful support work done by Brits for any of the Majority World hotspots. Given the regions position as one of the three hottest hotspots it could be the most *globally* important eco-action carried out here. We have reason to hope for such a situation, and corporate ravagers of the Caribbean based in Britain have reason to fear it.

One of our main entry points for far off lands—anarchism—is little use to us in the Caribbean where anarchist groups are pretty much non-existent. Cuba is the only island where a sizeable movement ever took root, and no organisations survive now thanks to Castro's social weeding.[8]

The Caribbean is one of only two hotspots whose area is partly within the US. Unsurprisingly we know more people in Florida than say, Haiti. EFlers are active in Florida and good solidarity actions for them would be great.

The Top Nine Hotspots

Moving down one level of priority to the top nine we find similar patterns to the top three. These regions are *largely* out of our direct reach. We can do little at the moment bar actively supporting radical ecological influenced groups in these areas. Groups in the top nine should be given disproportionate support and direct aid.

Covering less than 1% of global land surface, mostly in 'Majority World' locations, the top nine are of immense importance. In this context even relatively minor conservation programs are worth supporting—physically and financially.[9]

Of course this kind of thing is all well and good but we've rarely shown ourselves to be particularly brilliant at sustained international solidarity. We need to build a strategy based solidly on our strengths. Stopping developments. Fucking shit up. Blockades. Sabotage. Land occupations. Broken windows and crippled corporate confidence. To be really effective we need terrains of struggle which are both easily reachable and globally important.

Thankfully one of the top 9 is within our reach—the Mediterranean Basin. The Med is both amazingly biodiverse and under serious threat. Due to this hotspot's direct relevance to us and our activity I have re-printed here an essay by N. Myers and R. M. Cowling from the Hotspots book. I have shortened it due to space constraints. It's more eloquent than I, so read it and then return to me.





This huge hotspot stretches from Portugal to Jordan and from the Canary Islands to Northern Italy. It encompasses all of Cyprus and over 90% of Greece, Lebanon, and Portugal, though less than 10% of France, Algeria, and Libya. In Spain, 6,000 of the country's 7,500 plant species occur within the Mediterranean climate zone, in Israel 1,500 out of 2,200, and in Morocco 3,800 out of 4,200.

The flora of the Mediterranean Basin includes 25,000 species of vascular plants, 13,000 of which are endemic. This figure is very high when compared to the 6,000 species of non-Mediterranean Europe in an area nearly four times as large. It is also the third highest of all the hotspots, being surpassed only by the Tropical Andes and Sundaland.

The Basin's violent geographical history has produced an unusual geographical and topographical diversity, with high mountain ranges, peninsulas, and one of the largest archipelagos in the world. The Mediterranean Sea includes several hundred islands.

In mammal and bird faunas endemism is moderate, at 25% and 14%. The reptile and amphibian faunas on the other hand, have levels of endemism of 61% and 52%.

The typical and most widespread vegetation type is a hard-leafed shrubland dominated by evergreens. Shrublands, including maquis and the aromatic, soft-leafed and drought deciduous phrygana, have persisted throughout the Quaternary in the semiarid, lowland, and coastal regions of the Basin. However, prior to the onset of significant human impact, which started some 8,000 years ago, most of the Mediterranean Basin was covered by some

The Mediterranean Hotspot

form of forest, including evergreen oak forests, deciduous forests, and conifer forests.

Endemics are concentrated on islands, peninsulas, rocky cliffs, and mountain peaks. The principal foci in the Mediterranean are 10 smaller 'mini-hotspots within the larger hotspot'. These 10 are areas in which unusual amounts of original vegetation still survive and where many of the endemic species hang on, albeit several threatened. These areas cover about 15% of the Basin's total area, yet account for almost 4,800 endemics, or 37% of the total tally. Clearly, these are priority sites for conservation of these plant components of Mediterranean biodiversity.

Diversity and endemism among Mediterranean Basin vertebrates is much lower than for plants. The present number of land mammals in the region is about 184, of which 46 (25%) are endemic. During the Holocene, but especially in the last few thousand years, many of the larger mammals became extinct because of aridification, habitat alteration, and persecution. The earliest victims included some spectacular species like dwarf hippopotamuses and elephants on some islands. These were followed by other large mammals, including the African elephant, wild ass, scimitar-horned oryx, northern hartebeest, and lion. Still others are so severely depleted as to be on the verge of extinction, among them the brown bear, leopard, and Mediterranean monk seal.

The region's avifauna includes about 345 breeding species of which only 47 (14%) are endemic. A few small portions of the Mediterranean Basin also appear as priorities in BirdLife International's recent global analysis of Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs). These are Cyprus, with two bird species confined to that EBA, and Madeira and the Canary Islands, with 9 species, 8 of them confined to the EBA, and one species, the Canary Islands oystercatcher already extinct.

Endemism is much better developed in reptiles, with 179 species, 110 (61%) of which are endemic, and amphibians, with 62 species, 32 (52%) of which are endemic. Reptile diversity is highest in the drier, eastern and North African parts of the Basin, whereas the opposite is true of amphibians. For both groups, the Mediterranean Basin is an important centre of diversity and endemism for some families.

As is the case for the other hotspots, much less is known about the invertebrate fauna. One of the exceptions are the insect pollinators, which have been relatively well-studied as a group. The dominant pollinators are bees, with an estimated 3,000—4,000 species.

Flagship Species

The Mediterranean Basin is characterised more by its plants than its animals. Among the interesting plants are the cedars: one endemic to Cyprus and represented only by a very small relic population; another, fairly abundant in Morocco and Algeria but experiencing very rapid depletion by timber cutters; and a third, the famous Lebanon cedar, mentioned below, hangs on in Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. Another interesting endemic flagship species is the only palm tree native to the Basin, found exclusively in a tiny corner of Crete and on the Datca peninsula in Turkey, where it is threatened by tourist development.

A number of animals qualify as flagship species as well. Particularly noteworthy are the 'Mediterranean' tortoises, four in number. Among the endemic mammals, there are several standouts as well. The Barbary macaque is now found in relatively small and disjunct habitat pockets in the Rif, Loyen, and Haut Atlas mountain ranges of Morocco, and in the Chiffa, Petite, and Grande Kabylies mountain ranges of Algeria, with a small, well-known population on Gibraltar that lives in a free-ranging state but is provisioned. It is believed that the Gibraltar macaques were present since early times, but have been sporadically replenished by imports from Morocco. *The Gibraltar macaques are now the only free-living nonhuman primates in Europe.*

The Barbary deer is confined to a small area of cork oak and pine forest on the border between Algeria and Tunisia. The population is down to only a few hundred individuals, including those in captivity in both countries. The Corsican red deer is considered extinct in Corsica, and is now found only in three mountainous areas near the southern coast of Sardinia. The total population is only about 200.

The Mediterranean monk seal, though primarily a marine species, does use coastal beaches and has long been an important symbol. It was once distributed throughout the Mediterranean, the Northwest coast of Africa, and the Black Sea. Today, the approximate 400 animals that still survive have been pushed to isolated spots in Turkey, Greece, the Atlantic coast of Morocco, Mauritania, Sardinia, Algeria, and Madeira.

Remnant populations of other once wide-ranging mammals include the brown bear, which still hangs on in the mountains of Spain, France, Italy, Greece and some of the Balkan countries, and two subspecies of the leopard, the North African leopard and the Anatolian leopard, both of which are considered critically endangered.

Threats

The present human population of the Mediterranean Basin is some 300 million, although population pressures have existed for millennia. Indeed, there is no other region in the world where the development of ecosystems has been intimately associated with human social systems for so long. The region has been home to sizeable human settlements for well over two millennia and significant human activity for another six millennia (there was a large town in Turkey 8,400 years ago!). In Roman times, the more fertile parts of Tunisia and Algeria—Rome's 'bread basket'—were laid waste through agricultural overuse, and the historian Pliny warned the ancient Greeks of the damages of deforestation. In Lebanon, the uplands were once covered with stately cedars whose height, strength, and utility became legendary throughout the Old World. Felling of the trees started as early as 3,000 BC, when the Phoenicians began a lucrative trade in cedarwood with the Egyptian Pharaohs and King Solomon, among others. Now the Lebanon highlands have lost most of their trees, and the cedar is a threatened species.



The Gibraltar macaques are now the only free-living nonhuman primates in Europe.

The impact of this long history of human assault on Mediterranean ecosystems has been huge. Perhaps the most severe transformation has been the conversion of forests, especially primeval deciduous forests, to agricultural lands, evergreen woodlands, and maquis. The first significant deforestation began as early as 8,000 BC, and increased dramatically at the end of the Neolithic. Each wave of civilisation created new pressures on the forests, culminating in the rapid human population growth and widespread increase in mechanised agriculture of the present century.

A crucial factor is fragmentation. The original vegetation has been reduced to only small patches today. This is hardly more than to be expected of a region that has been heavily settled for over 2,000 years, longer than any other hotspot. While some vegetation fragments still total several hundred square kilometres, many are less than 100 km2, a few are 10km2 at most, and one or two are down to a final handful of hectares. Equally significant are many of the 13,000 endemic plant species, which are 'narrow endemic' confined to unusually small areas. This makes them exceptionally susceptible to threats such as expanding farming, overgrazing by domestic stock, and spread of urban communities. Indeed, probably more species have already been driven to extinction in this hotspot than in virtually any other, some species having been eliminated many centuries ago, totalling probably hundreds of plant species alone. *As for threatened species, the total for plants is put as high as one half of the entire flora.*

The outlook is not propitious, if only by reason of the surge in human numbers and their demands. While one can readily point a finger at population growth in non-European countries it is Northern Europeans that generate most of the tourist influx to the shores of the Mediterranean as the biggest large-scale tourist attraction in the world. There are around 100 million visitors per year already, scheduled to become twice as many within another two decades. The tourism sector is flourishing and expanding its disruptive impact in Spain, France, Italy and Greece, and increasingly in Turkey, Cyprus, Tunisia and Morocco. Through the spread of hotels and associated buildings, the construction of roads and other infrastructure—plus the impact of millions of feet trampling through fragile environments every day—tourism has caused exceptional damage. It is now the most serious threat to seminatural areas in Western and Southern Turkey, and in Cyprus, Tunisia, and Morocco, a list that may shortly be joined by Greece among several other countries, particularly as concerns the Mediterranean islands such as the Balearics, Corsica, Sardinia, Crete, and the Canary and Madeira islands.



The Mediterranean Red Alert Areas

1) Atlas Mountains
2) Rif-Betique in Southern Spain and two coastal strips of Morocco and Algeria
3) Maritime Alps of the French-Italian border
4) Tyrrhenian Islands (Balearics, Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily)
5) Southern and Central Greece
6) Crete
7) Southern Turkey/Cyprus
8) Israel and Lebanon
9) Cyrenaica (the Libyan 'bump')
10) Canaries/Madeira Islands

There are also growing threats from what has always been the number one competitor for natural environments, agriculture. More people generally means more farmland to support them. The main agricultural threat today lies within food demands from people in far-off lands. Consumers of Northern Europe are becoming accustomed to strawberries and carnations right around the year, and during October-March they turn to warmer climates for supplies. Thus the speedy expansion of horticulture in many parts of the Basin; the market is already huge.

As for population growth, the countries of the Southern and Eastern seaboards are projected to increase their numbers by 54% as early as the year 2025. Partly because of population pressures, environments are declining apace. Morocco, Tunisia and Libya each are losing around 1,000 km2 to desertification every year, and Algeria still more.

All of these factors contribute to making the Mediterranean Basin one of the hottest of the hotspots; indeed in many ways it is hyper-hot, scoring very high in the fundamental criteria that we use to define hotspots. It is exceptionally rich in diversity, especially plants, and second in the world in plant endemism. In is also highly threatened, and in fact has the lowest percentage of natural vegetation remaining in pristine condition of any hotspot.

Conservation

The Basin's protected areas are of diverse sorts and cover 1.8% of the total area.

Today, most countries of the Basin are planning substantial increases in their protected area systems. But due to the demands of agriculture and other activities that absorb large tracts of natural environment, many protected areas are too small to meet the imperatives of 'island biogeography'. Moreover, many protected areas suffer some effects of pollution arising far outside their specific locations. Some of them are short of water after feeder rivers rising in distant watersheds have been diverted for industry, agriculture, and urban communities. All of these problems are likely to become more pronounced as human numbers and human demands keep on growing—and that is without counting the rigors of enhanced U-VB radiation through the depleted ozone layer and the onset of global warming with its many dislocations of plant communities. In a greenhouse-affected world, plant and animal communities will try to follow warm-temperature zones as these head northwards. Those in Northern Italy will have to try to migrate over the Alps and those in Eastern Spain over the Pyrenees, while those in Western Spain and Portugal will find themselves migrating into the Bay of Biscany.★



The Gomeran laurel forest in the Canaries is the one surviving remnant of an ecology which once covered much of Mediterranean Europe.

I read that essay and was struck by its importance for us. Travel becomes ever cheaper. Less than 24 hours away on a coach is one of the nine most important terrestrial eco-regions on earth. Victories and defeats in this arena are of the utmost global importance. The same cannot be said of many of the places we have fought for in the last 10 years. As I said earlier, I do not mean to lessen the importance of those campaigns, and our many victories, only to point to the reality that they mean little when it comes to confronting global biological meltdown. For a whole host of reasons they should continue, but it's time for us to join other battles.

Looking at the map of the Med we can quickly come to some obvious basis for our action. Though there are conservationists in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey,[10] Libya, Egypt, Jordon and Syria, there are no radical ecological groups to link up with. Israel is the only country in the Near East with a listed EF! contact. Ecological struggles are of course going on but are largely off our radar.[11] Work should be carried out to rectify this situation, but to be brutally honest I don't fancy doing direct action in Morroco much. Ask the Saharawians about it! We should support struggling communities and aid conservationists if and where we can in North Africa and the Near East—but let's face it we're not likely to very much. However, unlike other hotspots we can get stuck in to a large part of the area relatively easily. We have contacts in the European half of the Mediterranean hotspot and getting there is a cinch.

It is within this area that some of Europe's most militant ecological action has been taken. In fact at the time of writing there are eco-saboteurs serving time in Spain (for fucking up construction of the Itoiz Dam), Italy (for trashing a high speed rail construction site in the Sosa Valley) and Greece (attempting to bomb the Ministry of Industry in solidarity with communities fighting mega-port construction). The struggles these prisoners are part of are all being fought by anarchist/radical ecological groups our scene is in direct contact with, and there are many more.

Looking for allies lets take a trip around the European section of the basin anti-clockwise. We start with Greece. Much of it is a red alert area and has a sizeable and very militant anarchist scene with a slowly increasing green hue. Albania has no established radical ecological groups. There are smatterings of anarchos and radical eco-types throughout the ex-Yugoslav republics.

Italy's anarchists are pretty full on and increasingly engaged in some ecological resistance (The Italian-French Maritime Alps red alert area is relatively near Turin's anarchists and the area someone is in jail for defending). Southern France also has many active groups from GM trashing Confederation Paysanne to anarchists, with the French Pyrenees being the site of the ten year resistance to the road through the Valle d'Aspe.

On the other side of the Pyrenees in Spain there are large anarchist groups and at present probably the biggest squatting movement in Europe. The Basque country (which borders the hotspot) has a history of mass struggles against mining, dams etc. with even ETA getting in on the act. The Spanish section of the Rif-Betique red alert area has become home for a sizeable British punk and crusty exile community. The Canaries red alert area (which despite being off Western Sahara is part of Spain) has a few environmental groups and like the Basque country has a (much smaller) nationalist movement with ecological tendencies.

Portugal has a number of together eco influenced anarchist groups and significant clashes continue between it's peasant past and the onslaught of modernity.

Over the last few years many of our circle have increasingly turned to the continent for adventure and action. The relatively low level of struggle in Britain since the end of the anti-road period, the rising [and now setting?] sun of the Spanish squatting scene, the strength of sterling, riot tourism, cheaper travel and the warmer climate of parts of Europe have all been factors. In the '90s the transient tribes of anti-road activists moved around Britain with little concern for distance. Now a similar situation is evolving for which the terrain is the whole of Europe.

This situation will expand significantly over the next decade. For while some of its causes have their origin in Britain's present,[12] others arise from the increasingly unified nature of Europe's planned future.

While this causes some problems for sustaining local organising in Britain it also opens up amazing opportunities.

Of the ten red alert areas, the ones nearest Mediterranean activist hubs are the Spanish section of the Rif-Betique, the Maritime Alps of the French/Italian border and southern/central Greece. Campaigns and targets in these areas should be relatively easy to find out about. *If we in Britain added our weight to our comrades in these countries and convinced other Northern Europeans to do so, we would be moving towards serious defence of a globally important area—making an actual impact on biological meltdown.*

Experience and contacts made through struggle in these 'easily accessible' three areas will chart the way forward towards action in other parts of the Med. A full scale migration is not needed. Some of our circle are planning to move to the Med's warmer climate. Many others are already wintering or taking small sojourns there. Significant contact has been made with groups in these

areas. All that is needed is that this pre-existing process be consciously and collectively shaped to the immediate goal at hand.

It is important in some areas to join local campaigns. In others, covert holiday sabotage is more in order. The latter is really just a call for the European adoption of one of North American EF!'s longest running tactics—roving monkeywrenching. With the consolidation of the European super-state, travelling across borders to trek into and defend wildness seems ever more like crossing US states to defend wilderness. A practice, despite the distance, our North American friends think little of.

The Remaining 15 Hotspots

I am not going to go into much detail about the remaining hotspots; it would take too much space and be rather repetitive.

Of the 15, all bar three are in the Majority World; countries at the moment largely out of our direct reach. As stated earlier, active ecologically minded groups in the hotpots should be given priority when it comes to support actions and funding. We do, in fact, have contacts in most of these areas. Some EF!ers do conservation work abroad and it would make sense that it is concentrated within the hotspots. If we can be of any practical help to efforts in these areas we should muck in wholeheartedly.

Three of the remaining 15 stand out, for us, if only because they're predominately English speaking and 'Western'—South West Australia, New Zealand and the Californian Floristic Province. In all three areas serious land battles are being fought and we have quite extensive contacts.

Aoterea: In Aoterea (New Zealand) there is a large indigenous resistance movement keyed into the PGA. There is also a sprinkling of anarchos and radical eco-types.

South West Australia: This region has a history of aboriginal land defence stretching from the invasion to the present day. The last three decades have also seen significant struggles by white radical environmentalists, defectors to the side of the indigenous and the land. When EF! first came to Britain, Australia was probably at the forefront of ecological resistance in the 'West'. Large-scale actions against the importation of tropical timber were carried out hand-in-hand with direct land defence. Over the last decade this scene has

Some (Don't) Like it Hot(spot)

While this section leans heavily on the hotspot theory, for good reasons, it is merely a system of global priority setting and thus should not become ideology. At base the very utility of such a project can be questioned—is global (rather than local) thinking possible or even desirable? Should our objectives be taken from cold, scientific number crunching? Unfortunately I think our time and geographic location force us to such analysis if we are to have an impact on biological meltdown. Other biological priority systems are out there but if we accept the need to go in this direction I reckon the hotspot theory offers the best route.

On a similar tack we should not see species diversity as a measure of the 'value' of specific ecologies. The basic tenant of biocentric thought is after all that wild nature has value in and of itself. The kind of discourse that leads to telling phrases like 'species richness' is poor substitute for a real connection with nature. In relation to Red Alert areas a true holistic/whole ecosystem approach is essential. There is after all little point protecting a habitat if, outside the protected area, the river that 'services' it is dammed or re-directed.

There is one deep worry I have about the hotspot theory—maybe it's simply too hopeful.

It concentrates on those highly diverse areas at imminent high risk of desolation. It's global > regional > local priorities are Hottest of the Hot > individual hotspots > Red Alert areas within the Hotspots.

By concentrating on those precious areas most at threat we are possibly concentrating our energy in those areas in which we are most likely to lose.

This is a dilemma worth pointing to because other strategies are available—though ones with more depressing conclusions. This then swings on one's calculation of the collective power that ecological direct action, conservation biology, enlightened bureaucrats (ha!) and popular movements can muster. I choose to believe that we can have some serious impact in the hotspots, but it would not be exactly illogical to think otherwise. Many of the Red Alert areas specifically and some of the hotspots in general are probably doomed. It might make more strategic sense to concentrate instead on the less devastated/domesticated areas (the big rainforest wildernesses not included in the hotspots) making links and preparing for battles to come. This 'Long War' strategy of concentrating on the 'cold spots' (Amazon, Congo, New Guinea) is attractive but it does take as a given that a vast % of global biodiversity is unsaveable. I choose more hope than that—for now. A reappraisal of the situation should happen in maybe 10-15 years. If our trouble-making and conservationist money hasn't resulted in victory in at least some hotspots then a switch of strategy would seem in order.



Redwood Summer logging road blockade.

shrunk but is still never the less both active and pregnant with great possibility. Australians have been responsible for some of the largest summit actions of the Global Resistance Period. It has the normal assortment of anarchists—many being very eco in word and deed.

For obvious reasons there is a reasonable amount of three way traffic between Britain, Australia and New Zealand. While these areas are not as important or threatened as some other hotspots higher up the global diversity/threat hierarchy, for cultural reasons it is simply more likely that links will continue and consolidate with these areas.

Californian Floristic Province: This hotspot is probably the one we have historically had most ties with. Though the latter '90s have seen an increasing turn towards 'Europe', in the early '90s British EF! orientated itself primarily with reference to North American EF! By the time of the birth of our movement EF! had internationalised, yet it was still very much a North American export. For this reason I will go into more detail about the only hotspot found predominantly in North America.

The Californian Floristic Province stretches along the western coast of North America, most of it within the state of California. However, it also extends north into Oregon and south into Baja California, Mexico.

Approximately 60% of California's land is included within the floristic province. The total number of plant species present is greater than that for central and northern US and the adjacent portion of Canada, an area almost ten times as large.[13]

This rich biodiversity is seriously threatened. California is the most populous of the United States, its economy ranks among those of the world's top seven countries and it produces half of the food the US consumes. Among the main threats faced by this hotspot are urbanisation, air pollution, expansion of large scale agriculture, livestock grazing, logging, strip mining, oil extraction, road building, the spread of non-native plants, an increasing use of off-road vehicles and the suppressing of natural fires necessary for reproduction of key plant species.[14]

In defending this region against attacks North American EF! has had some of its most memorable moments. The massive Redwood Summer campaign which led to the carbombings of EF!ers Judi Bari and Daryl Cherney. The amazing direct action victory at Warner Creek, the killing of EF!er David Chain by a logger from Pacific Lumber. Two Eugene radical eco-anarchists are serving long sentences in the region for arson attacks on an off-road vehicle showroom.

In the early '90s we did quite a few solidarity actions for our North American friends. More recently most have been for Majority World groups. Those actions should continue but we should not neglect supporting North American EF!, especially in its struggle over this immensely important hotspot. Apart from the Mediterranean Basin, this hotspot is the one people from our circles visit more than any other. Big wilderness, cheap flights and an impressive (English speaking) movement will continue to be a pull for many. What we can offer those defending this hotspot is regular communication, occasional solidarity actions and itinerant Brits. Well, it's better than a bag of beans.

Defending the Land: Medium Term Global Objectives

Here, I am attempting to set, using the hotspot theory and an understanding of our strengths, a hierarchy of our top global *biological* objectives for the next ten years.

In many ways this seems ridiculous. However, in 1992 we set ourselves the task of stopping 600 roads which were ripping through a significant proportion of Britain's most important habitats. Within five years 500 had been cancelled. I am confident that unified action can have a momentous effect. Those who believe less than I in our cumulative power should see the utility of strategising all the more clearly. Here then is what I think our top global objectives should be, in order of their importance to us.

1) Get Militant in the Med: A big push is needed to directly defend the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. It is the only one of the 'top 9' found in the 'West' and the only hotspot to include part of Europe. Over the next few years we should consolidate links with Basin groups and start to engage directly in action within it. The Med's 10 'red alert areas' are of greatest importance. Of these the Maritime Alps, the Spanish section of the Rif-Betique and Southern and Central Greece should be our first concern. Involvement in resistance in these areas should build our ability to engage and support struggle elsewhere in the northern part of the hotspot. Within a relatively short period of time we could be involved in serious defence of a globally important area—making an actual impact on biological meltdown.

2) Uncompromising Aid for the Three Most Threatened Hotspots: The Philippines, Madagascar and the Caribbean are the priorities at the moment, yet as we are unlikely to actually get to them they are not our highest objective. However we should target solidarity and aid to radicals, resisters and conservationists in these three hotspots as a matter of urgency. Of the three it is with the Philippines that we have most extensive links—these should be consolidated. Filipino EFIers and anarchists should be given substantial aid. [Since this was first distributed EFIers from Leeds have formed the 'Philippine Solidarity Group', providing practical aid for EFI and indigenous groups there. This has included direct financial aid, on-the-ground solidarity, prisoner support etc.]

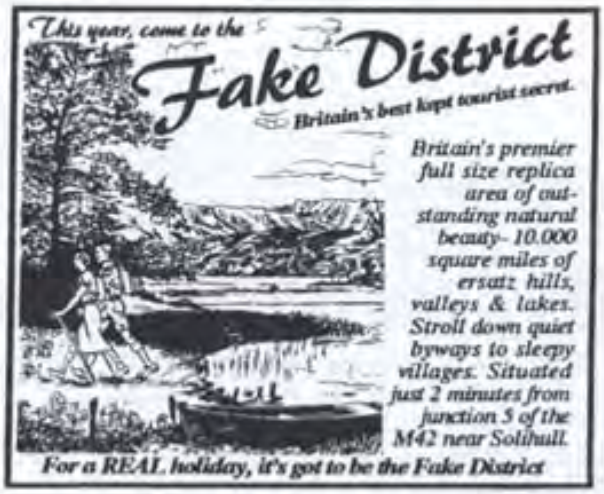
3) Go Wild for the 'Western' Hotspots: For various cultural and economic reasons our direct involvement with struggles is more likely in 'Western' countries than Majority World ones. The areas under occupation by the 'West' largely do not appear in the hotspot list. Apart from the Med and a small part of the Caribbean, those that do are South Western Australia, New Zealand and the Californian Floristic Province. Already existing links should be solidified, solidarity actions carried out and the steady flow of our visitors to these hotspots should continue. Just remember to wrench at least one big machine for each long-haul flight!

Beyond this we should do anything we can to assist the preservation of all hotspots, not just those mentioned above. Wild areas not included in the hotspots should of course also be defended. However if we want to have any meaningful impact on biological meltdown, as much of our activity as possible should be aimed at the hotspots in general and the above objectives in particular.

Back to Britain, Back to Reality

So far I have charted what I believe we should do on the global terrain. Yet most of what we have done over the last decade has been defending the land of these dear isles. I am not calling for abandonment of this struggle. It is important for both us and the ecology of Britain. It is also what we have shown ourselves to be pretty good at. Hundreds of habitats remain living due to ecological direct action. Kiss the earth and feel proud. We—among many—have done well.

Though many of us will take action in the global hotspots, few will spend most of our time there. One criticism of following a hotspot based global triage strategy is that it lacks soul. Species diversity surveys do not an ecological sensibility make! While that's true, the global crisis calls for *globally* important action and I believe that the hotspot theory has utility. Yet acceptance of the *globally* peripheral nature of British habitat defence does not extinguish our desire or duty to defend *our* land. An authentic land ethic must be rooted in where we are. My bioregion may be 'species poor' compared to a rainforest but I love it. It's the bracing wind on its bright hills that whisper to me to live wilder. On a totally practical level it's far easier to defend land nearby.



As I said earlier in Part One, throughout the 1993-1998 Land Struggle Period our action priorities were largely set by the Department of Transport. When we decimated the state road building program we lost a terrain of struggle that unified and strengthened us nationally. The question posed, then, is what is the greatest and most geographically spread threat to British ecology?

The tactically unfortunate answer is industrial agriculture.[15] The 'great' thing about road building was that wherever you were in the country it produced a front to attack, land to defend. It bit into Britain's ecology in big bites. The terrible thing about industrial agriculture is that though it devours more, it does so incrementally, with small bites. Fronts rarely present themselves. The camps at Offham,[16] The Land is Ours occupations and trespasses,[17] and most of all the growth of anti-GM actions, are all in part attempts to bypass this impasse.

The post 1998 wave of global resistance allowed us to totally side step the question of what land to defend (of course, some camps continued but little on the previous scale). Now we are faced once again with this question. Essentially without a national programme to attack, the question divides further—at least from the perspective of strategy. There are three categories of British land habitat defence to take into consideration:

a) Bio-regional Habitat Defence. Specific local sites under threat that may not be perceived as either ecologically or strategically national priorities should none the less be defended by local groups.
b) National Co-ordinated Habitat Defence. Land deemed ecologically or strategically[18] of prime national importance, which the movement as a whole can recognise and act on.
c) Defence of the Wild Periphery. Areas beyond the bioregions of any local groups and far from large population centres that have some character of wilderness about them.



The Tory road building programme provided obvious national focus. The campaign against the Newbury bypass was a battle in which people from all over Britain took part.

With roads, local bio-regional habitat defence fed into national co-ordinated habitat defence. Any terrains which mirror this hugely advantageous situation should be pursued. At the moment I can see no such terrain, but let's keep a look out! I'll go through each category in order with some suggestions.

Bio-regional Habitat Defence: Essentially this is a question for us as individuals, groups and hopefully eventually as local counter-cultures. We should be intimately aware of the ecologies around us. Only through a deep knowledge of, and connection with the land can we hope to defend our bio-regions from further damage. Looking at local biodiversity studies[19] is worthwhile, but it is our feet across the landscape that is most informative. Get out into the countryside around you. Make sure you are familiar with the wildness on your doorstep. Know your land and you'll know when it's threatened.

Put yourself about in peculiar circles. Conservationists, twitchers, ramblers, insect lovers; in most areas there are a smattering of nature nerds. If you're not one, make sure you're friends with some. They'll know about the housing development that'll destroy ancient woodland or the farmer who's draining some amphibian rich marshland for subsidies. Keep your ear to the ground.

Many of our most important habitats are listed as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. SSSIs are Britain's ecological backbone, but nevertheless are often threatened. Make sure to keep an eye on the ones nearby.

I am not going to go into detail about what tactics are needed in local battles. After 10 years it's pretty obvious. Community mobilising, occupations, blockades, bulldozer pledges, sabotage. Threatening the destroyers with costly chaos and giving it to them if they try it on.

Nationally Co-ordinated Habitat Defence: Since Newbury/Manchester there hasn't been a piece of land that we have all pulled together to defend. This has been a great shame. Together we are quite a force/farce to be reckoned with. National co-ordination has some real advantages. For a start it maintains our circle's bad reputation, which is invaluable. Countless sites have been saved with just the threat of camps and direct action. However, significant and loud struggles are needed to keep this threat potential alive.

Beyond tactical considerations, some ecosystems are simply so precious they call upon us all to cram into crummy vans, meet joyously in the mud and fuck shit up. Above all else, these moments can be bonding, inspiring and educational (when they don't go horribly wrong).



Many targets such as the Hillgrove cat breeding farm were forced to close in a cycle of success for animal liberationists. The cycle only came to a close when the state put its full financial backing behind Huntingdon Life Sciences.

When deciding whether a particular piece of land should be coalesced around nationally, a few questions should be asked. Is it highly ecologically important? Is it winnable? Is it easily accessible nationally? Is the actual physical terrain conducive to action? Will a victory or noisy defeat on this land help save habitats elsewhere?

Mid to late 2001 saw the re-emergence of direct action in defence of the Thorne & Hatfield raised peat bogs. To all the above questions this habitat answers with an enthusiastic YES! At the risk of seeming foolish from the perspective of a few years hence, I believe this campaign to be immensely important. Not only does its re-emergence allow us to co-ordinate nationally but direct victory is quite conceivable. [Since this text was first distributed the campaign escalated and secured the end of peat extraction on Thorne & Hatfield and other sites. See the article in this issue for more details.]

Reform environmentalism has spectacularly failed to save this hugely ecologically precious habitat. If we win this battle and choose our next equally well we could end up in a cycle of success. One noisy victory leads to another and many quiet ones besides.

A recent good example of such a cycle is when animal rights groups got on a roll after closing down Consort, who bred dogs for vivisection.[20] Once they had shown their mettle by closing Consort they followed up by forcing closed Hillgrove (cat breeders) and Shamrock Farm (a monkey quarantine centre). By the time the cycle reached Regal (rabbit breeders), the owners were so freaked that they packed up the day after the campaign was launched!

These successes understandably led animal liberationists to become too cocky too quickly and take on a much bigger target—Huntingdon Life Sciences. HLS is integral to corporate Britain. The state saw the danger of animal liberationists on a roll and realised that if HLS was brought down the 'animal rights extremists' would feel unstoppable. Smaller companies would crumble at the sound of their approach. Thanks in large part to the targeting of its financial backers things were getting economicaly dicey for HLS. The state reacted and stabilised the company by arranging a large injection of capital. From then on HLS has acted as a firebreak, stopping the spread of animal liberation. The cycle may have been broken. The teeth of this trap should not be allowed to cut into resistance again.

A comprehensive analysis of national land defence priorities is too big a job for this piece. Such a study must take place. For the moment we



Wild areas far from activist hubs should not be ignored. Habitats such as the Caledon forest remnants in the Cairngorms deserve our uncompromising defence.

can concentrate on the peat bogs, but we should not wait till victory to map out our next targets. It is around our ability to act nationally that our network survival (rather than just that of our local groups) rests. Previous waves of national action have been defeated by either our victory in a particular battle (i.e. roads) or the pig's success in swamping us (i.e. Sea Empress, Target Tarmac etc). Hopefully this time we'll get the wagon rolling fast enough that it can't be stopped—at least for a while!!!

One priority that can definitely be set is confronting corporations in the National Parks. As long as they succeed in one development, one quarry, one pipeline, the vampires will push on with another attack. It should be our job to make them scared enough to retreat—at least out of *some* of the National Parks.

The National Parks are immensely important and the hold they have over popular imagination makes them easier to organise around than other areas. It is also often easier to find out about threats facing the Parks. If the companies are given an inch they'll take a mile, but if their profits are threatened they'll run a mile.

The present Nine Ladies action camp in the Peak District National Park stands a fair chance of success, has strengthened the resolve of local conservationists and is deterring other destructive projects.

Defence of the Wild Periphery: Our movement for the wild has evolved in a physical and political environment lacking big wilderness. Habitats near large human population centres are more likely to defended by us than wilder and more precious ecosystems far from the cities. Wildness is everywhere from the grass between the paving slabs to the high mountains. It's good that we defend wild pockets in deserts of development (the M11, Abbey Pond, Crystal Palace etc.)—primarily for such struggles' (r)evolutionary potential—but we should not ignore 'the mountains' altogether. So far this has largely been the case.

With the exception of some good work in North Wales, the stillborn (but dramatic) campaign against the Skye Bridge and the victorious defence of the Pressmenan Woods Caledon remnant, defence of the wild periphery has been pretty paltry.

An example of our failures can be found in the Cairngorms—one of Britain's largest roadless areas. For at least 8 years I remember occasional campfire/pub chat about the possible construction of a funicular railway up Cairngorm. It's been very contentious as the train replacing the ageing chairlift (itself an aberration) will massively increase the amount of people on the Cairngorm Plateau (1,000 a day is a figure bandied about). With them we knew would come much damage and significant building work, shops and all. Plans are

even being discussed for hotels! This isn't fucking Mayfair—it's the summit plateau of one the wildest areas in Britain. Many said that direct action should be used if construction started. The project was put on hold at one point and I for one presumed it had been cancelled.

Yet no one kept their ear to the ground or acted if they knew. The first I heard about the railway being actually built was Autumn 2001 and on January 1st 2002 the first public train ride up Cairngorm was broadcast across the nation. A carriage filled with smiling politicians toasting the New Year—pass the sick bag (No wonder they were smiling—there was no way the parasitic slobs could have got up the mountain in January if they had had to walk it. That would have made far more amusing TV). The glint in their eyes was the reflection of our failure. If one of the last British bastions of wildness can become a site for development, what chance have we got of re-wilding London or Liverpool!

In the Cairngorms 10% of the area below the treeline is still covered by native woodlands and is the "most extensive example of Boreal forest in the UK and one of the largest tracts of comparatively unmanaged and still mainly unenclosed woodland."[21] If we have failed to defend the wildness of the Cairngorms Plateau it is essential we protect these remnants of Caledonia and other sites like them. Though a significant proportion of the massif is now under conservation ownership, a lot of damaging economic/ecocidal activity continues. If anywhere calls for some occasional monkeywrenching, it's these wildlands.

I use this example because it's horrific and it's in Scotland. If protecting SSSIs and the like is of primary national importance it is worth pointing to one simple fact: 20 % of the total area of Scotland is designated either an SSSI, National Nature Reserve, or National Scenic Area. Scotland's total species diversity is far less than England's but its habitats are far less fragmented.

"We have species and habitats in Scotland that are important, in both the national and international context. Examples are the native pinewoods, the extensive blanket bogs, the bryophyte-rich Atlantic woodlands and the enormous colonies of breeding seabirds"[22]

These areas should be militantly defended. Yet apart from the exceptional actions of some communities, few stand up to defend these wild areas from the threats of plantations, logging, development etc. In large part this is because of the absence of people in much of the Scottish countryside—excluded by one of the highest concentrations of land ownership anywhere in the world. Given this, it is all our responsibility to protect these areas. If not you, who? In the long run it would be good to formulate ways of confronting this destruction in a co-ordinated fashion. Until then, happy hikers with wrenches in their backpacks have an important role to play.

Unfortunately what makes Scottish bio-diversity globally unique—its climate edge position resulting in an amazing coexistence of species from different ecologies—is itself under threat from climate change. This should not dissuade us from action but remind us all the more of the need in times of flux for massive wilderness restoration: and situate our *local* British struggles in the *global* context. As one contributor at a conference on biodiversity in Scotland put it:

"Our Scottish action on biodiversity is in danger of being reduced to trivial tinkerings on the margin: another example of deckchair-shifting on the Titanic."[23]

As in Scotland, so it is across the divided queendom—many habitats main protection lies in their remoteness and the efforts of an array of often relatively powerless conservationists. Not even on this domesticated isle has the wild been vanquished, but it is under threat. I'm not going to specify the areas in need of special defence—across the wild periphery diversity is being whittled away. We are a people in love with the wild. We are committed to the wild—to its power and its defence. By spending more time 'out in it', we will better know which areas are threatened and gain the inspiration to take the action needed.

Many tens of thousands desire these areas, finding solace and strength in them. One of Newbury's greatest moments was when the state's use of climbers catalysed the involvement of many from the climbing fraternity. Those who took the state's silver were seen by other climbers for what they truly were—scabs, traitors to the land. A leading climbing magazine stated that what Britain's wild areas really need is a monkeywrench



Through walking the wildlands we become more able to defend them and unite with others who hold them in their hearts.



Even the Little Steepingford Ramblers' Association was not without its hooligan element.

gang unity forged between us, two tribes of the outdoors. I couldn't agree more.

Many committed to the wild will not engage in our (r)evolutionary organising. They may scent defeat and futility or simply disagree with our 'political' aims. This is understandable. Thumb in the Dam resistance enables those without hope for any positive change *in* culture to take action, by militantly defending wildness from negative change *by* culture. In this they can create hope for nature even if they see little hope for humanity. In the masses of climbers, walkers, hill runners and mountain risk freaks is an untapped force, that if unleashed could become a formidable biocentric army for the wild. Against such a force incursions like the Cairngorm Railway would have little chance.

Through walking the wildlands we become more able to defend them and unite with others who hold them in their hearts. As John Muir said: "One days exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books." Or a radical eco rag like this for that point.

Defending the Land: Immediate British Objectives

Having gone through each of the categories in turn I'll outline some objectives for British habitat defence. These I believe are realistic objectives, some of which we have already got our teeth into. In defending the wildness of our isles we can find both great peace and great excitement. We have shown ourselves capable of being adequate habitat defenders. Let us march on to the defence of many more.

1) Build Bio-regional Defence: Locally we should all continue to expand knowledge of our bioregions and take action when important habitats are threatened. Our ability to generalise the skills and confidence needed for direct action is what will protect areas.

2) Save Thorne/Hatfield Moors and Kick-start a National Cycle of Successes: Despite considerable success throughout the 90s direct action is often seen as a last stand rather than a tactic that wins. As a network we should pull together for a loud and undeniable victory which can catalyse others. The defence of Hatfield Moors is an excellent terrain of struggle. The habitat is very precious, on the brink of unrecoverable damage and yet it is winnable. It's strategically and ecologically in all our interests that the campaign succeeds. [The campaign has succeeded!]

3) Keep Camp Culture Alive: The high cost of evicting action camps is the reason many habitats are still alive. As recently as 2001 the state cancelled the Hastings Bypass when camps were threatened. Unfortunately the last few years have seen a steady decline in camps. If allowed to continue a decline in our threat potential to stop developments may follow. It's make or break time. We should do all we can—as predominantly urban activists—to keep camp culture alive; otherwise much of the ground gained by the Land Struggle Period could be lost.

At the time of writing there are only three ecological defence camps. The responsibility for aiding them lies with all of us—not just those groups nearest. Tat, cash and bodies are always needed on site. Next time the bailiffs go in we should descend en masse to kick shit, up costs.

Ok, so I sound a bit old school; after all many of us lived on camps but now choose not to. However we should not let *our* present cloud the continuing and future importance of camps. *For nearly ten years there has not been one month in which a camp hasn't held out against development. Let's make sure we can say the same in another ten.*

4) Increase Action on the Wild Periphery: Our movement for the wild has too long neglected the wild areas far from the cities. As many in our circles spend more time 'out in it' this action will increase. Let's remember to pack a wrench as well as our waterproofs!

A concerted effort should be made to push militancy among the many tens of thousands who walk the wild. We should aim to empower those who don't wish to 'join' our 'movement', but



nevertheless embrace the land ethic and want to defend the areas they love. Boltcroppers for every hiker!

Links should be consolidated with the small number of organisations representing non-ruling class interests in the wilder parts of the British countryside (prime among them of course the Crofters Union[24]).

We should build towards a future where we can make significant interventions on behalf of threatened habitats even when they are far from 'activist centres'. Until then, it's monkeywrench gang time!

Given the onslaught of climate change and the highly fragmented nature of British ecology—especially in England—ecological restoration is essential from a Thumb in the Dam perspective. Isolated reserves will be little use in the long term,



what is needed here is the regeneration of big ecosystems that can manage themselves. Before we are finished let's see bison and wolves in the Cotswolds!

Defending the Living Sea

Most of this earth is covered by sea. The oceans, birth place of all life. Despite civilisation's ravaging they remain wild. Two centuries ago Byron said it well:

"There is a murmur on the lonely shore. There is a society where none intrudes. By the deep sea and music in it's roar. Roll on thou deep and dark blue Ocean. Four thousand fleets sweep over thee in Vain. Man marks the earth with ruin. His control stops with the Shore."

Since Byron's time the fleets have grown. Huge factory ships sweep the seas leaving ruin in their wake; fisheries which must have seemed endless now brought to the edge by machines which must have been unthinkable;[25] giants of the sea hunted to extinction. Yet Byron is still right. The oceans are the largest wilderness left on earth, injured but untamed.

It is unlikely that the ecologies of the seas will suffer the fate of many of their land cousins: dehabilitated, denuded and finally enclosed within the prison of agriculture.[26] Yet many are under serious threat of being wiped out. In the seas are some of the planets oldest species and systems, survivors of hundreds of millions of years. Now, they drown in man.

Climate change, pollution, factory fishing, whaling, oil exploration and increasing volumes of shipping are some of the main threats to the oceans. How, if at all, can we combat these attacks?

As always, when looking into the chasm we have to accept that much of what is alive today will be dead tomorrow, whatever we do. Coral reefs are one example. Already climate change induced warming of high sea temperatures has killed most of the coral reefs in the Indian Ocean, Western Pacific and Eastern Pacific. Corals in the Caribbean and Brazil have also been badly damaged.[27] Given the time lag inherent in climate change, if we had global insurrection tomorrow (unlikely), we could still expect the death of most of our reefs and the life that depends on them. Depressing, but as the hackneyed old slogan goes: Don't Mourn, Organise! We CAN take some practical action to slow some assaults on the sea.

Despite the spectacular image of Greenpeace dashing around in natty zodiacs, relatively little direct action has been carried out to protect the seas. This is largely for entirely understandable reasons. We are, after all, land mammals and few of us spend much time at sea. When compared to the odd roll of poly-prop the cost of running anything sea-worthy is astronomical. Yet we in the British Isles are ideally placed to get to grips with the problem.

So far the only serious group to take Gaia's side on the oceans is the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Its founder, Paul Watson, declared: 'Earth First! is mother earth's army and we are her navy'. Their first action was the 1979 ramming and disabling of a whaling ship off the Portuguese coast. The whaler managed to limp into port only to be mysteriously bombed a few months later sunk with a magnetic limpet mine.

Since then Sea Shepherd has been confronting enemies of the oceans with an arse kicking



Two Sea Shepherd warriors (an American Indian and a Cornishman) send half the Icelandic whaling fleet to Davy Jones' Locker in 1986.

attitude. Slicing the nets of driftnetters, ramming and scuttling whalers, and sabotaging seal and turtle kills. As I write they are patrolling the waters off the Galapagos Islands. The last year has seen them make headway in eliminating the ecocidal ships attacking this immensely important area.[28] If they succeed it will be one of ecological direct action's biggest victories. It should be no surprise that they might be responsible. In fact, if it wasn't for Sea Shepherd, mass commercial whaling probably would have restarted, pushing numerous species to extinction.

Though predominately based in North America, Sea Shepherd has operated all over the world carrying out many operations in European waters. Most recently Norwegian and Faeroes whalers have been targets. Its mere presence has a serious deterrent effect. The Italian fishing industry halted its most damaging practices on hearing Sea Shepherd had entered the Mediterranean.

Though a smattering of Brits have crewed, the number is surprisingly small when you think how many of our mad lot it might appeal to. There are a number of reasons. Real lasting links have never been made between us and Sea Shepherd. Personality politics is also a factor. The figure of Captain Paul Watson is both immensely inspiring and deeply off-putting to circles with a dislike for hierarchy and the media. Our height was also their low. The mid to late '90s coincided with a relatively less active period for Sea Shepherd. That period has thankfully now ended with two large boats in the fleet and a growing international organisation.

Though few links exist now, if ever there is a meaningful attempt by our circles to contribute to the defence of the seas, we will have lots to learn from Sea Shepherd. A major driving force behind their success has been good strategy and well applied tactics. So let's have a look.

Most of Sea Shepherds most spectacular actions can be divided into two categories—Sea Confrontations and Harbour Sabotage. The terrain of struggle they operate in is one of both waves and laws. A lot of what they confront is illegal and often beyond state territorial waters. Political considerations make the extradition and jailing of anti-whaling activists difficult.

Sea Confrontations: Slicing driftnets and ramming enemies of the sea is what has made Sea Shepherd famous. The keys to the success of many SSCS sea confrontations is that they're militant—though 'non-violent', media friendly—though not merely stunts, carried out on an international level but rarely against Sea Shepherd host nations, largely against illegal activity, and regularly in international waters. The main key of course is having big fuck-off boats and crews committed enough to plough them into target ships. Keeping these ships running is expensive.

Harbour Sabotage: Sea Shepherd's most infamous action was a daring raid in 1986 that left half of Iceland's whaling fleet at the bottom of a harbour and its major processing plant trashed. This action needed only good intelligence, cunning, limited funds and two brave souls to open up the boats' sea water intake valves. By the time the action was discovered, the two, a Native American and a Cornishman, were on their way to the airport to leave Iceland forever. Since '86 Sea Shepherd has carried out other impressive scuttling, most notably against Norwegian whalers.

So far no-one in Sea Shepherd has served any major time for any of their actions! Despite SSCS glaring victories no other groups have successfully copied them by taking to the seas. It would be excellent if an autonomous Sea Shepherd-like organisation evolved in Europe. But with no such groups coming into existence, those who wish to take action at sea must join the long volunteer lists of SSCS.

Readers who have served aboard Sea Shepherd or have general maritime experience should seriously consider the need for a European addition to 'Neptune's Navy'.



Off-shore fish farming is set expand massively. Pictured above is the mechanical feeding of fish to fish. It takes approximately four tonnes of wild fish to feed one tonne of farmed fish.



The Sea Shepherd 2 gathers in driftnet. The flag emblems signify the number of Norwegian/Japanese etc. boats SSCS have rammed or sunk.

Much money and commitment would be needed to set it up, but it would be an immense asset to ecological resistance in Europe. Such a project, if handled right, could bring together energy and resources from a range of circles—radical eco-types, ex-members of Greenpeace's direct action units, animal liberationists & rights groups, ex-Sea Shepherd crew etc. Indeed, the years have proven that there is significant mass support for radical action at sea—especially when it comes to dosh. Two decades ago, a third of the cost of the first Sea Shepherd boat was put up by the RSPCA. The Faeroes campaign in '86 was funded mainly by English school children who raised £12,000 in a save-the-whale walkathon.[29]

While Sea Shepherd is alone in carrying out militant sea confrontations, the tactic of harbour sabotage has been taken up by others. Even here in Britain serious sabotage was carried out against seal cullers in the mid '70s, resulting in the destruction of one vessel and damage to another.[30] Across Europe a number of ecocidal ships have been scuttled. Recently, Norway has been the prime target.

On 11/12/01 one of Norway's main meat processing plants at Loften Dock was destroyed by fire, causing damage totalling at least £1.5 million. Five days earlier, the whaler Nehella had burned and sunk at the same dock costing £150,000. Another whaler, the Nybraena, was damaged when the factory fire spread to the dock. The Nybraena had been scuttled by Sea Shepherd agents in Christmas 1992, for which Norway sought in vain to extradite Captain Watson.

These recent actions also follow another action on 27/2/00. Then, another Norwegian whaling vessel, the Villduen, was destroyed when an explosion sunk the ship at its moorings. The blast collapsed the deck and the ship sank to the bottom of the harbour half an hour later. Sea Shepherd stated publicly that they were not responsible. It has always denied the use of explosives and this is what it said about the attacks. 'We neither take, nor condone actions that might result in any injuries. None the less, we are pleased for the whales!'[31]

While putting a new fleet afloat would take a lot of work, basic harbour sabotage takes few resources bar pluck. While the recent Norway bombing and arson were obviously very effective, monkeywrenching can be effectively done with just hand tools. An exact and proven guide to the subject has been written by Sea Shepherd Agent #013. S/he says in the intro:

"With the scuttling of ecologically destructive ships comes the possibility of doing tens of millions of dollars of economic damage. We are talking *megatage* here. The joy of bringing down a whaler can be one of the great pleasures in an eco-warrior's life. It can be the most treasured of feathers in one's spiritual war bonnet."[32]

S/he should know—the author was one of the team that scuttled the Nybraena in 1992.



Most coral reefs are now either dead or doomed. Retribution is needed.



Sea Shepherd 'escorts' dolphin-killing Mexican tuna boat away from Spotted Dolphin pod, 100 miles west of Guatemala.

We have looked at direct action tactics used in the defence of the sea and posited some possible conclusions. Now maybe it's worth looking at the situation around the British Isles directly. Beyond the unconfrontable cataclysms of climate change and the like, a variety of processes threaten the marine ecologies around our shores. The oil industry (especially expansion into the Atlantic frontier), factory fishing, industrial shoreline expansion, marine aggregate dredging and pollution.

In my opinion we can have little impact on pollution given the continuation of the system. It's a hydra with too many heads/outflow pipes. The odd concrete blockage might be good for press attention and a bit of justice, but it's not really meaningful.

Of the other threats, we have only done action against industrial shoreline expansion. The best example is the campaign against the Cardiff Bay Barrage, which though unsuccessful is credited with discouraging some other similar schemes. A similar struggle could soon arise at Dibden Bay on the edge of the New Forest. These campaigns are really just an extension of the land struggles, with the possible added excitement of zipping around in dinghies, so I will not go into detail here.

The oil industry at sea has been largely ignored by us bar the ridiculous debacle that was the Sea Empress Spill Anniversary Action. As it happened it would have been far better had we ignored it. (Though all credit goes to Reclaim the Valleys, who tried to rescue the situation when the organising group 'Cardigan Bay EF!' went AWOL on the day—after 70+ activists from around the country turned up!) So far only Greenpeace has done actions around the Atlantic Frontier. It is beyond me how with our present resources we could carry out *direct* defence of this globally important marine ecosystem—but let's at least get our grey cells working on the issue. Though it's not actually getting in the way on the Atlantic Frontier itself, blockades etc of Britain's oil infrastructure may be useful.[33] When jewels like the St. Kilda region are under threat, action must be taken.

As for factory fishing, Britain is both a base and a stopping port for fleets of driftnetters and klondkyers from around the world. Look through the eyes of agent #013 to see the work ahead.

Fishing quotas are resulting in the elimination of over half of the British fishing fleet. Unfortunately this is not automatically a cause for celebration. The elite are using the collapse of fish 'stocks' to eliminate small fishing boats while leaving large factory boats to trawl the seas. There is potential for some level of joint action by radical ecologists and militant fishing communities against big ships and the economic forces steering them. The barriers and conflicts which would need to be overcome to build such a unity are maybe too big and it's maybe too late already.

Aggregate dredging—aka quarrying the sea—is set to become a significant threat to marine life around this island. Massive expansion plans are afoot which among other things threaten 'fish stock breeding areas'. Fisherfolk in France have already shown their opposition, and ironically there could be a point of tactical unity between us around this attack. As far as I know, no one is organising on this.

Defending the Living Sea: Medium Term Objectives

I have been more vague when dealing with defending the living sea than I was when discussing defending the living land. This is not a reflection of their relative importance; just on our position today and the powers we have developed. Though hotspot style analysis does exist for the seas, it is both less developed, less accurate and, for us anyway, less relevant. As mentioned before, some of the most diverse marine ecosystems—such as many coral reefs—are probably doomed thanks to climate change. Nothing we can do will save them. However, I do believe there are some steps we can take to move towards the challenge of defending the living seas

1) Engage with Sea Shepherd: The SSCS has a UK contact but no office. We should build connections and aid them if possible. At the very least we should distribute their material and give

whatever support we can when their boats visit Britain. We should raise awareness of their mission and do solidarity actions if and when they are arrested. Despite reservations, more Brits should volunteer to serve aboard Sea Shepherd vessels.

2) Expand Neptune's Navy: There is no innate reason for the non-existence of European Sea Shepherd style boats. This project could take years to come to fruition but would be immensely valuable as both a tool for direct action and a training ship for marine wilderness defenders.

3) Sink 'Em My Hearties: No massive organisation is needed to scuttle a whaler or similar ship. Serious thought should go on before such action is taken. 'Illegal' whalers should primarily be targeted as they are presently trying to expand their 'harvest'. All that holds us back is our fear.

4) Investigate and Take Action off British Shores: Research needs to be done, similar in scope to that needed for British land habitats, to find out which marine ecosystems are both threatened and within our capacity to defend. Solid conclusions should lead to solid action, setting national priorities for action.



Our Isles host fleets of factory ships. A large purse-seiner (above) based in North East Scotland hauls in a catch of herring from the North Sea. How long will these Leviathans roam unhunted?

5) Skill Up: Our circles should try to increase our watery skills. Scuba, ships, zodiacs, sailing, navigation—whatever. Worse case scenario is we have a fun time with little political payoff. Best scenario is we have fun and prepare ourselves for campaigns to come.

Defending Living Culture

Radical ecology has always taken its cue from indigenous resistance. Our crossed wrench and stone axe symbol holds the very essence of our movement; a fighting unity between primal people and those deep in industrial society who want to wrench their way out.

While the Fourth World survives enveloped within the borders of some First World countries, most indigenous people live in the Majority World. In Europe, only a minority of Sami live in any way similar to our ancestors. Thus as with biological meltdown, the struggle against cultural meltdown calls us 'over the water'.

Beyond the core the tribes are everywhere under attack. Many are engaged in large-scale resistance to leviathan: the Papuans, the Zapatistas and the Ijaw for example. Our circles have already done quite a lot of action to support these indigenous communities and this should continue. Here I am less concerned with them (cultures with significant populations capable of major action), than with those small shrinking wild societies that if left without allies will undoubtedly soon perish. I cover the work needed to aid struggling indigenous communities later at length in Task IV—Supporting Rebellions Beyond the Core.

There are many scattered individuals trying to help *endangered* primal cultures but no solid network that enables them to co-operate internationally. The nearest to what is needed is Friends of People Close to Nature (FPCN). FPCN has carried out serious no-compromise work around the world. Unfortunately it revolves largely around a man who has severe problems working with other people and has dubious ideas around gender and race. Never the less, many practical things can be learned from this 'network'.

FPCN concentrates less on solidarity actions than with getting out there and helping directly. Two examples of some recent campaigns illustrate their attitude.

Within the territory of 'Tanzania' live the Hadzabe—East Africa's last gatherer-hunters. One band are typical. Pushed to the most marginal land, banned from using the only watering hole in miles unless they perform for tourists, their children abducted by soldiers and forced into schools; under siege from all sides by settlers & missionaries. While Western White trophy hunters armed with modern weapons zip around in Land Rovers decimating the local mega-fauna, Hadzabe hunters are jailed for hunting with bows and arrows



in their traditional lands. They don't have hunting licences, just an unbroken history thousands of years old.

FPCN activists visited the scattered camps to see how they could help. They provided basic humanitarian aid and protested against the local powers. Best of all, they hired a truck and rescued abducted Hadzabe children from enforced schooling and returned them to their families in the bush. There, as everywhere, missionaries are the advance guard of civilisation. The simple presence of 'Westerners' who decry the missionaries for the fools, charlatans and profiteers they are strengthened the tribal resolve.

"The hatred against these strangers grows among the Hadzabe. FPCN stands ready to sanction and assist with the burning out of churches on Hadzaland following a similar explosion where a church was completely destroyed by local tribespeople."[34]

Many thousands of miles away, the last gatherer-hunters surviving in the Philippines face similar threats. Like many tribes across the world, genocide has whittled down the Agta to the low hundreds. They are 'Red Book' humans! They have become landless refugees in their own land.

In 2001 FPCN raised £8,000 and purchased 10 hectares of stolen Agta tribal land in Dipuntian. This land is meant to be a base for a significant section of the Agta population and for action against local logging of the rainforest. FPCN have called for sorted Western visitors to help out on the reserve and in the resistance:

"I would suggest you stay here and look what can be done. Watch the non-hierarchic and soft way of Agta life, so you will perhaps love them and feel the need to protect them."[35]

FPCN is now trying to raise another £10,000 to buy an adjoining piece of land for another 100 Agta who want to stay. FPCN list a number of things western visitors can do at Dipuntian from 'watch the small scale loggers not to cut the trees to Keep missionaries out of the place. The Agta feel safer when foreigners are around."[36]

In Task IV I go into detail about practical work that can be done to support rebellions beyond the core, much of which is directly applicable to the defence of primal cultures. So to avoid repetition I will not go into tactical detail here. The two campaigns mentioned above provide good examples of what might needed to slow cultural meltdown.

Defending Living Culture: Immediate Objectives

I will draw out some objectives to further us on the path to aiding tribes in general and gatherer-hunters in particular.

1) Forge Links with Allies: A real effort needs to be made to link up supporters of gatherer-hunters interested in solidarity actions and direct aid. The lack of a well functioning network is hindering activity. [In the first published version of this text I advocated 'consolidating links with FPCN'. Unfortunately despite a lot of good will on the side of EF!ers FPCN's *leader* had been obstructive, rude and downright difficult to deal with from the start. Other problems specifically around FPCN and the Agta have also surfaced. Despite this I believe they have done more to help out gatherer-hunters than nearly any other Western group. This should not blind us to the group's serious problems, but instead underline the need for activists from our networks to learn from and in large part replace them.]

2) Provide Direct Aid to Gatherer-Hunters, Starting with the Agta: By aiding the Agta we can have a real impact on a perilous situation. Only £10,000 is needed to buy the adjacent land to the Dipuntian reserve. Raising a substantial proportion of the cash needed should not be impossible. Flights from Europe plus internal connections to the reserve cost just over £400. Once there living costs are low. This is an unusually cheap opening for on-the-ground support work, not to mention an amazing experience. Don't let this opportunity pass by! [People didn't - see below.]

The Agta are defenders of the local rainforest. Earlier I stated that the Philippines are one of the three hottest hotspots, in facing global biological meltdown one of our highest priorities. Here we have an opportunity to give direct aid and on-the-ground solidarity to an endangered gatherer-hunter community struggling to protect an ecology within one of the three hottest of the global hotspots, in one of the few Majority World countries with active

EF! groups. The importance of any action on this field cannot be overstated.

Any involvement by our circles with the Agta would act as a jumping board, extending experience and contacts—thus enabling similar work elsewhere. [In January of 2003 four Leeds EFlers went over to the Philippines with the express purpose of helping at Dipuntian and working with EF! Philippines. Meanwhile quite a few in the movement had pulled together around the inspirational sounding project and raised the needed funds for the second land purchase-through a mix of benefit gigs, beer selling, personal donations and grants. Unfortunately Dipuntian was definitely different than is publicity stated. As the EFlers said on return; "For the past year, much of SSP's work on the Philippines has centred around the FPCN project at Dipuntian... We provided publicity and volunteers, and secured funding to buy more land for the project. Having now visted and worked on the project we have made the decision to withdraw our support for it." While this was very disapointing, to say the least, the visit was by no means a waste of time. Not only did the 'fact finding mission' uncover some, unfortunate, facts—it also forged links with Agta bands elsewhere and tribes throughout the islands, as well as supporting Filipino EFlers. The Leeds visit achieved a number of decent things itself and has opened up the way to further, targeted action. More info can be found on continuing work and the probems involved on : www.eco-action.org/ssp.]

3) Reconnect with Young Lions EF!: Six years ago Young Lions EF! (South Africa) were aiding the San Bushman, setting up 'bush skill' training camps where elders taught the old knowledge to 'assimilated' San. The last we heard from them they were planning to smuggle a considerable number of San back into the Kalahari desert from which they had been expelled. We have heard nothing since despite some attempts at contact. YLEF! were an exceptional group, we must hope they're alright. Serious attempts should be made to find out what happened and aid them if they are still active.

4)Continue to Build Indigenous Solidarity Work: Those struggling indigenous peoples we have aided so far (Ogoni, Ijaw, Papuan, Bougainvillian, Zapatista etc.) deserve our support. This will involve a lot of activity, but we are well on our way. A detailed look at what is needed can be found in Task IV. The last wild peoples call us 'over the water'. I know some of us will answer them, yet we must be very careful not to cause damage with our good intentions—'Mosquito Coast' style. These are incredibly delicate situations. Tribal people already have a plague of 'do gooders', what they need is allies. "Most tribes have no voice.They need people like us as allies because all the other potential allies have agendas they want to impose in return for help. They are fighting for freedom, not for rights within our culture. Since freedom doesn't exist in our culture then theirs is truly the same."[37]

Task Conclusion: Warriors for the Earth

To the land of these Isles most of us will return one day—dying, rotting, giving life. Until then, the wind and soil in our soul should direct us. When our leaps halt machines, our scythes cut through experiments, our wrenches disable diggers and our matches start fires—we are the land.

Though we love this land, we love this entire earth and thus the *global* crisis calls us 'over the water'. In the biological/cultural meltdown Britain's diversity is marginal. To confront the meltdown we will need to join the battle to defend the earth's last big wildernesses—on land and at sea. However, many of us will be unable to reach these global ecological frontlines and will have to fight to preserve fragments behind enemy lines. Above all else, the wild areas in the Mediterranean call us.

To slow cultural meltdown, the last remaining wild peoples must be aided in every way. If most of our species are ever to break out of this nightmare of our own making and find our way back to the earth, we will have a lot to learn from them.

Back in Britain, let's expand and escalate our action. In the conflict over road building ecological direct action took on the STATE and WON. Let's zero in on particular attacks on wildness and stop them one after the other.

We have the power to defeat some of civilisation's attacks on the wild, both here and in the hotspots; will we unleash it? While community mobilising may win the day in some battles, sometimes 'vanguard' action is called for. Here lies a contradiction for us. The militant action needed could in fact alienate and hinder the (r)evolutionary process. It could result in increased state repression and a cut in public support. These are big problems but do not mean we should preclude militant action—for the price may be worth paying. After all, Thumb in the Dam struggles aim to protect ecological diversity while waiting not just for the *possibility* of global (r)evolution but the certainty of industrial collapse. As warriors for the earth we must put the earth first!★

Notes

1) From Harrison Ford's (!) intro to: *Hotspots: Earth's Biologically Richest and Most Endangered Terrestrial Ecosystems* by Russel A. Mittermeher, Norman Myers and Christina Goettsch, ISBN 9686397582
2) *Conservation Biology* by ME Soule and Bruce A. Wilcox, Eds., p. 166
3) 'The Chartist Anthem', in *The Jolly Machine: Songs of Industrial Protest and Social Discontent From the West Midlands* by M. Raven.
4) *Hotspots*, p. 37
5) *Ibid.* A number of the hugely important major tropical wildernesses are not presently included in the hotspot list They are Amazonia, the Congolian Forest Block of Central Africa, New Guinea (i.e. West Papua and PNG), the Melanesian Islands—New Britain, New Ireland, Northern Solomons (i.e. Bougainville and Buka), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These areas are all under some level of attack—some heavy—but they all retain over 25% of their original area untrashed. The team that wrote *Hotspots* are in the process of writing a report on these areas. While they need defence, from the perspective of *global* triage they are not *presently* areas of highest *global* priority. Of course if industrialism continues for much longer these areas will almost definitely join the global habitat 'red list'.
6) While the Philippines does not appear in the overall 'top 9' list; when looking at plant endemism alone it is ranked ninth highest of all the hotspots.
7) Caribbean Environment Watch produce a useful newsletter: CEW, 141 Coldershaw Road, Ealing, London, W13 9DU.
8) Cubans grew one of the largest anarcho-syndicalist movements in the world. Though its height was in the 1920s it was still a significant force when Castro rose to power. Armed resistance to the communist counter-revolution ended in jail for well over 100 anarchists. Many companeras were killed and hundreds more went into exile.
9) Important issues must be faced when supporting mainstream conservation programs in the Majority World which too often just shit on local people. Though conservation fiefdoms are in many ways just another form of colonialism they may still be the best hope for some species survival through this century. A prickly reality. It matters little to a bear how oppressed its killer is and the sap still spurts whether the tree is cut with the axe of a peasant or the chainsaw of a company logger. In the war between humanity and nature, I side with the bears. Nevertheless multinational conservation organisations awash with money make questionable allies!
10) As well as mainstream conservationists some Turkish anarchists have recently done anti-GM actions—hopefully an indication of the greening of that scene.
11) This is for many reasons—not least of which relates to language and Britain's colonial past. It is no surprise that many of the majority world groups we Brits have linked up with have been in ex-British colonies and/or Christianised countries. We need to go beyond this and forge links across these divides. So for some of the countries in the Med the kind of work needed for most other hotspots is called for. It is likely that groups in Spain, Italy etc. will be able to connect us up to groups in these areas better. For example, French anarchists, for reasons connected to their own country's colonial past, are much more aware of the 2001 Berber uprising in Algeria than British activists.
12) The desire to escape the boredom of much of our present activism. The state repression of travellers. The squeezing of dole autonomy. High land prices and repressive planning law.
13) *Hotspots*, p. 177
14) *Hotspots*, p. 182
15) See 'Farmageddon: Confronting Industrial Agriculture', *Do or Die* No. 7, p. 40
16) See 'Victory at Offham', *Do or Die* No. 6, p. 62
17) See 'South Downs Mass Trespasses '98; Notes on Packed Lunches and Revolution', Anon., South Downs EF!
18) Ecological and strategical importance are fundamentally different. Strategical importance relates to us, our abilities and what effect action at a specific site will have on our growth or collective power. Ecological importance relates to the intrinsic value of sites irrespective of our ability to defend them.
19) At the Rio Earth Summit nonsense in 1992, governments said they would catalogue their countries' biodiversity. The card-filers of the apocalypse have been busy and you can check out their handy work on the UK Biodiversity Website: www.ukbap.org.uk The website is being added to constantly and you can search it for particular habitat types nationally or locally, or look at biodiversity in your county generally. Some of the website is very useful, other parts blather.
20) The move into a cycle of large-scale daytime national mobilisations was a significant shift in strategy for animal libbers—catalysed by the unexpected mass explosion of the live export protests (See 'Shoreham: Live Exports and Community Defence', *Do or Die* No. 5, p. 75). After the significant victories of the '80s against vivisection and fur farming animal libbers looked to escalate action against the largest cause of animal suffering in Britain. Their target—industrial agriculture. Their action against the meat/dairy industry—a vast target to say the least—though dramatic (just look at those meat trucks burn!) was a failure. Few animals were saved and the *entirely* covert nature of the activity seriously cut into 'recruitment' and 'outreach'. Industrial agriculture is just too big a target. Ironically the live export resistance opened a way out of this impasse.
21) *Common Sense and Sustainability: A Partnership for the Cairngorms—Executive Summary*, The Scottish Office, p. 4
22) *Biodiversity in Scotland*, The Stationary Office, ISBN 0114958157
23) *Ibid.* p. 287. Read: 'No Evolution Without Revolution: The Political Ecology of Wolves, Beavers, Sheep and Deer', *Do or Die* No. 6, p. 34
24) While crofters are some of the best allies of the Highlands and Islands nothing is without its contradictions. The growth of hugely damaging salmon farms is one example. The Crofters Union has recently been in increased contact with Via Capensinal, the global peasant network which includes among others the Karnataka farmers and the *Confederation Paysanne*. For a good intro to reality for today's crofters read: *The Story of Crofting in Scotland* by Douglas Willis, ISBN 0859763447
25) See: 'Over Fishing: Causes and Consequences', *The Ecologist*, March 1995.
26) Though still globally minor in scale industrial 'mariculture' is set to grow massively over the next few decades. From the salmon farms of the Scottish Hebrides to the slaveing of Caribbean fisheries, civilisation is attempting to manage sealife as it does landlife. All over the world considerable struggles are being waged between traditional fishers and industrial sea farming. See: 'Taking the Pisces: Struggles of the Fishworkers of India', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 251
27) 'Wildlife in Danger', *The Ecologist*, March 1999.
28) The Galapagos Islands are one of the two exceptional mini-hotspots which Myers et al. see as global priorities on a par with the 25 conventional hotspots.
29) 'Occurrences in the Ferocious Isles', *EF! Journal*, September 1986.
30) The 1974 seal cull ship sabotage at Sutton Bridge was one of the first acts of the Band of Mercy, predecessor of the ALF. See: *Animal Warfare: The Story of the Animal Liberation Front*, David Henshaw, ISBN 0006373240, p. 15
31) Notorious Vessel Meets Explosive End! : www.seashepherd.org/research/international/villduen.html
32) 'How to Sink Whalers, Driftnetters, and other Environmentally Destructive Ships' by Sea Shepherd Agent #013, p. 343 in *Ecodefence*, Ed. Dave Foreman, ISBN 0963775103
33) See: 'Putting a Spanner in the Oil Industry's Works', *Do or Die* No.7, p. 66
34) 'Hadzabe: East Africa's Last Hunting and Gathering Tribe', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 267
35) For more information see: www.eco-action.org/ssp
36) 'Hadzabe: East Africa's Last Hunting and Gathering Tribe', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 267
37) 'Tribal Round-up', *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 264

III
Preparing for Crises

We must have the ability to defend ourselves, survive, and exploit crises in society including capitalist attempts to destroy us. The divided and industrial nature of today's society has already determined the instability of tomorrow.

"It is difficult for the British with their tradition of stability to imagine disorders arising beyond the powers of the police to handle, but already there are indications that such a situation could arise, and this at a time of apparently unrivalled affluence..."

"If a genuine and serious grievance arose, such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts and produce a situation which was beyond the power of the police to handle. Should this happen the army would be required to restore the position rapidly. Fumbling at this juncture might have grave consequences even to the extent of undermining confidence in the whole system of government."

—General Sir Frank Kitson , ex-Commander-in-Chief of UK Land Forces.



"Imagine having no running water to drink.
Chemicals contaminate the pipes leading to your sink.
Just think, if the grocery stores close their doors,
And they saturate the streets with tanks and start martial law.
Would you be ready for civil war?"
—dead prez.

The Myth of Stability



The myth is that though we may see crisis on the TV in other countries, Western Europe will be forever stable. This is an idea that our generation holds; other living generations are not so ahistorical—they, after all, have lived through history.

Our grandparents experienced the Second World War and all of its horrors and the cold war partition of Europe. Many of our parents were teenagers during the fall of the Spanish and Portuguese fascist regimes in the '70s, the rise and fall of the CIA-backed military coup in Greece, the May '68 revolt in France and serious social conflict in Italy in the '70s, to name but a few of Western Europe's recent crises. Not to mention internment of radicals, soldiers on the streets for nearly thirty years, bombings and guerrilla warfare in Northern Ireland.

For those who think 'that sort of thing couldn't happen here' it's worth remembering that Britain came perilously close in 1968-75 to a military coup spearheaded by leading industrialists, high ranking army officers and members of the secret services.[1]

Social crises are regular occurrences in societies based on class warfare.

The Living Earth in Crisis

The crises we've known are likely to look pretty minor compared to what's on the horizon. Climate change and biological meltdown are already kicking off serious crises, killing hundreds of thousands and the ride hasn't even got going yet. The extremes of ecological instability are most visible at the ecological extremes—the Tropical, Arctic and Antarctic zones. However the evolving global crises WILL reach us in the Temperate zone. Things are gonna go a bit fucking weird. There is no way out of it; the ecological effects of yesterday's industry have already decided the ecological instability of tomorrow.

If the climate and life support systems of the earth destabilise, you can guarantee that society will also.

The Megamachine in Crisis

Economic crisis, though connected to crises arising from class struggle and ecological destabilisation, are capable of creating chaos in their own right. In the last five years of the twentieth century a wave of economic crises crashed whole economies; Albania, Russia, the Asian Tiger countries. In a globalised system the collapse of one economy can create a domino effect. For those assimilated into these fragile economies living standards get worse. Many people simply cannot afford to let things continue as they are.

The Indonesian uprising which ousted Suharto and the 1997 insurrection in Albania[2] show what happens to regimes when their economies collapse. So, unfortunately, does the depression era rise of the Nazis.

Thanks to heavy economic manoeuvring West European societies have not experienced the destabilisation that has swept East Asia and the Second World in the last decade. Their economies are inherently less robust than those of the core capitalist countries, but that does not mean that the core capitalist countries are 'untouchable'.

Listen hard—you can hear the crash before the impact.

The Flesh in Crisis

The mass nature of industrialism—a society evolved to consolidate oppressor order—itself produces mass 'personal' disorders in the oppressed. Incremental changes in mental and physical health can seem trivial until a threshold is reached. Under certain circumstances these personal disorders can seriously re-order civilisation.[3]

With herd medicine and transport systems turning humanity ever more into a mono-culture, we can expect future epidemics to reap an unparalleled harvest of heads. In the mean time a divided society will continue to create divisions, not just between people but within people. Despite the glossy charade, such a fractured society is always on the edge of implosion. As in the past, it is just



a matter of time and chance how soon it will be before the personal becomes political in a cataclysmic fashion.

Crisis Breeds Change

For all the reasons stated above it is highly likely that British society will be hit by serious crises within our lifetime. Any movement that does not take this into consideration is unlikely to survive. Crises by their very nature contain truckloads of both danger and possibility. Crises are moments of the extreme and when the shit hits the fan people look for extreme solutions.

Times of sudden (r)evolutionary possibility often arise out of war, chaos and social collapse. The period after both world wars saw massive revolutionary waves. The First World War brought us the Russian revolution as well as workers and peasant uprisings across much of Europe. The Second World War seriously damaged much of the social fabric of empire leading the way to insurgencies across the Third World. In turn the horror of the Vietnam War opened up fault lines across American society.



While insurrections have often arisen out of crises, crises may not be fertile ground for harmonious social (r)evolution. Though people look for extreme solutions, there are no 'pre-ordained' reasons why they will turn to anarchist ideas rather than authoritarian ones. In fact libertarian tendencies in the people are likely to be heavily curtailed when confronted with the interwebbed complexity of industrial society, peoples alienation from their own food and the scale of modern warfare.

"Read no more odes my son, read timetables:
they're to the point. And roll the sea charts out
before it's to late. Be watchful, do not sing,
for once again the day is clearly coming
when they will brand refusers on the chest
and nail up lists of names on people's doors.
Learn how to go unknown, learn more than me:
To change your face, your documents, your country.
Become adept at every petty treason,
The sly escape each day and any season.
For lighting fires encyclicals are good:
And the defenceless can always put to use,
As butter wrappers, party manifestos,
Anger and persistence will be required
To blow into the lungs of power the dust
Choking, insidious, ground out by those who,
Storing experience, stay scrupulous: by you."

—Hans Magnus Enzenburger

Hope for the Best—Prepare For the Worst

Once again this is where I depart from what I've earlier called the 'It'll be all right on the night' tendency. Two factors that are likely to in part decide what happens in a crisis are:

1) How well known are anti-authoritarian ideas?

In crises peoples perception of the possible widens. Ideas, which under normal circumstances are rejected out of hand, in moments of crises can be judged and seen to be sensible. However, they can only be judged if they have been put forward in the past. Thus anti-authoritarian educational work to the non-aligned[4] majority today, can influence decisions over aims and forms of organisation they make in crises tomorrow.

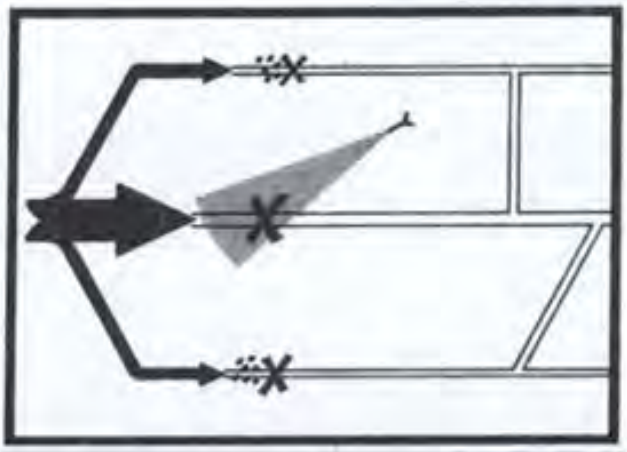
2) How experienced and organised libertarian groups are.

In any crises in British society today the main course of events will primarily be determined by the elite and the previously non-aligned. However, history has shown that relatively small groups can have a decisive effect in moments of crises. Spain in the 1920s and 1936, Northern Ireland, the Ukraine in 1919 and the French resistance provide some examples.

I am *not* advocating organising an armed vanguard force to lead the people to revolution in times of crisis. I'll leave these ridiculous notions to the Leninists. I am saying that as groups which understand what might be coming and have the ability in part to affect it we have a duty to intervene in times of crises. It's our role as anarchists to stop authoritarian organisations—right wing or left wing—gaining ground in times of crisis. Or at least attempt to do so.

If a group is to have any effect it must:

a) Have an intimate knowledge of its local area.
b) Have a range of basic skills and resources available from those needed for fighting to medicine, printing and the use of communication equipment.
c) Consist of members who through previous struggle have pushed back their fear barriers and extended their creative operational vision of the possible.
d) Have an understanding of what actions authoritarian organisations are likely to carry out in moments of crisis.
e) Have a number of members entirely unknown to the state as 'subversives'.



Some advice from an Orkney anarchist—"Cover main road block with automatic fire. Block secondary routes and mine or booby-trap these." 'Revolutionaries' too often don't think about the practicalities of insurrection, never mind prepare for it.

Thankfully, actions taken under other areas of strategy from Thumb in the Dam struggles to the growing of a combatative counter-culture prepare us in part for what might need to be done in crises. The experience 'affinity groups' get in the present from involvement in mass actions, anti-GM sabotage, strikes, hunt sabbing, monkeywrenching, animal liberation, pirate radio, general criminality and anti-fascist activity are all useful training for the unexpected future.

The anarchist scene in Britain is growing but it's still a small shoal in a sea of sixty million fishes. Nevertheless it's easy to underestimate our ability to intervene in a crisis by concentrating on our present number of 'activists'. In fact one consistent aspect of crises is that when the barricades go up many 'ex-activists/militants' come out of 'retirement'.

Thanks to dole cheques and the low level of generalised class struggle the British radical ecological and libertarian scenes have existed as 'alternative youth cultures'. These cultures have encapsulated the lives of tens upon tens of thousands of people over the last three decades.[5] By their very nature youth cultures are cultures of the young, and when the young get older they usually leave. However, I believe that most of those who have 'left', 'dropped out of politics', 'got disillusioned', 'burnt out', etc. rejected not the principles of anarchism but the practice of activism. In times of social crises those who got off the hamster wheel will know that action is not only with purpose but in their interest. Those who have once stood up are likely to stand again.

(Counter) Revolutionary Rainy Day Reads

It's raining outside and unusually you're not feeling particularly passionate. Hell, why not read up on state counter-insurgency strategy? When it comes to insurrection and revolutionary struggle the state is highly efficient at assessing and learning from its successes and defeats. Sadly, radical movements rarely are. In times of relative social peace we have the space to learn from the past. If we ever need the lessons in the future we are unlikely to be able to do the reading. As well as studying 'our own' histories it is highly useful to read the 'other side's' view of things—not the propaganda it gives the people but the analyses it gives its own armies. Some of them are publicly available if you look for them and unlike the 'pie in the sky' rubbish radicals can come out with, they are useful, relatively undogmatic analyses of confrontations of strategy.

The first book worth reading is without a doubt the one from which this section's front page quote is from: *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency and Peacekeeping* by Frank Kitson, ISBN 0571161812. Anyone who jokingly might think themselves a revolutionary should read this book—without a doubt a Machiavellian masterpiece. Kitson's career culminated in being the top bod in the British land army and along the way he helped screw insurrections in Kenya, Malaysia, Oman, Cyprus and most famously of all, Northern Ireland. Written at the beginning of the '70s, *Low Intensity Operations* has remained hugely influential, especially in the British and American military. In the words of the author's 1991 Preface it was written: "primarily to prepare the army to play a part in countering subversion and insurgency...". While a tad dated, as a practical how-to book on snuffing out subversion it should be read by us all.

A good introductory (though non-specialist and therefore less useful) is *Ragged War: The Story of Unconventional and Counter-Revolutionary Warfare* by Leroy Thompson, ISBN 185409369X. Its author has a decent pedigree from a USAF Ranger-trained special missions unit and seems to have spent most of the last three decades training some real oppressive scumfucks. Being recently published this is by nature far more contemporary. *The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War* by Lt. Col. John J. McCuen, (ex-US Army General Staff) was published in 1972 and thus like *Low Intensity Operations* is heavily dated but well worth reading; not least for its vast and bi-partisan bibliographies.

While much of these books concentrate (understandably) on countering predominantly rural guerrilla warfare, to ignore urban counter-insurgency strategy would be a serious mistake. Northern Ireland is the classic Western case and radicals should devour anything they can find about it. The best available I'd say is *The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* by MLR Smith (Lecturer at Greenwich Military College), ISBN 0415091616.

The only serious attempt to breach this subject by British anarchists is the wonderful—but now very dated—*Towards A Citizens Militia* by Cienfuegos Press, ISBN 0904564339. It's a good introductory guide to principles of armed resistance, organisation and conduct of guerrilla warfare, the tactics of security forces, and the organisation and operation of civilian resistance movements. It's written by Stuart Christie, an Orkney-based anarchist who put his money where his mouth was—among other things famously attempting to assassinate Franco. It's practical, and at 28 A4 pages, quite concise. If you read any book in this selection read this one. Beware though—state technologies have advanced a lot in the last twenty years!

After a rainy day in with that lot you should be able to join the swelling ranks of counter-insurgency warfare trainspotters.



Mock village on the Dungeness peninsula in Kent which was constructed for realistic military training in Northern Ireland and urban areas.

Visualise Industrial Collapse

The above sub-header is an oft used North American EF! slogan. Ecologically this civilisation (unfortunately probably not civilisation itself) is doomed—maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow but within the lifetime of our children's children, our children or possibly even ourselves. We should not mourn for the death of this tyrannical, earth destroying culture but we should prepare for its end.

For the second time in this pamphlet I'm emphasising the need—in times of crisis, in times of stability—TO KNOW HOW TO FEED YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COMRADES! We will not always be able to rely on the destruction and imperialism of industrial agribusiness to feed us like babies; nor should we.

George Bradford of the American anarchist magazine *Fifth Estate* is instructive in his essay 'We All Live In Bhopal'. In the aftermath of the 1984 chemical explosion in Bhopal in India (which killed, and continues to kill, thousands), the population fled:

"The New York Times quoted one man, who said, 'They are not believing the scientists or the state or anybody. They only want to save their lives... All the public has gone to the village.' the reporter explained that 'going to the village' is what Indians do when trouble comes. A wise and age old strategy for survival by which little communities always renewed themselves when bronze, iron and golden empires with clay feet fell to their ruin. But subsistence has been and is everywhere being destroyed, and with it, culture.



What are we to do when there is no village to go to?...".

"The corporate vampires are guilty of greed, plunder, murder, slavery, extermination and devastation. We should avoid any pangs of sentimentalism when the time comes for them to pay for their crimes against humanity and the natural world. But we will have to go beyond them, to ourselves: subsistence... We must find our way back to the village, or as the North American natives said, 'back to the blanket', and we must do this not by trying to save an industrial civilisation that is doomed, but in the renewal of life which must take place in the ruin."

Until recently people were adept at subsistence even in Britain—birth place of industry. For most people it is only a few generations that separate their fingers from the soil. One does not need to go back to the times of the peasantry to see this connection. On an allotment site anywhere in Britain you'll find elderly working class people who know both the satisfaction and the personal and political reasons for growing.

Subsistence skills can be learnt by us all, and passed on to our children. Non-industrial medicine must also be strengthened. In preparing for 'the collapse' we also build our autonomy and reconnect with living systems. There are few things more satisfying, and sensible, than sitting down to eat a meal grown by the combined powers of nature and one's own hands. Let us rebuild the generational connection with the land now. And as Bradford says, "Let us do so soon before we are crushed."



Counter-(R)evolution?—We should be so lucky (lucky, lucky, lucky)

In this section I have been talking about how we should prepare for a number of types of crises. I have not mentioned counter (r)evolution which I have largely dealt with in Task I: Growing Counter-Cultures. To many it may seem strange that I have separated 'preparing for crises' and 'preparing for counter-revolution'—surely a type of crisis?

My answer is that in this section I have been talking about what preparation our existing movement can make in anticipation of crises that are likely to be coming. On the other hand, discussions of counter-revolution presume a revolution worth countering—a class movement of vast scale. I have argued that in Western Europe only a significant working class counter-culture can seriously threaten the elite. That does not exist in Britain and no doubt is unlikely to in the immediate to medium term—if at all. In other words, preparations to defeat counter revolution could only be made by a movement as yet not in existence in anticipation of crises that without its existence are unlikely to come.

As I argued earlier in Task 1, only a combination of military disaffection and an armed people has any hope of successfully defeating a counter-(r)evolution—'winning' a civil war. I also argued that rebellions such as France in '68 will remain only temporary when they are not products of past struggles and a strong counter-culture that can not only propel a vision of the future but field considerable armed class strength.



Troops on the streets in the UK. Many don't think 'that sort of thing could happen here.' In fact, the UK has hosted one of the longest civil wars in history.

Task Conclusion: Don't Call Up Blood

It is worth here underlining the point that we should not look forward to these moments of cataclysm with relish. Anarchist history is brim-full with stories of social crises leading to uprisings which have in turn lead to the extermination of libertarians.

All powermongers are our foes and as a result anarchists have a tendency to get it in the neck. While harmony can be born of crisis, the child is more often horror.

However, an understanding that crises are likely in our lifetime shows that being in a sorted counter-culture rooted in the land yet with an ability to act in conflict is in our own interest.

Radical groupings are essentially gangs (see Camatte!) and gangs are what you need to survive and prosper in times of crises.★



Notes

1) The 1970s crisis and the secret state destabilisation of a succession of Labour governments is a rarely mentioned but extremely important part of recent British history: "A substantial section of the British Secret state and its allies in the Conservative party, business and the media believed, or found it useful to pretend to believe—the distinction is difficult to make—that British democracy, the state, and even the capitalist system itself was under threat from a resurgent left, spearhead by the trade unions and manipulated by the British Communist Party under instruction from Moscow..."—from *Lobster* Magazine No. 34, p.32.

Radical Right militias led by intelligence and military men were formed. Newspapers openly discussed the right circumstances for Army intervention in Britain while M15 orchestrated black propaganda against the Labour Cabinet and trade union leaders. Joint military and police operations were carried out at Heathrow Airport without government sanction. Plans were advanced to install an unelected government of 'National Unity' lead by Lord Mountbatten. No unsubstantiated conspiracy theory, this was first exposed in an autobiography by an ex-*Daily Mirror* executive who was actually at a meeting with some of the conspirators and a long time M15 agent. Similar manoeuvres within the military continued through to the mid '70s.

The parapolitical background to the '70s crisis is essential to any understanding of the death of the post-war consensus and the triumph of the Thatcherite radical right. It's amazing to realise how near to the brink Britain really was! See *Who Framed Colin Wallace?* by Paul Foot, (Macmillan, 1988) and, *Smear: Wilson and the Secret State* by Stephen Dorill and Robin Ramsay, (Fourth Estate). These are still the best and most fully documented accounts of the Wilson plot.

2) After the collapse of the state-backed pyramid scheme much of the Albanian population were left destitute. As a result in 1997, "Albania experienced one of the most profound proletarian revolutions of the Twentieth Century. Virtually the entire armed forces mutinied whilst workers formed revolutionary councils and seized 80% of the country... the Albanian Government was not going to extinguish the Albanian revolution because there was no longer a government. The revolution had extinguished the Albanian state. The world's investors began to panic. It took the armies of ten countries to crush the Albanian revolution and it was a close call..." 'Kissing goodbye to their Koreas', *Black Flag* No. 213, p.22.

3) Blatantly crazy millenarian revolts and the pro-peasant social reorganisation following the Black Death, are examples of the positive effects of past social ruptures, themselves arising from mass explosions of personal physical and mental health problems. On a similar but more depressing note we can look at the global rise of the West, enabled in large part by the mass deaths that Western disease brought to indigenous peoples.

4) I'm talking here about crisis as opposed to counter-revolutions. Counter-revolutions are essentially attempts by elites to counter and destroy the self-organisation of peasants and the working class—Roll back (r)evolution. While counter-revolutions by their nature presume the existence of large movements of the politically aligned, crises can break out when the majority of people are 'non-aligned'. I do NOT use the phrase non-aligned to mean apathetic. Most people today in Britain would not align themselves to any group of 'politicos' for a whole host of very sensible reasons.

5) Here I am talking about those who really lived inside the activist cultures of squatting, animal liberation, ecological direct action etc. In fact the sum total of all those involved peripherally over this period would probably run to over 100,000. Anyone who doubts this should note that despite most people who went to anti-road protests not being arrested there were 1,000+ arrests at Newbury alone! Similarly J18 was just below 10,000, while smaller RTSs have happened all over Britain. In the same period every weekend 'in the season' dozens of hunt sab groups were out in the field. At the turn of the '90s heyday of travelling tens of thousands were on the road at any given time. A high proportion of all these people would see themselves as anarchists.

Code 71008 (Rev Feb 1988)

RESTRICTED

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR PVC BATON ROUNDS

General

1. Baton rounds may be used to disperse a crowd whenever it is judged to be minimum and reasonable force in the circumstances.

2. THE ROUNDS must be fired at selected persons and not indiscriminately at the crowd. They should be aimed so that they strike the lower part of the target's body directly (ie without bouncing).

Additional Rules for the 25 Grain PVC Baton Round

3. Authority for the use of the 25 Grain Baton Round is delegated as follows:

"In self defence only the commander on the spot may authorise use; otherwise a commander not below he rank of Sgt must authorise use".

4. ROUNDS MUST NOT BE FIRED AT A RANGE OF LESS THAN 20 METRES EXCEPT WHEN THE SAFETY OF SOLDIERS OR OTHERS IS SERIOUSLY THREATENED.

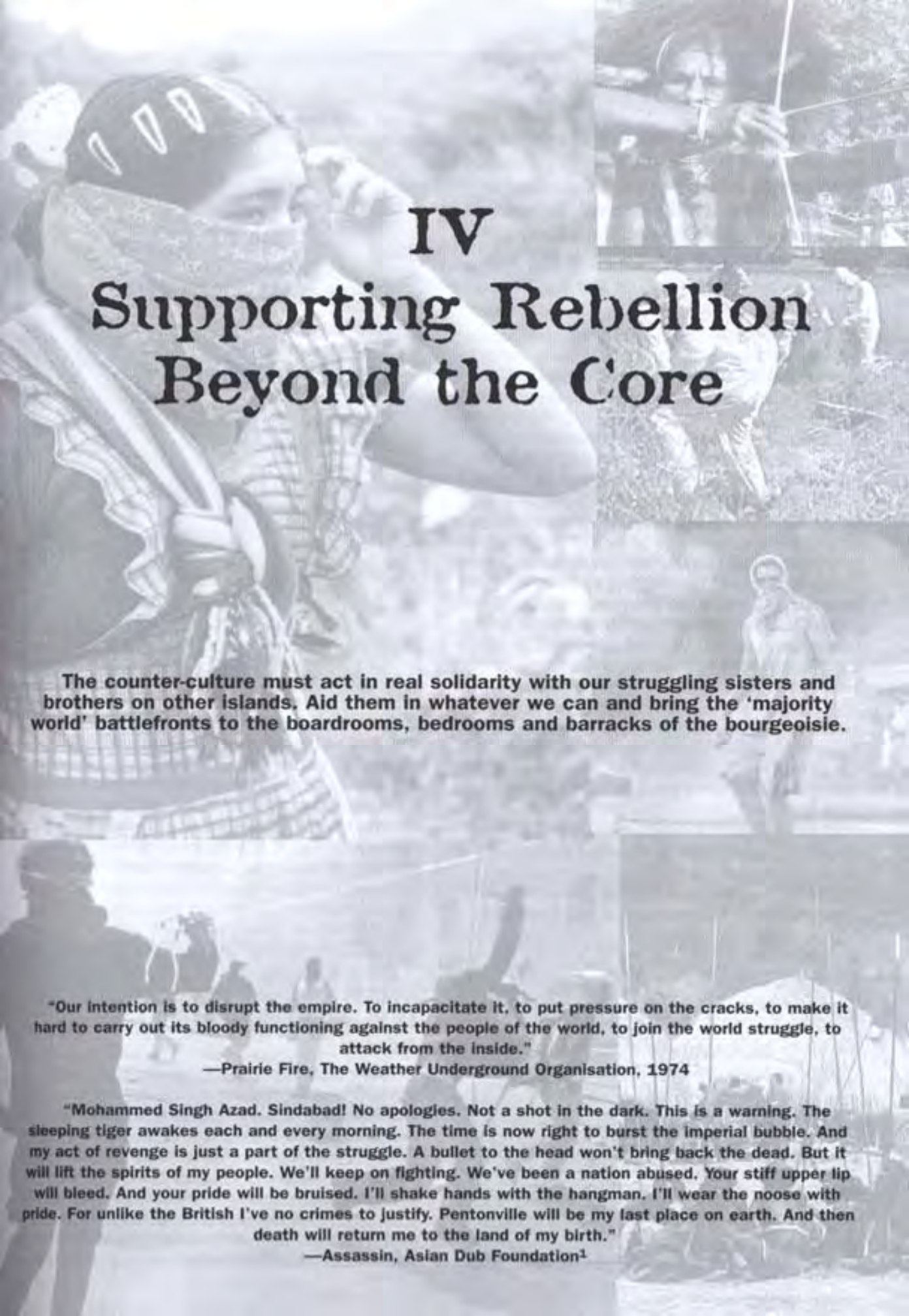
5. The baton round was designed and produced to disperse crowds. It can also be used to prevent an escape for HM Prisons if it is, in the circumstances, still considered to constitute the use of minimum and reasonable force. If a prisoner can be apprehended by hand, the baton round must not be used.

RESTRICTED

Above is a pocket card carried by English soldiers in Ireland. Those of us living in Britain should not feel complacent: mainstream sources confirm that orders to use baton rounds were issued for an anti-Criminal Justice Bill demo in 1994. Demonstrators scaled the gates of Downing Street—had many of them actually made it over the gates into the street, orders were that a volley of plastic bullets should be fired.



"A security counter-action need cover no more than 5000 people... the total internment could easily be accomodated in a 'Gaelic Archipelago' off the West Highlands."—George Young, ex-Vice Chief of MI6 (Subversion and the British Riposte, 1984)



IV
Supporting Rebellion Beyond the Core

The counter-culture must act in real solidarity with our struggling sisters and brothers on other islands. Aid them in whatever we can and bring the 'majority world' battlefronts to the boardrooms, bedrooms and barracks of the bourgeoisie.

"Our intention is to disrupt the empire. To incapacitate it, to put pressure on the cracks, to make it hard to carry out its bloody functioning against the people of the world, to join the world struggle, to attack from the inside."
—Prairie Fire, The Weather Underground Organisation, 1974

"Mohammed Singh Azad. Sindabad! No apologies. Not a shot in the dark. This is a warning. The sleeping tiger awakes each and every morning. The time is now right to burst the imperial bubble. And my act of revenge is just a part of the struggle. A bullet to the head won't bring back the dead. But it will lift the spirits of my people. We'll keep on fighting. We've been a nation abused. Your stiff upper lip will bleed. And your pride will be bruised. I'll shake hands with the hangman. I'll wear the noose with pride. For unlike the British I've no crimes to justify. Pentonville will be my last place on earth. And then death will return me to the land of my birth."
—Assassin, Asian Dub Foundation[1]

Solidarity is also a Weapon

All over this earth millions of peasants, workers and tribals are defending themselves and the land against constant assaults by capital. In every nation the war between the classes escalates and at present it is the rich that are winning most of the battles.

Ever since the radical ecological direct action movement emerged, one of its central themes has been support for struggles in the Majority World. The communities we have chosen to support have reflected changes in our worldview and how we see ourselves.

At first, only 'non-violent' struggles were given any support. This can be illustrated by looking at the Direct Action Empowerment Video—produced in early 1993. The film (which I like, despite some cringe-worthy moments) covers ecological conflicts around the world. The only Majority World struggles given space were the Narmada protests, the Ogoni in Nigeria and the Penan logging blockades in Sarawak. At the time, all three communities professed some sort of non-violence code. The tactic of 'non-violent' confrontation is pretty rare in the Majority World, for sensible reasons, so this selection is quite revealing. During the '90s most of our circles abandoned the ideology of non-violence and as a result we have increasingly been supporting those engaged in armed resistance to the global empire. Now perceiving ourselves as 'revolutionaries', we are engaged with revolutionary communities.

Originally our actions were media-centric, trying to bring press attention to the plight of our 'adopted' peoples. Now that we see ourselves involved in a growing network of communities in resistance, how do we engage in real solidarity?



Zapatistas confront the Mexican state in the Lacandon jungle.

Real solidarity with a rebellion abroad is (as the Zapatistas hammer on at us) creating rebellion at home. Only a truly global rising will put an end to class society/civilisation and give birth to a new world. Fighting not *for* them but *with them* against a common enemy. However, there are some important things that we are well placed to do. Below is by no means a complete list.

Direct Cash Aid to Struggling Communities

Thanks to exchange rates small amounts of hard currency can have a much larger effect in Majority World countries than it does here. Providing practical financial aid for revolutionary groups abroad should not be seen as charity. It's merely a tool of solidarity that we have available to us as a result of our position in the highly moneterised capitalist core.

1) Money for Community Health and Survival

The types of low intensity warfare that many groups find themselves in are not fought out simply between soldiers and armed groups. They are fought out in the 'hearts and minds' of the community as a whole. A long established tenet of counter-revolutionary warfare is to firstly grind down the subsistence and health of a population. Secondly, at the moment of desperation, offer medical, educational and technical aid to families and villages within the conflict zone who are willing

to take sides with the state and corporations. The carrot-and-stick approach aims to disconnect the population from radicals in its midst, and form counter-gangs to oppose them. By supplying aid money directly to struggling communities we can in part oppose this process through positive action. For instance one minor punk benefit gig in America paid for a Zapatista (EZLN) community to be connected up to clean water. One US/Mexican anarchist federation quickly raised enough money to set up a women's health clinic in Chiapas.

Regimes often purposefully spread diseases in rebellious populations and put up medical blockades. This is exacerbated by the fact that many struggling communities do not have basic immunity to Western diseases and live on marginal land, or in slums and shanty towns. Thanks to malnutrition they often have weakened immune systems from the start.

One Bougainvillian told me that due to the medical blockade by Papua New Guinea (PNG), £25 raised in Britain to smuggle in medical aid could save the life of half a dozen revolutionaries on Bougainville. If that's not a good deal I don't know what is! Saving the lives of six, self-described ecological revolutionaries, for the price of a couple of rounds down the pub and a curry!

2) Money for Refugee Camps

When people try to defend themselves and their land, the resulting military repression often forces a significant proportion of the population to flee over borders to the relative safety of neighbouring countries. The resulting life of the refugee can vary tremendously but is almost always hard, poor and crammed. Often forced to rely on outside support, refugee communities sometimes find none at all.

When the Nigerian military cracked down on the Ogoni resistance against Shell Oil, around a third of the Ogoni fled their home villages, many of which had been razed to the ground. Thousands fled to camps in neighbouring countries where they lived for months in squalid conditions. A small amount of medical aid, clothing and funds were collected in Britain and sent over by a solidarity group and by Ogoni living in London. In a desperate situation this aid made a real difference.

However, it was still very little compared with what could have been raised. At the time the Ogoni were big in the newspapers and hundreds were willing to risk arrest in petrol station blockades across the country. Tens of thousands could easily have been raised by local groups. Even without public fundraising a sizeable amount could have been raised very quickly. At least 300 people took part in the petrol station blockades. If just those 300 people had each put in a fiver £1,500 could have been raised at the click of our movement's fingers—enough for a sizeable aid package!

Recently a couple of hundred quid was sent to Papua New Guinea. This paltry amount paid for a consignment of anti-malarial drugs for West Papuan refugees.

3) Money for Prisoners

Of course, any movement which gains any success will quickly find some of its number in prison. Being in prison in Europe is no picnic and our movement's prisoners desperately need more support than they get. Most of the problems we associate with prison support here are similar outside of the West but in more drastic ways.

Family visits, if allowed at all, are often costly both in travel and in bribes. In many Majority World countries a prisoner will not be fed from the prison budget but will have to rely on his community to supply either food itself or money to the prison in order to stay alive. (It's worth pointing out this used to be the case in many British prisons hundreds of years ago!) In the usually horrendously unhygienic conditions decent doctors also have to be paid for. Even the smallest 'privilege' can be impossible without bribes to prison officials. Legal aid will also have to be paid. This financial burden can cripple families. Increasingly, the time and energy a community used to put into revolutionary action has to be put into raising funds to keep its prisoners alive and relatively healthy.

Over the last few years British Anarchist Black Cross activists have raised hundreds of pounds for East European anarchist prisoners and their support campaigns. This money has been a large boost because hundreds of British pounds in countries like the Czech Republic and Poland translates into a lot of money. In the Third World this is even more the case. Ridiculously small amounts of money can make a real difference to those in cages in the colonies.

4) Money for Agitation and Propaganda

Why not sponsor a pamphlet, leaflet, book or poster campaign by an anarchist/ecological group outside of the West? You'll definitely get more



propaganda for your pennies! As an example a donation of $40 from anarchists in the US paid for a campaign of stickers, posters and leaflets by anarchists in universities across the Czech Republic. Another good recent example is the funding and provision of basic radio transmission and studio equipment by Black liberationists in the US to the anarcho-syndicalist Awareness League in Nigeria.

Travelling to and Joining their Struggle

Revolutionary tourism—a contentious subject! I would say that, despite limitations, Western activists can be very useful on the ground in Majority World struggles—as long as they take their cue from native groups and don't just follow their own agenda. This opinion is shared by the Mexican EZLN, the Free Papua Movement (OPM), the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), Anti-Dam communities in India and the Rainbow Keepers in Russia; all of which have recently asked for foreign radicals to come to their lands. From the perspective of the volunteer, sojourns in others struggles can be extremely instructive.

Activists should only take part in this on-the-ground solidarity at the invitation of the communities themselves. In some situations, the presence of a foreigner can bring down hassle on the community and just be another mouth to feed. The communities will know what is needed and what is applicable.

Three years ago some EFlers and friends published a great basic guide to what one can practically do on-the-ground in Chiapas. Though much of it will be inapplicable to other struggles, I urge anyone thinking of engaging in a bit of revolutionary tourism to read this book which goes into far greater detail than I do here.[2]

Essentially, the useful work that can be done by Western activists can be divided into work involving: 1—Specialist practical skill and 2—Work which involves very little specialist practical skill. I'll deal with these two areas separately.

On-the-Ground Solidarity Work with Specialist Practical Skills

The nature of the struggle will define what skills outside radicals can provide that might not be available or plentiful to struggling communities. In general, external specialist technological expertise is more useful in less urban struggles. I'll list just a few of the most obvious useful skills that have been requested by movements in recent years.



Medical Expertise: This is the one skill that without a doubt is always needed and never available enough to radical groups. Whatever form the struggle takes—violent or non-violent—resisters will get attacked by the state. Whether it is mass demonstrations, small blockades or guerrilla actions, those engaged in struggle risk injury and often death. Medical support on the ground can make all the difference. Whole movements sometimes operate with practically no medical support at all—at a terrible cost. This is especially true of indigenous groups such as the OPM.

Radio and Communication Technology: Many movements have got this sorted but many more have not. Communication technology needs divide into three areas: a) Internal organisational communication—such as radio links between different groups throughout a country and different cells on actions and demonstrations. b) External communication to the domestic population at large—such as mobile pirate radio systems c) International communication to movements and groups world-wide—such as mobile phones, long distance radio and internet set ups. Lack of electronic communication systems can leave

movements—especially guerrilla ones—isolated within themselves, from the people as a whole and from international solidarity. They are by no means essential—and in some situations an unnecessary danger—but they can make the way easier.

Appropriate Technology: If you're good at turning rubbish into useful things, there is always a place for you. At whatever stage of struggle innovation is always needed. Bougainville showed how far you can get with appropriate technology—water power turbines running lighting and lathes for making home-made guns and coconuts fuelling cooking, BRA unit jeeps and pretty much everything else. However, be wary of any tendency to push development through technology!

Weaponry and Warfare: It's extremely unlikely that if a group has modern weaponry it will need Westerners to tell it how to suck eggs. However, if you're an ex-squaddie, you might be useful in some struggles—not so much as some sort of unpaid mercenary, but more for any specialist knowledge the state may have taught you.

On the Ground Solidarity Work NOT with Specialist Practical Skills

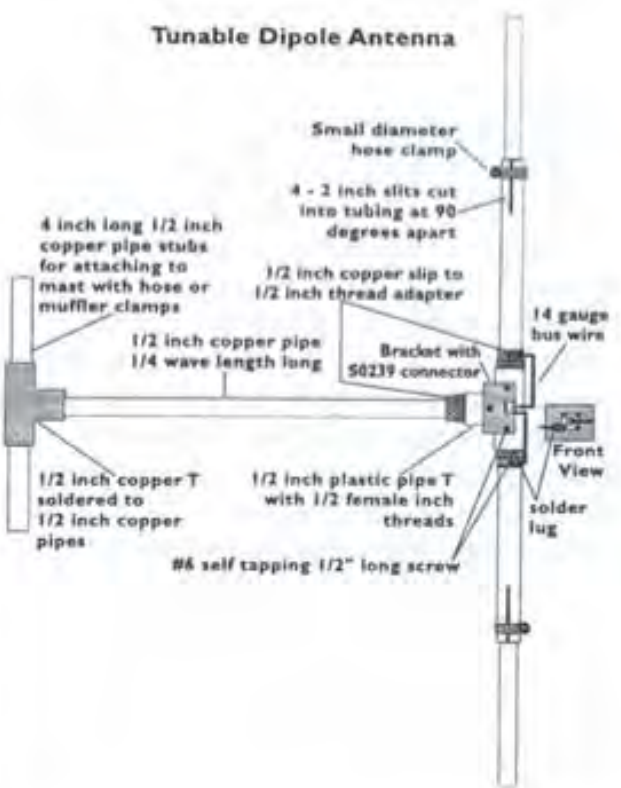
If you have little of the skills described above you can still—depending on the struggle—be of possible great use on-the-ground. As an anarchist Westerner one is in the peculiar position of, upon leaving the West, being able to do certain things merely because of the passport one carries or the colour of one's skin. The following is just a short list of some useful roles. It is worth underlining that these can largely only be carried out in situations no more intense than low intensity warfare.

Human Shield/Human Rights Observer: The presence of Westerners can decrease the likelihood of some forms of assault on communities. As an example, aerial bombardment and artillery are less likely if there's awkward Westerners who it's embarrassing to kill hanging about. In some situations making the state do its massacres by hand decreases the state's in-built military advantage. Sometimes the mere presence of a Westerner can cool a situation—albeit temporarily. Such work has been very useful in various places but most solidly in Chiapas. Situations are different between countries AND within countries. One activist who went to West Papua found his presence did have a positive effect in one area, a negative effect in another.

Media work: As Western activists we have greater access to the international media than native communities. Though liberals put too much stock in raising the profile of struggling groups, it can make a real difference. Footage and reportage of strikes, rebellions, armed struggle, riots and general chaos can be the deciding factor that convinces a company it is not worth investing in such a trouble spot.

Travel Companion: The presence of a Westerner with limited 'immunity' to arrest, torture and disappearance can be very useful when exiled radicals attempt to re-enter their homeland. Airports and border crossings can be very dangerous. A Majority World friend told me once that despite being wanted by the state, when he was back among the mass of his people he felt relatively safe. But entering his country was terrifying. Would the patrolling secret police become suspicious and guess who he was? Would they check his passport was 'fully in order'? Alone in the airport, he could have been picked up and nobody would know that he had been taken. No outside support would come to a man no-one knew was missing. For this reason, a British activist went with him so that at least his people and solidarity groups would know they needed to look for him. Of course, the very fact of travelling with a Westerner can arouse suspicion so it is not always a good idea. One Kurdish anarchist was asked if she wanted such a travelling companion, but she believed in Turkey it would make no difference. For her, possible torture or worse was merely the luck of the draw.

Prison Visiting: Westerners can sometimes get into places that might be difficult for locals. Also for different reasons there may be no organised prison visiting programme by a native community. Prisoners could be held in far off jails maybe hundreds of miles away from their friends and





Students on the Palestinian olive harvest in the '80s. Today Western activists continue to join the harvest to offer some protection to the beseiged Palestinians, who are regularly shot at by Israeli settlers and soldiers.

families. Visits by a prisoner's comrades may only result in the visitor himself being interrogated and possibly jailed. This is less likely for Westerners.

Agricultural Work: One of the commonest forms of on-the-ground solidarity with struggling peasant communities has been just getting stuck in and lending a hand with rural work. In the '70s Cuba was one of the New Left's favourite resorts and many US rads worked the sugar harvest. Similarly in the 80s bundles of British lefties went to Nicaragua to join agricultural work brigades. They in some small way acted like an international Red version of the WW2 Land Girls—enabling peasants (this time men and women) to go to the front without their land falling fallow. Putting aside (BIG) political differences over the nature of the Sandinista and Cuban STATES, the work these anti-imperialists did was practically useful (though minor in scale).

In Chiapas, 'Human Rights Observers' have taken part in the work of the communities too, rather than just hang about waiting for the next military incursion. At the time of writing, similar work is underway in Palestine where Israelis and foreign activists are picking olives in frontline Palestinian villages. This is in reaction to the shootings, by Zionist settlers and the army, of Palestinians doing the harvest on exposed positions. While I have put agricultural work under the general heading of non-specialist it would be foolish to underestimate the skill and labour involved in peasant work. Friends have remarked on their sudden-found frailty compared to much older Zapatista peasants. Even those with agricultural experience will find the day demanding. But all are likely to find the work rewarding, and working with others can be the best way to really get to know them.

Hosting Majority World Radicals

For a whole range of reasons (safety, educational, economic, operational), Majority World radicals can crop up in the core capitalist countries. More often than not they join already existing communities of radical ex-pats, (see 'Immigrant Communities in Rome' below), but for some there may be no community to join. In these cases it is our responsibility to act as good hosts.

Arrival here can be very confusing and we can be useful simply in terms of aiding orientation. Also there are basic needs such as cash, food and accommodation—all of which might be beyond the reach of lone radicals. With ever more repressive state action against economically poor immigrants these basic needs will increasingly come to the fore. If they are here legally they will probably need help dealing with visas and travel arrangements.

Depending on the purpose and duration of their stay they may want help in projects here in the core aimed directly at helping their people, or they may wish to start conventional solidarity campaigns with speaking tours, newsletters etc. It should be left to them to ask what they want of us, rather than we presupposing what would be useful.[3] We can also be of use in providing many types of information—from the political to the technical.

We can catalyse communication between them and members of other similar groups from their regions who may be in the core. Ironically it is often within the core that many groups from the Majority World meet for the first time. Logistics and state repression at home can be a major barrier to inter-movement/international discussion.

A recent example comes to mind. Despite a common enemy (the Indonesian State in particular and the capitalist system in general) communication between the East Timorese and West Papuan resistance movements has been rare.[4] The beginning of renewed communication between the two movements in part came when people from both were introduced by common friends at a British EF! Winter Moot.

Such instances are bizarre but regular occurrences in history—during the 20th century anti-colonial wave it was within the core that many militants from different countries first met each other. The recent growth of a number of non-centralised libertarian 'Internationals' (People's Global Action, Via Capensina, International Anarchist Federation, EF!, International Workers Association and many radical global internet networks), is easing communication between majority world radicals (and us in the core of course!) and our minor role as inter-movement communication enablers is likely to decrease but it is still unlikely to disappear.

Issues around security have to be given serious thought when hosting a foreign radical. The state(s) their groups are resisting at home are likely to have embassies and agents here. Whether or not their foes find out who they are and what they have been doing can decide life or death, freedom or prison when re-entering the home country. In many cases states share intelligence so it is not merely a case of avoiding foreign state interest but also domestic state interest.

Hosting Majority World activists is not just our responsibility—it can be immensely rewarding and illuminating.

Supporting Prisoners

Writing letters to prisoners in jails outside the core is one of the easiest—and most real—ways to aid our distant struggling sisters and brothers. Amnesty International rarely support those who are in prison for resisting something, as opposed to just saying something. So it's up to us to support imprisoned libertarian and ecological saboteurs, rioters, guerrillas, politicos and tribal warriors. Anarchist Black Cross groups have been doing a brilliant job but it shouldn't just be left to them. A letter from a far off land can help brighten a prisoners day and remind the wardens that people on the outside are looking in.

ChipasLink received a message from a Zapatista prisoner organisation in response to its letter writing campaign. Jose from the Autonomous Municipality of the 17th of November stated: "Morale had been extremely low due to a wave of recent arrests. We were feeling depressed. Letters from the UK helped raise morale and made us feel we were not alone. We want to say thank you."

Solidarity Actions

For years we have been barricading ourselves inside corporate offices, disrupting AGMs, blockading petrol stations and going to directors' houses. These are all valuable and should continue but do they effectively hinder the system or do they largely symbolically oppose it? Let's first look at what we have done so far.

Our solidarity actions have usually had three objectives:

a) Raising the Spirits: Hearing that people far away care about you and have taken action, however small, can really raise the spirits.

b) Harassing the Attackers: The functionaries ripping the world will back down from individual attacks only if their profits or their wellbeing is threatened.

c) Exposing the Struggles: Actions increase awareness of both the individual struggle involved and the global struggle in general. This helps us here and sometimes builds direct aid for 'over there'.

Some solidarity actions over the last decade have needed meticulous planning like the Shell-Mex office occupation.[5] Others like the daytime smashing of the Nigerian Embassy windows just took two dozen people with pluck.

These actions can sometimes have quite an impact. One office occupation yielded an internal report that stated the actions were harrowing company moral and public image. When loads of us around the country were doing blockades at Shell petrol stations it felt, to be honest, a bit naff.



A BP employee tries to prevent the unfurling of a banner at its London HQ during an action against BP's funding of Colombian death squads in December 1996.

Occasionally we would close down a petrol station for a few hours or even half a day, sometimes co-ordinated across the country, but was it really having any effect? The surprising answer is yes!

After the Nigerian state/Shell executed Ken SaroWiwa, 21 of his 'co-conspirators' lay in jail awaiting a similar fate. Against expectation after months of suffering, the prisoners were released. Once outside the bars they wrote a letter to their supporters in Britain. The letter thanked everyone for their support and specifically mentioned the petrol station blockades as a major factor in their survival.

The Shell campaign built up a head of steam over years and garnered significant mainstream support after Ken was killed (little of which turned into any meaningful aid). It was exceptional but not thankfully an absolute exception.

Most of the time the power of our actions comes from constancy, confronting targets over and over again. However in times of foreign crisis lone acts can be useful. A recent funny example was when 'Those Pesky Kids' invaded the Argentine embassy pulling down its flag and hoisting up the black and red. It will not make much difference on the Argentina streets but its image has travelled the world through papers and the web. Argentinian anarchos were really jollied up, their spirits raised.



'Those Pesky Kids'

Other solidarity actions, notably those done for the Zapatistas, have succeeded to differing levels in raising the spirits, harassing the attackers and exposing the struggles. Over the last decade I think our solidarity actions, given our numbers, have been remarkably successful in achieving these objectives. Sometimes, though, it could be said that we are using Majority World struggles as scripts with which we can act out our own politics.

The Clouds are Gathering?

The type of solidarity actions described above should continue but let's face it—they rarely hinder the system, but symbolically oppose it. Symbolism has a lot of power—but not as much as force.

In 1997 a British/South African mercenary outfit acting for British mining giant RTZ was planning, from their London offices on the Kings Road, to burn up the rebel held territory in Bougainville. Carpet bomb the heart of the resistance. Helicopters were to rain down bombs and bullets on friends, families and forest. Poison. Fire. Blood.

The mercenaries would be richer and the murdered land would be back under control—ripe for mining again. Thankfully this plan was scuppered at the last moment by an uprising on PNG that forced the mercenaries out of the country.

Imagine that had not occurred and put yourself in the shoes of one of the self-described 'ecological revolutionaries' on Bougainville, looking the 1,000s of miles from the Jaba river valley to

the streets of London. What would you do if you could be on the Kings Road in London rather than a jungle in the Pacific awaiting death? Hold a banner? Shout at a few people? Occupy an office?

If such a situation arose again, and it will, what will be the reaction of our circles? While British mercenaries on PNG were preparing to decimate Bougainville, Greek and Italian troops were crushing the Albanian insurrection. It is likely that Western European troops will be increasingly used to counter revolutions in the Majority World. *Direct action must be used to hinder the functioning of the militarised arms of capital when they reach out to destroy libertarian and ecological rebellions.* We are where they are based. We are where the guns are produced. Sited as we are in the heart of the beast small amounts of intense action can have a disproportionate affect.

It's worth taking a quick look back at what attempts at solidarity were made by previous generations of capitalist core radicals.

In the 1960s and 70s western solidarity with the Vietnamese struggle[6] took many forms, most of which was pretty useless. As an American Indian Movement activist put it: 'holding candlelit vigils and walking down the street does not constitute "acts of solidarity" with those engaged in armed struggle.'[7] However there were rare actions with real effects. The German left wing urban-guerrilla group, the Red Army Faction, attacked a whole array of US army targets. One of its most successful actions was a major attack on a key US base from which the laying of mines in Vietnam was organised. Across the water the Weather Underground bombed the Air Force wing of the Pentagon. The consequent flooding crashed the central computer of the US military's global communication system. These two acts had a real effect. By 'bringing the war home' they directly joined the struggle in the jungles of Vietnam and contributed to the crippling of US military morale. That both actions were born out of a 'politics of despair', (arising from the orchestrated apocalypse in Vietnam and the self pacifying, racist and delusional character of 'mother country radicals'), did not diminish their utility in supporting rebellion beyond the core, merely the ability of the organisations carrying them out to survive.

From the perspective of domestic (r)evolution most of the '60-'70s European guerrilla movements were counterproductive. Irish Republicanism and Basque Separatism (Europe's longest running armed struggles) were both expressions of communities in rebellion. The European New Left guerrillas on the other hand, (with the exception of Italy), were largely the project of middle class student radicals with little social 'base'. Often seeing themselves as vanguards who would lead the working class to victory, they became self destructive cliques that probably even regressed the building of (r)evolution in their countries.

This does not however detract from the fact that some of things they did were extremely effective 'fourth column operations' carried out in time of war. Given the absence of generalised struggle in the capitalist core these radicals were given a choice. They effectively decided to defect. While other New Left formations immersed themselves in (largely futile) domestic (r)evolutionary activity (such as supporting unions) the Weather Underground concentrated on the 'global struggle'. Their (amazingly arrogant) attitude to the rest of their country was summed up well when they reacted to an opposing left wing groups slogan 'Serve the People'. Weather replied that they would "fight the people if to do so would further the international revolution."[8]

The question is not whether 'vanguard adventurism' is a way of rousing domestic (r)evolution (it isn't) but whether the potential gains to revolutions elsewhere outweigh the negative effect it has on domestic social evolution.

To a certain extent a pretty stupid question, but a real one posed by the contradictions inherent in the 'global struggle'. It all depends how one weighs up at this point in time (r)evolutionary possibilities in the core—and political activists relationship to such possibilities if they exist—and (r)evolutionary/anti-enclosure struggles in the Majority World.

If we came to the conclusion that as a movement we were going nowhere yet were either in a position to: a) significantly aid an allied struggle with a better chance of success, or b) significantly decrease the level of violence visited on friends being drowned in blood; what would we do?



Bomb damage to the officers' mess of the US Army HQ, Frankfurt 1972: "West Germany will no longer be a safe hinterland for the strategists of extermination in Vietnam."—RAF

Any really effective action might bring down a level of repression that our circles could not survive. Yet if serious action is not taken *solely so as to avoid personal hardship* (rather than for any *real* strategic reason) we are guilty of 'posing as progressives' while accommodating ourselves to power. It is worth here repeating the well known quote by Black Panther Assata Shakur. Back in 1984 she said:

"It is the obligation of every person who claims to oppose oppression to resist the oppressor by every means at his or her disposal. Not to engage in physical resistance, armed resistance to oppression, is to serve the interests of the oppressor; no more, no less. There are no exceptions to the rule, no easy out..."

In fact the question is not just one concerning 'armed resistance'.[9] If 'non-violent' action is *actually effective* (not merely symbolic) it too results in severe repression. At present a number of Animal Liberationists are in prison for waves of fire bombings which the ALF press office would correctly describe as 'non-violent'. The repression that has followed each wave of action has been considerable. One could guarantee at least the same level of repression if ecological circles ever took the road of some solidarity movements in the past.

The guerrilla movements were crushed by state repression and internal dynamics. Jail and death was the fate of many of our forbears. *I for one have no desire to join them but it is important that we look at their stories and think seriously about these issues.* Sadly, it has to be said that in many ways the urban-guerrillas never fully escaped the symbolic political terrain they had evolved in. Looking at their targets one sees again and again globally unimportant army bases, recruiting offices and the like. Despite being very direct, their actions, with some notable exceptions, were rarely very targeted. Most of the armed action was relatively minor in scale and of course armies are designed to sustain and survive mass death and destruction. Attacks on key armaments factories for instance would have had considerably more on-the-ground effect in Vietnam.

There are serious questions here about strategy, racism, symbolism, violence, the nature of sacrifice and our position in the global slavery pyramid. These ideas have to be thought through, all the time rejecting both a cult of violence and an internalisation of passivity.

Immigrant Communities Within 'Rome'

The Terrorism Act which passed into law in 2000 was seen by many as part of a clampdown on the 'direct action scene'. It is likely that some of its powers will to be used against us in the future, *but as targets of the new legislation we are peripheral.* The main targets are undeniably Irish Republicans and immigrant communities. The newly proscribed organisations are almost all British wings of Majority World organisations—mostly Communists or Islamists. This should come as no surprise—states have always worried about immigrant communities becoming 'enemies within'.[10]

Until last century the individuals and institutions of Western power were largely out of reach to the far off peoples they massacred. With the growth of international travel and increased immigration into the core capitalist countries this is no longer the case. **[This section was written before the attacks on the Pentagon and the WTC—I deal with these in the box opposite.]** Some of these organisations have been sending fighters to Majority World battles and carrying out attacks in the core. We may have sent footballers to Chiapas[11] but Islamists have been sending guerrillas to Yemen. No surprise who got proscribed.

Whether Islamic or Communist we should have no illusions about the authoritarian nature of many of these groups. It is hardly likely that anarcho-athiest types are likely to make common cause with religious nuts of any persuasion but there are often calls to build 'anti-imperialist unity' with immigrant community commies.

The best example of a left-wing immigrant community is that of the Kurds. Kurdish groups here in Britain retain direct communication with their respective organisations both at home and throughout Europe. The demonstrations, occupations and immolations in London—and throughout the Kurdish diaspora—that followed the trial of the leader of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) were highly co-ordinated. The Kurds have been very active in supporting struggles in Britain such as the Liverpool Dockers—taking part in marches and raising money. They have turned up en masse at two arms trade blockades and were some of the most up-for-it people on Mayday 2000 in London. In Germany there is a much larger Kurdish population and though the PKK has been proscribed for years, attacks on Turkish interests

have continued. In fact the PKK remains one of the largest left-wing organisations in Germany.

Another good example is the Palestinians. The 1970s saw Palestinian organisations (chiefly the PFLP) carrying out attacks on targets in the core related to their struggle. While the level of attacks in the West by Palestinians has decreased, there are still reasonably regular outbreaks. As I write two Palestinians are serving time for bombings in London in 1994.[12]

On the face of it there is a good argument for working with these communities, but the case of the Kurds throws up important questions which are widely applicable. The PKK and its various offshoots and rivals are largely Stalinist parties whose political aim is in total contradiction to liberty and ecology. This reality can result in serious problems—here as well as in Kurdistan.

A few years ago members of the London 5th of May Group (Turkish/Kurdish anarchist exiles) were threatened by a Kurdish Stalinist sect. Back in Turkey the same sect has murdered two anarchists, one on the streets and one in prison. Ironically the British wing of the same sect was appealing for solidarity for the PKK prisoners in their struggle against control units.

Around the same time the flags of Turkish Stalinist parties were held aloft in Parliament Square on 'our' Mayday 2000. If they had been held up by white English people I am sure our circles would have forced them down. The emblems of authoriatarian socialism are the tombstones of libertarians past, present and future. How would we feel if Turkish anarchists marched alongside the banners of a gang that had executed one of us?

'Anti-imperialist unity' despite its seeming attractions can be worse than vacuous. It can mean unifying with priesthoods of new imperialisms. A true opposition to Empire requires us to choose those communities and organisations we organise with carefully.

This does not mean we should not practically engage in struggle alongside groups we are bitterly opposed to. During the march for the Liverpool Dockers it would have been ridiculous for us not to be part of the demo because it contained a contingent of Kurdish Stalinists—who were there in

11.9.2001

I will say little about 'S11'. I found out about the attacks on the Pentagon and the WTC from an excited kid leaving school, having spent most of the glorious sunny day in a different world picking beans on an allotment. As is obvious from bin Ladens' CIA history this was, to use Malcolm X's statement on the Kennedy assassination, America's chickens coming home to roost.

The world is class divided and filled to the brim with religious idiocy. As long as that remains the case, war and all its horrors will be visited on people everywhere. S11 was pretty horrific but the 4,000 + deaths are small fry compared to those put in the gas chambers by industry, pollution, enclosure etc. The hysterical reaction of many to the events—while understandable—seems rather sickening considering the lack of any similar response to the many thousands more deaths every day caused by profit and the dominant hierarchy.

S11 has many ramifications but I will mention only a few. Firstly, radical US prisoners are getting a harder time of it. They need our support. Secondly, I stated above that militants from the Majority World will increase attacks in the core—thanks to the changing nature of global society. Rome was sacked by armies that invaded on roads Rome itself had built. When I wrote this section I wasn't envisioning anything as dramatic as S11. The fact that it was carried out by religious nuts isn't really surprising considering what I say later in 'There is No Rosy Picture'. S11 was the first attack by Majority World militants of its scale, and it is only the first. All over the world in shanty-towns and slums teenagers with no future will be thinking about what can be done with a few box-cutters—not even knives for fuck sake! One of the Los Almos Lab team which exploded the first nuclear bomb, said that there was nothing hidden which had stopped others from doing what they did. The secret was that it could be done. S11 showed what can be done. The ring side slug fest of leviathans slaves has only begun.

During the Second World War the RAF's firestorm massacre of thousands of civilian Germans at Dresden was justified by saying that those who worked in the factories of the Nazi war machine, were military targets as much as those who fought on the field. During the post war anti-imperialist wave Algerian guerrillas rejected this logic when they rejected a plan to crash a hijacked plane into Paris. The horrors of the unity-in-opposition of 50 years of communism and capitalism has resulted now in Arab 'anti-imperialists', lost in the Koran, accepting the logic of Bomber Harris.

For a thought provoking read check out *Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens* by American Indian Movement activist Ward Churchill.

No War Between Nations.
No Peace Between Classes.

Peasants and the Transitional Class

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the resistance to the global empire arises where the majority of its subjects and slaves live—the hilariously named 'Third World'. To accept this is not to reject the reality of class struggle in the core capitalist countries but merely to accept the logic of maths and geography. The Third World is, after all, most of the world.

In the Majority World the global elite are faced with class enemies they have long since vanquished within the industrialised West—the peasantry and the transitional class. These two classes are the main human block to the elite's expansion and consolidation over the majority of the planet.

Nearly half of the world's population do not live in cities. Of these, hundreds of millions are hardly under the actual domination of capital at all. As peasants they retain relatively high levels of autonomy and have yet to be fully (or often even partially) enclosed by capital. For the actual domination of capital to expand that autonomy must be destroyed. They themselves and the land they live on must be commodified: their land turned into 'resources' and they themselves into wage slaves.

In localities all over the Majority World the continuing class struggle between loggers, agribusiness, oil corporations, local land autocracies and the state on one side, and peasants and tribal people on the other is, in fact, the border war between the global economy and the land community. It is a border war that, despite heavy resistance from groups as diverse as farmers in India, river delta communities in Nigeria, the Zapatistas in Mexico and tribes in Papua, is largely being won by the wealthy. Of course people do not immediately submit to power and accept their position as wage slaves. Throughout the 'developing' world (a telling phrase) the new inhabitants of the cities fight back.

One would expect Western radicals to orientate themselves towards 'Third world' struggles according to their present class position, and the fact that our shared past is their shared present. Unfortunately many communists, liberals, greens and anarchists vision is still hazy, blurred by the misleading mythologies of Marxism. There sometimes seems to be an unbridgeable split between those who think that social change can only arise out of the core capitalist countries and those who believe it will be fought out in the 'Third World'. This really is a false dichotomy and both sides take their ridiculous scripts from the Left.



On one hand 'Third Worldists' have supported all sorts of authoritarian murderous gangs and governments on stupid basis like 'the nationalism of the oppressed is different than the nationalism of the oppressor'. (It should be almost banal now to point to Israel's treatment of the Palestinians or Ethiopia's offensives against Eritrea as just two examples of the nationalism of the oppressed becoming the nationalism of the oppressor.) Anyone saying anything like this cannot in any way be an anarchist and at this historical juncture should just be the cause of mirth. Lenin's bizarrely inverted version of anti-imperialism has a lot to

answer for. In a sickening twist the 'What's a few massacres between comrades' tendency are often the first to condemn even the most minimal revolutionary violence in the West—"It's alright for niggers and chinks in far away countries to go killing each other in the cause of revolution but don't throw rocks at white english policemen—*they're* human too!"

On the other hand the Marxist dogma of the fully developed industrial working class as the 'revolutionary subject' has led many to ignore the vast scale of struggle going on in the majority of the world. This is highly ironic considering that the European 'proletarian glory days', starting with the French insurrection of 1848 and ending with the crushing of the Spanish Revolution, were pushed forward by a class that today can be found throughout the Majority World but only on the social margins in the West. For the second time in this pamphlet I'll quote at length from Bookchin's seminal work, *The Spanish Anarchists*:

"The June barricades of 1848 had in fact been manned not by an industrial proletariat 'Disciplined, united, and organised by the process of capitalist production,'[Marx] but by craftsman, home-workers, nondescript labourers of every sort, porters, unemployed urban and rural poor, even tavern keepers, waiters, and prostitutes—in short, the flotsam and jetsam of French society... These very same elements, nearly a quarter of a century later, were to man the barricades of the Paris Commune. It was precisely the industrialisation of France after the Commune—and with this process, the emergence of a 'full-grown' hereditary proletariat 'disciplined, united, organised by the process of capitalist production'—that finally was to silence the 'crowing' of the French 'Red Cock' that had summoned Europe to revolution during the nineteenth century. Indeed, much the same could be said of the Russian proletariat of 1917, so recently recruited from the countryside that it was anything but a 'full-grown' working class."

"The great proletarian insurrections that seemed to lend such compelling support to the concept of proletarian socialism were fuelled primarily by social strata that lived within neither industrial nor village society but in the tense, almost electrifying force field of both. Proletarian socialism became a revolutionary force for nearly a century not because a well organised, consolidated, hereditary proletariat had emerged with the factory system but because of the very process of proleterianisation. Dispossessed rural people and craftsmen were being removed from disintegrating preindustrial way of life and plunged into standardised, dehumanising, and mechanical urban and industrial surroundings. Neither the village and small shop as such nor the factory as such predisposed them to the boldest kind of



social action; rather, they were moved by the disintegration of the former and the shock of the latter. Demoralised to the point of recklessness, déclassé in spirit and often in fact, they became the adherents of the Paris Commune, the Petrograd soviets, and the Barcelona CNT."

"The very 'half grown' quality of the early proletariat, formerly peasants and craftsmen or perhaps a generation removed from such status, produced a volatility, intractability, and boldness that the industrial system and factory hierarchy were to attenuate in their descendants—the hereditary proletariat of the 1940s and 1950s, a class that knew no other world but the industrial one. For this class, no tension was to exist between town and country, the anomie of the city and the sense of shared responsibility of the small community, the standardised rhythms of the factory and the physiological rhythms of the land. The premises of the proletariat in this later era were formed around the validity of the factory as an arena of productive activity, the industrial hierarchy as a system of technical authority, and the union bureaucracy as a structure of class command. The era of proletarian socialism came to an end in a step-by-step process during which the 'half grown,' presumably 'primitive' proletariat became 'full grown', 'mature'—in short, fully proletarianised."[15]

Crammed into the growing Majority World metropolises, hundreds of millions today find themselves a part of this class in transition, caught in the electrifying force field between village and city. They face inhuman and desperate conditions as wage slaves within the city. They have memory of the communal experiences of the



village that enable them to envision a different reality that they could create. They have vast potential collective power in the sheer numbers of young fellow shanty town/ghetto dwellers who share their class position. This is a potent revolutionary mix.

Many Majority World writers talk about this 'village in the city'. Within the slums and shanties, old village system of kinship and communal decision making often continue to aid survival in a hostile capitalist environment. It is from these collectivities that mass organised squatter movements arise such as the Movement of the Landless (MST) in Brazil which challenge the urban autocracy and the rural latifundi.

It is this tension that propelled the insurrectionary hordes in 1997 to bring down Suharto and systematically burn out the mansions of the Indonesian elite. It should come as no surprise to hear the voice of Lucy Parsons echoing from Haymarket through a hundred years—"We shall devastate the avenues where the wealthy live!" The class that gave birth to Parsons today spawns innumerable children throughout the 'developing world'.

I am NOT contending that rebellion and resistance do not and will not break out in the core capitalist countries. As long as society is based on class warfare 'normality' will be punctuated by episodes of rebellion and day to day opposition. Widespread insurrection and anarchist revolution are however another thing entirely. It is in the majority of the planet that the most seismic struggles are happening. For most of last century the resistance and transcendence of the oppressed 'Third World' global majority has faced two huge foes. The unity-in-opposition of two forms of capitalism: the Marxist 'national liberation' of native elites and the colonialism of Western elites has hamstrung the oppressed.

With the death of the USSR and the final 'withering away' of state socialism around the world, a growing unity is developing between movements of those who live on the land and those who live in the shanties. Increasingly libertarian and ecological new generations are taking the fore. It is this unity which more than anything else could reap the whirlwind, shaking capitalism to its foundations and maybe even replacing it with a more authentic world.★

The Panthers—Militants of a Transitional Class

An interesting aside. Hugely influential to the radical wave that swept the west in the '60s and '70s was the Black Liberation struggle in America. Two examples stand above others. Germaine Greer says second wave feminism took its rallying standard—Women's Liberation—in reflection of the concurrent Black Liberation struggles, (see her book *The Whole Woman*). The rebirth of Republicanism in Northern Ireland arose largely out of the Civil Rights Movement, which took its name and in large part inspiration from American Blacks.

The Black Panther Party—itself deeply inspired by struggles in the Majority World—is often seen as being entirely urban in origin. In contradiction, David Hilliard, ex-chairman of the Panthers, cites the land-based culture of the Deep South which many Panthers or their parents were brought up in as highly influential:

"When I think about the influences that inspired the spirit and work of the Black Panther Party—many of which are still not understood—this culture figures large among them. Many of the most important members of the party—people like John and Bobby Seale and Geronimo Pratt, Bobby Rush and Fred Hampton—were imbued with the moral and spiritual values of their parents; and the work that went into the party, our dignity as an independent people, the communal ideal and practise that informed our programs, all stem in part from the civilisation of which my mother and father were so representative a part."[16]

an inspiring show of genuine class solidarity. (As ridiculous as, say, refusing to take part in the Newbury Bypass protest because FoE is involved, with its pro-industrial stance.) However such unavoidable contradictions arise largely within the realm of advancing (r)evolution at home (Task I). Here we are concerned with supporting rebellion beyond the core (Task IV).

While the dynamics of (r)evolutionary struggle may decide our bedfellows for us, we can still decide who to actively support. Here I am talking about actions, money, resource sharing and solidarity. Giving support to organisations here which stand in opposition to libertarian tendencies at home, (not to mention the interests of the people and planet!), is worse than nothing..

Marxist authoritarian ideologies which are dying off throughout the core retain real power outside it. Radical immigrant communities reflect their political culture of origin, yet within many of these communities there will be libertarian and anti-industrial groups and individuals. It is our responsibility to seek them out and however we can help them aid their people and land.

Luddite Attacks on Evolving Elite Technology

Just as we should oppose the militarised arms of capital based here so to we must slow the evolution of new elite technologies (weaponry for the class war) being developed here. One of the major aims of genetic engineering is to purposefully destroy the social fabric that keeps the land community together and fully incorporate the peasantry into the global cash economy. The threat is neutralised and becomes fuel for the machine's further expansion.

GM sabotage throughout the world is growing. Here in Britain we can say that we have hindered the evolution of this technology considerably.

As the Luddites of today, we know that, given the continuation of this society, halting—forever—the development of new technological weaponry might not be possible. Even if we don't succeed in stopping genetic engineering we have already slowed down the introduction of this technology. What this means in real terms is that we've succeeded in delaying the further degradation of the lives of millions of people. We have delayed for months, maybe years the ecological destruction, hunger, despair and domestic abuse that social dislocation brings. If that is all we succeed in then we have achieved much.[13]

By slowing technologies of enclosure we are defending the ability of Majority World peasant communities to rebel. More will suffer as a result of these enclosures than ever do in overt global policing operations/ imperialist wars. Effective action against GM and other elite technologies are direct attacks on empire's power of expansion. Let's keep at it.



Smashing Up the Spectacle, Spectacularly!

The recent global resistance period has been hugely successful in building solidarity across borders and in supporting rebellions beyond the core. Radicals in every part of world have fought together on the PGA-called international days of action. This physical unity is immensely powerful. Beyond direct communication the conflict on the streets has itself an important message, one that cannot be diluted by the forces of mediation.

"This is one important thing to remember about Genoa—because it was the G8 summit, all the world's media were there, and the news and the images of the rioting will have been carried back to almost every country in the world. The value of this, especially in much of the Third World is inestimable. Many people in other countries in the world imagine that everyone in the West lives a life of indolent luxury. Remember that Baywatch is the most popular TV programme in the world. This is



the image that many people across the world have of life in the West. It is very valuable for them to see images of things they are familiar with—poor people fighting the police—taking place in the 'rich' West, leading them to see that the image they have been fed of the Western lifestyle is not all it's cracked up to be and that maybe there are people like them in the West fighting for the same things they are fighting for. The riots in Genoa will send a message of hope to people all over the world that right inside the belly of the beast there are thousands of people who are against the system and are prepared to risk their own life and liberty to fight it."[14]

For a moment Genoa's burning barricades effectively monkeywrenched the global image factory that aims to haemorrhage the self worth of peoples in the Majority World, to make more malleable fodder for the global economy.

The environment created by the 'street' at global conferences has also helped open up cracks in empire. The collapse of the Seattle era WTO negotiations a good example. Another is the increased bargaining power the protest has given Majority World elites. They, like all of their global class are scum, but any action that opens up divisions in the global ruling class while bridging gaps between the global multitude is great.

Task Conclusion: There is No Rosy Picture

While I tend towards believing libertarian social (r)evolution is extremely unlikely within the core, I don't have a particularly rosy picture for the Majority World either.

The combined factors of social dislocation, the spread of adolescent culture, the increasing depredation of the poor—especially of women, growing religious fundamentalism, bad health, agricultural crises, climate crises, the quickening internalisation of all into the global economy, the continuing survival of authoritarian ideologies—Marxism and nationalism in particular and most of all the unparalleled disparity in any capacity for force between the Core and its colonial multitudes; all these factors lead to a pretty horrific future for the majority of the worlds population.

Presently the oppressed throughout the world are hamstrung, how long this will remain one cannot say. However there is no point in being absolutist. Just because the arrival of *global freedom* has been (maybe terminally) delayed does not mean that action is without purpose. By supporting ecological and libertarian rebellions and anti-enclosure struggles we aid the opening up of *local freedoms* and slow the devastation of the earth.★

Notes

1) The track *Assassin* by ADF concerns the "payback" one Indian revolutionary gave Sir Michael O'Dwyer, ex-governor of the Punjab. O'Dwyer had presided over the massacre of unarmed peasants and workers in Amritsar in 1919. Nearly twenty years later Udnam Singh shot him dead in London at a meeting of the East India Association. Singh was an electrician, trade unionist and in 1938 in Coventry the initiator of the first Indian Workers Association. The action both harrowed the English elite and lifted the spirit of many of his people. He was hung in Pentonville prison. The Indian Workers Association remains active today. For a good intro to Black resistance in Britain see *A Different Hunger* by A. Sivanandan. ISBN 0861043715

2) *The Zapatistas: A Rough Guide*. (Chiapas Link) ISBN 0904367992

3) Too often activists from other countries are pushed into reformist—and futile—trajectories by their liberal Western hosts. Indigenous groups especially are told to engage with the UN etc. While this idiocy is unlikely in our circles, other problems arise. Sometimes radical groups own normal ways of behaviour can lead them to push their guests into an endless round of solidarity talks, meetings, pamphlet and newsletter writing. Often

these *are* aimed primarily at the domestic group's own constituency and may be more of use to them than to the foreign group whose member they *are* hosting. This can waste time the guest could more constructively spend on studying and organising in their own communities interest. However the above mentioned activities can be very useful IF they build solidarity actions here and other forms of direct aid. If not, the relationship can descend to one of the foreign guest giving a bit of Third World political entertainment to the Western radicals.

4) In fact the Indonesian state has used classic divide and rule strategy by using ethnically Papuan Indonesian soldiers to suppress revolt in East Timor and ethnically Timorese Indonesian soldiers to suppress revolt in West Papua.
5) A lot can be learned from this action. See the article 'Sabbing Shell' in *Do or Die*, No.8, p.125
6) The struggle of the Vietnamese against America was unbelievably heroic, from which many lessons can be learned, but it should be underlined that Ho Chi Minh's regime was an authoritarian state that mercilessly crushed all opposition. Our enemy's enemy is not our friend!
7) See *Pacifism as Pathology* by Ward Churchill, ISBN 18 940370 73, p.79. A brilliant "intervention into the delusion, aroma of racism, and sense of privilege which mark the covert self-defeatism of mainstream dissident politics." Speaking as an ex-pacifist, I'd highly recommend it!
8) 'A Strategy to Win' by Bill Ayers in *New Left Notes*, 12.9.1969.
9) The whole concept of 'armed struggle' is rather nebulous in a similar way to its dualistic opposite 'non-violence'. The fetishising of guns—basically just tools—is often carried out with equal abandon by those who advocate their use and those who vehemently oppose them. What is 'armed struggle'? Is the destruction of a digger by explosives (as was the case in one action by the Welsh Mebion Glydowr) an act of armed struggle? If hand tools were used to the same effect (as say at Manchester Airport) is that not armed? Is tossing a mollie/petrol bomb at a cop in Genoa not armed struggle? Was the machine gunning of the Spanish Embassy by the Angry Brigade (in which no one was injured) armed struggle? If so, was the smashing up of the Nigerian Embassy with hammers not armed struggle? If the definition of armed struggle lies entirely on whether guns are used, the concept is of little use to us. *We should not let tools define our activity, but our activity define which tools to use.*
10) It is not just in the realm of actions, bombings and the like that immigrant communities become 'an enemy within'. Over the last few years immigrants have been at the forefront of workplace struggle. The combination in some immigrant communities of radicalism and low wages has resulted in prolonged strikes such as at Hillingdon Hospital and JJ Foods. Inner city riots by young Blacks and Asians are another example. However it is not within the scope of this task section to discuss rebellions within the core (Task I) whoever they are carried out by.
11) 'Easton Cowboys Go West' in *Do or Die* No. 8, p.248
12) In the crackdown that followed the bombings of a Zionist office and the Israeli embassy many Palestinian activists were raided. Samar Alami and Jawd Botmeh were convicted of the attacks and given 20 years after which they face deportation to Israel. They maintain they have been framed. See 'The Israeli Embassy Bombing and the Secret State' in *Do or Die* No. 8, p.224
13) 'The New Luddite War' in *Do or Die*, No. 8, p.95
14) 'Being Busy' by Anonymous (SDEF!), in *On Fire: The Battle of Genoa and the Anti-capitalist Movement*, p.41
15) *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years* by Murray Bookchin, p.281
16) *This Side of Glory* by David Hilliard, ISBN 0316364215, p.27

It's Time to Defect!



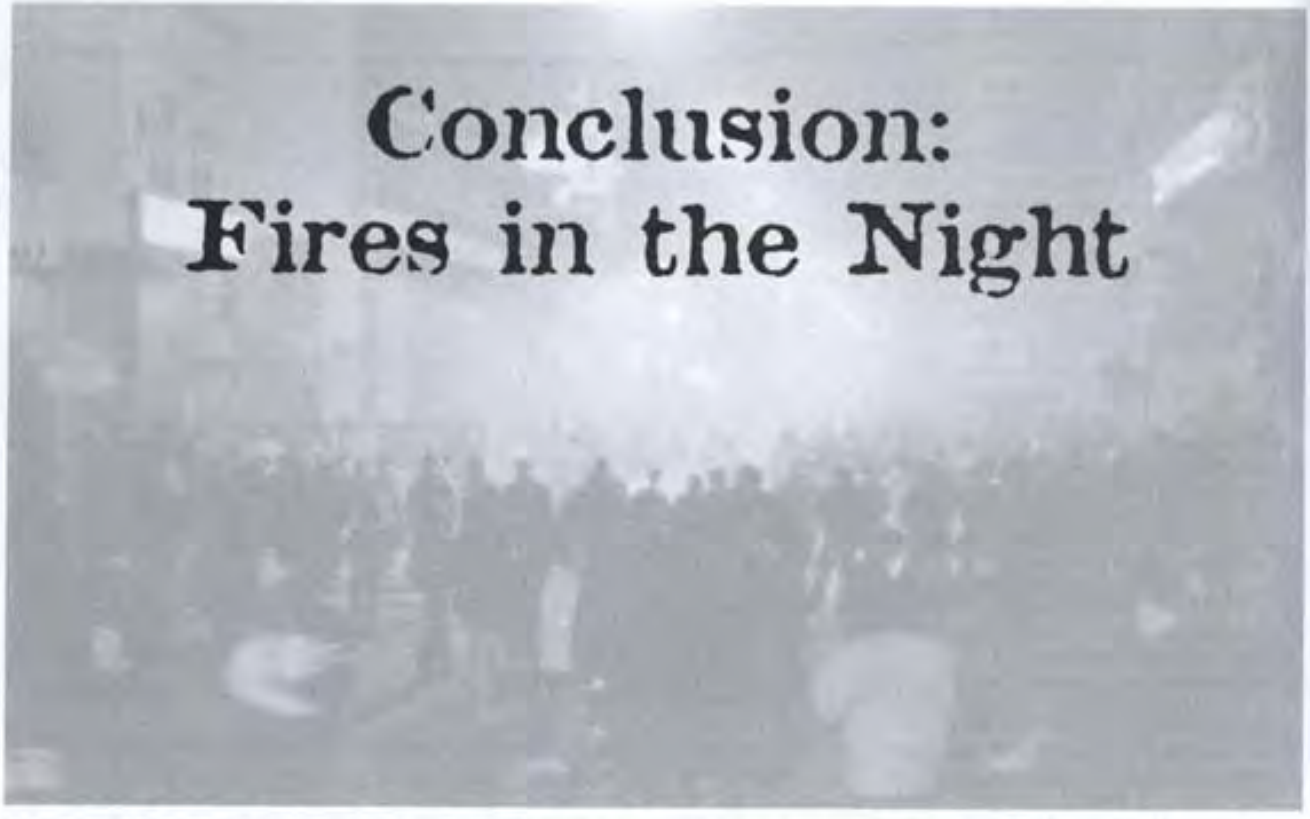


At the beginning of the 21st century we all have to choose sides. Do we remain on the side of industrial civilisation or do we stand with struggling peoples in defence of our earth? Across the world the fight is on, fires are flickering, arrows flying. Look around you, see the targets. Pull up your mask, it's time to defect.

Above: Tahitian rioter besieges the international airport against French nuclear testing in the Pacific. Top Right: The 500 years of Mayan resistance lives on in the Mexican Zapatistas.
Bottom Right: Papuan stone age spears pierce the madness at the heart of modernity.



Conclusion: Fires in the Night



I hope the conclusion to this pre-history and future strategy will not be written in words—but in action.

I went to a funeral. An ending, but it felt like a beginning. Old Mick was a veteran squatter, rebel and thief. His most successful heist was the reclaiming of his life from those bosses and jailers who think they own us. For decades he lived in the gaps. No one made him into a wageslave. No dropout, he fought. He was no saint, but if ever there was a temporary autonomous zone, Mick was it.

His funeral was one of the best 'actions' I have ever been on. Mick wanted to burn in Lyminge Forest, a large part of which was saved from destruction by direct action. Funeral pyres are illegal, death rights have to be sanctioned by the state. Mick wasn't going to take that, neither were his mates.

Thanks to a snitch the cops had got wind of the plan and a decoy was arranged to throw them off the scent. Meet up points were organised, phones rung. From all over the country vehicles arrived at the secret destination, appropriately marked 'Covert Woods' on the OS map. Over a hundred were gathered. Ten foot the pyre of 'stolen' wood rose, Mick's coffin astride. Night came. Fireworks shot into the sky. Crackling fire, we saw Mick's bones burn, back to the earth. For hours he burned. Some were lairy, some were silent. All of us knew that despite the petty daily bother, we were tribe and on the pyre was one of our elders.

Away from the roads, fearful in the dark—authority crept. The cops knew they had no power here. In the woods, a short confrontation. We were many, they were few. Behind our line—a fire. They listed their petty rules. Illegal gathering. Illegal land occupation. Not to mention illegal funeral. But they could do nothing. Just then a track on the sound system announced with base certainty:

"The day belongs to The Man, but we *shall* control the night."

Be the Spark

When we step out of legality, when we are masked by the night, when we become the earth, we are unconquerable.

These moments of collective power, of togetherness and tribe, are not limited to those times we mass together. In the dark in different places, different times, our sparks join together as one fire. Many of us will never meet each other; all the better, we'll still be one—but those who want to extinguish our flames will find it all the more difficult.

Sun Tzu counselled that even under attack an enemy will only fall through its own mistakes and weakness. The key to victory is not so much to defeat one's enemy, instead it is to make oneself undefeatable.



This is true for our aim, objectives and form. In a sense it is the 'depth' of our victory which is at stake; as victory, given our aim, is not in question. For we know one thing; civilisation is temporary, an aberration. The class war is vicious—but there can be only one winner, the wild. We aim to shorten civilisations rule, to hamstring its tyranny, to lessen its damage. How far we succeed will in large part depend on which objectives we set and which forms we grow.

Of course our networks have not come out of nowhere, but have evolved within struggle. Many of what others see as our weaknesses, are our greatest strengths—with us thanks to a rejection of past mistakes. Our tactics are pretty direct, our immediate objectives usually achievable, our forms relatively autonomous.

As the corporations and states grow ever more powerful they know they can win any 'symmetrical conflict'. What the strategists of authority view with horror is the potential 'network power' of increasingly direct, decentralised, oppositional movements. Their nightmare, our dream; but to reach our potential we must go far beyond ourselves.

Our strength is in our ability to take action and by doing so inspire others to take action. Not mass growth but cellular growth.

Rooting ourselves in the soil and the future, with keen strategy and an ever more tangible—but less visible—combative edge, we can get far stronger.

Our tribes, our counter-cultures will grow. We'll prepare for the fight. No prostituting ourselves to the media, we'll grow in the shadows, but strike when needed. New technologies will attempt to track us, we'll have to evolve to throw them off the scent. Some of the old techniques will have to be abandoned, others picked up. No faces. No names. No Compromise.

For over a decade many on this island have fought for the earth. Yet if we are going to truly defect we will have to struggle harder, think quicker and live wilder. The long trek back to the earth and each other is only beginning. In writing this I merely hope to aid our navigation. Part One showed where we came from. Part Two pointed a few routes to the future. The four tasks are huge; yet with sensible objective-led thinking, luck and hard will, they are perfectly realisable.

Imagine the machines, the pylons, the factories, the labs, the tanks—broken by you.

Imagine the wind, the sun, the beautiful moments—lived by you.

Down with the Empire!
Up with the Spring!

★



"Whatever you can do, or dream you can—begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."
—Goethe

SHAC ATTACK!

Targeting Companies Animal Rights Style



"A small group of people have succeeded where Karl Marx, the Red Brigade and the Baader-Meinhof Gang all failed."—*The Financial Times* on the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign, April 2003.

In 1997, a Channel 4 television documentary exposed Cambridge-based animal experimentation laboratory Huntingdon Life Sciences for numerous horrific abuses of the animals it was testing on, as well as for various breaches of regulations. The government slapped its wrist and let it off.

Meanwhile, the animal rights movement in Britain had just won a fight to shut down the beagle breeder Consort. It was also in the middle of a vigorous campaign to shut down Hillgrove Farm, the last commercial breeder of cats for vivisection in the UK, and the campaign to shut Shamrock Farm, the largest importer of primates for vivisection in Europe, was just beginning.

After tough battles the Hillgrove Farm and Shamrock campaigns were ultimately successful. On a roll, it was decided by some campaigners to move on from simply closing down the animal supply chain, and step up to take on a major component of the vivisection industry—Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), a publicly listed company and the largest animal testing facility in Europe. Building on the momentum of the Channel 4 expose and the success of the Hillgrove victory, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) was formed in 1999 as a purely volunteer, grassroots campaign, with the express purpose of closing down HLS...

Bending a Company to Your Will

For years it has been common to treat companies as giant monoliths—single entities symbolised by their great glass headquarters in which you can only ever see your own reflection, but never what is really going on inside. This was intentional on their part, to make you feel small and impotent in the face of their impressive size, and to themselves appear well armoured and invincible.

Corporations depended on keeping activists ignorant of how they really worked. But look a bit closer and you will find that their armour is really quite fragmented, and if you find the right set of cracks then you can bring even the mightiest company to its knees.

For a long time campaigns consisted of running at a company full tilt and attacking whatever came to hand. Unfortunately what often came to hand

was precisely what the company wanted us to attack; those bits deliberately put in place to draw the attention of activists, while the real business continued unabated behind closed doors.

What SHAC, and similar campaigns following their lead, are now doing is the complete opposite. Before announcing a company as a target, careful research is carried out. A picture of the company is built up, copies of their annual reports obtained, lists of subsidiaries, offices, research and manufacturing sites drawn up. Its activities and their weaknesses are identified. The PR flunkies and the lower management being paid to take the heat are ignored. What matters are the real decision-makers; the people at the top and the people behind the scenes pulling the strings are the real targets.

As well as going for HLS itself, the campaign has spent much of its effort taking out all the secondary companies that support the company, keeping it alive. Each such strut has become a campaign in its own right, and each time one collapses it causes HLS to totter that bit closer to being pushed over the edge.

Experience has shown this to be a highly successful approach, leading to numerous victories. It's got to a point where even a phone call to a company from a SHAC activist letting them know that their involvement in HLS has been rumbled can often be enough to get them to pull out.

With HLS itself every single aspect of the company is being targeted, because there is the single goal of outright closure with no escape clause. However, the majority of secondary targets don't require that sort of campaigning, as the aim is not to close them down but simply to break their links with HLS. This requires a more focused approach, where the supporting company is analysed and targeted at its weakest points.

Every company can be broken down into 5 main aspects:

1) Top people.
2) Ordinary workers.
3) Communications.
4) Offices.
5) Public presences.

Each of these requires a different strategy, but when hit on each front, it will leave the target reeling. Companies are not accustomed to dealing with campaigns working in this fashion, and indeed they are very hard to counter—especially if a variety of above ground campaigning and underground action takes place. Large companies are too spread-out to protect everywhere at once, while small companies give a nice focused target where vital bottlenecks are easily hammered.

The really powerful tool we have as activists is that they never know what we will do next, and that if we all act in a united cohesive way we can take out parts of their infrastructure that they cannot afford to lose. It basically boils down to three things:

1) Putting the fear of God into them.
2) Costing them financially.
3) Dragging their name through the dirt.

Don't waste your time appealing to their better nature—it doesn't exist among the people who really matter in a company. What you appeal to is how much money you are going to cost them, how you are going to destroy their morale and how they are never going to know when and where you will turn up next with a new, disruptive and embarrassing tactic they can do nothing about. Always changing tactics and hitting them at different points keeps them confused and disoriented so they cannot fight back properly.

It does no harm to approach a company first, saying you are planning to campaign against them. But be very strict about what you actually want from them. Tell them that there is little room for negotiation, and that once the message that their company is being targeted reaches the wider public there is nothing that can be done to recall that message without announcing a significant victory or concession that has real meaning. Actions can start happening while you are negotiating, as this re-enforces the message that you do mean business.

However, it is useful to give the target a way out, an escape clause. Depending on the campaign, this may or may not be possible. But if





it is, or can be manufactured by making yourself come across as the reasonable party, then this is a very useful tool to bring the campaign to a successful end.

1) Top People

These are the people at the very top of a company—the people who sit on the board of directors at the parent company, or the very senior management. They are the people with the most power, and also the most to lose. In general they start as very intransigent and hard to get hold of—but a few home demos and actions directed specifically at them can sort that out sharpish.

They, above all, have the ability to set policy for the company and all its subsidiaries, regardless of what they might say. It does not matter if it is just one of their distant subsidiaries who are actually at fault, they still have the power to say stop. Anyone lower than this can be overridden.

2) Ordinary workers

Treat these differently from the top people, as they often have little or no say in the running of the company, and quite often you will come across disaffected employees who are willing to dish out information. You do not want to alienate these potential allies. Don't tell them it is their fault, but that of their managers that their office is being targeted. Tell them to get on the phones to their bosses and demand that they give into the campaign's demands.

Senior management are very aware what damage insiders can do, and if they realise their own workforce is opposing them on this issue, then you have a powerful tool. Many workers will be sympathetic to your aims themselves, and won't like the dirty side of the company they work for. In the past this has resulted in a gold mine of information coming our way. Indeed, in some campaigns it has been the actions of employees awakened to their company's misbehaviour which provided the winning blows.

Public exposure of internal secrets is a very powerful weapon, and is much under-used. Secrets that might not seem important to protestors may be very sensitive information from a commercial point of view. In some cases whistleblowers can crash a company's share price. It may not seem significant to campaigners, but from the company's point of view it can be a deadly blow.

3) Communications

Modern companies cannot function without their communication systems. Blocked phone lines, faxes and email accounts mean that they are not doing business properly. Sales are lost; time is wasted weeding out the hoax orders; staff are demoralised and work less efficiently—it all affects the profits of the company, and that, at the end of the day, is what they really pay attention to.

Companies, small and large, often channel all messages through a central telephone number. This is a natural bottleneck—tie this up and you have a large knock-on effect, especially if it is their main number for doing business.

Companies also tend to own a whole subsection of numbers. Don't just try their publicly issued numbers, but also the ones a digit or two on either side. This will often turn up interesting details as well, and can give direct lines to the top people.

Emails are very easy to target, as you can email a lot of people at once. After a while they will start blocking you, but being smart can circumvent that. Posting their emails to newsgroups and signing them up for free links pages can generate huge amounts of emails from other people, saving you the time and effort. We know of one target who ended up having their entire email system taken down, something which will have hurt them greatly given how much internal communication and networking is done by email. It is also a clear sign to employees that you are winning the campaign.

Next to targeting the top people, this is probably the most effective tactic, but it has to be done consistently and the pressure needs to be kept applied. When the call to action arrives in your email box don't simply send one message or phone-call or fax, then forget about it. Keep at it, day in, day out until they cave in.



4) Offices

The staple of many protests, people often drift away from doing office demos because standing outside holding placards and banners is dispiriting and little reward is seen. In the past, these were often the main form of action rather than being run in conjunction with other tactics. However, they do have a large effect, both financially and in terms of morale. It demonstrates your commitment to closing them down and puts them in a defensive position.

Even better is to meet them on their own territory by entering offices and speaking directly to the staff. Demand to see a manager and bring videos and literature to offer them. This is a tactic they really hate. It is one thing to have a wall between you, but when you are in their workspace they cannot ignore you. Plus they don't get much work done. Do it repeatedly and they start having to pay for increased security measures, as initially you will find most security is done on a low budget basis and easily dodged. Increased security makes for an unpleasant working atmosphere that only helps raise awareness of your cause and encourages people to come forward against their bosses.

5) Public presence

Most companies have a public presence. This comes in two forms: the sponsorship of awards and public events, and attendance at conferences. In both cases it is basically advertising for the company. This is very easy to disrupt and causes them acute embarrassment among the people they are trying to reach out to.

Activists locked onto their stalls at conferences or banner drops exposing them at public events are not things they can hide from. It costs them business and goodwill, and damages their brand name. HLS have stopped going to some conferences now because they know they will be unable to avoid being publicly humiliated—and that definitely means lost business for them.

And it does not have to be just the companies. Company directors often sit on local government and charitable boards—a few visits to these and the directors will soon get the point that it is not just their company name being dragged through the dirt, but their name as well. It is at this point that many long-term campaigns rapidly come to a conclusion.

Dealing with Subsidiaries and Affiliates

An issue that regularly arises is that it is only one part of a large company which is the problem. For example, those companies dealing with HLS know that protests are to be expected. Their parent company probably doesn't know this though, and is not prepared for it either. However, the first thing they normally say is that it is not them that's involved, and why don't the protestors go and target the people who are directly connected.

The response to this is twofold. Firstly, they are all part of the same overarching company and that means they all have a voice. The reason pressure is put on other subsidiaries is to make sure the message reaches the top people that the activists really do mean business. It is one thing for the top people to ignore the chants of protestors, it is another to ignore the demands of their own managers wanting to know why they are getting the grief.

The second reason is that companies are made up of separate divisions who often do not like each other. There is competition for resources and for promotion. Though we will rarely see it, behind the scenes the protests sometimes even give ammunition to different factions in the company, allowing us to divide and rule. It makes the managers of the subsidiary dealing with HLS look to their own backs as the rest of their competitors use the opportunity to gang up on them, costing them precious resources and pay-rises.

Even if you do not get an outright victory, a well-fought, hard-hitting campaign can have major effects. It makes the target think twice about whether they want to deal with HLS again in the future, and whether the cost of lost business and extra security is really worth it. It also sends out a strong message to the rest of the industry that you mean business.

With this campaign the results have gone far beyond just HLS. Multinationals such as Novartis have questioned the suitability of the UK as a place for animal research, while Japanese companies have withheld £1 billion of research

Never Give Up!

Once you pick your target, never give up. Even if for a while it seems you are going nowhere, let this simply spur you to more inventive and effective methods of campaigning and taking action. Giving up makes you look bad and gives other companies the belief that they can defeat you.

In the past too many campaigns have gone this way, and it has a hugely detrimental effect on the campaign and people involved. Sinking your teeth in and refusing to let go, no matter what they throw back at you, is the only way to real victory. If you show any sign of weakness your enemies will jump on it, and it will make other victories much harder to achieve. The psychology of your success is as important as the psychology of using their fear against them. Never give up!



grants. Both cite the HLS campaign as a reason. The result is that the UK is increasingly looked upon as a place to avoid carrying out any animal based research.

The Worlds of Finance and Commerce

It was often questioned why SHAC went after companies such as HLS's insurers, bankers, auditors, shareholders, stockbrokers, market makers, etc, instead of focusing on the companies directly involved in the animal abuse.

The answer is that you need to think about the company itself, not just why you are taking action against it. Once you pick your target you need to remove all the struts supporting it. From the company's point of view, its auditors, insurers and share price are all important aspects, the loss of which make it very hard to function. A good campaign creates a climate of suspicion and instability among creditors and clients and is hard to shake off, as well as being disruptive of the natural workings of the company.

Clients become reluctant to invest and will not pay out millions for a contract if there is a big question over whether the company is going to be around to complete it. Large investors only invest in companies on prestigious stock markets and with recognised auditors. Companies lacking this find it hard to attract these investors, which further damages their credibility, and once in the vicious downward spiral it is hard to climb out again.

Another effect is that, the way the system is, it makes it much harder to get loans. Loans are a vital part of the process of expanding and attracting new business. They are needed to modernise and stay on top. For companies of HLS's size, loans are very much tied into the share price—a dead share price means loans are very hard to come by. As HLS struggles to replace support companies, it is losing the battle for credibility in the eyes of the financial people who can really matter to its future. Nobody in the main financial markets will now touch HLS, and for a company fighting for its life that is a deadly situation.

Success is vital. It is better to focus on one company, gain a victory on, and use that as an example to hold up to others. Once one goes, it is easier to get the ball rolling. Though you may have an array of targets to hit, pick them off one at the time. They will all talk to each other, and the message that you mean business will get around of its own accord.

Internationalism in Action!

Success also breeds global awareness—and global awareness breeds more success. The HLS campaign is capturing the global imagination, and now has sister organisations in dozens of countries around the world. This means that when a new target is chosen, they're hit on an international scale, adding greatly to the impact of the campaign, as well as helping unite the global movement. When HLS moved their shares and loans to the USA in order to escape UK activism, the SHAC campaign in the USA took off and much to HLS's horror, crushed whatever they could lay their hands on.

This global aspect of the struggle has been a significant part of the campaign against HLS. The importance of this is when targets do not have headquarters in the UK. Headquarters are vital as they are where the real decisions are made. Having the presence of activists close to home is very influential in encouraging them to make the decision to pull out from HLS. It also means that they cannot simply escape the attention of SHAC by pulling out of the UK. HLS attempted this and were humiliated. Likewise, Japanese pharmaceutical company Yamanouchi closed down their large UK research centre, only to find that there was no refuge in Holland.

The End (for HLS!)

After the last 10 or so years, animal abusers and other destructive companies now expect direct protests from us, and are ready and able to deal with them. What they are not able to deal with is the loss of the support required to keep them in business. Take these supporters out and the companies are left in a position where they can be put out of business relatively easily. The promises of the governments and police are no substitutes for our tactics of cold hard economic fact, and the fear of being held personally and directly accountable for supporting animal abuse in any form.

The HLS campaign was treading on completely new ground; the learning curve was exponential, and continues to be so. Consistent and unwavering

campaigning and action, continually revising strategies and tactics, and producing glossy, professional literature kept the targets, police and government wrong footed, while keeping the public on our side. The hard work and single-minded commitment paid off, as HLS has become a household name associated with animal abuse, and other companies are quaking in fear of being publicly associated with it.

All it has required is for us to recognise that we have to move forward, embracing new opportunities and taking new forms of action. It does not mean you need a lot of people either. A few focused individuals and some time spent on background research makes for a very effective and victorious campaign. The key is to stop thinking as protestors, but to put ourselves in the position of the target and discover its weak points. A company is made up of many people and has many supporting structures. Pick the right ones and the lot comes tumbling down.

Since the HLS campaign started much has changed in the world of animal rights, but, as even their managing director recently admitted, HLS is on its knees. The media and government rant about the campaign, but it is making very little difference. Indeed, the negative press has been a very useful tool, as it helps spread the word as to just what new targets have to fear when they have the spotlight turned on them. In the last four years SHAC has made mistakes, but they have been learned from and strategies and tactics have been honed. Companies may well be able to run, but they are finding it very hard indeed to hide...★



Contacts

Talks on the HLS campaign can also be arranged on request, and if you have any questions on the tactics discussed in this article contact the author at: banangling@yahoo.com

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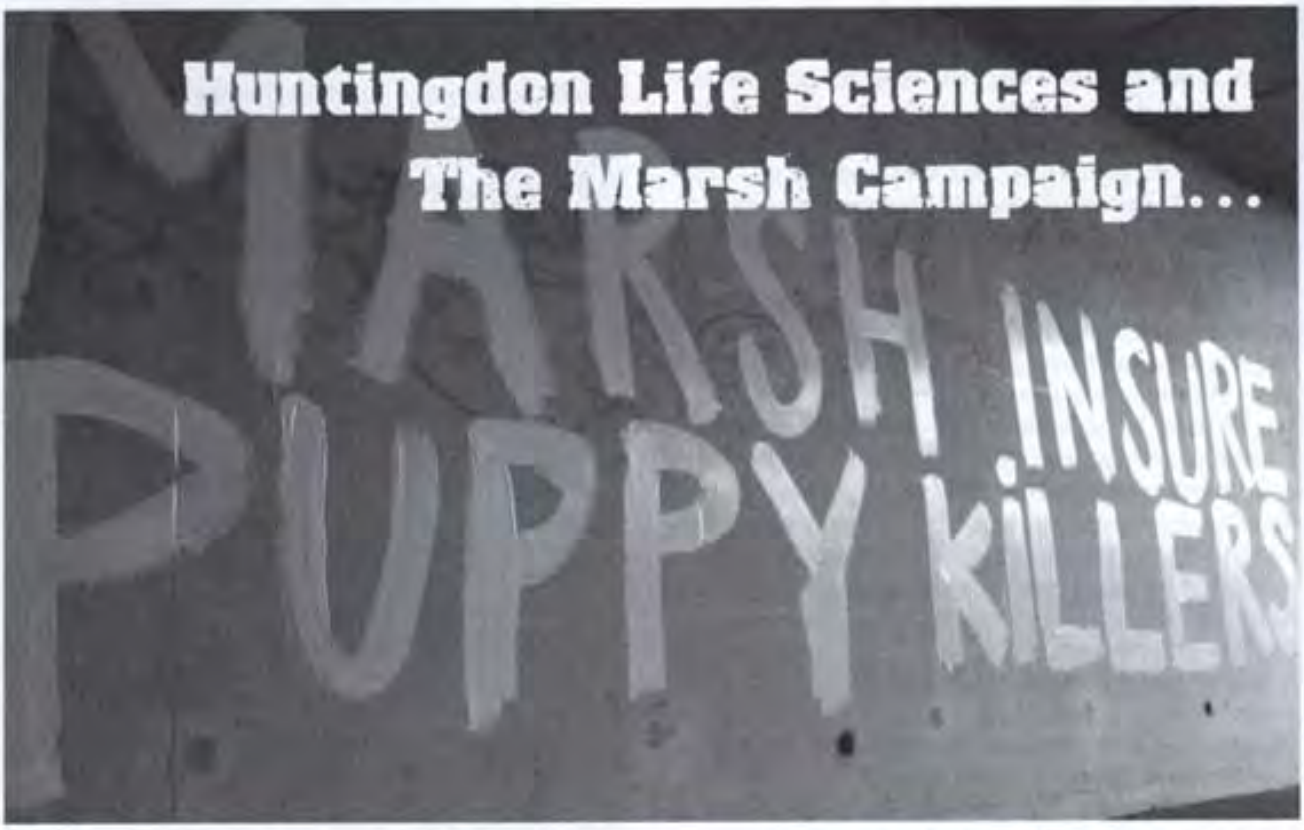
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Huntingdon Life Sciences and The Marsh Campaign...

Marsh Inc., one of the world's largest insurers, acted on behalf of HLS. One of the toughest campaigns launched by SHAC, it took them a year to get Marsh to announce they were stopping involvement with HLS. The victory established SHAC as a force to be reckoned with, and the result is now that other companies look at the Marsh campaign and decide that they are not up for taking the same hammering.

Following on from Marsh, HLS's auditors Deloitte & Touche clearly saw the grief Marsh had received, and 10 days was all it took for them to pull out, and no major auditing company will now touch HLS with a barge pole. It has established the domino effect in campaigning, with all the initial hard work on one company leading to easier victories with others.

Below is a timeline of the Marsh campaign, giving you an idea of how intense the pressure on Marsh was, and showing how this fundamental victory was won. The campaign started in February 2002 and finished in December 2002. Countries involved included: Austria, Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Holland, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, UK and the USA.

February – August In the UK Marsh had their office windows smashed. At some points there were almost daily office demos, occupations disrupting their work, roof top demos, home visits, protest camps set up at the homes of several directors, as well as name and shame leafleting campaigns in directors' villages. Additionally, their clients were targeted, insurance companies working with them were hit, cars were covered in paint stripper, the people who rent them their offices were targeted, and events sponsored by them were ruined.

March – June Boston Marsh executives receive repeated home protests, including several at 3am.

4 March Activists in Boston protest at Marsh offices as part of a weekend of action. Also, Chicago activists disrupt the Marsh office building. In San Antonio Marsh offices are disrupted with stink bombs and flyers.

5 March Under cover of darkness activists sticker Marsh offices and glue their locks.

10 March Homes of Marsh executives are covered in anti-HLS stickers in the middle of the night.

11 March Chicago activists visit the homes of Marsh executives wielding bullhorns, noisemakers, air horns, stickers, and their fists for banging on doors. During the night 'Puppy Killer' slogans are spray painted on an executive's home. In Texas, 3 Marsh offices are covered in stickers and flyers.

25 March Chicago Marsh office building disrupted. Internal Marsh memos released, detailing

"proactive steps which should be taken at every office" in response to the SHAC campaign. It also mentions a 24 hour hotline established for upset Marsh employees!

29 March Seattle activists cover Marsh's office in flyers.

5 April Activists blockade themselves inside San Francisco Marsh offices.

8 April Putrid fruit left in Boston Marsh office stinks the whole place out.

9 April Chicago Marsh executive gets a late night home visit.

21 April – 28 April The homes of two NYC Marsh executives are trashed. Doors, vases, lamps, and mirrors of the lobbies of their Central Park and Park Avenue homes are left in piles of broken glass. Marsh offices and employees homes are protested against in San Francisco, Texas, and Chicago. Their neighbourhoods are plastered with posters informing neighbours that puppy killers live in their communities.

14 May San Francisco Marsh executives wake up to neighbourhoods plastered with posters informing neighbours that puppy killers live in their communities.

7 June Chicago Marsh executive has his house covered in red paint and windows smashed.

11 June In San Jose, California a Marsh executive has his house spray-painted with 'Puppy Killer' and 'Scum' slogans.

17 June A Boston Marsh executive has the front of his home covered in gallons of red paint.

1 July In Sacramento, California, a Marsh executive has his house spray-painted with 'Puppy Killer' and 'Scum' slogans.

3 July A Boston Marsh executive receives a 7am home demo. Later that night two Marsh executives receive late night candle-lit vigils.

7 July Activists hang a banner and flyer the neighbourhood of a Marsh executive in California.

10 July Smoke bombs are set off in two Seattle Marsh offices. Both are evacuated and city blocks are closed off.

15 July Banners are raised by helium balloons in three San Francisco Marsh offices.

24 July Anti-Marsh banners are hung over expressways in Chicago.

26 July San Francisco activists hold an anti-Marsh street party in the financial district.

1 August During the PGA tournament a cell of Animal Liberation Front (ALF) destroys a golf course on Long Island, where an honorary Marsh director is a member.

5 August Activists protest the homes and offices of Marsh executives during a Texas regional weekend of action.

9 August – 11 August Boston activists protest the homes and offices of Marsh executives as part of a regional weekend of action.

17 August A Texas Marsh executive has her neighbourhood plastered with stickers and posters informing her neighbours that she is a puppy killer.

26 August More Marsh home visits in the UK.

27 August Another day of Marsh home visits in the UK.

28 August A Marsh executive gets a 6am early morning home demo. The executive does not go to work. Protesters returned at 4pm to catch the evening traffic.

1 September Marsh directors in New Zealand get visited at their homes.

2 September Activists protest the offices, homes, and church services of Marsh executives. Additionally, the homes of Marsh private investigators are receive home visits.

3 September Marsh director Hamish Ritchie has his windows smashed.

5 September Noisy late night demo at home of Marsh director Christopher Pearson. Later on in September it was reported that a demonstration had taken place at the home of Pearson on the day of a family member's funeral.

7 September Marsh offices across UK get visited by activists. Some are invaded and others face noisy demos outside. It was common practice with Marsh for people to just stand outside their offices all day long banging drums, screaming and





shouting, setting off sirens and air horns and making so much noise it was impossible to work.

7 September Marsh private investigator receives a late night wake up call.

14 September Italian ALF cell smash up a golf club where Marsh sponsor a tournament. Extensive damage caused to the golf course.

17 September Long Island activists protest at the home of a Marsh honorary director.

21 September The ALF paints Long Island Marsh honorary director's home with slogans while security guards sleep in their cars close by.

22 September Marsh executives receive home demos in California.

23 September Phone blockade begins against a hotel in New Zealand who are hosting an event sponsored by Marsh. There are also Marsh demos in Portugal and New Zealand. In NZ offices are entered and stickers plastered everywhere. Another office has 15 people outside it handing out flyers with employees' home addresses on them. There are Marsh demos in four German towns on the same day. Offices are besieged all day long.

24 September As part of an Italian week of action against Marsh 3 offices had demos outside and 3 were invaded and a week-long phone blockade took place.

25 September Activists invade the Marsh offices in Liverpool.

28 September Memorials to the animals are left outside the homes and health clubs of Marsh executives in California.

29 September Activists break away from a national demo against HLS and visit Marsh directors in their homes.

30 September At 1am activists arrived at the home of Marsh director Hamish Ritchie, shouting at him on a megaphone and setting off air horns.

3 October Internet attack against Marsh begins. Activists set up an Internet chat room where every time a word is typed an email is sent to Marsh. Marsh received over 200,000 due to the action and experienced computer problems as a result. For details see: www.huntingdonsucks.com

10 October University job fair in London disrupted as activists besiege Marsh's display with chants, megaphones, posters and flyers.

19 October SHAC is sent a letter from a Marsh employee claiming that there is a group of employees who sympathise with the campaign and have been causing damage to company property. At one point during the campaign a coffee machine fire caused the whole office to be evacuated.

24 October Activists disrupt a party at a Country Club in Long Island, USA where Marsh directors schmooze with other high rollers. Outside another protest ensues.

27 October Marsh director William White Cooper has stickers bearing his name and address plastered all over his neighbourhood. Marsh Offices in Exeter have demos outside. Marsh takes out an injunction to try and keep people away from the offices but it is constantly ignored over the following weeks as people carry on giving Marsh hell. Marsh client Exeter council is also targeted and they take out a similar injunction.

28 October A two-day conference in London is besieged by activists in protest at the fact a Marsh director is speaking at it.

30 October Activists distribute information to attendees of a Marsh presentation at a university's ongoing job fair. In the middle of it activists stand up and disrupt the presentation.

1 November Activists demonstrate outside Marsh offices in Italy.

4 November Long Island activists protest at the homes and golf club of Marsh executives.

5 November An ALF cell claim responsibility for spraying slogans all over the village of Marsh director Julian Atkinson in the UK.

6 November Marsh director's house in NZ is attacked by the ALF. Car paint-strippered and slogans sprayed all over and more Marsh directors are visited in the UK.

7 November The polling places of Marsh executives are plastered the night before Election Day with posters informing the district that puppy killers live amongst them.

8 November Marsh director Hamish Ritchie 'retires' from another company he is involved in (HALMA) to save them the trouble of a planned week of action against them. In Philadelphia activists protest at Marsh offices.

9 November An honorary Marsh director on Long Island has his neighbourhood, food market, and



gas station plastered with posters educating the town that he is a filthy puppy killer!

10 November Marsh directors across the South East of England are visited in their homes despite a huge police presence to try and curb the demo.

11 November The Animal and Earth Liberation Fronts pay a visit to an honorary Marsh directors golf club on Long Island and covers the shop, surrounding buildings, and signs in painted slogans.

17 November SHAC Portugal visit Marsh offices and Marsh offices all over the UK get demos. During the evening activists find out that Hamish Ritchie and his wife sit on the board of the English National Ballet. A performance of the world famous 'Nut Cracker' show is invaded and disrupted. Days later Ritchie and his wife are made to resign and the Ballet confirm that their sponsorship deal with Marsh will not be renewed.

21 November Activists hold a demo at the British Insurance Brokers Association over their links with Hamish Ritchie of Marsh.

22 November Several Marsh directors have their home windows smashed and there are home visits on Marsh directors in Austria.

23 November A witness statement by the head of security for Marsh UK is leaked. It reveals that up until September 2002 Marsh have had thousands of abusive emails and letters, up to 400 nuisance phone calls per hour, text messages sent to employees on their mobile phones, 244 office demos, several bomb hoaxes and suspect packages, 42 employees bombarded with junk mail and threatening letters, 26 directors have had home visits on a total of 58 occasions, several cars damaged, windows smashed, corporate events have been disrupted and documents removed and leaked!

26 November New Zealand Marsh director sells his house and moves out after home visits, leafleting and damage. 10 UK Marsh directors are visited in 48 hours—some of them in the early hours of the morning.

28 November Marsh executives in Cincinnatti get late night megaphone home visits.

1 December Son of Marsh director phones SHAC and claims that incendiary devices were found at the family home. German activists visit Marsh directors in their homes and demonstrate outside. Around 24 home visits against Marsh and other HLS collaborator directors take place in one day. The ALF report that Marsh in Holland has windows smashed, locks glued and acid is thrown all over the hall way.

5 December Marsh in Southampton have their windows bricked in.

9 December Posters and stickers put all over the area of a German Marsh office.

10 December Marsh offices all over the world get demos on a global day of action. It is also reported that German Marsh director is bombarded with junk mail and unwanted services as an early Xmas gift.

12 December Texas activists hold home demos against Marsh executives.

13 December Marsh demos in 3 German towns.

14 December Marsh directors in Surrey get home visits.

17 December Marsh offices in London get demos—they have been done every Wednesday for the past few months.

Unknown date in December Police claim that an activist attempts to carry out an arson attack on the property of Marsh director Christopher Pearson.

18 December Marsh announce they will sever all contact with HLS. Victory!★



My Heroes Have Always Killed Cowboys



An Interview with Rod Coronado

The inspiring Native American earth warrior and animal liberationist Rod Coronado paid a visit to Brighton a little while back. Finally free to speak after years on the run, in prison and then with parole conditions banning him from engaging in any political activity, he made the best of it by going on a speaking tour around the UK. He managed to spare some time out of his schedule for a chat with *Do or Die*...

How did you first get involved with animal liberation actions and political struggles?

Well, I was raised with a value system that didn't see animals as property, a value system that saw the earth as our mother, that value system not being founded on anything that took years to develop through philosophical or ideological involvement but instead being what I was brought up with. Having that worldview, then being exposed to institutional animal abuse and earth destruction, that's what led me into direct action, as opposed to the more common path that takes years and years of frustration, and a feeling of ineffectiveness before one uses direct action. That's something that never occurred to me.

My political involvement began in the mid-1980s, when I became an adult and graduated from school. I was very much attracted to the mainstream issues of saving the whales and preventing the clubbing of seals and the most extreme examples of animal abuse and environmental destruction. I found myself gravitating toward the more aggressive direct action groups simply because I never had held much faith in governmental avenues of change and political systems. Whether it's as a Native American or an observer of history, I just always felt that governments were about breaking resistance or accommodating it, rather than listening to it.

So, for me the tactic was always finding the group that was most effective, or most involved with intervention and the physical disruption of killing. In 1978 or '79, I saw a documentary about Greenpeace's campaigns to interfere with the Canadian seal hunt, which in those days was the largest wild animal slaughter in the world. And their direct action tactics were the type of actions that I

felt were necessary. And so I gravitated toward them until I saw there was somebody even more aggressive on the political spectrum of direct action, which was Paul Watson, who had broken away from Greenpeace to start Sea Shepherd. Of all the organisations that I joined as a teenager—mainstream animal welfare groups—it was Sea Shepherd that I got a human connection from in the form of letters back from people, letters back from Paul himself. When I was 17 and I left school, I started working full time for them on anti-whaling campaigns in the Faeroe Islands against the pilot whale slaughter there. My first voyage was in 1985 to interfere with that hunt and the following year, 1986, I returned to the same campaign in the Faeroe Islands.

Working with Sea Shepherd led me to a greater exposure to more revolutionary political movements here in Britain, and also to the phenomenon of anarchy and its role in the direct action movement. That's where I'd say I realised that direct action wasn't something that you waited for someone to ask you to do—you just took the initiative and did it yourself. And that led me onto a path that saw me beginning my own direct action for Sea Shepherd in the form of a campaign that we took upon ourselves in 1986, to stop illegal Icelandic whaling. And once that proved successful, with our sinking of two whaling ships and destruction of the nation's whaling station, that only inspired and encouraged me further to continue on this path of empowerment that wasn't dependent on any structure or politics or organisation. And it reaffirmed my personal feelings of where an individual in today's world is most effective when representing the earth and animals. By taking individual autonomous direct action and utilising the tactics of guerrilla warfare, you are able to strike much larger targets when they least expect it, as opposed to more mainstream strategies that involve lobbying, protest, demonstrations and letter writing.



Canadian seal hunt

Sea Shepherd

What tactics did Sea Shepherd actually use? Like in the Icelandic whaling fleet actions, did Sea Shepherd ships take on other ships?

The tactic of intervention that we used against the pilot whale hunt was simply to place our ship between the whales and the much smaller fishing vessels that would sail out from small ports to drive the whales to shore. And by simply placing our ship outside the local harbours of fishing villages, when the whales were migrating past, it was intimidating enough to the locals for them not to pursue the whales. Based on the reputation that we had already built through previous years of direct action against whaling ships, they knew that we meant business, we weren't Greenpeace, that we weren't above destroying property, and that was a reputation that preceded us and proved to be very effective in itself. Simply our presence was enough of a threat.

In Iceland it was more of a covert operation. Me and one friend, with the wages we had made over a summer of labouring in London, were able to fly to Iceland, where we discovered through observation of the activities of the whaling station, that there was nobody on the premises at night. So it was possible for us to break into the facility and inflict maximum economic damage through sabotaging the machinery and computers. By having the experience of working on an actual ship, we knew that we could also get aboard the whaling ships, and if we could access their engine rooms, we could sink the vessels in the harbour without using explosives or risking any injury, which is what we were able to do. And we weren't trained mercenaries or commandos or soldiers, but just people who were empowered because nobody told us we couldn't accomplish what we set out to do. Being a saboteur is a power an individual can have if he or she studies the enemy long enough to find a weak link. And that is still an avenue of action that seems to be very effective, simply because the target is what industry and government care about the most, which is their profits, their financial base.

There's been an Earth First! movement in America for 20 years and there's been direct action and eco-defence actions for longer than that. But it seems that Sea Shepherd, with the exception of Greenpeace, who are now more of a mainstream

organisation, are still the only people to have taken direct action onto the sea in a big way. Why do you think this is?

Well, I think there's just an unfamiliarity that our movements have with working on ocean issues in a hands-on way. I think that any issue that's land based is easier simply because we are a land based society. But I think a lot of it also has to do with the fact that destruction of wilderness, where it can be seen, shocks a lot more people into action than environmental destruction that takes place in the ocean. The depletion of fish stocks and marine mammal populations and pollution isn't something that's really seen unless you live in a coastal environment; unless you depend on a healthy ocean environment for your existence. I think that has made it harder to generate attention for ocean issues because a lot of people don't really fathom the level of destruction. I mean, you hear commercial fishing being described as the strip-mining of the seas, but without any sense of the magnitude of it, it's harder to generate direct action campaigns against the commercial fishing industry. Also it has to do with people's conditioning, which makes it much easier to organise around furry cute animals or indigenous people as opposed to plankton or fish. We definitely have a tendency in our movement to be attracted to the causes that are easier to generate public support for. It is unfortunate that Sea Shepherd has been the only organisation to really fight for the high seas with a direct action strategy. But I think one reason that it hasn't happened more is because it just takes a hell of a lot of money to put a ship to sea. It's hard enough organising demonstrations and campaigns on land, let alone organising and raising the funds necessary to put a ship that consumes two tonnes of diesel a day in the sea—and there's also some environmental issues connected with operating a ship like that!

What are your opinions of Paul Watson? Because I know he is sometimes a controversial figure.

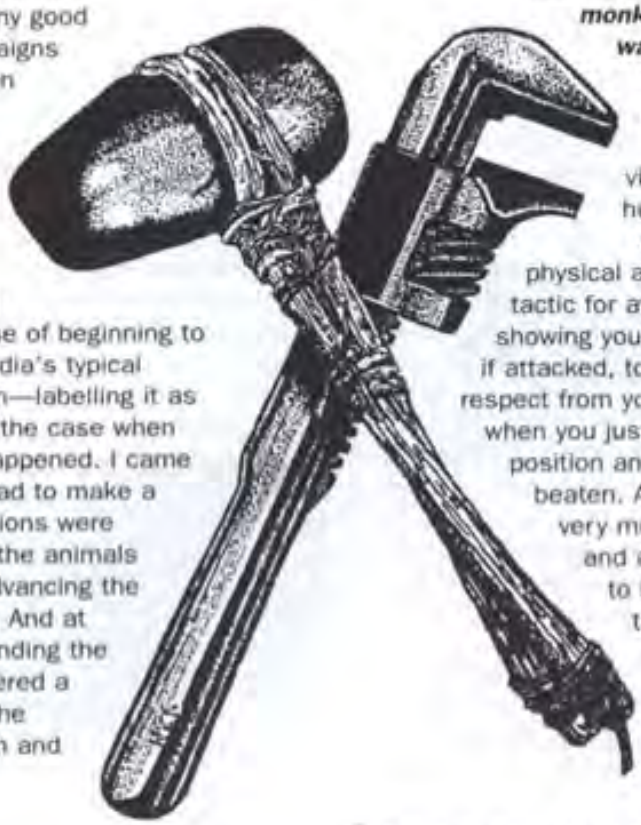
I think a lot of people tend to judge Paul on the basis of their opinions of how he should carry out his actions or how he should carry on his life as a reflection of his actions. And because we find it hypocritical for somebody to fight for animal rights and yet eat meat, a lot of people judge Paul for that. But regardless of what Paul's own lifestyle decisions are, I choose instead to just look at what can't be ignored in his life that he has done for the Earth. And after 30 years of action, he has never become an institutional environmentalist, or condemned the tactic of direct action, like so many other people have in the grassroots movement, once they gain a position within the mainstream environmental movement or turn their actions into a career. And at the end of the day, that demands respect. This is a warrior; this is someone who has repeatedly put his life on the line. Paul's now pushing 60 years old and he's still out there on the ship carrying out campaigns. There's very few activists in our movement that have been involved that long and are still doing the level of grassroots organising that they were 20 or 30 years ago. So I think that deserves a lot of respect. And as we said before, there is only one organisation that is active on the high seas, to protect and defend the whales and the sea nations. I don't think we're in a position to criticise the one organisation that exists.

In 1989 I finally felt that my term had been served with Sea Shepherd. I started to have differences of opinion with Paul Watson's strategy. Not that I questioned its effectiveness, but I knew it was no longer the mode of operation that suited me. Sea Shepherd used direct action, but direct action that could be argued to be enforcing international government agreements. I didn't want to wait for international bodies to recognise the need to preserve animals and the Earth; I just wanted to start taking actions that protected animals and the Earth on the basis of ecological law and moral law. I wanted to take actions that very specifically targeted the industry and worked, and didn't depend on public support or have publicity



On the side of Sea Shepherd, its tally of trashed targets. The two Icelandic ships, Hvalur 6 and 7, were the ones sunk by Rod Coronado.

as their goal or a sign of their effectiveness. While many good organisations and campaigns do defeat their targets on the basis of getting public support, I found that the role I could best perform was to simply operate with only the intent of damaging the industry. I think this is also because of beginning to see more clearly the media's typical response to direct action—labelling it as criminal activity, as was the case when the actions in Iceland happened. I came to a threshold where I had to make a decision whether my actions were motivated by protecting the animals that I represented, or advancing the cause of our movement. And at the end of the day, defending the Earth and animals mattered a lot more than pleasing the movements for the Earth and animals.



The Earth First! logo of a crossed monkeywrench and Iroquois warhammer. EF! was inspired by the struggles of native peoples from the beginning.

Tactics

When you were in this country, I guess like 10 years ago or more, was that the first time you'd come into contact with animal liberation activists?

Yes, in the mid-'80s—that was the first time I came into contact with people who were physically getting out into the field to protect animals, by disrupting hunts, by sabotaging fur shops and butchers' shops. But what I think was more important was the lesson to be learned in that seeing that people with very little money could still carry out actions in defence of animals and the Earth. There was the same level of social and ecological responsibility that I've heard most frequently spoken of in indigenous societies, whereby the individual is responsible for their own actions, and not only for their own actions but also for protecting and defending those who cannot protect and defend themselves. So that was something that resonated very strongly with me, the fact that you didn't have to be part of a larger organisation to be effective.

I went out hunt sabbing in Bristol and Plymouth and seeing first hand the level of violence that people were willing to inflict on us, because we were trying to protect the fox's life, was another transition that took place in my life; until that time I really believed that I was a pacifist. And I really believed that there was no place for violence or even self-defence. I believed in passive non-violence until I saw that as hunt saboteurs, the willingness to defend oneself against physical attack was the most effective tactic for avoiding physical attack. Really showing your enemy that you were willing, if attacked, to fight back, created a level of respect from your opponent that didn't exist when you just curled up into a foetal position and allowed yourself to get beaten. And being a person who is very much about fighting violence and avoiding violence, it seemed to be an appropriate logical tactic, to demonstrate a willingness to defend yourself and your comrades. The level of violence has increased against non-violent activists, whether they are representing the Earth or animals or human rights. This has led me now to be even more galvanised in the effort to avoid physical confrontation. Targeting the institutions' property and machinery and buildings that are used to destroy life, is much more non-violent than carrying out actions where you are physically confronting the people who are operating those machines and who occupy those buildings, who carry out the killing.

So you're doing it in a more anonymous way where you never actually physically confront another individual?

Yes, because the greatest level of violence I've seen in our movement is when we're physically confronting our opponents. And I strongly believe that we should choose our battles wisely, because when we are subject to arrest and the ensuing court proceedings, it not only disables us individually from activism but also creates a dependency on our movements to support us and provide legal defence. I also see that as part of the obligation we have to our movement, to always represent the Earth and animals first and avoid situations where we have to then claim to be the victims ourselves rather than keep the attention on those we are fighting for. We've repeatedly seen demonstrations for good causes turn into defence funds for the activists who were participating in them; the issue changing over from being about environmentalism to one of police abuse, protecting one's constitutional rights, etc., which



also I find to be in a sense hypocrisy, because we're demanding protection from a society that at the very same time we seemingly oppose.

So you think that tactically it's more sensible to move away from street demonstrations and that kind of action, which is risking getting yourself arrested and tying up everyone else in a campaign of legal support?

You see a lot of people being arrested in large mass demonstrations who are masking up and carrying out small property destruction. Rather than all actions being supported, we can also be justified in questioning those people and debating within our movement whether it's effective for somebody to carry out action in the light of day for the TV, the media and the police cameras, or whether instead it would be better that we support the tactic but in a much safer environment where people who carry out those same tactics are so much less likely to get caught. I mean, in a sense it seems extremely irresponsible and reckless to carry out property destruction in front of the police when it can be carried out much more effectively if you just wait until the next day, or do it the week before the demo. And I think that that's something we owe to ourselves to do, rather than just argue that property destruction done on large demonstrations should be applauded and encouraged. If you're part of a mass demonstration that is targeting a research facility, animal breeders, or an immigration facility, where it is possible, by virtue of the sheer numbers you have, to rescue individual victims, then direct action should be carried out at that time. But, at the same time, I think that we also have to ask ourselves, "Well, gee, if I could save ten animals' lives in a mass demonstration against Huntingdon Life Sciences, maybe I could save 100 if I came back when the security wasn't escalated to meet the mass demonstration."

My avenue of action has always been based on what an individual can be most effective at doing. And applying that to my own life I have found that there's a lot more that I'm capable of, when I target the very same corporation or issue that larger groups and organisations do on demonstrations. And rather than just be another body on the picket line, I personally have found that I can be a lot more effective using sabotage and direct action against that very same industry. And I think that when we call ourselves green anarchists or anarchists, or we call ourselves revolutionaries, I think we really have to seriously consider what that means. We have to recognise that it isn't just about feeling that you do enough if you go out on a mass action every couple of months. If you fly halfway across the country or the world to go to an international protest against globalisation, that isn't enough to realise the power of direct action. In large street demos, you might get away with smashing a few windows. To me the power of direct action is about recognising what you can do away from a larger movement.

I think larger movements most definitely have an effective place in our struggle. But already I think that we've seen that the anti-globalisation movement, by virtue of being very successful in its first couple of demonstrations in Seattle and other cities, has been meeting with ever-increasing police violence and ever increasing arrests. Activists are being banned from travelling out of their home countries, and are being pulled off aeroplanes before they even attend the actions. I really wish those demonstrations would be left to people who are living in those countries where it's easier for them to organise, as opposed to us utilising our limited resources in paying for flights and travel, and just being one more body. I think that we have to recognise as revolutionaries that as young, physically fit people, it shouldn't be enough to just go to a demo every two months, even if we are able to mask up and commit some property destruction. I think that's a dangerous, slippery slope that one can easily slide down as an activist, when you start feeling that the actions that you carry out as part of a mass movement are enough. Masking up and smashing some windows is effective but it's nowhere near the only direct action I want to do.

I think there are a lot of people who believe in the power of revolutionary action and who support revolutionary struggles but are very apprehensive about starting their own in their own home country. And I think that's a product of our privilege as members of a First World society, regardless of many of us being working class or poor. We are still for the most part not representing ourselves but representing the Earth and people in other countries, and as a result we're not directly being

oppressed as much as those that we represent. You see some struggles where people are paying a very high price for the same level of activity that we carry out with the blessing of our governments by virtue of being able to organise overtly. I think that we have an obligation to do as much as we can with the privilege that we have. And if you're a revolutionary, I think that means a lot more than just smashing a few windows. It's been repeatedly seen over and over again, that when people do rise above that and do recognise that they can do a lot more on their own, independently, the results speak for themselves.

Fur Farms



So when you were over here, back in the '80s, and you met up with hunt sabs and animal liberation people, were there particular things that you thought could be carried over to the USA, or things that you thought would work back there as well?

I think that I really recognised the effectiveness of ALF tactics of economic sabotage against the fur industry. I participated here in London, by smashing up fur shops on my own, without knowing any animal rights activists in London, I just did it. Collectively by my doing that, then other people doing it at demos, I think we were pushing these retail businesses into bankruptcy. I recognised that the fur industry was a winnable target. So when I did go back to the States I was very motivated to attack the fur industry there, which hadn't met the level of economic sabotage that it had met in England. And I knew that if we persisted to the degree that people in England had, that there was no reason why we wouldn't meet with the same results, because regardless of them being different countries, it's still the law of economics that we were working under. And we were able to put a couple of retail fur shops out of business, so the evidence was there. I think that's what led me to decide that it wasn't enough to target individual fur shops; that we needed to set even higher goals, and hit larger industry targets. That's why I found myself beginning to work against the fur farm industry.



I realised that a lot could be gained by an intelligence gathering mission, so with the support of a mainstream animal rights group, we were sent to carry out an investigation of the fur farm industry. At this time the majority of the animal rights movement's arguments against the fur trade were based on fur trapping and as a result the fur trade was shifting its emphasis from trapping to the domestic rearing of fur-bearing animals, which we knew very little about. So we spent about a year infiltrating fur farms under the premise that we were looking for breeding stock and wanted to start our own operation. We accumulated massive amounts of video documentation of the abuses on fur farms that could be used as ammunition to educate people as to what was going on—the suffering that was behind fur coats. And at the same time, carrying out this investigation revealed to me the level of vulnerability that the industry had in America, because it had not been targeted by ALF direct action. So, on the conclusion of this investigation and having achieved our goal of gathering evidence to prove the level of psychological and physical abuse that was experienced by animals on farms, I felt that the next logical step was attacking the industry using direct action. We'd gotten images that could be used to get public support for the anti-fur movement, but I also recognised that there was an industry here that could be hurt by direct action. So I felt the logical obligation to carry out that direct action, in the way I had carried out actions against the whaling industry.

So after you'd researched it, you knew where all the fur farms were and you knew what might be the most effective points of attack?

Yes, like any industry, I knew that research and development was the cornerstone and the pioneering front that advanced the industry. So this seemed to me the most vulnerable link in the fur farm industry in the United States, targeting the handful—four or five—university researchers who were funded by the fur farm industry to carry out vivisection on mink and to study and overcome the obstacles that were encountered by the industry, in terms of animal husbandry. Because whereas factory farming is based on the intense confinement of domestic animals, fur farming is based on the intense confinement of native predators who are yet to be domesticated.

So I drove down to the nation's largest experimental fur farm at Oregon State University. I walked into the facility after careful reconnaissance. I was by myself, and you know, they weren't expecting anything—the fur farm industry hadn't been hit in America yet. And so I got into the guard fence and I looked at the main research building and there was an open bathroom window. So I took the screen off and I crawled in and there was all the research records and documents and experimental equipment of the nation's largest experimental fur farm. And no alarms went off and so I climbed on the roof and I told myself, "Look, OK, if you decide to do what you're thinking..." I'd been captured in 1987, four years previously, smashing up fur shops in Vancouver, Canada. So I knew the consequences of what would happen if I took direct action, and what I was thinking was total destruction, not minimum damage, and in this case it was arson. For me, as an indigenous person, fire is a cleansing force—it's how we clean ourselves when we take sweat lodge ceremonies; it's how we clean ourselves when we burn sage and sweetgrass and other medicinal herbs; it's a power, a force of nature, and you use it to rid away evil, so in that way it's a very sacred application when the ALF or the ELF use arson. And so I was on that roof knowing that the actions that I was thinking about taking would probably lead to prison eventually, because having done the investigation of the fur farm industry, I knew that it would probably only be a matter of time before my presence in the fur farms and in the auction houses and the feed co-operatives would... you know, people would start connecting the dots. It wouldn't take a rocket scientist to see that probably these people were the ones responsible.

But despite prison or a fur farmer's bullet, I just knew that it was what had to be done—it wasn't a heroic decision, it wasn't a brave decision, it was just recognising the obligation that I had to the animal world, to my brothers and sisters. So that was the beginning of what we called Operation Bite Back. For the next year and a half we attacked five of the six recipients of research grants given out that year. We destroyed many, many major research projects: we destroyed experimental feed barns, we rescued a couple of dozen mink and other animals, and we destroyed over 32 years worth of research at Michigan State University.

Going Underground

What are the dangers or advantages of acting 'underground'?

Well, I definitely found that my targeting and subsequent imprisonment was largely a result of my above ground activism rather than illegal activism. Had I never been identified as an ALF member fighting the fur trade and as somebody that believed in property destruction to defend the Earth and animals, I never would have been caught. So that leaves me advising other people who find themselves ready to carry out direct action to sever whatever connections they have with the above ground movement that is a part of the same struggle they are representing illegally, simply because the police investigation's first tactic in searching for the perpetrators of illegal political action is looking at the legal activists that are part of that same movement. So if you are not a part of that same movement in the above ground you instantly preserve your anonymity and remain off their radar until further investigations. It's definitely making things easier for them when we wear one hat during the day that identifies us as an animal rights activist or environmentalist and then in the middle of the night wear a separate hat when we're carrying out illegal activities for the same cause. And even though we repeatedly do this due to the limitations we have in our

On the Run

I am blind with anger because of this racist anti-native government that now hunts me like any other wild dog. Is my crime that I am not intimidated, that I attempt to speak truth when I witness atrocities against life? ... Let's assume the Feds are right and I'm responsible for six arsons, break-ins and animal rescues that have cost exploiters over $2 million—all actions that caused no loss of life. Why is it that white men can build a factory that manufactures weapons whose primary function is to kill non-white people, under the full approval of the US government; yet when one native guy is suspected of burning down animal research laboratories and rescuing animal hostages, his friends are jailed for not providing information, and a $35,000 bounty is put on his head?

Suddenly Wounded Knee becomes understandable and not in the distant past. For the souls of my human sisters and brothers who visit me in my dreams and visions, I will continue to fight. Crazy Horse tells me, "All you need is a few good warriors and you shall fight for the people."

This is a very real struggle, one that will require each of you to re-examine your commitment to the earth. Let us all get beyond the human nature and back to wild nature. Let the children of earth be one again and fight, fight, fight.

—Rod Coronado, written whilst on the run. from *Do or Die* No. 2 (1993!)

movement of numbers of people willing to carry out direct action, it's easy to see just by looking at prisoner pages that the majority of people who are getting busted for direct action are busted because they were seen within the above ground movements.

Arrest and Imprisonment

How was it that you finally got arrested?

Well, my criminal indictment came about from a paper trail of documents that were discovered after a raid—documents that were being delivered to mainstream animal rights groups who could then use the information that we had confiscated from the laboratories. And also it was a result of handwriting samples that were obtained from handwritten communiqués that were confiscated from personal storage lockers that were raided by the police. But interestingly enough, the majority of evidence that led to my criminal conviction was not related to the actual committing of the crime, but more to the publicity that we tried to generate for the issue that we were attacking. And as I stated before, I was trying to be effective both as a source of public education and as an impact against the industry, and this cost me. Ideally, if we were part of a more organised movement, my only job would have been carrying out the action. The media part of it would have been handled by somebody else. Since we were very much in the infancy of a direct action movement in America at the time, I found myself in multiple roles, still being a spokesperson while also carrying out the actions I was speaking for.

Is that partially the idea of having the ALF/ELF spokesperson office?

Exactly. Which didn't exist at the time. Or if it did, I wasn't aware of it. I mean, there was a press office in England, but in America, it was pretty much up to independent media sources to spread the word. The point of a press office is to create a safe avenue for an individual to defend actions that they themselves are not a part of, as opposed to trying to create an avenue of communication for those that carry out the actions, which is extremely risky. It helps preserve those people's anonymity to have a press office, and in that way it serves a very important role.

What was your experience of prison? How long were you actually in for?

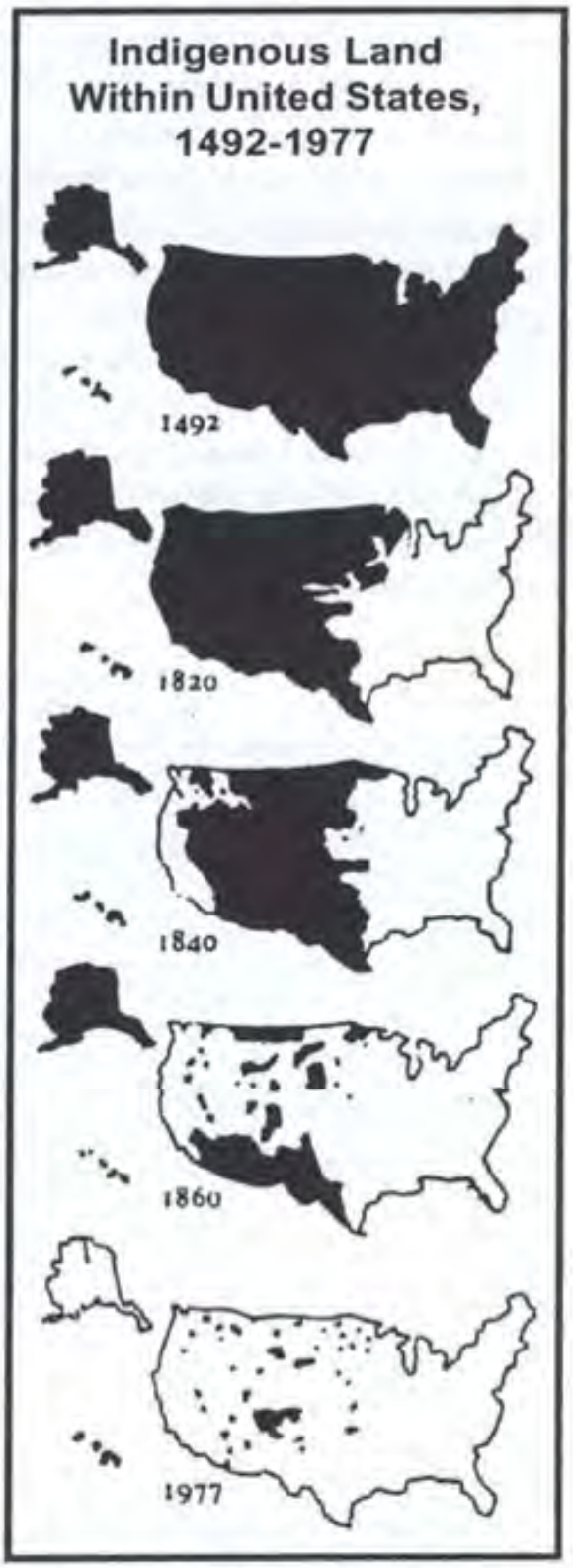
I ended up doing just about four years in prison and my experience was that the struggle did not end as I entered prison, but that it just shifted. Rather than carrying out direct actions against industry, my new role as a prisoner of war was to educate people—not only the prisoners, who

"For me, as an indigenous person, fire is a cleansing force—it's how we clean ourselves when we take sweat lodge ceremonies; it's how we clean ourselves when we burn sage and sweetgrass and other medicinal herbs; It's a power, a force of nature, and you use it to rid away evil, so in that way it's a very sacred application when the ALF or the ELF use arson."

themselves are victims of state repression, but also the numerous people who corresponded with me and were part of the environmental and animal rights movements. I expressed to them through my story of imprisonment, how the sacrifice that we are forced to make is so much smaller than that faced by other people in other struggles in other countries or the sacrifices faced by the animals themselves we represent. And also, by being able to write to people and tell them how I was and what I was doing, I could show them that prison isn't a disempowering thing if you don't want it to be. Prison's intention is to break our spirits and make us lose faith in what we believe in. But when you're sent to prison for something no more than protecting life and a healthy environment, it's a situation where you wake up and you feel really good about why you're there, as opposed to having done something that you regret.

It also becomes a very strong representation, not only to our movement, but also to the people in prison, that you are so serious about what you believe in that you're willing to go to jail for it. That in itself I think really validates our struggle and earns us the respect that we deserve as direct action warriors, as opposed to people who sometimes feel that animal rights and environmentalism are privileged movements. I think when we demonstrate our willingness to give up that privilege and go to prison for what we believe in, we show the rest of the world and the community that it's time to start recognising this movement that isn't about humans or protecting the environment for humans' sake.

I think that the outrageously long prison sentences being handed out to people like Free and Critter are evidence that there is a very strong political motivation behind our persecution by the law. We're not being sentenced as if we were



simply criminals carrying out illegal activity, we're being sentenced as people that represent a movement engaged in direct action, in order to intimidate other people from joining that movement. So I think that while being a very real obstacle to our movement, at the same time it's forcing many people to evaluate what this struggle is about for themselves; whether it's only something you do for a couple of years in college until your career comes around or whether it's something you dedicate your life to, as many people have. So, I think in America, any reduction in action as a result of police repression is simply because we are working out separating the wheat from the chaff and seeing who is really ready to live up to their beliefs and walk their talk as opposed to most people who might be attaching themselves for other, less selfless, reasons.

What sort of relationships did you have with the other people in prison?

Well, considering that there was a large Native American population in the prison, I had a very good relationship with all of these people who were raised believing in a worldview that I shared as an animal rights activist or direct action activist and as an indigenous person. And as for the rest of people, the concept of environmentalism and animal rights was very foreign to them, but in time, they were exposed to it by associating with me, me providing them with reading material, answering their questions about who was writing to me, and giving them a face to a movement that they previously maybe had only heard about in the media. And so I found that it was very educational in that the next time those people heard about a direct action attack or even a protest about animal rights or the environment, they would think back to me, not believe what the media were saying about the people engaged in these things, but know that the type of people who do these things are very real because they knew one of them.

Spirituality

I have heard you talk before about the importance of the spiritual aspects of ecological struggle and animal defence. I was wondering if you could say a bit more about that.

Well, I definitely do not recognise the animal rights or environmental movements as being movements of a contemporary time. I definitely do not believe that I can contain the things that I believe in within the framework of animal rights philosophy or environmentalist philosophy. For me, that's impossible, because it's not just about protecting animals, it's not just about protecting the environment, it's about being part of a larger global resistance that for hundreds of years has resisted this worldview that has plagued the Earth for so many centuries now, that attempts to force indigenous peoples, animals, and the Earth, into subjugation and reduce them to property or a resource.

After being involved with the struggle for so long and with the history of my people, I don't see this as a new phenomenon. I don't see the Earth Liberation Front as this new force that just burst on

to the scene; I see the Earth Liberation Front as being the modern incarnation of the very same resistance that has existed everywhere in the world. The world that our people come from and that still exists for many indigenous people—and non-indigenous people too, if they choose to recognise it—is a world that sees every human being, every animal being, every plant being, as part of a whole and equal to each other.

I'm not sure how familiar people are with the natural world as it existed in north America, but that is really the basis for understanding my whole worldview, because the world that we come from, the world that all indigenous people come from, is a world that prior to European invasion was a vibrant, highly advanced civilisation. We weren't primitive people—we were *more advanced*—in our science, in our understanding of the workings of nature—not through any establishment or institution, but just through the participation of being a member of the circle of life, and through the observance of the harmonious existence of the natural world through generations.

Our elders come to us and talk to us about what kind of world existed before, and in North America that was a world where not only 40 million-plus bison blanketed the plains from one end to the other so thick that early explorers said that all they could see from one horizon to the next was just a mountain of moving animals. It was also a world where in the eastern seaboard of the United States, a squirrel on the Mississippi River could travel the 400 miles-plus to the coastline without ever touching the ground. The canopy of the eastern forests was so dense and thick that it created its own eco-system, much like that we see still surviving in South America. It was a world where bird life as we see it today can't be compared to the way it existed in the past. There's records that were saved, written by white settlers and explorers, that recount flocks of geese and other animals that were so thick so as to block out the sun, sometimes for days. And the passenger pigeon, which is now extinct—one European reported that it took five days for one flock to pass by. And in just a little over 125 years it was reduced to extinction. Whales, which are animals that are sacred to our people and very much to myself, were a nation of beings that were so prolific in the oceans that the Europeans identified them as a navigational hazard, there were so many of them along the coast.

So this was the world as it existed before. And I'm not going to lie and say that I believe that it's a world that can exist again because unfortunately the damage that has been done by humans is never going to be reversed in our time, that's for sure, and maybe not in the time of humankind. In the time of the earth it will, because the earth is much more powerful than anything man can do to it, and though we may destroy the living environment for every being that lives on the earth presently, the earth is a living force, it is an organism, and it will grow, it will evolve, and hopefully when it does we won't find ourselves on the top of the food chain.

I think there's a spirit of resistance, a spirit that infects us because we live in this land where past generations were killed and where their bones are buried, and we live on the land that they died for. And a result of that I think is that we hear their cries and our spirits are home for their restless spirits. So we find ourselves being the children of the invader, the children of a generation that is responsible for the things that we now oppose. And that is how I think the spirit of resistance exacts its revenge—by infecting the very children of the people who caused the suffering and now we are using that effective position to fight from within the belly of the beast, within the First World nations. It's not just about indigenous peoples fighting us, in the jungles where British or US corporations are based; it's about British citizens and American citizens fighting American and British companies. Not for our rights but for the rights of other people who cannot represent themselves in our homeland.

Indigenous Struggles

Presumably in America, the continuity of the struggle is more apparent, in that there has been direct military conflict more or less continuously between Europeans and Native American nations up until relatively recently.

Well, I'm from the Yaqui nation, outside of Tucson, Arizona, and when I see the American flag, that represents to me probably the same things that a Jewish person would feel when they saw the Nazi flag. That flag was carried into battle against our people repeatedly, it is still carried into battle against indigenous peoples in other parts of the world and it will continue to, because it's nothing new—that behaviour is what the US government has always done, it is how it was founded and it is how they maintain their control and power over not just our tribe, and other people of the world, but the natural world too.

Just thirty years ago the American Indian Movement were facing the brunt of US repression

for wanting to do nothing more than represent their lands and culture and traditions. Living in a nation where there are still people who live in harmony with the land and keep a worldview alive that sees animals and the Earth as our relations, it is so much easier to realise the continuity of our resistance. It's so much more logical to see that the indigenous resisters of the last century are today manifesting themselves in the radical environmental and animal rights movements, the anti-globalisation movement, and the anti-racist human rights movements. I mean, it's very easy to see that it is about fighting for the same worldview and value system that other people have fought long and hard to defend. And my own experience was that when I was forced into hiding and forced to live on the run, I found sanctuary amongst indigenous people whose ancestors had died for the very same thing that I was a part of. And even though animal rights and radical environmentalism were foreign terms to them, the principles of what I was fighting for were very familiar.

What sort of relationship has there been between the American Indian Movement and other Native American activists and the animal liberation and Earth First! movements?



American Indian Movement member Buddy Lamont (centre), killed by the FBI during the 71-day seige at Wounded Knee in 1973. In the first time since the Civil War that the US Army was used in a domestic operation, the Pentagon used helicopters, Phantom jets, Armoured Personnel Carriers, grenade launchers and CS gas against less than 300 Indians engaged in a peaceful protest at the symbolic site of the 1890 massacre.

Well, I think that the most obvious relationship that's been seen has been the one that has been the most exploited by the media, and that was the division that was seen in North America, when the Makah tribe of Washington State decided to exercise their treaty rights to kill whales and were hence faced with overwhelming opposition from the animal rights movement and the environmental community, mostly privileged middle class white people. And it was an issue that the media was most willing to take advantage of simply because it helped demonstrate a clear division between two otherwise very powerful allies. And what reinforced my opinion that this was being exploited to both of our movements' detriment, was the fact that there has never been nearly as much publicity on those issues where we have worked together. The animal rights and the environmental movement worked very closely with Native American activists to fight uranium mining and coal mining in Arizona, to protect Shoshone lands in Nevada, to fight nuclear waste transports and shipments to Indian lands, and to fight for protection of the bison herds and the Yellowstone eco-system. All of these movements have been conglomerates of animal rights and environmental activists and Native people, and they have worked very effectively together and built very strong solidarity as a result.

But now, by participating in a campaign against a Native American tribe, we have allowed our opponents to create division in our ranks, where there would otherwise only have been strength. And so I think that we have a long road ahead of us before we can recognise the common ground between the Native American sovereignty movements and the movements for the rights of the animals and the Earth. I think that a lot of it is dependent on us recognising that we are very much a part of Western culture and do not have an understanding of what it means to live the way we only speak of living, as opposed to many Native American people who were raised with a worldview that we only by choice adopt.

Message to the Movement

Do you think that sometimes the Earth and animal liberation movements are lacking some of the spiritual conviction you're talking about?

Most definitely. I think that a lot of people have a knee-jerk reaction to any spirituality, as most of our experiences have come not through spirituality, but through religion, from the Christian church, which is really the opposite of what we believe in. So, when you talk about spirituality, I think it's hard to get around the bad taste in people's mouths. But at the same time, we really have to identify with the things that we fight for on a spiritual level, because there is a lot of power in them. The past

generations that I mentioned before, that made the sacrifices that we now do, based themselves in a recognition of the power of the Earth and the power of the animals.

So the reason I talk a lot about spirituality as a component of direct action is simply also because it has served repeatedly as an effective and empowering element that kept me from falling into a pit of despair and depression and a feeling of ineffectiveness that I've seen many activists succumb to. I've seen friends of mine commit suicide because they were exposed to so much evil in the world and they had so little happiness in their lives that they just couldn't see a world that was worth living in. Whereas for me, the only way I can hold on to faith and hope is by continually discovering the power of the Earth and the beauty of animals and the things they have to teach us—that keeps me going. And if it wasn't for my ability to do that, I might fall down that same dangerous trap.

So you think spirituality actually has direct practical application; it can make your actions more effective?

Yes, you know, I can't see how it couldn't. I mean, we fight for the lives of indigenous peoples and their cultures and we fight for the lives of animals. And I think that when we see the beauty of an animal that isn't being pursued and we see the beauty of it in its own environment, when we learn from indigenous people who still live in harmony with the land and see how they sustain themselves, how they suffer from none of the psychological and physical ailments that we do, that to me is a very healthy thing to be gained from struggle, as opposed to just fighting for the Earth but still living under the laws of man and living in the system of man.

Many Native people say that we have to call on the animals for help and that if we do so, they will come forward and help us. Not just so we can help ourselves, but so that we can help everyone survive. I went to live on the plains when they finally indicted me for the actions against the mink industry. I stayed on this land of this elder. When I was living on this land it was the first time I had been living the life of my ancestors, the life of my animal relations, of being a hunted individual. And I prayed a lot and I asked for guidance and support—it was a time when I was living in fear, I was carrying a gun with me, because I knew the history of the FBI in their attempts to stop the American Indian Movement and the Black Panther Party, so I was prepared that they were going to come in and kill me. And one day I was walking on the plains, just really sad and I was calling for help and I saw a coyote and I saw a hawk. And when they came to me, they seemed to be looking at me and rather than speak any words I just felt this huge burden removed from me and in the wind I heard them sing, "Now you are one of us—you are a hunted one, just like us, and whenever you need us, all you have to do is ask for our help and we'll be there, but we cannot be there as long as you believe more in them than you believe in us." And so that was the point when I started accepting my faith more.

There was one more action that we needed to do. We had discovered in our reconnaissance of mink farms another research facility whose sole purpose was the development of new traps and poisons and techniques to control coyotes for the sake of protecting the livestock industry. The facility had a bunch of enclosures where they kept coyotes that they would starve for three to four days and then they would put newly developed poisons and traps baited with food in these enclosures knowing that the coyotes would be forced to eat them or step on the traps and then they would study the impact. So we had just put that in the back of our minds, but later that summer I was in this sacred place I used to go to pray when I lived in Oregon and the coyote came forward again. There was a full moon and it was a very sacred time and I realised that these beings were nations and families of their own people, just like we were, and I realised that I had to carry out this last action. So I gathered some friends together, and even though I was on the run at the time, we went to the research facility and after reconnaissance, decided we would attempt to burn down the Predator Research Facility.

The night we took action we prayed. Previously to this I hadn't really involved prayer in my preparations for actions—I always just worried about the logistics. But this time we gathered together and we prayed and we called upon the coyote nation to help us and to guide us in this act. That night when we went into action, I was the one chosen to get into the Predator Research Facility and I thought I could get in one way but when I actually got there I couldn't, so I had to find another way. I found a window that looked to be open, but to get to it I had to remove this big screen and there was a caretaker's house really close by and I knew that he would probably hear me and so I just started praying and calling on the coyote spirits and asking for help and in a sudden chorus from all around me all the coyotes that were in the kennel building and those in the enclosure started to sing. And they sung so loud that it provided enough cover for me to rip this frame off the window and I got in there and planted an incendiary device and later that night the facility burnt to the ground.

When I left, I met up with two other people who were busily going around to the enclosures cutting

the fence to release the coyotes. This place abutted National Forest lands so the coyotes had a quick escape. But the others were just shaking and moved because they said that while they were trying to cut through the wires of the fences, the coyotes had gathered and they were on the other side of the fence digging. And so they had in that way helped us, just as we had asked. So that was a demonstration to me of the power that is available.

To finish then, do you have any advice or ideas for the animal liberation and ecological defence movements in this country?

I think that what I just spoke of, you know—finding what empowers us and what keeps us strong, what keeps us connected to the things we fight for, is really one of the best things that I think I can give to the movement. By fortunate circumstance I have lived in two worlds, as a person that's politically evolved into a direct action activist, and as a person that was raised with values to respect the Earth and animals. It leaves me with much to share with my warrior brothers and sisters who are fighting alongside me. There's a power that I feel by maintaining the relationship with the animals and the Earth that my ancestors did. But the Earth doesn't care what colour your skin is—she just cares what your actions are. And in that way, you don't have to be a Native person to enjoy the benefits of a renewed relationship with the Earth and the animals, you only have to demonstrate to them your compassion, love, and the willingness to accept them as members of your family, and then they will also give you the rewards that they share with other people—basically the recipe for our survival. And that to me would be foolish to ignore, as somebody who believes in fighting for their liberation.

And now it's our turn—our purpose on earth isn't for our own sake. In Native American prophecies people say we're the seventh generation—we're the people who have inherited this earth and now it's time for us to protect it for seven more generations. So that is something that we have to do, whether you do it against fighting the war in Iraq, or you do it for protecting the animals or protecting peat bogs or forests or indigenous cultures—we have to recognise that sacrifice is necessary—that is the greatest, greatest demonstration of love. You know, I *did* end up going to prison, I went to prison for four years and I just finished three years of probation—for the first time in eleven years I've finally finished this chapter in my life. But I feel so grateful that I had this opportunity to serve my animal relations. And so I spent four years in prison... you know, that's nothing. That's nothing compared to the sacrifice my ancestors have made. You know, they used to hang our people with barbed wire from telephone poles and electrical lines. And it's not only for the animals and the earth and ourselves and our own families that we take such action, but it's for the children. We have to think of that—our children are the ones who are going to inherit the world that we are now responsible for and I sure as hell do not want to have to explain to my grandchildren why I didn't do anything to prevent the destruction that we see today. So that's what I'm asking people to think about or remember when the time has come—which is *now*—for us to defend the earth.★



REAPING THE WHIRLWIND



GENETICS ACTION ROUND-UP

"I don't want to see any GM crops grown in the West Country. If this happens, me, other farmers, and campaigners will destroy the crops... We all have to take action before it's too late. It's vital we pull up and destroy GM trial plots. United we will win, divided we will lose."—An organic farmer, from Bideford in North Devon.

In the last few years Britain has seen an effective campaign of sabotage against Genetically Modified (GM) crops. Backed by widespread public support, the saboteurs have succeeded in massively holding up the introduction of GM crops and GM food into Britain.

Back in 1996, a handful of multinational companies planned to flood the UK with GM crops. They didn't expect any opposition and for a time it looked like they might succeed: unlabelled GM soya and maize products were all over supermarket shelves, GM crop trials were increasing exponentially and commercial growing of GM crops looked to be a foregone conclusion.

However, by 1998, it became clear that things weren't going well for the biotech industry. Starting in 1997, huge amounts of sabotage targeted the scientific trials that the industry needed to gain legal approval for their crops. Massive public opposition to GM crops forced a panicking government and biotech industry to cook up something to make it look like they were listening to what people were saying. The result was the Farm Scale Trials (FSTs) and a four-year voluntary agreement between the government and industry to hold off commercialisation of GM crops until the trials were finished.

The FSTs are very large test sites—some up to 50 acres—that were supposedly designed to conclusively evaluate the impact of GM crops on farmland ecosystems. In reality they've been a half-arsed and scientifically flawed attempt by the government and GM industry to fool the public that they really take concerns about GM crops seriously. Their bogus nature became clear when saboteurs escalated their tactics to destroy whole entire fields of GM crops rather than the small plots that had previously been the case. Large numbers of the FSTs were trashed, but the scientists kept moving the goalposts to prevent their experiments being invalidated by the sabotage, declaring that they only needed a percentage of the crop for the experiments to still be valid.

In the last four years the industry has been on the back foot. GM products have to a large extent been eliminated from British food, there is still no commercial growing of GM crops in Britain and the Farm Scale Trials got 'Farm Scale' trashings. But now our four years are up and the fight against GM crops could dramatically change.

Crop Trashing A-Go-Go!

The destruction of GM crops in Britain has continued unabated over the last year. With scythes, sickles, pallet wood, castles and whatever comes to hand, the saboteurs have got the job done. Protesters who destroyed GM oil seed rape

at Hedley Hall, near Tadcaster, owned by Leeds University expressed the desires of many when they said: "This crop of GM oil seed rape is now 100 per cent destroyed—completely destroyed. Probably every single plant has been either uprooted or broken."[1]

The majority of FST trials are now completed; only the remaining handful of the final winter oil seed rape sites (16 in England and 2 in Scotland) were planted in the Autumn of 2002, due for harvesting in 2003. There have also been ongoing National Seed Listing (NSL—the final stage before legal approval) trials for winter oilseed rape. There are also much smaller amounts of GM crops planted as part of Research and Development work by scientists.

In the 2002-2003 season so far (as of June 2003), saboteurs have trashed 17% of the Farm Scale crops and 50% of NSL trials. In 2001-2002 the figures were 17% for the Farm Scales and 66% for the NSLs. So the proportion of the crops that are getting trashed is holding pretty steady, but in the last year this represents a much smaller number of sites because there are simply less test sites as the FST programme winds down.

The much higher percentage of the NSLs that have been getting trashed is probably due to the fact that they are physically easier to hit—being far smaller and less daunting than facing 50 acres of oil seed rape armed only with a broom handle. Also, there has been a growing awareness that the FSTs are primarily a PR stunt, and that trashing them doesn't affect the industry that directly.

Crops planted for research and development work by academics or scientists working for corporations are usually in even smaller plots than the NSLs but are often much harder to access, being indoors or at least in the close vicinity of a research centre. Trashing the research into the next generation of GM crops strikes an important blow against the industry, but understandably, these sites are more heavily protected. For example, Syngenta's Jealott's Hill research station is protected by barbed wire, infra-red cameras and mobile patrols. However, this still didn't stop 75% of their GM potato crop getting trashed in 2001.

In Norfolk in June 2002 activists managed to attack another of these research centres, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage at the John Innes centre near Norwich. The activists destroyed a small GM barley crop at this notorious pro-GM research centre.

Saboteurs took another step up in blatantness in July 2002. Daylight rallies at test sites which end in crop-trashing have continued over the last year. But in July 2002, activists upped the stakes in being obvious as over 200 people from all over the country descended on DEFRA (the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) bearing gifts of unwanted, uprooted GM crops and seeds. Bags of GM oil seed rape, maize and sugar beet were left at DEFRA from Farm Scale trials in Cheshire, Shropshire, Dorset, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Fife and Hertfordshire. The crowd, some in fancy dress and costume, pushed wheelbarrows containing crops illegally removed from almost every field trial in the country. Five activists said they spent five hours uprooting the crop at Preston Wynne and another five hours driving to London. An organic farmer from Munlochy, Scotland who had a test site just five miles from his home, which threatened the integrity of his crops, expressed his feelings: "Sod off. We don't want it in Scotland".



This has been one of the great advantages of the level of public opposition to GM crops in Britain—a corresponding level of public support for sabotage. And this has meant that the state has not been able to impose very severe sentences for GM crop pulling, making the risks of taking such action relatively low. This is turn has meant that a much wider spectrum of people than you might expect have been willing to engage in sabotage.

One of the last Midlands GM Farm Scale trials was finally finished off on May 3, 2003 in an action



claimed by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). A total of six audacious raids were made to the same site over a period of months. The ELF stated: "We decided that we needed plenty of time to remove as much of the crop as possible. We first entered the field on a frosty December night and have since returned five times, decontaminating a different part of the field on each visit. As the crop grew, we changed our technique, using hoes when the plants were small and scythes when they became waist high. We even perfected our own tool using pallet wood." On their last visit, the saboteurs even stayed until daybreak so that they could photograph the results of their work (see above).

Scotland and Wales

Meanwhile, the Welsh and the Scots have been leading the way in keeping entire countries GM-free. In July 2002 around 150-200 people gathered in a public rally to keep Wales GM-free. They attempted to decontaminate an Aventis fodder maize trial crop in Flintshire—the only GM crop in Wales. Despite lots of cops, around 40 people jumped barriers to get into the field and began pulling up the crop. Six people were arrested and a man filming for Undercurrents needed medical treatment after security guards threw him over a fence.

Scotland became successfully GM-free in May 2003, as activists removed GM oilseed rape plants at Wester Friarton Farm, Newport-on-Tay, near Dundee. This action followed the removal of GM crops at Daviot, Aberdeenshire the previous weekend and the abandoning of the Farm Scale Trial at Munlochy, on the Black Isle, following a sustained campaign of direct action in 2002.

The Munlochy protest began when three women from Highlands and Islands GM Concern went to visit the site set for a Farm Scale Trial of winter oilseed rape, only to discover a tractor with drilling equipment planting GM oilseed rape right in front of their eyes. A small number of local people stopped the crop from being sown by blockading the tractor. Eventually about fifty protesters had gathered, their numbers matched by police who set up a control centre at the field. The protesters responded with an information caravan. For several days a presence was maintained at the field, but despite repeated waves of obstruction the GM oilseed was eventually sown. After this a permanent camp was set up outside the farmer's field. The camp remained throughout the field trial causing trouble and rallying the local community who were very much behind them. Later in 2002 the farmer pulled out of GM trials completely!

In September 2002 Aberdeenshire farmer Shirley Harrison was awarded the 'Genetically Modified Personality of the Month Award', being presented with a cake made of GM ingredients and a bottle of whiskey containing 2.7% methanol—an acceptable level of food contamination according to Aventis and Shirley Harrison. As this failed to have any impact on her, more direct action was required. So on October 6th, protesters entirely destroyed a field of GM oilseed rape at her farm. They left a sign reading 'GM-free Grampian' in the field, and a note left at the site read: "Silently we came, silently we left, to strike a blow for a GM-free Scotland." See: www.munlochygmvigil.org.uk and www.gmfreescotland.net

The Government Try to Distract us

The campaign against GM crops and food has been amazing. It has provided a real example of how people can stand up to huge corporations and halt the 'inevitable advance of capitalism' in its tracks. We have had a major impact on the industry, which has been left reeling, but not yet defeated.

Monsanto, the chief cheerleader of the biotech revolution and responsible for over 80% of the world's GM crops, has been taken over and broken up, with head man Bob Shapiro pushed into semi-retirement. Fellow biotech giants AstraZeneca and Novartis are to get rid of their agricultural divisions. There has been a mass exodus of Europe's biotech companies from GM research. They have

cancelled millions of pounds worth of investment into genetically modified crops, sending the industry into a steep slump. The European Commission has admitted that nearly two thirds of the EU's biotech companies have cancelled GM research projects over the past four years. "The increasingly sceptical climate is scaring European biotech companies and research centres away," according to Philippe Busquin, the European Research Commissioner.[2]

But the major companies still see the GMO controversy as a 'blip' that will pass in 4-7 years, a view echoed by financial analysts. Governments continue to subscribe to a GM future, and give Monsanto & Co. their whole-hearted support. Despite a slight decrease in GM plantings, farmers in the USA have still managed to sell all of their GM harvests. Many more countries are now shifting their farms over to GM crops.

So whilst we may have helped to stall GM crops in Britain we should be under no illusion that we have stopped them. What we have done is bought ourselves some breathing space. But the biotech industry and government have also used this hiatus to wait for public opposition to GMOs to die down and to prepare the ground for the ultimate commercialisation of GM crops.

So now we need to keep up the pressure because industry and the government are preparing for the final push to force through GM food and GM crops in the UK. Now the FSTs are finishing, with the results supposed to be published in July 2003. The period of the FSTs has given the government and corporations time to perfect their spin before they go ahead with commercialisation anyway.

As part of the same process, the government's phoney 'public debate' on GM crops is taking place to 'identify and address any gaps and uncertainties in public knowledge.' Just like the FSTs, the 'debate' is another crude one-size-fits-all attempt to allay public concerns (and soak up opposition). It involves several official public meetings around the country, regional public meetings, some grass-roots events and a website. The government gave the project a tiny budget and said that the whole

Bayer Hazard

In the ever-fluid, name-changing, shape-shifting world of agricultural biotechnology it can be hard to keep track of who owns whom and who is doing what. The last couple of years have seen a bewildering array of sales, mergers and spin-offs among the companies trying to force GM crops into the fields and down our throats. The company formerly known as AgrEvo (Hoescht/Schering), PGS and Aventis CropScience has been a particularly slippery character. However, rather than being a deliberate ploy by evil transnationals to confuse the public as to their real identity, this constant name changing reflects a real atmosphere of uncertainty within the crop science industry.

In 2002 Bayer became the latest multinational GM target in Europe following their recently acquired status as Europe's biggest GM research company. Bayer were targeted for their take-over of Aventis CropScience, the company behind the majority of the UK's GM field trials. Eighty-five percent of GM field trials planted in the UK in 2002 were owned by Bayer.

Bayer now owns over half of the GM crop varieties currently seeking approval for commercial growing in the EU. Should the de-facto EU moratorium on the commercial growing of GM crops be lifted, Bayer will be best placed to flood European fields with GM crops.

On January 24th 2002, as Bayer launched on the New York Stock Exchange, activists blockaded their UK Headquarters in Newbury by using a scaffold tripod, a human chain of people



padlocked together and by locking themselves together in the revolving doors at both the main entrance and the rear doors.

Then on April 26th 2002, seven GM activists from the UK and the Netherlands managed to sneak into Bayer's shareholder meeting in Germany. A wheelchair-bound activist miraculously leapt up and stormed the stage as others scaled the sides of the stage, occupied the speaking podium and ranted at the board in German.

Following on from these actions, on April 25, 2003, about 15 protesters blockaded the main entrance of Bayer CropScience in Hauxton, near Cambridge, where genetically modified plants are developed and tested.

To keep track of which corporation is doing what, get a copy of the *GM Family Tree*, an A2 poster available on paper from Corporate Watch or on-line at their website (see contacts at end).

Web: www.bayerhazard.com

process had to be finished by June 2003, conveniently just before the FSTs' results were due to be published. As it became embarrassingly obvious that the whole thing was about to fall apart, the government reluctantly increased the budget and extended its deadline. It seemed that the new extended public debate would have to take account of the results of the FSTs. This is something that the government always wanted to avoid just in case it threw up anything awkward. It now seems they may have got their way after all, as it has been revealed that the FST results are unlikely to be published before September and may be even later.[3] The 'debate' itself is due to wind up in September 2003 and its results will be published in late 2003/early 2004.

However, the government may even start granting applications for commercial growing before the end of their bogus 'public debate'. It has been revealed that the UK government intends to proceed with its assessment of 18 GM crop applications awaiting a decision on commercialisation. They have admitted that some of these may get the go ahead for use in food, feed or for growing before the GM public debate is scheduled to end.

The FSTs and the public debate are simply government window dressing, designed to distract public attention and campaigners' energy away from the government's real intentions. The FSTs and the debate have no legal basis and the government has no statutory obligation to pay any attention to them at all. Whatever the results, it seems likely that they will go ahead with GM crops if they think they can get away with it.

It's up to us to make sure that they don't get away with it.

The Corporations Step up a Gear

The corporations are now really pushing hard to crack the EU moratorium on GMOs. Since the beginning of 2003, the EU has started receiving a flood of marketing applications for GMOs, which hasn't been the case since the moratorium started. It looks like the GM companies, by submitting so many applications, are increasing the pressure on the EU to lift the moratorium. The US recently said that they do not want a trade war with Europe over GM at present (especially in the aftermath of the recent split with Europe over the war in Iraq), but by forcing the EU to actively enforce the moratorium, the GM industry is setting up the conditions for a trade war to happen in the future.

The applications for cultivation include all those GM oil seed rape and sugar beet varieties that have successfully completed NSL trials in the UK. Should any of these varieties gain EU marketing consent, one of the final barriers to their commercialisation would be removed.

One possible reason behind this sudden increase in applications to the EU for approval of GM crops is that the only reason that the companies are obliged to reveal the location of the GM trials in this country is because they *don't* have EU approval. So if the EU do grant approval to any GM varieties, trashing the crops is going to be a lot more difficult.

Over the next year we may well be facing the imminent sowing of the first commercial GM maize in the UK. This will open the door to many other GM varieties and activists will have no idea where they're being grown.

Green Light to Trash GM Crops

Over the last year, the ability of GM saboteurs to get away scot-free even when caught red-handed has continued. At worst, saboteurs are normally only facing small fines. One representative example is the case of the protesters with the Colchester GM Campaign who had the case against them dropped in January 2003. They claimed this was because the authorities feared a jury would be sympathetic. Andy Abbott, 33, from Colchester, said the dropped case showed that authorities had given up trying to prosecute GM protesters. "The government is giving a green light to people to trash GM crops," he said.

The situation has been slightly different in Scotland. The Scottish legal system is different to that in England and Wales and protesters have come to expect convictions and heavy fines. There has been a string of cases over the last year where activists have been landed with fines of up to £1,000. However, this hasn't stopped Scotland from being probably the most active area in Britain.

A ruling in March 2003 saw the first instance of GM protesters being convicted of aggravated trespass as five protesters were found guilty of disrupting planting by sitting in front of the tractor at Munlochy in Scotland on August 23, 2002. 'Crop Protesters are Convicted of Trespass', *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, March 7th 2003.[4]

Fourteen protesters who destroyed a GM oil seed rape crop in a daylight action in Hilton in Dorset



in August 2002 were confident that their actions were lawful. So when they were arrested, they handed over statements admitting their actions to the police. Four months later, they have been told that no charges are to be pressed. They were decontaminating oil seed rape which had accidentally been contaminated with an unlawful variety of rape seed which contained genes for antibiotic research. The government admitted a clearup would be necessary, and so the saboteurs, in a public-spirited way, came forward to do their bit. It seems the government didn't want to press the issue. To date no legal action has been taken against Bayer, the company responsible.

Finally, after nearly 6 years of mass GM sabotage in the UK, in April 2003, a court outside Scotland actually found someone guilty of trashing GM crops. Two women were fined a total of £1,150 for trashing GM maize as part of a mass rally in July 2001 against the last remaining GM site in Wales. One of the pair is refusing to pay the fine and will probably receive a one month prison sentence.

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

While the government tries to baffle us all with their public 'debate' and bogus Farm Scale Trials, we need to be able to hit targets that are actually important to the industry rather than get caught up in all the PR flannel intended to distract campaigners. These are the main areas that might be worth targetting in the coming months:

National Seed Listing Trials: In order for any new plant variety to be sold commercially it has be placed on the National Seed List (NSL). In order to achieve this, the plant variety has to satisfactorily

Pink Castle



The most bizarre tactic adopted to stop the spread of GM crops has to be the use of a pink castle to blockade a field of GM maize near Littlemoor in Dorset. Sometime in the early hours of April 25th 2002, the pink castle arrived in the field where the mutant remains of 2001's GM maize crop could still be found. Those resident in the castle hoped that by occupying the gateway to the field they could prevent further GM contamination.

On May 16th, three weeks into the occupation, farmer Charles Foot arrived with seven tractors and a massive police presence and entered the field. Those in the castle ran out to do a spot of tractor-diving, climbing on the cab of one tractor and D-locking themselves to another. Four people were arrested and the farmer eventually succeeded in planting the Aventis (now Bayer) GM maize.

However, within hours of the seeds being sown, at least twenty locals were seen digging them from the ground. In the following days, people went out every night and removed all the GM seedlings. The two Littlemoor GM sites were completely stripped bare. Several bags of this GM maize made their way to London to be ceremoniously dumped on the government's doorstep as part of the DEFRA action in July 2002.

A top tip to bear in mind for the future is to get your crop trashing inspected. The pink castle crew asked the local vicar to be a witness to the total destruction of the crop in case the government should try and claim any 'scientific' results from the trial. He wrote a letter to the newspaper saying he would be willing to testify to this and for the first time ever, the scientists followed their own rules and the remainder of the crop was 'sprayed off' with herbicide before pollination because the level of damage had invalidated the trial.

The pink castle was finally taken down on June 15th and may now be occasionally spotted popping up in unexpected locations around the country!

On March 6th 2003, the castle defenders came up for trial. They based their defence on the ancient common law of 'necessity', claiming it was lawful to stop the crop. The judge immediately agreed and all were found not guilty. This could set an interesting legal precendent!

Web: www.sayhi.to/thecastle



complete two years of trials to demonstrate its value for cultivation and use, and its distinctiveness, uniformity and stability. These trials are an essential part of the commercialisation process and have been ongoing during the period of the FSTs. NSL trials for three different varieties of Bayer's herbicide tolerant oil seed rape are currently underway at 10 sites in the UK.

Corporations and Commercialisation: Commercial growing of GM crops is being pushed forward by three companies: Bayer CropScience, Monsanto and Syngenta. Bayer have most to gain. Two of their GM maize varieties—Chardon LL and Sheriden—are first in line for commercialisation. They also have a large number of GM oilseed rape varieties that are close to commercialisation. Monsanto and Syngenta share two varieties of GM sugar beet that are close to commercialisation. It is worth noting that none of these companies are performing well and they are all desperate to make GM crops a success in the UK and Europe.

Chardon LL, Milk and Seeds: Bayer's Chardon LL GM maize is intended to be grown for animal fodder. In order for it to be a commercial success, farmers have to be able to sell their GM-fed meat and dairy produce. Leaning on dairy companies to not accept milk from cows fed on GM fodder maize could help destroy the market for Chardon LL before it starts. Working on the other end of the supply chain—putting pressure on seed suppliers and distributors to stay GM free—might also be effective.

Research and Development Trials: Beyond trials of GM crops that are soon to be commercialised, a small number of R&D trials are also underway. These represent the next generation of GM crops. They are all small scale, at an early stage of development, and VERY important to the companies conducting them. These trials are being conducted by: John Innes Centre in Norwich, looking at GM barley, Advanced Technologies (Cambridge), a subsidiary of British American Tobacco, looking at GM potatoes, and Syngenta, which is continuing with trials of fungal resistant wheat.

Farms and Farm Machinery: Like with the vivisection industry, there's only a limited number of people that can actually grow GM crops and it shouldn't be too difficult to persuade a farmer growing GMOs to stop. This has already happened to an extent. There are a number of test crops that never get planted. This is often due to the farmer on whose land the crop is due to be planted withdrawing under pressure from activists. This is a kind of silent victory. In 2002-2003 one FST was withdrawn and in 2001-2002 11 FSTs were withdrawn. The farmers whose land is used for test sites are not getting paid much for the use of their land. It shouldn't be too difficult to make it worth their while to pull out of a trial. There have already been a couple of examples of pressure being put on farmers. In East Hoathley in Sussex in 2001 a visit by anti-GM activists resulted in a farmer pulling out of a GM trial because of the threat of direct action and more specifically the threat of visiting campaigners accidentally spreading foot and mouth disease. As reported in *Do or Die* previously, there were also two actions in 2000 in which activists sabotaged the machinery of farmers hosting GM test sites. Farms are full of bits of machinery lying around at night in the middle of nowhere. Use your imagination...

Scientists and Laboratories: Like farmers, there are also only a small number of scientists centrally involved in biotech. They may not have farms but they do have homes and places of work. Demonstrations outside scientists' homes have been a very succesful tactic used by the animal liberation movement against vivisectors.★



Further Info

Corporate Watch are due to produce an in-depth report into who is winning the genetics war. *Apocalypse Later? Who's Winning the Biotech Battle?* is due out on July 8th. Get yourself a copy by contacting Corporate Watch or check their website.

Notes

1) *Yorkshire Evening Press*, 07/04/03
2) 'GM Crops: Industry 0—Protesters 1', *The Independent*, March 23, 2003
3) GeneWatch UK Press Release, 3 March, 2003
4) See: www.pressandjournal.co.uk

Contacts

Genetic Engineering Network (GEN)
Archway Resource Centre
1a Waterlow Road
London N19 5NJ
Tel: 0845 4569329
Email: genetics@gn.apc.org
Web: www.geneticsaction.org.uk
Information for action, updated details of test site locations and support for local groups.

Totnes Genetics Group (TOGG)
PO Box 77
Totnes
Devon TQ9 5ZJ
Tel: 01803 840098
Email: info@togg.org.uk
Web: www.togg.org.uk
Information and resources, the current home of the Genetix Update and the Lifecycles pedal-powered cinema.

Corporate Watch
16b Cherwell Street
Oxford OX4 1BG
Tel: 01865 791391
Email: mail@corporatewatch.org
Web: www.corporatewatch.org.uk
Information on corporations, including those involved in GM crops.

Genewatch
Tel: 01298 871898
Web: www.genewatch.org
A research group evaluating genetic technologies from the perspective of environmental protection, and human and animal health.

GM Food News
Web: www.gmfoodnews.com
A huge archive of news stories and information.

DON'T MENTION THE WAR!



The observant among you may notice this issue of *Do or Die* doesn't include any reports or analysis of the anti-war movement. The new book from our fellow Brightonians at *SchNEWS* is dedicated to the global resistance to the war.

Send a cheque/postal order for £9.70 (including postage) and payable to 'Justice?' to:

SchNEWS
c/o PO Box 2600
Brighton BN2 0EF
Tel: 01273 685913
Email: schnews@brighton.co.uk
Web: www.schnews.org.uk

We also recommend that you take a look at the forthcoming analysis of the anti-war movement in the new *Aufheben*, due out in Autumn 2003. For details of how to order this contact them at:

Aufheben
c/o BHUWC
4 Crestway Parade
Brighton BN1 7BL
Email: aufheben99@yahoo.co.uk



Animal Antics



Beating the Bipeds

"Male lions have a special way of urinating, using a powerful, horizontal jet aimed backwards at some landmark in their territory, so that their personal scent is deposited on it... the [London Zoo] Lion House keepers told me that one of the male lions had developed a particularly devastating refinement... of his urinating technique. When he discovered that the spray created by his jet of liquid hitting one of the cage bars could reach his adoring public, crowded to watch him from the other side, he introduced a special multi-squirt to help pass the boredom of the zoo day. As the front rows of the crowd leapt back screaming after his first dousing of them, others quickly took their place to see what was happening. They then took the full brunt of his second squirt, which he had saved up for them, so that they, too, retreated yelling and cursing. On a good day, he might even catch a third wave, by carefully staggering his ejection of pungent liquid. It was just about the only assault device left to the Lord of the Jungle, in his sadly reduced circumstances, and he made full use of it."—*Animal Days*, Desmond Morris (Jonathan Cape, 1979), p.118

"Perhaps before offering to help plug the hole in the Hamilton finances, the 10th Earl of Portsmouth should have spent a little time contemplating the fate of one of his ancestors. The third earl died after a riding accident while fox hunting in Devon on a Sunday. As his body was being lowered into the grave, the fox he had not managed to catch was seen a few yards away, sitting and laughing."—Letter to *The Guardian*, 27/12/99

"Hunt saboteur Sid Thomas has described how he was injured by a fox he was trying to save during a protest at a Devon hunt... He said: "I noticed the fox was in the middle of the pack of hounds. I jumped over a fence and chased the hounds away and managed to grab the fox. It bit me and almost took the end of my thumb off. I suppose there is a touch of irony about it." Eventually he had to let go of the fox... He added: "I had cuts to my face and bruising. But the fox might have survived."—*Torbay Herald-Express*, 6/2/01

"The National Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology at Brickley in Somerset has been quietly testing a GM maize crop called Sheridan. If eventually passed and placed on the national seed list, Sheridan would be fed to cattle. But has anyone asked the cows? Somerset's finest are not waiting for a referendum. The institute has had to write to the Ministry of Agriculture explaining that certain cattle got into the field and, er, trampled down the crop rendering the test useless. So did the protesting cows like their new grub? No question about that. The institute reported that none of the maize was eaten."—*The Guardian*, 15/11/00

"Police at Tavistock, Devon, were locked out of their station after a swarm of bees blocked their front door."—*The Observer*, 28/5/00

"A new device aimed to help gay people identify each other discreetly has had a strange effect on animals. The Gaydar, a small electronic gadget which transmits a signal to other users and vibrates in the wearer's pocket, was tested out by an engineer in a park in Reigate. But, instead of attracting men, he found himself being pursued by an amorous badger and getting divebombed by squirrels."—*Bizarre* magazine No. 24, September 1999

"On hearing great commotion in the garden, I looked out to see a crow lying, inert, on the grass, with three in the apple tree making all the racket and two on the ground, pushing at their stricken comrade. I thought at first they were attacking it... but soon realised they were putting their beaks under the sick one, trying to lift it back onto its feet. The bird, though, was dead, so they soon gave up, flew up to another tree and joined in the chorus. Within seconds, more crows flew in, then more and more, all perching on branches in a ring around the dead bird, all staring down at it and cawing loudly. I counted 23 birds—almost four times as many as I had ever seen in our garden at one time. They kept up the cawing for over a minute, then, a few at a time, flew away."—Letter to *Country Living*, May 1999

"The Daya Bay nuclear power plant is facing what may be its biggest safety threat yet—the notorious chewing ability of termites. After chomping down boxes of banknotes in an unnamed Shenzhen bank, white ants were on the rampage through the power plant site, according to a study cited by the Hong Kong China News Agency. The study, by the Shenzhen White Ant Prevention and Control Centre, also found that termites had invaded the Shenzhen reservoir—a major source of drinking water for Hong Kong... Last year, an electronics factory in Shenzhen had been forced to close for a week after white ants ate parts of the power cables; and in January, a local hotel was blacked out for half a day after the live munching-machines wreaked similar havoc."—*South China Morning Post*, 10/11/94

"Pet parrots are playing havoc with TV sets—by controlling them with "silent" squawks. The birds mimic ultra-sonic beeps made by remote control handsets, which they can hear but humans can't. The "sounds" turn TVs on and off, and change channels. And owners are fooled into thinking their sets are on the blink... David Wilcox of the World Parrot Trust at Hale, Cornwall, said: "Parrots are able to imitate high-pitched sounds inaudible to people. I know one that imitates a dog whistle that no human could hear. The dog rushes up yapping to find it's been conned by a parrot."—*Daily Mirror*, 30/9/91

"Any animal called Joey the Thug must be one to be treated cautiously, and this Australian boxing kangaroo was no exception. He escaped from his enclosure at the Adelaide Zoo in November 1938 and kept keepers and the zoo authorities at bay for a long while. One brave policeman managed to corner Joey the Thug, but as he approached, smouthing soft words of reassurance, Joey cocked his head to one side and delivered the fiercest uppercut imaginable. The policeman was knocked out cold and Joey was still free."—*True Animal Tales* by Rolf Harris, Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine (Century, 1996), p.34

"Stockholm, Sweden: A newspaper gave five stock analysts and a chimpanzee the equivalent of $1250 each to make as much money as they could on the stock market. The chimp won. After one month, the chimpanzee, Ola, saw the value of his stocks rise $190, the newspaper Expressen reported yesterday... While the stock experts carefully considered their portfolios, Ola made his choice by throwing darts at lists of companies on the Stockholm stock exchange."—*New York Post*, 8/9/93

"Motorists who have just recovered from the recent greenfly plague could now be facing a new hazard—weasels intent on making a meal of car tyres. Swarms of the small, sharp-toothed rodents have been gnashing away at car tyres and cutting electric cables in Switzerland, and some scientists believe that the problem may crop up in Britain. Sex, say the scientists, may be at the root of it all: "It is possible that one of the smells from hot rubber is like the smell you get from the female in the mating condition—at least, to a weasel," said Dr. Donald Jefferies, mammals specialist of the Nature Conservancy Council, in Huntingdon yesterday... Dr. Jefferies pointed out that surprising things have often turned out to be true. "Nothing is impossible these days where animals are concerned," he said."—*The Guardian*, 1/8/79

With thanks (and deep regrets) to the Duchess. Also, to the miserable sods at the British Newspaper Library.★



Movement as Monoculture?

Outreaching the Clique

The aim of this piece is to share some thoughts and experiences of what it felt like to first come into contact with people involved in Earth First! in one city, through to becoming more directly involved in a local activist group in another city. While it's very much a personal account of the journey of a white, middle-class, university-educated female—from feeling like a conformist 'outsider' to believing in our collective power to achieve radical social change—I also know it's not a unique experience.

It relates to many discussions over the past few years within the Earth First! network to address questions about the exclusivity of the movement, and how we function as groups so as to include new people. This is simply one more perspective within these conversations. It's not meant to be a personal attack against particular individuals, or a worshipping of others, and it is meant to be a self-reflective piece to act as a reminder to myself not to fall into exactly the same traps that I'm questioning, now that I've joined the clique!

One of my overriding memories of first meeting Earth First!ers was my inability to understand about a third of what was being said. In the midst of mostly fascinating conversations, I kept stumbling across a whole range of completely new and alien words, acronyms or names of places: tat, CAT, yurt, permaculture, bender, action, lock-on, pigs, RTS, PGA, nicked, Whatley, Fairmile, Twyford... the list could go on. I quite quickly started to feel stupid after stopping and asking people to explain what they meant a few times. It was like being a foreigner that had stepped into a strange land.

This reminded me of how I felt when I met evangelical Christians or other fervent, sect-like groups at university, where a core of people, generally close friends, believe passionately in the same values, speak a common language, look very similar and on the surface seem to have little contact with people from different, diverse worlds and experiences. Where I expressed ideas or views that were based on a lack of information rather than a lack of concern, I found they were often met with a combination of disbelief and disgust, and with arguments along quite simplistic and black-and-white lines (e.g. everybody who works for a multi-national company is inherently an evil bastard). It felt to me like a stifling atmosphere with an unhealthy consensus, and a lack of debate and openness as to where other people are coming from and why.

At the same time, it was a genuine inspiration for me to come across people with so much energy, commitment, rage and desire to challenge and confront the system which is causing so much social and ecological devastation. It was incredible to realise that such a small number of people in their twenties with apparently so few resources, had such a wide range of skills and experience and could achieve so much. They were simultaneously researching the issues behind specific campaigns, writing and printing leaflets, getting people involved, using practical blockading tactics, building tree-houses and walkways, dealing with the press, knowing their legal rights, being arrested and prepared to go to prison for their beliefs. These were people who weren't waiting for or expecting anybody else to do things for them, but getting on and doing it for themselves.

I was also fascinated and amazed by some of the daily life choices that went along with political action which were obviously part of a long-term vision of society. These included living communally, eating locally grown organic food, not buying new consumer items, rejecting car use, taking collective decisions with no apparent leaders, forming strong supportive friendships, trying to live ecologically in an urban context—there was even an indoor compost toilet! All quite bizarre to me at the time...

However, I think that the combination of feeling judged, lacking in self-confidence and having hardly any free time meant that I made very few steps



towards getting involved in any sort of direct action. There is an irony in the fact that a group of very strong, empowered individuals actually made me feel daunted, inadequate, and unsure of what skills I had to offer or how to get involved. I think this is compounded as a woman coming into what is still a sexist environment. What seemed to be valued were actions taken mostly by men, often with very large egos—activities like tree climbing, building things, staying in tunnels for long periods, or just being loud, funny and cynical and not listening to quieter people, especially women.

I also felt that taking direct action and being willing to break the law was a major barrier for me to overcome, coming from a privileged background. I was shit scared of getting arrested, of not knowing what my rights were or how I would respond to the police, who up until that point had been the upholders of justice and protectors of freedom. I never heard anybody expressing fears or difficulties that they had overcome themselves. More than a few times people started to mention something about a (not-so) covert action and then realised that I wasn't involved and hadn't yet been accepted as trustworthy, so the subject was rapidly changed and hushed over. This sense of being around a small cell of underground revolutionaries only added to the feeling of being an outsider with a few more hoops to jump through before proving myself worthy of joining the clique!

When I finished my course, I knew that I wanted to get more involved in campaigning and direct action. I very quickly decided to move cities (in a typically mobile, rootless kind of way) and a significant reason for this was my quite different experience of another active group. A friend who was involved at the time made a clear effort to introduce me to people and to help me feel included.

Others also made a genuine effort to include me in the group's activities. As a recently formed 'forum' for diverse campaigns and issues, there was an enthusiasm and a commitment to make space for people to develop new skills, as well as a commitment to share those skills people already had—for example, through practical workshop days. I felt there was a healthy awareness of the danger of informal hierarchies developing, and of people falling into particular roles (such as regularly facilitating meetings) which skill sharing and rotation helped to overcome.

The lack of overbearing egos and dominating personalities, even though some had over ten years of direct action experience, was incredibly refreshing. So was the honesty of both established members and newcomers within the group about their own fears—of arrest, or of violent confrontation, for example—which we talked about in small groups, and acted out in role-play situations. The two years that I was involved in the group enabled me to stand up for myself with others against what I believe is wrong, to say NO!, to overcome my fears and feel powerful. I began to recognise our collective strength and to realise that we don't need leaders or politicians to do things for us.

As I've become more involved in the Earth First! network, I've tried not to forget those first impressions. I feel they still raise some key challenges and I've heard quite a lot of other people (from many different backgrounds) express similar feelings. And it's very easy for me to be a complete hypocrite! Only last week, I was talking to a woman I had just met about my involvement in a campaign against biopiracy. I was about to carry on when she stopped me, looking totally confused and asking, "What the hell is biopiracy?"

There are a few questions that I try to bear in mind (with very variable amounts of success!): Am I slipping into jargon that excludes everyone but those 'in the know'? Am I making other people feel judged and disapproved of for having different politics and lifestyles to my own—almost guaranteed to put potential activists off? As I become more confident and experienced, am I becoming dominant or arrogant and preventing other people's skills from developing and being valued?

It is important that we keep on asking ourselves: what do we value as a movement? It goes without saying, but it's not only people who are willing to be arrested that are committed and caring. For instance, do we value the work of bringing up children, of providing them with a loving community and supporting their parents, as well as trying to create a better future for them to live in? I think that one way of being less exclusive is to reflect more deeply on what it is that prevents more people from getting involved, and to try to set up ways to get round this.

Finally, when it comes to gatherings and meetings, I feel that it's essential to try to keep some kind of boundary between what is purely social interaction and what is meant to be the political discussion. When a few people from the group I was involved in came along to a Winter Moot (their first time at any Earth First! event), they felt as though they had walked into roomful of mates who didn't have much time or inclination to meet anybody new or genuinely include them in the process.

One of the great strengths of the Earth First! movement is that—like any healthy organism—it is constantly changing, adapting and evolving. However, we still need to be aware of the mutation which can entrench us as a clique of 18-35, overwhelmingly white and educated, similarly-dressed friends who (used to) have funny hair.★

Fanning the Flames!

The Earth Liberation Front in North America



"They proudly take credit for striking in the night, often torching homes, schools and workplaces. Even now, as the nation struggles back from the vicious attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, they continue to boast of their assaults, recruit others to join them and offer training in how to use arson and elude the authorities. They call themselves the Earth Liberation Front and they take credit for over 30 acts of terrorism over the last six years, inflicting millions of dollars in damage."—Tom Randall, Director of US National Centre for Public Policy.

From its somewhat murky roots in early '90s Britain, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) has leapt across the Atlantic and, in the last few years, has become an ecological force to be reckoned with. Pre-September 11th, the FBI even went so far as to name it as the number one domestic terrorist threat. The ELF is an international underground network of people that use direct action, in the form of economic sabotage, to try and stop the exploitation and destruction of the natural world. The people and small groups that comprise the network identify the capitalist system as the root cause of ecological destruction.

The North American ELF has no central authority, no membership, no public meetings and no mailing lists. Apart from an obvious shared radical ecological political perspective, its main principles are three guidelines, and anybody who takes actions using these guidelines could potentially claim them for the ELF. People from all walks of life are taking action as ELF activists, and this loose structure has created a network that is effective and very hard for state and industry forces to infiltrate and destroy.

The first attack that was claimed by the ELF in North America was in 1996. Shortly after that an action against the US Government Bureau of Land Management offices resulted in their offices being totally destroyed by fire. From then onwards the list of ecologically destructive companies and institutions chosen as targets by the ELF has expanded.

One of the most significant actions taken by the ELF happened on 18th October 1998 in Vail, Colorado. Vail is a ski resort and was scheduled to expand and destroy 885 acres of wilderness that was prime lynx habitat. The attack by a cell of the ELF caused between $12-24 million worth of damage, the single most expensive act of ecological sabotage in US history. Nobody has yet been caught for this attack.

Although housing developments and forest destruction have also been targeted, it is genetic research establishments that have really faced the full fury of the anonymous cells, with many being totally destroyed by carefully planted incendiary devices.

The ELF in North America has moved on from just being an activist campaigning group to become an underground ecological resistance movement. It's growing, and its message is a simple one: we're fighting a war for the survival of our earth, so let's hit the capitalists who are destroying it with everything we can muster. No compromise in defence of the earth!

The North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office (NA ELF PO) is a legal, above ground news service dedicated to exposing the political and social motives behind the covert direct actions of the underground Earth Liberation Front. The NA ELF PO receives anonymous communiqués from the ELF and distributes the message to the media and public. Look at: www.earthliberationfront.com or contact them at: elfpress@resist.ca

Firect Action with the ELF!

Here is a very selective list of some of the actions that have been taken and claimed by the ELF in North America over the last 6 years. For a more comprehensive list look at the updated listings on the ELF website mentioned at the end of the article.

1996

July 3 in Middleton, Wisconsin

The slogan 'Independence Day for Fur Farm Prisoners' was painted at the United Vaccines laboratory during a daylight raid jointly claimed by the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front. Holes in the fence were also cut and 310 ferrets and mink were released. Equipment and windows were also destroyed.

October 14 in Eugene, Oregon

Two McDonald's stores are spray painted and have their locks glued.

October 28 in Detroit, Oregon

A US Forest Service pickup vehicle is torched on the parking lot of the Detroit Ranger District headquarters. The building is spray painted with 'Earth Liberation Front' and anti-logging slogans. An incendiary device fails to go off and is later found on the roof.

1997

March 14 in the Mackenzie River watershed, Oregon

A joint ALF and ELF tree spiking took place at a timber harvest site in the Mackenzie River watershed in the Willamette National Forest.

November 29 in Burns, Oregon

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wild Horse Corral was struck by fire. The office, horse pen barns, tack room, corrals and chutes on the facility were all burnt to the ground while the 488 wild horses and 51 burros held captive were let free. The fire caused over $450,000 in structural damage.

ELF Guidelines

Any direct action taken to halt ecological destruction whilst keeping to the following guidelines could, if claimed as such, be considered an ELF action.

1) To inflict maximum economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment.
2) To reveal and educate the public about the atrocities committed against the earth and all species that populate it.
3) To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal—human and nonhuman.

Fairy Footsteps



"We pulled it off, Jim!"

1998

June 21 Olympia, Washington

In the early morning a joint cell of the ALF and ELF destroy two US Department of Agriculture Animal Damage Control Buildings. An estimated $1.5 million in research was lost and $400,000 in structural damages was caused.

October 18 in Vail, Colorado

Huge damages were caused to Vail Associates who were planning to develop a huge wilderness area into a ski resort. The largest act of eco-sabotage in US history, it catapulted the ELF into the public eye in North America.

December 26 in Medford, Oregon

US Forest Industries suffered damages estimated at $700,000 from a fire that gutted their offices. The target served as the corporate headquarters for four logging mills.

1999

December 25 in Monmouth, Oregon

Fire destroys the main office of the Boise Cascade logging company costing over $1 million. ELF claim responsibility in a communiqué.

December 31 at Michigan State University, Michigan

Offices doused with gasoline and set alight. The ELF said the fire was set in response to the work being done to force developing nations in Asia, Latin America and Africa to switch from natural crop plants to genetically engineered sweet

potatoes, corn, bananas and pineapples. Monsanto and USAID were major funders of the research and promotional work being done through Michigan State University. According to local newspapers, the fire caused some $900,000 in damage.

2000

January 23 in Bloomington, Indiana

Fire destroyed a building site at the Sterling Woods development with estimated damage of $200,000. The ELF targeted the house because the sprawling development it is part of is in the Lake Monroe watershed that's being jeopardised by building developments.

April 30 in Bloomington, Indiana

At least six pieces of logging and heavy construction equipment were sabotaged, and a trailer full of wood chips was set ablaze at a road construction site just outside the city. Damages were estimated at over $75,000.

September 9 in Bloomington, Indiana

Fire erupts at the headquarters of the Monroe County Republican Party Committee headquarters. Investigators say a flammable liquid was poured on the building and ignited. The fire was a reminder, according to the ELF communiqué, that it would not sit quietly as politicians pushed for plans to extend an ecologically destructive highway.

December 9 on Long Island, New York

Fire erupts in a condominium under construction. The ELF claims responsibility, saying the homes were "future dens of the wealthy elite." The group, announcing "an unbounded war on urban sprawl," claims it checked for occupants—human and animal—in 16 buildings before setting incendiaries.

2001

January 1 in Glendale, Oregon

The ELF claimed responsibility for burning down the Superior Lumber Company offices. This caused at least $400,000 in damage. The communiqué stated that, "This year we hope to see an escalation in tactics against capitalism and industry."

January 23 in Louisville, Kentucky

The ELF takes action to counter urban sprawl. Five windows were broken, and 18 vandalised in the first wave of attacks against corporate development.

March 5 in Huntington, New York

Corporate shops whose owners have involvement in the clear-cutting of forests in the Pacific Northwest had their windows smashed. The communiqué warns that actions will continue until the corporations stop their economic support for forest destruction.

November 27 in Boulder, Colorado

The ELF use arson to destroy a $2.5 million mansion belonging to corporate developers. The target was razed to the ground, leaving only the cement foundations recognisable.

2002

September 3 in Irvine, Pennsylvania

The ELF claims responsibility for an arson attack on the US Forest Service Northeast Research Station. The laboratory was set ablaze during the early morning hours, causing over $700,000 damage and destroying 70 years worth of research.

2003

January 2 in Erie, Pennsylvania

The ELF destroys several off-road vehicles at a car dealership.

April 10 in Santa Cruz, California

The ELF spray-paint anti-war messages on about 60 vehicles and trucks.

June 4 in Chico, California and Washington, Michigan

Two separate arson attacks against urban sprawl target luxury homes under development. These are the third and fourth attacks against urban sprawl undertaken by the ELF in 2003.★

Factories and laboratories don't burn down by themselves. Learn to burn!



COLOMBIA

This article is about Colombia, but it is also about the logic of capitalism—applied in a specific part of the world. In order to maintain access to energy resources that keep the scandalous luxury of the global minority, the already impoverished majority is being driven to misery and violent death. Those who speak out against this injustice are threatened, kidnapped, tortured, massacred. The energy resources I am talking about are hydroelectricity and, more notably, oil.

THE THIRD WORLD WAR HAS ALREADY STARTED

Back in Colombia, to build dams, oil wells and pipelines, the legitimate inhabitants are either displaced or killed in order to clear the land before the machinery moves in. The paramilitaries kill them; poisonous fumigation, supposedly for the coca crop, displaces them. The money and resources come from a 'Northern Brother'—the US—via the army and the government. This process is called Plan Colombia: $1.3 billion in US 'anti-drug' aid, sending 70 Black Hawk helicopters to skim the tree line and fumigate illicit coca crops with clouds of chemicals.

Colombians are not about victimism—they put on a brave face with a huge smile. Colombia enjoys an extremely cheerful and colourful culture; visitors from Europe always get the shock of the vision of poverty first, then how extremely whole-hearted, lively, optimistic and generous they are—like only poor people can be. Which does not mean they live in limbo. They know what is happening and know they can't believe the hype. Robert, a journalist turned human rights activist, told me that those who have a TV watch the news just as they watch the 'telenovelas', soap operas about impossible life stories that invariably come to a neat conclusion in the last episode.



Members of an elite counter-insurgency unit of the Colombian armed forces.

They also do something about the situation in their country. Juan Carlos, or Juancho, is a peasant from the Caribbean coast who saw seven members of his family being killed by a death squad raid on his village. He now campaigns in the city, and sometimes comes to Europe. He told me of so many human rights activists and lawyers, unionists, indigenous leaders, who had been gunned down or kidnapped, that we would need another book to enumerate them: "Most of the best union leaders, journalists and human rights workers have been killed or are in the mountains. All high profile human rights lawyers are now dead. When they attempt to use the political system to analyse this they are exterminated." The amazing—yet natural—thing is, it doesn't alter the strength of the struggle.

A History of Struggle

It is always necessary to look back to the past to understand what is happening in the present. In 1903, Colombia lost Panama over the ratification of the lease to the USA of the Canal Zone. Then as the demand for manpower increased in the cities, migrations from the rural areas began in the 1940s. Social conflicts also sprang up in this decade, over land redistribution and labour reform. During this period, the liberal Jorge Eliecer Gaitán consolidated the political party UNIR ('Unión de Izquierda Revolucionaria'—Union of the Revolutionary Left), representing the popular masses. The party was welcomed across the


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GULF OF MEXICO
MEXICO
CUBA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
BELIZE
JAMAICA
HAITI
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
PANAMA
COSTA RICA
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
VENEZUELA
GUYANA
SURINAME
FRENCH GUIANA (Fr)
PACIFIC OCEAN
COLOMBIA
BRAZIL
PERU
BOLIVIA
PARAGUAY
CHILE
ARGENTINA
URUGUAY
FALKLAND ISLANDS
THE LAND IN WHOSE HANDS?
Countries in Central and South America where 80 percent of total farmland is owned by:
less than 20% of farms
up to 30% of farms
up to 55% of farms
other countries
armed conflict over land distribution end 1990s
violent disputes over land distribution 1990s
urban riots against austerity programmes 1980-95
violence resulting from narcotics trade 1980-95
other armed conflicts 1990s

country. The conflict escalated with the murder of Gaitán in 1948.

The first guerrilla groups appeared and there was a period known as 'La Violencia' (The Violence) which lasted until the early '50s, during which about 300,000 people died as popular movements were repressed. In the 1950s there was the first attempt to carry out an agrarian land reform, but many peasants were massacred and the process had to stop. The colonial structure was still in place, with a few landowners controlling most of the arable land. Another attempt at agrarian reform in the 1960s was also stopped, as many peasants and indigenous leaders were killed. In this decade, thousands of families left their lands and villages and organised themselves in the mountains. Many of them took up arms.

In 1964 a Communist Party-inspired peasant co-operative, calling itself the 'Independent Republic of Marquetalia', suffered a military attack supported by the US. Survivors of the attack proclaimed the 'Programa Agrario de las Guerrillas' (Guerrilla groups' agrarian programme), and in 1966 founded the FARC ('Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia'). The ELN ('Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional'), Colombia's second largest guerrilla army, was also founded around this time.

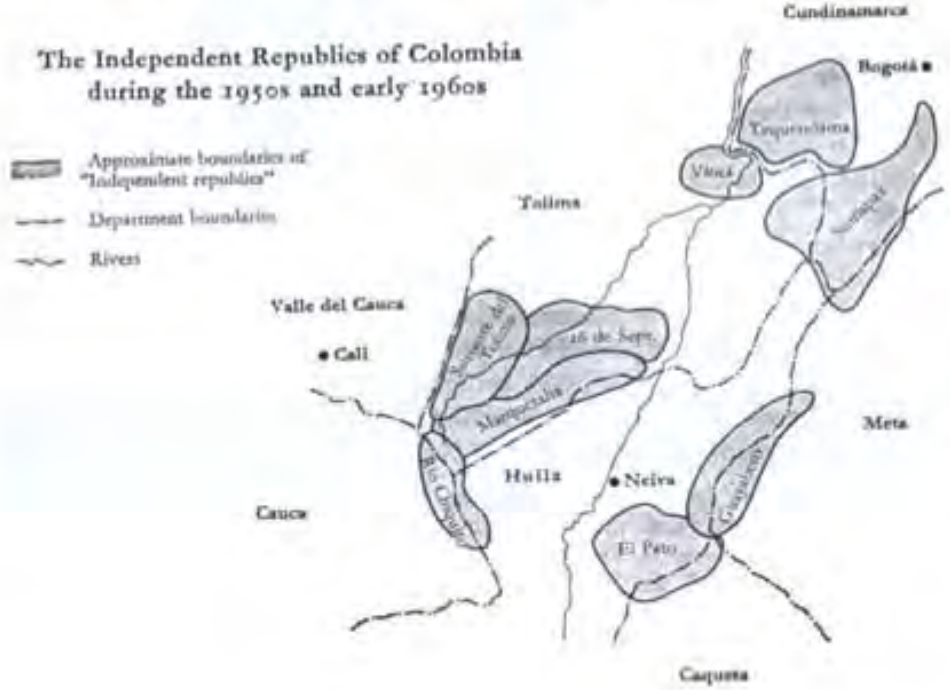
Peasants and Paramilitaries

With a programme deeply in consonance with the peasantry's long standing demands, especially in regions where the peasant and indigenous leaders were killed, the guerrillas filled that political space. As a response, the paramilitary groups were created, and the government legalised them in 1968 as a form to fight the guerrillas, and gave them the backing of the army.

In 1984 the first peace negotiations between the government and various guerrilla groups took place, resulting in a bilateral ceasefire and the demobilisation of most groups except FARC and ELN. Although attacks against guerrilla members proliferated and some guerrilla groups abandoned the ceasefire, the reaction of others was to create a political party to bring about change by 'democratic' means. Unión Patriótica (UP) was the union of political parties, grassroots lefty movements and guerrilla members that returned to civil life after the ceasefire. It participated in the elections of 1986, getting the best results for a lefty party until then.

During this process, and until 1990, more than 5,000 members were killed, including the two presidential candidates. Subsequent investigations revealed the existence of strong links between the perpetrators and members of military intelligence. The guerrillas who had remained in arms had supported UP—its treatment deepened their feeling that government promises of a normal civilian life in exchange for disarming were lies. They also doubted the government's ability to satisfy their political demands.

Paramilitaries were declared illegal in 1989. Little was done to disband them, though. Human rights groups have documented widespread post-1989 collaboration between Colombia's armed forces and the paramilitary groups. To mention but one, the Human Rights Watch report 'The Ties that Bind' states that specific brigades of the military do collaborate with paramilitaries who are committing atrocities against civilians. For Robert the difficulty is not in proving links between the army and the paramilitaries, but to differentiate between them: "They have the same arms, same uniform, same radio wave, same food rations, even the same commanders some times, and most operations are joint. It could be said that the paramilitaries are just one part of the army." It would be difficult to prove this and stay alive; however he was in contact with army troops and this is what he was told: "If you work for the army,



one day you get told: 'You have 5 days off, see you back then'. But before you go off, you are required to put on a mask and put yourself under the command of paramilitaries."

Bloody Petroleum

Nowadays, approximately 62% of Colombians live in poverty, of which 10 million (25%) live in absolute poverty. 21% are unemployed, while the 1.5% who are landowners control 80% of the useful land area. The legal products it exports are oil, coffee, coal, bananas and flowers. Coca is a major export too. As for oil, the United States imports more of it from Colombia and its neighbours Venezuela and Ecuador than from all the Persian Gulf countries combined—and that is with less than half of the suspected 'oil territory' having been explored. This, however, is on its way to being amended: in June 2001 the largest oil discovery since the 1980s was announced. And international consortia (otherwise known as transnational corporations) plan to exploit the vital oil needed in the North for survival.

The ELN in particular targets Colombia's oil sector, which it regards as dominated by foreign interests. Bombings of pipelines and energy infrastructure (such as power lines) are frequent. Usually oil exploration will mean the displacement of the population that is settled in the land, that sometimes even owns it. Most times the displacement takes place well before the machinery moves in, so the faces of massacres and oil exploration don't get linked in the 'mainstream media'.

However some instances—like the one in which British Petroleum (BP) was involved—do reach the 'mainstream media'. It happened in 1996, with BP's Cusiana-Coveñas pipeline in the region of Zaragoza. Through different subsidiaries, BP owns two different pipelines that cross the region, in northern Antioquia. The two pipelines pass through farms and have caused significant environmental damage—stripped trees, moved earth, and other pipe works—with serious erosion, avalanches, diversions of streams and the destruction of 150 sources of water. While some of the reparation works were in progress, animals got poisoned and fruit trees and other crops were lost. In some cases, this forced peasants off their lands. But 300 peasants who stayed have since claimed compensation[1]. This 'inconvenience' to the company could have been avoided by previously displacing the farmers. Not to say that BP ever planned to do so here, although there have been, in the past, links between 'Beyond Petroleum' and paramilitaries, well documented, proven and admitted.

In 1992, a report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights linked former army commander General Hernán Guzmán Rodríguez to a paramilitary group responsible for 149 murders from 1987 to 1990[2]. It turned out that he had been hired to provide security for BP. In 1995 the Colombian President's human rights adviser, Attorney-General and Ombudsman made specific allegations that "BP passed photographs and videos of local protesters to the army, which human rights groups say led to killings, disappearances, torture and beatings"[3]. BP has admitted paying a 'war tax' for army protection to stop left-wing guerrillas kidnapping senior staff and attacking oil installations. They "also made additional voluntary contributions to Colombian military spending which it claimed were to provide soldiers with good food and accommodation."[4]

Guerrilla Groups

I asked Juancho about these allegations of guerrillas kidnapping staff and attacking installations: "The second biggest oil drilling site in Colombia," says Juancho, "is Cañon Limon; it gets blown up every day by the guerrillas. Last year in February they just couldn't drill at all." Robert explained the 'taxing process': "After Plan Colombia was announced, FARC has produced a law, 'Ley 002', which states 'every company or individual in Colombia, either Colombian or foreigner, who has assets of more than one million dollars, must pay taxes to FARC'. So in Colombia, if you are rich you must pay taxes to FARC. If you don't, you are kidnapped and taken to a FARC jail in the mountains. If it is a company not paying, the premises get blown up—always without people inside. It is usually cheaper to pay."

Can this not be considered a human rights abuse? "In the UK, whether you are rich or poor, you must pay taxes to the state. If you don't, you are taken to jail and your assets get auctioned. It seems the same process to me. In my view, it is a worse abuse to have the resources and hold them when there is so much need in the country, or next door to the rich. There is this particular town under FARC control, where the head offices of big companies need to send one representative once a year and pay. Then they are left alone for that year. So you will see an expensive jeep in this town with no roads, and a man in a suit, with all these peasants in poor clothes looking at him, as he looks around lost with this thick case handcuffed to his wrist."

It was to fight this kind of guerrilla activity that paramilitary groups were created. However, it seems to be doing the contrary. Juancho has been in the FARC'S 'demilitarised zone' and he knows why much of the population supports the guerrillas: "FARC control about one half of Colombia. This is impossible to maintain without civil support. It would be impossible for them to



Indigenous protest in Coiyama, Tolima department. The banner reads "Stop the Killing of Indigenous Peoples".

even survive, let alone to hold power in the region, without that support. About three quarters of the members of guerrilla groups come from poor families, with no education. About one quarter come from universities: students, reformist activists, professors. Samuel Trinidad was professor of economics, he is now a FARC commander. Ivan Marquez, left-wing politician, member of Congress, is now a member of the central command of FARC. And many more. Lots of commanders, about 30 or 40, were union leaders and Communist Party activists before. Student leaders are now in the various guerrilla groups." Another reason for this support is the fact that in some areas, every family has an acquaintance in the guerrillas. When a town gets displaced, or when a human rights lawyer suffers too many assassination attempts, there are not many other options but to go to the guerrillas.

In 1999, the ELN demanded a 'clearance zone' be established, similar to that granted to the FARC. Here, they intended to negotiate their peace agenda through a several-month 'convention' with Colombia's civil society and popular groups. Since early 2000, the government and ELN agreed in principle to establish a temporary zone in two municipalities in southern Bolivar department. The zone has yet to be established, however, due to the active and at times violent resistance of paramilitary groups who control much of the area to be 'demilitarised'.

Death Squads and Drug War

Paramilitaries are widely considered to be responsible for about 80% of human rights abuses in Colombia. But when it comes to the numbers of those murdered, only a very poor estimate is possible. More often than not, after a massacre, body parts appear separated from each other, making it difficult—if not impossible—to identify or even count the victims. It is also difficult to determine if those parts were cut off before or after killing the victim. Therefore it is almost impossible to determine the numbers of those 'just' killed, those tortured and those tortured before killing. Torture is not unusual as a way of killing civilians, especially when they are union members or politically active members of peasant and indigenous communities. Those surviving these massacres have only the option to leave a deserted village, where they saw their families being slaughtered—they either emigrate to a big city, to add to the unemployed masses, or they disappear in the mountains, where they will join the guerrillas.

If paramilitary massacres are an 'efficient' way of displacing population to clear the land, fumigation by aerial spraying is another one. The excuse is to eradicate cocaine production, but there is so much evidence that what fumigation does is to move the coca crops further into the forest (thus forcing peasants to destroy it in order to survive). According to Juancho: "Fumigation has been going on for many years. It began intensively in 2000, but only where guerrillas are strong. Orovar Cordoba is a region strong with coca, and there are lots of laboratories dedicated to coca processing there, but it is controlled by death squads so it has never been targeted. The paramilitaries are funded by that drugs money. They produce the crop, they process and traffic it. The area has been never targeted by Plan Colombia."

In case Juancho fails to convince us, here are the words of Stan Goff, a former US Special Forces Intelligence sergeant, quoted in October by Bogotá daily the Espectador. According to him, Plan Colombia's purpose is "defending the operations of Occidental, British Petroleum and Texas Petroleum and securing control of future Colombian fields. The main interest of the United States is oil." Goff retired in 1996 from the unit that trains the Colombian anti-narcotics battalions: "We never mentioned the words coca or narco-trafficker in our training. The objective of our operations was not the Colombians but the Americans who pay taxes for the investment made in Colombia. The objective continues to be oil. Look where American forces are—Iraq, the Caspian Sea, Colombia—places where we expect to find petroleum reserves." Plan Colombia also means new intelligence bases: "Nobody knows about the intelligence component. For now, the biggest CIA station in the world is in Bogotá."

One 'defence' for fumigation spraying is that coca funds the guerrillas: "FARC tax the drug business. They don't tax peasants who grow it. They target one level up—people who buy the leaves and process it. They also target big factories of, say, socks, restaurant chains, banks, millionaires, and multinational companies. They

call them drug guerrillas, but they could call them car guerrillas, or beer guerrillas, they tax drug business as they tax any other business, their activity is just taxation."

Two kinds of weapons are used in the fumigation: biological and chemical. The biological weapon is a genetically modified fungus, 'Fusarium Oxysporum' or EN4; the chemical weapon is gliphosate, produced by Monsanto and called Round Up, some times Round Up Ultra. The fungus spores are dispersed from planes over the coca plantations. In the soil, the fungus reproduces and kills the coca, surviving in the soil for up to 5 years after destroying the coca. Which means that nothing else will grow during that time. And because the fungal herbicide does not distinguish between coca and other crops like bananas—and neither do the planes, spraying them from hundreds of meters up—alternative crops will be destroyed too, and with them the efforts of years of sustainable coca eradication programmes. Having lost their food crops as well as coca, peasants cut down more jungle to replant[5].

The ecological implications of this war strategy are unpredictable, as current science is not in a position to predict the effects of fungi or bacteria in alien ecosystems[6]. So far, what has been researched and documented is the phenomenon of epidemics. Fumigation often affects sources of water too; when the water gets poisoned it poisons crops, animals and humans, and illnesses no-one has seen before proliferate.

Death or Total Change

The results of these different kinds of what Juancho calls 'war against the people', are that "each year, some 300,000 new refugees are driven from their homes, with a death toll of about 3,000 and many horrible massacres."[7] Official statistics reveal that in the year 2000, 480 villages were affected by displacement. The Defensoría del Pueblo (Ombudsman) admitted that 128,843 had been displaced in 2000, while other sources counted 317,375 (CEDHU, Ecuador). According to the World Bank Development Report in that year fifteen thousand fled the country. As Juancho puts it, there is a real situation of civil war in Colombia: "One union leader/worker is killed every day. In the context of this war, about 72 are killed a day".

As in other zones in a situation of conflict, there is also a peace process going on: "The government is only using the peace process to wait for the aid from the USA to arrive. It will take about 2 or 3 years for Plan Colombia to be fully implemented. The money has already been planned, but it takes time to build the promised helicopters, to train the militaries, to set up intelligence systems, with those huge computer databases, and train people to use them. That takes time to be implemented. The government is using this time to get FARC less militaristic, to do this it is promising the reforms FARC are seeking, and have them weakened when the USA aid is ready."

The reforms FARC are after are those of the unions and peasants: land reform, social change. "But the government, and the oligarchy, of which the family of Pastrana [the Colombian President] is an important part, won't give anything they are promising. All those documents, all those rhetoric words, what lies behind is the government saying 'Let's sit and talk peace', the guerrillas sitting and saying 'We want land reforms, human rights, a halt to massacres, economic resources for all, etc.' Then the government replies 'We won't give them', then the guerrillas get up and leave. There is no peace process anywhere, there is only an oligarchy winning time."

At the time of writing these lines the peace process is not only stopped, but the demilitarised zone where FARC rules has been bombed—which of course has been ignored by our media. I had to ask what the situation is after September 11th: "On the 12th of September the head of the army appeared on TV and said that FARC were terrorists. Union leaders, and human rights activists are just said to be terrorists and put in jail. Sometimes they get killed, sometimes they don't. They are never charged (there is no evidence that they are terrorists) and they are never taken to court. It is just the last tactic to criminalise opposition. They just call them terrorists; before, they were drug traffickers, the name just changed in one day."

It looks like activists are globally considered terrorists now. Robert puts it this way: "Any peaceful attempt to change things leads to its promoters getting killed. But things are changing. That's why they kill them, there is a real possibility of change and that is why. It is a war between the people, especially poor people, and the status quo." Juancho puts it this way: "The people are very strong, they have the power. Either all the left is killed or take power. Either they all die or it will change." They both think that "Colombia has the greatest chance to change the system, than any other country, at this moment in history."★

Notes

1) Colombia Report, 13th August 2001, published by the Colombia Peace Association.
2) See: http://www.corporatewatch.org/profiles/oil_gas/bp/bp5.html#Anchor-54380 for more information.
3) David Harrison and Melissa Jones in *The Observer*, 20 October 1996.
4) See: http://csf.colorado.edu/mail/elan/96/oct96/0059.html
5) 'Anti-drugs plan threatens Colombian peasants', Jeremy McDermott, in 'Heinz Dieterich Steffan', 1st August 2000.
6) See: www.rebelion.org for more information.
7) *The Colombia Plan*, Noam Chomsky, April 2000.

FARC THAT FOR A GAME OF SOLDIERS

It seems all too easy sometimes for radicals in the west to become uncritical cheerleaders of national liberation movements in the 'Third World'. Sometimes in solidarity circles, critical discussion is sidestepped by the mantra 'It is not for us to tell people in other countries how to lead their struggles'. And then it is assumed that whichever is the biggest organisation—be it the PLO, the ANC, the Viet Cong or the FARC—is the only authentic 'voice of the people'.

This kind of solidarity only encourages authoritarian organisations to be even more repressive towards other groups seeking change, or internal dissent.

In the case of Colombia there is clear evidence of the FARC's repression of other left-wing groups. Some of it comes from the bourgeois media. But not all. For example, the second largest guerrilla group the ELN (National Liberation Army) have denounced killings of their militants by the FARC in the east of the province of Antioquia on their website.[1] And a smaller group, the EPL (People's Liberation Army) denounced massacres of their militants through the December 2000 issue of *Revolución*, the newspaper of their political wing. Then there is the small matter of the 'collateral damage' caused in all of the operations of these groups, which has been fully exploited by local media to worsen yet further their credibility among ordinary people.

But all this is not simply a result of regrettable but unavoidable 'errors'. Rather it flows from the politics of organisations steeped in the Leninist tradition and the separation of 'the (armed) vanguard' and the 'masses'. This is a tradition which has been amply critiqued by its libertarian and communist counterpart, and indeed by many Colombians, who see the armed groups as basing their whole strategy around organisational self-preservation. And self-preservation is a key issue. The real story of the last few years is the ability of the right-wing paramilitaries to recruit urban youth: even gang members who once participated in the guerrillas' previous attempts to set up an urban front.[2] It is they who now control urban neighbourhoods and villages, with the guerrillas pushed out into more rural areas. With the growth



Members of M-19, the April 19 Movement, handing over their weapons in March 1990 after the group's formal surrender.

of the 'paras', the war itself has become increasingly barbaric. Disillusionment and cynicism, rather than revolutionary hopes, are the dominant feeling among new generations after decades of warfare. But local echoes of the wider anti-capitalist movement can counter this effect, as recent carnival type protests in Bogotá to coincide with anti-ALCA (the Americas Free Trade Agreement) and WTO actions have shown.[3] As elsewhere, there is a sense of the need to go beyond authoritarian, militarist solutions of the old left, without necessarily falling into pacifism or reformism.[4]★

Notes

1) See: www.eln-voces.com
2) See Alonso Salazar, 'Viaje al interior de los paras' (Journey to the centre of the 'paras') in *Semana* magazine, March 25 2002.
3) For a report see: www.geocities.com/coordinadorabanderasnegras
4) A libertarian view from Colombia of the situation can be found in 'Civil War in Colombia', *Organize* No. 55. Also, between 1992 and 2000 articles by the (now defunct) Alas de Xue collective in Bogotá were published in the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist magazine *CNT*—including a very full report on the March 1998 Bogotá Libertarian Gathering (*CNT*, October 1998).

Contacts

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Email: banderasnegras@hotmail.com

Desde Abajo magazine: www.desde_abajo.org

Colombia Indymedia:
http://colombia.indymedia.org

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COLOMBIAN ANARCHIST STATEMENT

We reject the escalation in the war caused by the breakdown of talks between the government and the FARC. Likewise we reject the official version according to which this breakdown was 'caused' by the kidnapping of a senator, because there is evidence that it was planned well in advance: Plan Colombia required this escalation in order to see through its business, in the shape of the arms deal made between the Colombian state and the North American capitalists.

We consider that the best response is a radical opposition to the war, which recognises that the war will not de-escalate without concessions on the part of the state. This opposition includes a generalised civil resistance: not only against guerrilla attacks[1] but also based on actions such as: Direct action/desertion from the different armies; non-payment campaigns against the war being waged by the state and the bourgeoisie on the population, for example refusing to pay the public utilities bills;[2] strikes, including a political strike for peace.

We reject the way in which politicians and mayors—such as Bogotá mayor Antonios Mockus—support 'civil resistance' when at the same time they support policies which harm the people. We also reject the biased stance of the media, in particular Colombian TV, who use terrorist acts to spread disinformation and fear among the population, and as a way to improve their ratings. We support a social revolution which does not have to wait till 'after the war', and which is made by everyone, not just an armed vanguard. Historically it has been shown that an authoritarian, hierarchical opposition only creates a new elite of oppressors, in which exploitation continues despite images to the contrary. We think opposition to the war should focus on its causes: the defence at any cost of the profits made by the Colombian state and national and foreign capital from the exploitation of the majority of Colombians. Those who benefit include arms dealers, drug traffickers, politicians, the media, large property owners and financiers, and all those on whichever side who profit from the war and the suffering of the people.★

—Signed by various anarchist and sympathetic collectives in Bogotá and Medellin. Issued March 2002, after the breakdown of peace talks.

Notes

1) Translators note: This refers to the widely publicised cases of unarmed villagers filling the streets of their villages in order to dissuade the guerrillas from launching an attack (usually aimed at the police station but affecting anyone and anything in the way).

2) Translators note: This refers to the way Colombian electricity companies increase their charges, using the cost of damages caused by guerrilla attacks as an excuse but obviously charging the consumer way above what corresponds to the costs of these damages.

U'wa Victory!

Since November of 1999 the U'wa Indians have engaged in mass peaceful protest against oil exploration on their traditional lands in Colombia by the Los Angeles-based Occidental Petroleum. They have blockaded exploration work and mobilised to protect their land and way of life, despite government violence that has killed three and injured dozens. Early in 2000, nearly 3,000 local farmers, union members, and students joined the U'wa in nonviolent blockades and protests near the Gibraltar 1 well site. The military responded violently, and in February a confrontation between peaceful protesters and the military resulted in the deaths of three indigenous children. On June 24 2000, approximately 400 Colombian anti-riot police and soldiers entered indigenous territory in the department of Norte de Santander, attacking two hundred peaceful U'wa people who were blockading a road near the town of Cubara. The police and soldiers removed the U'wa from the blockade through the use of tear gas and physical blows. The next day, some sixty soldiers and police again physically attacked a group of U'wa peacefully assembled in Cubara. U'wa spokespeople reported that at least twenty-eight people were injured, some requiring medical attention, and that up to seventy people had been detained. But in May 2002 what has been a hellish struggle for the U'wa resulted in a major victory: Occidental announced that they would no longer drill for oil on their land—having already spent $16 billion on exploration work! Unfortunately Spanish company Repsol—who are involved in the devastating OCP pipeline through the Ecuadorian Amazon—are waiting to pick up where Occidental left off.

Plan Colombia's New Canal: 'Empire of Death' for the River People



Market on the Atrato river, department of Chocó, Colombia.

Plan Colombia is not a plan to eradicate narcotraffic at all, but to impose new projects run by American companies (oil, dams, motorways, quarrying) and to eradicate the political opposition from guerrillas and from native resistance.

One of these programs is the ultra-profitable new inter-oceanic Canal: the estimate is that it will make somewhere between $1.3 and $1.8 billion per year. It will link the Atlantic and the Pacific, through North Colombia.

At present, the Panama Canal is the only way to cross between these oceans without going all the way round South America. The Americans controlled the Panama Canal Zone, and managed to get several extensions on handing it back to the Panamanian government before finally returning it in 1999. Despite the control that they have over the government and via the multinationals that operate in the Zone, this is still far too big a loss for American foreign policy. Also, the Canal was built in 1914 and is quite outdated, as it is not big enough for the ship traffic currently using it. The proposal to link both oceans through Colombia is an idea that has been around for a long time, like similar projects in Mexico and Nicaragua [See article on Plan Puebla Panama in this issue.]. It is based on the linking of the rivers close to the Panama isthmus: the Atratô (Chocó and Antioquia) and the Truandô.

The Atratô river crosses the area with the highest pluviosity [rainfall] in Colombia and one of the richest in biodiversity, pretty similar to the Amazon rainforest. In this area there are no cities, but—due to geographical characteristics—just isolated communities of mainly African Colombians (90%) and Natives (5%). The main Native groups are the Embera, Cholo and Wounan, as well as the Kuna [see the interview with a Kuna activist in this issue], Noanamá and Katia. The good state of this habitat is due to the respect these communities have for it. The Black communities are descendants of slaves and in some cases they even keep African traditions. This heritage has

reinforced a sense of identity through the centuries as well as links with nature and the land which are pretty similar to those of the Native communities. As they say in a communiqué, the current situation is "an attempt against biodiversity and natural and 'super-natural'[1] resources of this area which is so vital for the planet". The remaining 5% of the area's population is made up of white and mixed race people, who also live in extreme poverty and are victims of paramilitary terrorism.

The canal project is one of the hidden agendas of Plan Colombia. It requires a massive area of land in order to enlarge the river and make it navigable. All this means a huge environmental impact but mainly a huge human impact, as those peoples inhabiting the riversides have to leave the area. But as well as the canal, the project includes other new infrastructure (motorways from Medellín to Pereira and from Urabá to Maracaibo, and a train route between Medellín and Buenaventura) which will force even more people out. And it will be subject to yet more destruction as the Chocó is very rich in oil and has already been used by the American army as a source of oil for their bases. (From 1999 Colombia has increased the contracts for oil exploration and exploitation with BP-Amoco, Chevron-Texaco, Shell, Exxon, Canadian Oxy, Talisman and Alberta Energy). Also exotic wood: logging has gotten out of control in the Lower Atrató and in the last ten years there has been a real shortage. Then the logging companies homed in on the Middle Atrató, where the forest has been preserved after being declared a natural reserve. The companies pressurised the government to allow them to get in, but the Afro-Colombian and Native communities stood up to defend the forest from the multinationals. As if this weren't enough, the Chocó is also rich in minerals: gold, platinum, silver, bauxite (aluminium ore), manganese, radioactive cobalt, zinc, chrome, nickel and copper.

This is why the US has given Colombia $7 billion! To clear the way for this mega-project so they can plunder its resources. American aircraft as well as NATO forces based on the Dutch islands of Curaçao and Aruba have been bombing this area



The route of the canal

The Black Communities Process

"In Colombia, 'peace' is proclaimed while the multinationals try to silence any demands for justice with rifles. But the subversive rifles against the developing mega-projects haven't stopped"—Black Communities Process activist

"About 25-30 % of the Colombian population is Black. Most live in cities but many communities are spread around the Pacific and Caribbean coast. The Black communities perceive themselves as the outcome of centuries of struggle for freedom. Struggles against slavery, against colonialism and now economic globalisation. They have developed forms of living which have little or nothing to do with capitalism and that are in harmony with their environment, one of the places on Earth with the highest biodiversity. They struggle to defend their right to live, their constitutional right to autonomy, identity and space to live.

Since the protests in Prague against the IMF/WB summit, the contact between PCN (Black Communities Process) and European grassroots groups has been developing rapidly.

The first exchanges have resulted in:

1) A call by PCN for support in building communication structures and skill capacity to improve communication within the communities and internationally.
2) A proposal to consider the planning of a large international presence in security zones in the Black communities, which are precisely in the way of the planned megaprojects.
3) A call to European and North American grassroots realities to build up autonomous collective alternatives as a response to the economical, political and cultural power of capitalism. Alternatives which articulate along horizontal and participatory forms, which practically implement the right to be different, support self-management capacity and develop structures independently from State structures."

From *Plan Colombia, FTAA and Black Communities in the Process of Global Struggle*

to evict their inhabitants. To these terrorist forces we have to add the paramilitaries, who are closely linked to the Colombian military, which funds and arms them. It is clear that these funds and arms come from the Plan Colombia money that the Colombian government receives from the USA. The training and support provided by US Marines to paramilitaries in their terrorist activities is also known. The Atrató was very strategic for the Spaniards as it was the only way to the gold mines. They built forts (one of which is now a paramilitary base—'Vigia del Fuerte', the Fort of the Watcher), and even banned sailing on it. Paramilitaries have their bases in the lower Atrató River, which is the main way to get to the cities on the coast and they control the access, detaining, intimidating and disappearing people.

In Colombia the massacres have already exceeded 425 deaths per year! And this is clearly aimed against the resistance: 4,000 activists killed and 3,000 trade union leaders in 14 years. In 1999 half of the trade unionists killed worldwide were Colombian, and one peasant union has counted 1,700 of its leaders killed in the last decade! Between 1995 and 1999 more than one million people were displaced, and this increases every year: from January to September 1999 225,000 people had to flee their homes!

This is something which is not new for Colombia—during the phase that is known in Colombian history as 'La Violencia' (1948-58), 2 million peasants were displaced and 200,000 killed. As the economist Héctor Mondragón stated, this is "a development model by blood and fire"—or what inhabitants of the Atrató call an "empire of death".

In the Middle Atrató, despite the brutal repression against peasants and small landowners, people are still highly organised. The Integral Campesino Association has 5,000 members, while the High Council of this area represents 40,000 members. They defend proudly "the independence and autonomy that for more than 15 years we have enjoyed as a result of our struggle for the territory, our communities' development, the preservation of the natural resources and the rescue of our identity".

These people's resistance is focused on their culture in opposition to capitalism, and the recognition of their autonomy and land rights. These rights were even recognised in the Colombian Constitution (Land Reform) in the 1990s, and many communities have got the official ownership of their land. Through this resistance, these communities identify with the anti-neo-liberalism and the anti-globalisation struggle that is taking place around the globe. For their survival, they have requested that international activists go to their communities as observers, in the same way that the Zapatista communities in Mexico have been supported.★

Thanks to Colombian economist Héctor Mondragón (www5.gratisweb.com/ciclocrisis) for providing such good information. Héctor's life has been threatened repeatedly by the paramilitaries because of his journalistic activity. He lives clandestinely in indigenous and farmers communities.

Note

1) By this they mean the spiritual 'powers' which they believe inhabit their land.

Contacts

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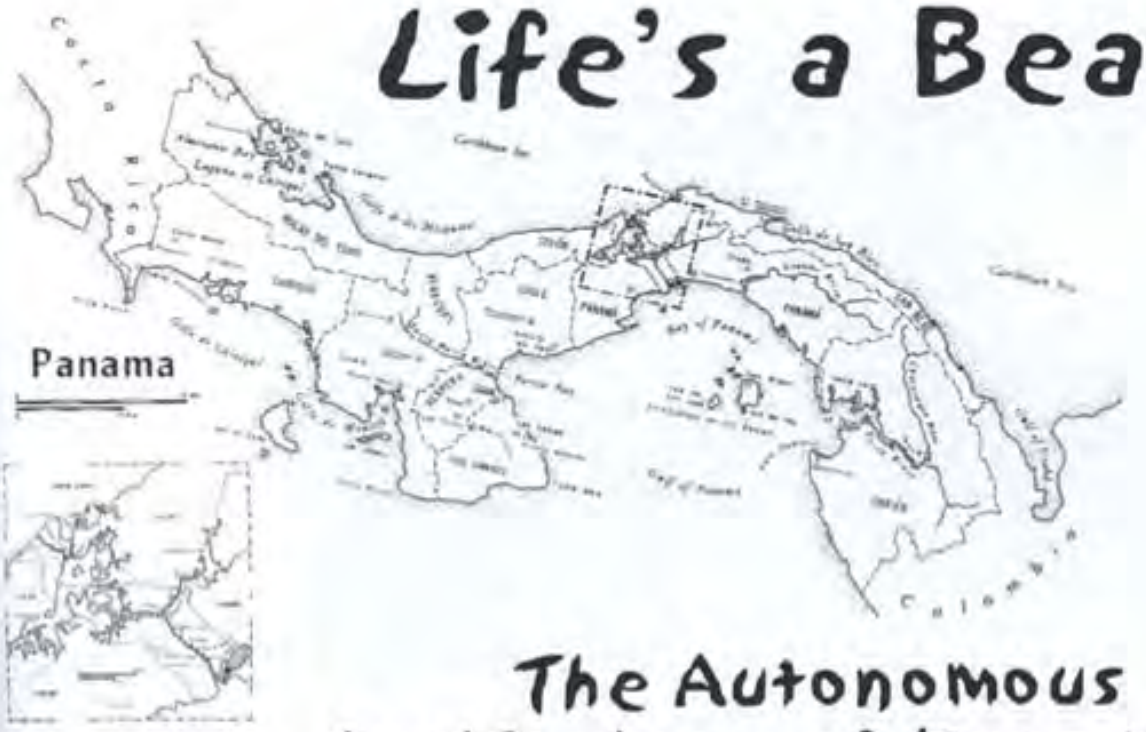
Peace Brigades International (Send observers to Colombia, although not currently to the Black communities):
PBI Colombia Office, 1A Waterlow Road, London N19 5NJ, England
E-mail: pbicolombia@gn.apc.org
Web: www.peacebrigades.org

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Terrorism against the Native population

At Christmas 2000 in Juradó, paramilitaries entered an Embera indigenous community close to the Pacific coast. They shot dead Amando Achito with 4 bullets. They also took the radio equipment, which is essential for communication, with them. Armando was an indigenous leader and for years had been organising resistance around the recognition of the right to live and the self-determination of the community. This community just so happens to be exactly where the inter-oceanic canal is planned. The message is clear: anyone organising resistance will be threatened with the same punishment: leave before the next one gets killed. Sometimes an entire village is threatened. A few days before, 6,000 people, mostly from nearby Black communities in the north of Cauca, were forced to flee. The number of displaced and fleeing people is estimated at around 2 million, half of them from the Black communities. There were 3,000 victims of murder like Armando Achito in 2001.

Life's a Beach



The Autonomous Archipelago of Kuna Yala

This interview was conducted with a representative of the Kuna people at the Third People's Global Action (PGA) conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Who are the Kuna?

We are indigenous people living on the Panamanian-Colombian border. A minimal percentage live in Colombia; the greater percentage live in Panama, about 70,000 in total. We have a territory—not land—but territory, physically demarcated, and administered by us, by the Kuna. To explain, we obtained it in 1925, with a struggle. Our people struggled to obtain the territory, and now we have it. There are approximately 360 islands, more or less 50 are inhabited by us. The rest are empty, though some are used for swimming by the people who own them. Some are shared among the families. Our islands are near the Panama Canal and the border, and are officially called the Archipelago de San Blas, but we changed the name to the Kuna Yala Territory. No foreigner, nobody who isn't a Kuna, can own any of the islands.

The fight which took place in 1925, who was it against?

It was against the Colonial Police of that era. The Colonial Police said that it was necessary to evangelise the 'savage Indians', literally, just like that. So they started to send out the military forces and the Catholic Church. From then on, after they began to repress the Kuna people by trying to make them wear foreign clothes and forget their customs and their language, our grandfathers were incited to rebel, and rose up in arms against the Colonial Police of that time.

What is your system of government, and how does that relate to the state government?

This is interesting. There is the leader, the Saila Dammad. He has the maximum authority. Of the 50 islands that are inhabited by the Kuna, each has its own authority, its Saila, and each one carries out its role, has its internal rules and regulations, and is autonomous and independent of the other islands. The populations of the islands range from 100 up to 5,000 inhabitants. Every six months there is a meeting of all these communities in the Kuna General Congress. Here, all types of indigenous Kuna people come together. People who have different ideologies and modes of organisation. As long as they are Kuna, they have to meet. There's no distinction, no discrimination. They discuss and debate the national problems of the Kuna, and the leader of all of them is the Saila Dammad. That is not to say that the Saila Dammad has to intervene in the problems of each island: each one is autonomous. The Congress decides what position it has to adopt before the Panamanian government and regarding the transnational companies.

Do all the people from all the islands come to these meetings?



A colonist and an Indian opening the rainforest for the Pan-American Highway.

No, each island has to send four delegates. It doesn't matter whether it is a small island or a large one—they all have the same rights. Anyone can come who wishes to observe or participate or speak, such as young people, or smaller organisations or groups. They cannot make decisions, but they can contribute.

If the Panamanian government wants to carry out any kind of project within the region, it has to consult the Congress. It has to be subordinate to the Congress, which has to make the decision—it has the last word. There have been some instances—once a Canadian mining company signed an agreement with the Panamanian government. The contract said that the mining company could explore and exploit in all Panamanian territory, including on indigenous land. The company, knowing that it had permission from the Panamanian state, arrived in our territory to carry out their explorations and the Congress said, "Even though you have a paper signed by the government, we cannot authorise this: you do not have the right to exploit our territory." So the company did not carry out its project. The same thing happened over four years ago when the government wanted to install a naval base in our territory, using the pretext that drug traffickers were there. But the Kuna people said "No, we don't want the naval base", so it wasn't allowed to be built.

Two years ago the Congress negotiated with a transnational company, without the intervention of the government. It was understood that the government had to accept the autonomy of our people. But this is being threatened. There is a lot of pressure. There are a lot of attempts to buy off the consciences of our leaders. There's a lot of that—so this presents a threat. We need to strengthen the autonomy that we already have.

The system you have explained to us—is it a traditional system, or one you have developed more recently?

I would say that we have been evolving, in response to our reality, and introducing some things which are necessary in the long term. I don't think it is much like it was before.

What are some of the problems of or dangers to this system that are currently faced by the Kuna?

We are fighting for the approval of Law 169—this is the instrument we will be able to use in the Western tribunals. For example, in this law, it is posited that the owners of materials which are found underground are the indigenous people. But the government says that it belongs to the Panamanian state, so that they have the right to negotiate with any company that comes here and say that they can exploit it. We say, "No, what is underground belongs to the indigenous people and we can decide what happens to it." To say it in fewer words: self-determination for our people.

Another major problem has to do with Plan Colombia—as we are on the border with Colombia we are directly affected by it. For centuries and centuries we have been co-existing with our brothers—peasants, black people, we have not fought with them. Today, it is no longer possible to live peacefully. One cannot go into the country, one cannot do what before one would do on a daily basis.

The border between Panama and Colombia is very rich in biodiversity. I believe that after the Amazon, the area along the border where the Kuna live is where the transnational companies most want to exploit. The danger is that if they are going to exploit this land, the ones who are going to be affected will be us.

Furthermore, there is the Pan-American Highway, which begins in Alaska and supposedly ends in Tierra del Fuego, but in Panama and Colombia this highway doesn't exist. It is not finished, and now they want to finish it. If they do, many transnational

companies are going to enter this area, and it will be much easier for the companies to destroy the land and the trees.

What are the resources in which the transnational companies are interested? Is there oil?

There is not oil, specifically. There is oil in the Colombian part of the area, but not in our part. There is however, as is well known by the indigenous people, flora and fauna—this biodiversity is now the business of the large pharmaceutical companies: this is what they want to exploit. Not only that, but as they're now saying that the Panama Canal no longer has any use, they want to build another canal along the Panamanian-Colombian border. This is a huge problem.

As the US recently had to return the canal to Panamanian control, do you think that the reason for their intervention in Colombia is to create a new area of military control?

We are clear that the US left the Panama Canal because there was an agreement. We understand that at any moment they want, they could intervene, and re-occupy the land that they abandoned, with many excuses. One excuse is that if the Panama Canal is threatened, they can intervene for the sake of its security. And now, looking at the current international situation, there is a possibility that that could happen.

How and why has Plan Colombia increased tensions among the people?

Firstly, answering for the Kuna specifically, we used to be able to go to Colombia without a passport. Our brothers are there, and we could cross the border, and they were able to do the same. Second, the commercial relations we have had were with the Colombians, especially with the people of Cartagena. Now that they have begun to implement Plan Colombia, there is more military here than before. The area is militarised, one cannot go to visit one's family, and the commercial boats cannot enter our territory. Therefore we cannot buy rice, we cannot buy sugar, we cannot sell our products to them. And as our black brothers and the indigenous population in Colombia are repressed, they are fleeing to our communities. We have lived peacefully on the border for years and years, even since the guerrilla groups were in the area and we have not had any conflict with them. It is not our problem: the problem is theirs. But now, it is no longer the same. The guerrillas are now a threat to the Kuna because the paramilitaries think we help the guerrilla fighters. And also the guerrillas think that we are helping the paramilitaries. For these reasons there is much tension. Before, these tensions didn't exist.

How are the Kuna responding to the militarisation of the area?

Firstly, the Congress has put out two statements condemning the military presence and Plan Colombia. Now, how are we dealing with it? Sometimes, because of our reality, we have to adopt positions or make decisions which are inconvenient to us, but which are necessary. For example, we are trying to educate our young and our grandparents so that they understand the effects of Plan Colombia, and we are suggesting that we have to go out into the country and work harder than before, because we no longer have the products that the Colombian boats would sell to us. Also, we are planning international campaigns against Plan Colombia, and making anti-Plan Colombia tours, because we know very well that through this campaign we can achieve a lot of support and solidarity, and make people realise and understand the effects of Plan Colombia. These are the actions we are currently taking. In the future, there may be others. And this will depend on the changes in our reality. I don't think anyone wants violence, because we want to live in peace, we want to be peaceful as we have been before, co-existing with nature and the land, and this would be threatened.

Why are you participating in People's Global Action?

Our organisation wishes to struggle and fight together, as fighting is necessary, without distinguishing between different ideologies, colours



A plan and a section of a 'nainú'—a Kuna plot.

Plan Puebla Panama



Grassroots Resistance to Neoliberalism in Mesoamerica

In June 2001 a second wave of neoliberal capitalist economic reform hit Central America and Mexico in the form of the Plan Puebla Panamá. The PPP is Mexican president Vicente Fox's pet project; a transportation and industrial development corridor that seeks to integrate the economies of the seven Central American nations—Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panamá—with those of the nine southernmost Mexican states—Puebla, Campeche, Veracruz, Tabasco, Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero.

This 102 million km region includes 63.8 million people, and is characterised by extreme poverty of a principally rural, indigenous nature. While the governments of the countries involved claim that the PPP will "elevate the level of human social development" in the region, history shows that this type of top-down 'development' will offer substantial investment opportunities to multinational corporations, at the expense of the further impoverishment and isolation of small farmers and indigenous people who constitute the majority of the region's population.

Southern Mexico is still not really part of the nation that joined the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. In terms of poverty indicators such as infant mortality, literacy rates, housing conditions, etc., southern Mexico has much more in common with Central America than with the rest of Mexico—more than half of all southern municipalities are categorised as 'poor' or 'very poor'. In the southernmost Mexican state of Chiapas for example, half of all communities have no access to roads, telephones or basic urban services. This poverty has a particularly rural, indigenous face: half of the population of southern Mexico lives in communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants, and two-thirds of the region's population is indigenous. Of these 7.5 million



indigenous people, 67% survive on less than one minimum wage salary, and the remaining 33% have no source of cash income whatsoever.
Economically, the region's most important export is probably the thousands of young people that emigrate to northern Mexico and the United States in search of work each year. 93% of Mexico's current exports go to the United States. Of this huge portion, only one percent comes from Mexico's southern and southeastern states (the PPP region, excluding Puebla).

Incorporating many old project ideas from the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), the guiding logic behind the PPP is that in order to take better advantage of the region's extensive natural resources and its strategic location for international commerce, Central America and southern Mexico have to make themselves more attractive to foreign investment. In order to achieve this, the national governments have dedicated unprecedented amounts of federal funding to the modernisation of infrastructure such as superhighways, maritime ports, railroads, airports, dams, gas lines, fiber optic telecommunications grids, 'dry canals', etc., in the hope that this improved groundwork will make the region competitive with Asia for foreign investment. For example, in 2002 Mexico's federal budget set aside 7 billion pesos for Plan Puebla Panamá, more than twice the amount designated for the same area the year before, with over 80% being directed toward highway and port development. The PPP will promote investment in natural resource extraction, like logging, oil drilling and bioprospecting (often on lands supposedly protected by the World Bank's 'Mesoamerican Biological Corridor'). Also on the cards is industrial genetically modified agriculture, the creation of common energy and telecommunications grids for the entire region, 'maquiladora' [free trade zones with virtually no workers' rights] factories assembling consumer goods for export, mono-cropped forestry plantations, and ecotourism. 90% of Mexico's oil comes from the southern region. And the larger PPP region, though it represents only 0.5% of the total surface area of the planet, contains 7% of the world's known biodiversity.

These industries promise to create profits in an area currently dominated by small scale farming for self-sufficiency, which has little interaction with the global economy. By driving down the prices of locally produced agricultural goods through free trade, and destroying the environment for local farmers and fishermen, the PPP will doubtless force many Mexicans and Central Americans off their lands. What will happen to these people? Proponents of the PPP suggest that it will create more jobs in the region to help stem the flow of northward migration; the past effects of NAFTA show that these neoliberal reforms don't create nearly enough jobs to absorb the massive number of people displaced, leaving many without land or other means of survival.

In order to achieve their lofty goals, the governments must break the resistance of the region's people to the expropriation of their lands—a resistance whose strength is unprecedented in the history of neoliberal development in Mesoamerica. In Mexico the process of expropriation began in 1992, when President Carlos Salinas Gortari ended the redistribution of agricultural lands to landless *campesinos* (a right that it took the Mexican



One of the non-timber forest products that can be sustainably harvested from the forests of Mesoamerica, chicle has long been used as a basis for chewing gum. In the forests of the Mayan region of southern Mexico, Guatemala and Belize about 5,000 chicleros still collect this valuable product using traditional methods.

Revolution of 1910 to win), by revising Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. This revision was demanded by the United States as a precondition for Mexico's entering into NAFTA in 1994, as these communally-held lands (called *ejidos* in Mexico) could not be broken up or sold and were therefore considered "barriers to trade". Since that time the Mexican government has maintained a virulent campaign to break up collectively held lands throughout the country, through a government agency called PROCEDE (the Ejido Rights Certification and Urban Lots Title Program). The Mexican Agrarian Reform Secretariat has even gone so far as to state that land will be forcibly expropriated for PPP projects if necessary. In Chiapas this divide-and-conquer strategy is also key to the government's counterinsurgency efforts: by breaking up collectively held lands, the government dismantles one of the campesinos' most powerful tools for collective resistance. It then further foments division and conflict within the communities through the selective distribution of government aid. Control over land is essential to the survival of indigenous peoples and culture, and the PPP seeks to privatise these lands for private profit—but according to Secretary of State Jorge Castañeda, the PPP is the "logical corollary" to the peace process in Chiapas. If the government indeed sees the PPP as linked to the Chiapas peace process, that would explain why guarantees of indigenous autonomy and control of natural resources were stripped from the indigenous rights law that the Mexican Congress passed at the end of April 2001. The PPP depends upon corporate access to land and natural resources in Mexico's south—the opposite of what the government promised the Zapatistas in the San Andrés accords of 1996.

The governments involved have been very slow to release concrete information about specific projects within the PPP. Two large projects that *have* been publicised involve highways and electricity interconnection. The modernisation of two large coastal highways has begun: the 3,156 km long Pacific Corridor highway which stretches from Colón in Panamá to Tampico in Mexico, of which 1,785 km will be improved at a cost of $977 million. The Atlantic Corridor, which is 1,925 km, will have 1,332 km improved at a cost of $777 million. Information regarding two electrical interconnection projects has also been published: one between Guatemala and Belize, the other between Mexico and Guatemala near the border town of Tapachula. These two projects are only a small part of the whole electrical interconnection system, which will include a 1,831 km line from a substation in Veladero, Panamá to another station in Pepesca, Guatemala. This line will cost $320 million, of which $34.8 million will be contributed



The incomplete Pan-American Highway, beginning in Alaska and ending in Tierra del Fuego. The highway is unfinished in the section that runs through Panama, which is now scheduled for completion.

by the countries involved. $45.8 million by the Spanish corporation Endesa, $70 million by Spain, and $170 million by the IDB. The countries involved will therefore be incurring large debts to build this line but the profits it generates will go to the Spanish corporation. When state-run electricity companies in Central America have been privatised before, it usually results in poorer service and overcharging.

Some other projects which are being discussed are a dam on the Usumacinta River which divides Mexico and Guatemala, a dry canal through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca and Veracruz, a tourist highway through the Mayan ruins in the Guatemalan Peten rainforest and a hydroelectric dam on the Terraba River on Costa Rica's Pacific coast. 71 sites for new dams in Chiapas have been located, mostly in zones of Zapatista influence. These dams would generate energy for export to the US as well as powering local industrial zones. Funding information for these projects has not yet been released, but one thing is certain: they will receive funding before any of the "human development projects" that the PPP's promoters like to tout—natural disaster prevention programs, sustainable development, job training,

health programs, etc. All of these have yet to see offers of financing or regional meetings to solidify their implementation.

The most universal criticism of the PPP is that it is yet another top-down development plan, polluting the environment and further impoverishing millions of already poor people, through economic pressures on small-scale farming or by forced displacement. Such development does not respect the rights of the region's inhabitants to maintain their traditional livelihoods and culture, because it pressures them into selling off their land and moving to urban areas to work in factories. Mexico has signed the International Labor Organisation's Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. This gives the government a responsibility to consult indigenous communities affected by the PPP before approving it, and to carry out this consultation in 'good faith', neither of which has happened. The PPP—along with Bush's recently proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement—will (literally!) pave the way for the hemisphere-wide Free Trade Area of the Americas, furthering neoliberal economic reforms in the region.

One effect the PPP is having in Chiapas is the forced displacement by the Mexican Army of 1,500 indigenous families from their lands within the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, under 'ecological' pretences. The public summary of the PPP published by the Mexican government blames small-scale farmers for the region's ecological problems: "The productive activities of the inhabitants of the southern and south-eastern region constitute an environmental risk, capable of provoking a massive and selective extinction of animal and plant species." The real reason, however, that the government wants to kick these people off their lands is that they are located in the Lacandon Jungle, the most biodiverse area in the Americas after the Amazon Rainforest.

Of all the 181 countries that are indebted to the World Bank, Mexico's debt is the largest; and the PPP will increase it. The governments of the region must take out loans to develop their infrastructure, further indebting their people, while the investment they hope to attract will be private and thus any profits will be remitted back to the investors' home countries. This is a classic neoliberal formula in which the state assumes the 'high-risk' investments which aren't considered safe for the private sector, thereby socialising the costs and privatising the profits. The Interamerican Development Bank heads the PPP's finance commission, and has already secured $4 billion in PPP loans.

In an already heavily-militarised region, the PPP will inevitably entail an increased military presence to protect foreign investments and patrol borders, not to mention for expropriation, as in the case of Montes Azules. 12,000 US soldiers have already been sent to the Guatemalan Peten region bordering Chiapas to conduct 'training and humanitarian support missions' with the Guatemalan military under a mission named 'New Horizons'. This is within a larger Latin American context of the US sending 100,000 soldiers to 21 Latin American countries in 2001 alone, to fight the 'war on drugs' and guerrilla activity. This pretext for further militarisation will be a boon to Fox as far as Chiapas is concerned, giving him an excuse to increase military control in the surrounding area and destabilise indigenous power in general. Maybe this is what Fox was thinking when he said he could resolve the conflict in Chiapas in "15 minutes"?

In Mexico indigenous people have been struggling for recognition of their culture and for rights to land and autonomy for years. Most recently they have demanded the implementation of the 1996 San Andrés Peace Accords between the EZLN and the Mexican Government, which extensively outline indigenous rights to autonomy and control of their land, natural resources and development. The Plan Puebla Panamá is in part the Mexican government's response to the indigenous movements: instead of recognising the right of indigenous people to continue their traditional lifestyles, the government seeks to transform them into consumers, maquiladora workers or tourist guides.★



Mapuche Land: Mapuche Life

Indigenous Resistance in Chile



Encompassed by the modern states of Chile and Argentina, in which they form sizeable minorities, the indigenous Mapuche people occupy territory on either side of the southern Andes. They live situated between the frozen wilderness of Patagonia and the scorched deserts of the north, and seem to exist along a continuum stretching between their former way of life and that of the dominant society.

While the Spanish slaughtered and enslaved their way southward through the Aztecs, Incas and other indigenous American peoples, and the Portuguese did likewise into the Amazonian interior, the Mapuche stood their ground. Consistently giving the invaders a run for their money, they were never colonised by the Spanish. Before the Mapuche were finally defeated in 1881 by a newly-independent Chile, the mighty Biobío river west of the Andes formed the frontier between European society to the north, and a free Mapuche nation to the south. Now the boundaries are less clear-cut, but territory is contested just as keenly.

"Arm yourselves!" urges a Mapuche grandmother, as her grandchildren scramble up the hillside behind her, gathering stones as ammunition for their slingshots. Mapuches from four neighbouring communities have banded together to occupy the road bridge which leads out of the tiny town of Ralco in Chile's XIII region (Bioblo), a little over 500km south of the capital Santiago. This is late January 2002. It's a warm summer's day, and the hills are alive with the sound of tear gas and rubber bullets being fired. "We as Mapuches, we're prepared to give up our lives to defend the land, our territory", declares Carmen Rosa, the twenty-something spokesperson for Mapuches in the area. The road occupation is the first of a series of actions aiming to increase pressure upon the State to return lands currently under the control of the Mininco forestry company.

In their native *mapudungun*, 'Mapuche' means people (*che*) of the land (*mapu*). Mapuche identity tends to be defined through a trophic relationship with the land—or as Carmen Rosa's octogenarian neighbour Berta Quintreman puts it, gesturing at the soil, "We are born and created on this land... Father, Mother... Sacred land. If I don't have land, where am I going to be? I am not." This deep identification of the Mapuche with their land has come to seem increasingly ironic in the century or so since they were first robbed of the greater part of them in the late 19th century. Throughout much of that time, the Mapuches were progressively



swindled and coerced out of many of the fragments they'd been left with; first by the migrant founders of a European-style, agricultural export economy, and latterly to make way for the industrial profusion of non-native, pine and eucalyptus trees. Around 60 percent of Mapuches in Chile now live in towns and cities, an urban Diaspora that contributes in no small way to their unease about maintaining a distinct national identity. The edge of desperation in Berta's voice stems from the $540 million, 570 megawatt Ralco dam project, which threatens to engulf her own community of Ralco Lepoy on the upper Biobío river.

The Biobío springs from the Icalma and Galletue lakes in the Andes and flows 380km through steep and narrow gorges, agricultural lands and cities, to the Pacific Ocean. The Pehuenches of this area are probably the least assimilated into dominant, 'Western' society: set amidst a vertiginous Jurassic landscape shrouded in coarse green forest, Ralco 'town' is in fact a 200-yard strip of houses served by a couple of local stores. A little higher on up the road from there toward the Argentinian frontier, the community of Ralco Lepoy lies hidden in the crook of a valley on the upper Biobío, but likewise hasn't escaped the effects of the State's favoured economic model. This is where the $540 million Ralco dam is currently under construction. Where once the river itself signalled the frontier between the Spanish empire and the beginning of Mapuche territory, now the tiny Collaqui community marks another frontline with the Spanish, in the form of the Madrid-based consortium ENDESA.

"I don't want the Spanish," insists Nicolasa, Berta's sextegenarian younger sister, and until recently a figurehead of the campaign to stop ENDESA. "I've listened to my grandparents, to my parents, who said that they came to make a war here, to punish us Mapuches; they leave us on the worst lands." Nicolasa and Berta have lived their entire lives close to one another, their houses separated by a kilometre of rough meadow, perched half-way up the river ravine. Now Nicolasa, quite understandably after holding out so long, has become the latest of the 98 Mapuche families who are affected to accept estates elsewhere in the mountains, purchased for them by ENDESA.

ENDESA's tactics undermine the possibility of considering the Pehuenches' interests *as a community*. ENDESA started building houses for the Pehuenche in El Barco, in the process employing many of the young Pehuenches who will later live in them. Before a decision has been reached on the suitability or otherwise of the land swap, the issue of community lands is muddied as it is *de facto* bound up with that of employment, pre-emptively enticing elements within the communities to favour whatever deal is then on offer. Pangue, the first of the Biobío hydro-dams was funded to the tune of $153 million by the private finance arm of the World Bank. In a rare *mea culpa* by the Bank, its former head James Wolfensohn acknowledged that ENDESA "appears to have taken a less than constructive approach to its environmental and social obligations."

The Collaqui community remains, for all this, typical enough of most of the rural Mapuche communities—*Lofs*—in the heartland of temperate, south-central Chile. Comprising one or two extended families, its residents inhabit a series of tiny farmsteads scattered amidst rolling fields. Threatened by infrastructural projects and the vast forestry monocultures now endemic throughout their territory, many such rural Mapuche households are struggling to survive, let alone maintain their way of life on a few meagre hectares apiece.

Scenes such as those on the hills at Ralco have become more common and Mapuches regularly invade the forestry estates to stage land occupations, or *tomas*. They haven't stopped there. In the district of Lumako, in December 1997, Mapuches from the 'Coordinadora' organisation ignited two lorries belonging to the Arauco forestry company, the first of an ongoing wave of direct attacks on the forestry industry in the region.

In the winter of '99, for example, in Collipulli town in the upper Biobío, 50 armed Mapuches destroyed two Mininco office buildings and a warehouse with molotov cocktails and torched two Mininco trucks. A general atmosphere of tension now grips the countryside in many areas. Forestry plantations are guarded by private security and *carabiñeros*, and their trucks travel with police escort to avoid ambush.

Such dramas make for titillating reading in the unfailingly indignant Chilean press, as well as in the 'radical ecological' journals of foreign activist movements. But whereas the forestry industry only gained its present stranglehold in the region within the last generation or two, the fire attacks form only the most visible and recent manifestation of a much longer history of Mapuche political activism.

Down by the coast, the Lafkenches form another of the territorial identities into which Mapuches of different regions fall. In the Hualacura community, not long before the events at Ralco, local Lafkenches were gathered for the *ngillatu*, the most important religious event of the Mapuche calendar. This is a ritual congregation of maybe one or two thousand people, involving the exchange of food and drink, and prayers for a good harvest. Mapuches have always seen the fight to regain their land as part of a wider struggle to maintain the culture for which the land is the material base, and this fight is nowhere more visible than here.

The people of Hualacura, like most rural Mapuches, have lived on the same lands for many generations, and their landscapes embody for them a history of family and community relations. Sometimes they talk of seeing and hearing their forefathers there in the mists or winds. And in precisely the Mapuches' offerings to those ancestors (and to the gods and to each other) at the *ngillatun*, lies the essence of the communities that comprise the bi-annual ceremony.

In this, we might get an idea of why the Spanish failed to ever get a handle on the Mapuche: their successful resistance in colonial times is attributed in part to their lack of any totalising social organisation through which the colonists could seek to take command. "Victory or peace was as elusive as Mapuche social structures", writes British anthropologist Sara McFall.

Instead, the Mapuche have a long tradition of autonomous, horizontal organising in which ad-hoc alliances were formed between groups of communities during crises, and disbanded when crises passed. Up until 1881, the Mapuche were living in the same bands as they were when the Spanish first encountered them in the 16th century. These bands weren't wholly nomadic, but had a territorial base on which they practised some form of horticulture. This way of life experienced a violent shock, however, with the Mapuche's conquest in 1881 at the hands of the Chilean forces. Now, through more than a hundred years of Mapuche interaction with Chilean society, the history of native resistance which Mapuches are so proud of has given us the newly-resurgent, and militant, Mapuche 'movement'.

At the town of Nueva Imperial, the Chilean state entered into an historic accord with Mapuche civil society. From 1993, the National Corporation of Indigenous Development (CONADI) began negotiating the purchase of pockets of land on behalf of Mapuche communities, along with the offer of training schemes in a system of 'Indigenous Development Areas'.

One of the few groups at the time to opt out of the 'Nueva Imperial Accord' was Consejo de Todas las Tierras (Council of All the Lands). From its office in Temuco, the regional capital, Consejo also had a hand in the actions up at Ralco, pushing an explicit agenda of political autonomy and beginning to foment tomas.

Not far up the Pacific coast lies the Tranaquepe estate. It's one of a number of *haciendas* local Mapuches have targeted in a recent wave of *tomas* centred around Lake Lleu-Lleu, and its history mirrors that of many others.

Tranaquepe was founded in the 1890s by a man named Ebsenperger, who arrived in Arauco province amidst the wave of white migrant colonists to whom the Chilean State was then offering land. At the same time, the Chilean political class faced the practical question of how to deal with the nearly 10,000 displaced and disturbed Mapuches. Pre-emptively in 1866, the state had arrogated to itself status of guardian of all Mapuche lands, in what was in part a paternalistic move aimed at preventing less 'lawful' expropriation by colonists. Following this and two subsequent laws in 1874 and 1883, the compromise reached within the state saw Mapuches organised, quite arbitrarily, into family groups, and assigned legal, communal land titles through deeds known as *Títulos de Merced*. These groups were then consigned to a system of eventually around 3000 fixed *reducciónes*.

The outlines of the state's policy were clear: 95% of Mapuche territory was expropriated, providing as much as 150 hectares apiece to immigrants from the US and Europe. Mapuches were assigned areas often of similar size, though having been settled in larger groups, this translated into far less than they had before. The entire Mapuche population had a mere half million hectares apportioned between them, which was equivalent to six hectares per person. Later, Indian Courts were established, supposedly to protect indigenous interests by submitting the transfer of land to a rational, legal framework; in practice this merely instituted legal avenues of theft to complement the more naked forms of abuse "Our land was usurped through very fraudulent sales".





says Mapuche farmer Manuel Maribur. "It was taken by the landholders with the backing of the government." Indeed by 1950, half of the land that had been originally left in Mapuche ownership after the 'Pacification' of 1881 had been expropriated, transforming the Mapuche from a society of rich livestock-traders, into one of poor, ethnic minority, subsistence farmers.

Through the course of the 20th Century, the expropriated lands were utilised in accordance with the imported ideology of perpetual economic growth. First, clearance fires blazed the way for a monoculture of wheat crops to be planted. Then, as yields plummeted, this was gradually replaced by livestock farming. Production dropped again in the '50s and the clamour for agrarian reform grew more powerful. Around this time, the first aerophotogrametric map revealed the existence of nearly 12,000 ha of land suitable for forestry.

From the beginning of the '60s, Mapuches began occupying estates in Arauco. Agrarian Reform Laws passed in 1962 and 1967 were aimed first at purchasing, then expropriating lands from the larger estates. But they were enacted principally on behalf of *inquilino* tenant estate workers. Mapuche agitation grew more vigorous.

Things really kicked off immediately prior to Allende's election as President, by which time Mapuche *tomas* had spread across the entire region. Many co-ops were founded with majority or exclusive participation of Mapuches; amongst the estates that were taken back into Mapuche hands at this time was Tranaquepe. After Allende was overthrown in a US-backed coup in 1973, Mapuche dreams of regaining their territory yielded to the nightmare of military rule.

Under General Pinochet, southern lands were unceremoniously passed to the handful of forestry corporations that control them still. In 1974, Pinochet's Junta enacted a law that made plantations even more lucrative for forestry companies through tax exemptions and direct subsidies to the tune of 75%. For the owners of transnational capital, the Forestry Incentives Law wasn't a free lunch; it was a lunch they got paid to eat.

In many areas, communities have become little more than isolated islands, surrounded by the pine monocultures that have sprung up around them. "They're taking our lives away from us", Julio says. Julio lives in the community of Anadela, on the edge of Lumako, an unusually dense patchwork of tiny plots.

"Our *machis* [shamen] don't have remedies", explains Julio, husband of one of the Lumako weavers. "Where they go to look for the traditional plant remedies, they're not there anymore. Everything's lost."

As the fast-growing monocultured trees rob the land of moisture, remaining water rapidly drains off of ground compacted by heavy machinery. It's difficult enough for the local Mapuches to grow enough to eat when the plantations take up 41% of Lumako district. But the forestry chemicals also contaminate the water, the air and the harvest. 17 of the 23 chemical products used are illegal in developed countries.

Through the *tomas*, and other acts of resistance, the Mepuche are fighting to regain control of their land, and their political and cultural autonomy. For much of the 20th century, Mapuche strategy was to assume the form of *winka* [white] institutions, those of Chilean society, and reinscribe them with their own meanings. The younger generation in the '20s and '30s had confidence in the possibilities of integration offered by Chilean society. The first Mapuche Deputy was elected in 1927, a member of the Democratic Party, later joined by a Mapuche deputy for the Liberal Party. Both were vocal and relentless in denouncing the theft of Mapuche lands. However, with the rise of Pinochet in the 70's, their access to a political voice was curtailed and they were further dispossessed. Continuing their long tradition of resistance and autonomy, they created a strong movement of social opposition, this time with the preservation of cultural heritage at the forefront.

"When the children are taught about the time of Lautaro, I want them to be conscious of what they are, they themselves", says Magdelena of the Mapuche women's artisanal co-op in Lumako, invoking the name of one of the heroes of historic Mapuche resistance to the Spanish. "A people with no roots or history has no identity", warns one Temuco-based Mapuche group. "But", continues Magdelena, "they always learn about the colonisers, "America", all of that. Here in Lumako it's a 100% Mapuche population, and they don't have an inter-cultural school which teaches in both languages. That's the way cultures are lost." Out in the nearby fields, Fernando echoes her themes. "We have a traditional language—mapudungun", he affirms. "We don't want to lose it, so we teach it to the children. One day we'll organise ourselves

to be able to teach the children proper Mapuche history."

Adolfo Millabur is the country's first Mapuche mayor. That is, a mayor elected, in his words "without talking to any political parties, running on quite an autonomist platform." As the *tomas* reached their peak in 1999, he and some other prominent indigenous activists forwarded a proposal to the government for a Commission of Truth and Historic Debt. "With the Historic Debt idea, we wanted to systematise and write a version of history", he says. "So that people would know why we were reclaiming a particular area of land and not another one." The idea was to determine the positive instances of injustice committed to Mapuches in the past, in order to rectify them, essentially with a view to settling accounts. In the hands of the Lagos government, however the plan became a Commission of Truth and New Treatment. In late 1999, "[We] were called for a meeting with the Minister who deals with CONADI, but nothing was properly explained to us. The next day a document was signed by a bunch of 'leaders' who didn't represent anybody, but were figures linked to the ruling government party. Lagos took our idea and copied the title, but he didn't copy the ideas and significance. We didn't want this document, we didn't sign it, we didn't participate."

According to Anibal Salazar, one of those responsible for the arson attack in '97: Consejo and Coordinadora "are both organisations that work for the autonomy of the Mapuche people", he says, "but their methods are very distinct... Organisations like Consejo talk across the table with the government. Consejo had discussions that were very important for the nation [but] The Mapuche people don't have the power to confront the economic and political situation that exists. It's necessary to develop a level of resistance that will allow the Mapuche to talk to the government on an equal footing. It was important to have a plan B. It was important to burn trucks."

"At Lago Lleu-Lleu the government has used seductive policies', contends Manuel Maribur. 'They declared it an 'Area of Indigenous Development' where there are 'open doors' and 'opportunities' for the communities. But no land." Resistencia Mapuche characterises CONADI's efforts as one half of a 'good cop/bad cop' strategy aimed at neutralising Mapuche demands. "The persistent mania of the authorities of classifying our organisations [between] those leaders who opt for 'anti-systemic' means and those that opt for 'institutional' means, those that merit carrots and projects, and those that can only expect... sticks and police repression."

"In my position as mayor, there are certain things I can't do", Adolfo affirms. He continues; "Lots of people have invited me to discussions with the President, to appear in the media and on the TV shaking hands with politicians. It's dangerous, because... I know that these image-makers want to qualify the Mapuche movement in terms of goodies and baddies... if I appear with the President or governors, it's a signal that we're divided.' The late '99 meetings included "two or three leaders from each community. When we arrived in Santiago, they gave us hotels so we could rest and stay there, and we said "no thanks!" Sometimes the government would offer us plane tickets to Santiago, and we said "no thanks! We're never going to accept a single peso from you." Or sometimes they'd say "We've got food ready here for you." And again we'd say "No." Not even a biscuit. No thank-you. We wanted to conduct our business with dignity and clarity. Because we come from communities that support us with their minimal resources, and they paid for our tickets there. If we'd have accepted money or something, they'd have begun to domesticate and condition us."

"I don't negotiate. I don't negotiate with anybody. Because I'm not a leader—I'm a Mapuche mayor... It's our job to slip some of the moorings of the Western system", remarks Adolfo softly in his office. "That's our contribution."★



United Hearts and a Fighting Fist

The Landless of Guatemala

"*Cabeza Clara, Corazon Solidario, y Puño combative*"—"With clear heads, united hearts and a fighting fist". This is the slogan of the *Comite Unidad de Campesina* (CUC), an organisation which has been fighting for the rights of "peasants, agricultural workers, indigenous and ladinos, poor men and women" in Guatemala since the late 1970s.



The history of Guatemala is the history of a struggle for land. This struggle has entered a new phase in the last year as *campesino* (peasant) organisations have begun to seize lands which are rightfully theirs according to the 1996 peace accords between the military oligarchy and the guerrilla groups. CUC has been instrumental in the seizure of seven *fincas* (*latifundio*, or feudal estates) throughout the various regions of Guatemala, as well as blocking roads and staging demonstrations in the capital. The struggle for land is fierce and the death toll is mounting.

CUC represents *campesinos* from many different areas with different needs and experiences. This is by default a lopsided account of the experiences of the community that we lived with. It is not intended to be a definitive account of all the struggles the various *campesino* organisations are involved in. We recently spent time as human rights observers in a community which was occupying the *finca* of Las Quebradas, in the east of the country. In this community alone two people have been murdered by paramilitary *pistoleros*, with complete complicity from the authorities.

"We know this struggle is not just for us" said Francisco Pinto, who with his wife was among the first to arrive at the *finca* when it was occupied in the early hours of April 16th 2001. "We took this land out of necessity, we had nowhere to live or work, we hope that in the future we will receive recognition from our government and support, because we have nothing, we are the poor."

Las Quebradas was worked by members of the community for many years prior to its seizure. It was part of the national land stock, supposedly held by the state for the people. In an act typical of the corruption of the period, it was illegally disposed of in a private sale to a company based in the US in 1994. This was just as the government and guerrillas were beginning peace talks which included discussion of the redistribution of land. Following the sale, the people were denied access to the land that they

had been working. The death of community member Sarbelio Ramos at the hands of paramilitaries on April 15th 2001 was what sparked the decision to immediately seize the land. Ramos was murdered as he was walking to his maize patch by gunmen who had entered the area with a police escort. Not surprisingly, despite the supposed civilian rule and guarantee of human rights in Guatemala, no one has even been charged for his murder.

The *finca* was seized in the early hours of the morning by 160 people with machetes in hand, who immediately began constructing a communal *champa* (thatched house) and staking claim to the land. Since then there has been one other murder and an endless stream of threats and intimidation. (A favourite trick of the *pistoleros* is the naming of a certain day by which time the victim will be dead.) However the community of Las Quebradas is determined to stay put—in the words of Don Tancho, headman of the Las Quebradas community, "our people have died for this land, we will not leave."

Life on Squatted Land

Approximately forty families now live on the land, and when local villagers who come to work fields are included the number is nearly 400. They grow maize and black beans as a subsistence crop and are able to produce two to three harvests a year. The houses are small, handmade from reclaimed materials and roofed with corrugated iron or palm leaves. Most families are large—women told me they had between five and ten children. Most people can't read or write and the work clearing and planting the land is hard and demanding. Both the men and the women work in the maize fields, where they slash and burn back the jungle to plant the corn rows. The women get up first, though, to make the tortillas and black beans. The diet is monotonous and poor, with little protein, and people hardly ever eat meat or vegetables. The community has no water system or electricity, all the water comes from the local river which is far from clean, and all the cooking is done on wooden fires. We were told that many children became sick.

However, the people have built a school from the disused buildings on the land and have organised teachers to come and teach the children for free. In the future they hope to build a water system and solar panels for electricity, and to plant trees to replace the ones that are necessary for firewood and building. There seemed to be a strong sense of community and collective focus. For example, every day the women cook a meal for anyone that happens to be around the communal *champa*, the ingredients of which are donated by everyone. Every night the men take it in turns to keep guard of the entrance, ready to defend their community "by any means". While we were there the son of one *campesino* had an accident that left him with a shattered leg, and the community took up a collection to help with the medical expenses of the family.

Their sense of collective struggle is not rooted in any political ideology, but in everyday practical necessity. Land is life to these people. Sometimes this throws up what look like contradictions to the mind of a Western politico. For example, the people would refer to themselves as 'illegal' occupiers in contrast to the more organised Zapatistas to the north, who refer to their land as *tierra recuperada*. Many in the community want nothing more than to reach a compromise with the government which will allow them to stay on their land, even taking out a loan and buying it if necessary. There is a different sense of awareness amongst the full time CUC activists who travel the country, many of whom will have been in the guerrilla groups during the war. The *campesinos* collectively elected their headman, but there often seemed to be little discussion of quite crucial issues, and a willingness to follow his authority. Essentially the community required land for survival and they have adopted the political form which seemed to them most likely to achieve this.

CUC have requested international observers to come to Guatemala to live and work alongside the communities. By doing so they prevent the authorities from interfering with their development. There is a marked contrast between places which have observers and those which don't. For whatever reason, the Guatemalan authorities tend to tread very carefully around *gringos*. There is an urgent need for more volunteers as in recent weeks the killing has begun again, with two murders in Lanquin, another squatted community in the department of Izabal near to Las Quebradas.★

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Email: cuc@guate.net



A Very Short History of Guatemala



Guatemala bus riots: you wait to turn one over and then three come all at once.

The Spanish conquest turned the country into a series of giant feudal estates, the *latifundios*. The majority Mayan population was totally subjugated and a system of serfdom—whereby Indians would owe their landlords up to 150 days servitude a year—existed well into the twentieth century. Repeatedly the peasantry attempted to change the balance of land ownership but were brutally put down. By the middle of the twentieth century the dominating player in Guatemalan politics was the United Fruit Company (referred to by Che Guevara as "the Green Octopus") which owned all the railway lines, the only Atlantic port, and huge tracts of land throughout the country. In many ways, at this point Guatemala was nothing more than a banana plantation for the American market.

In 1944 the Jorge Ubico regime was overthrown by a liberal-left coalition and Guatemala embarked on its only ten years of anything remotely resembling a democratic regime. The most significant development was the attempt by the new government to effect a large scale land redistribution throughout the country. A huge proportion of the country's most fertile land had been turned over to banana growing, and these intensive banana plantations required that 85% of the land be left fallow to prevent the spread of disease. Somewhat timidly the Arbenz regime began to square off with United Fruit in an attempt to kickstart independent development in Guatemala.

However, the multinational was extremely powerful in Washington and a CIA-backed military coup in 1954 installed the extreme right-wing regime of Castillo Armas. Land redistribution was halted and once more the poor were subjected to feudal servitude. Resistance grew and guerrilla movements of the poor arose. However, for the next thirty years Guatemala was ruled by a series of military dictators backed by the West. This culminated in the horrific atrocities of the 1980s, when over four hundred Mayan villages were totally wiped out. Up to 150,000 people died in this period and 50,000 disappeared. With the virtual annihilation of the resistance, Guatemala returned to a democratic facade, but the military never really left power and the same elite is still firmly in control.

Amongst many other things, the 1996 peace accords specifically promised the redistribution of land. The feeling among the poor is that they have been cheated. Don Tancho explained: "The government here is just a big business, the money is spent on yachts and chateaus in the mountains, there is nothing for the poor." Tired of waiting, people have begun taking direct action to call attention to their plight and more importantly to help themselves to the basic necessities of survival.

The struggle for land, justice and social development in Guatemala is entering a critical stage. Poverty is endemic and once more the poor are mobilising to take control of their own lives. The question is whether they will be allowed to, or whether once more the US-backed elite will succeed in repressing them.★

Pipeline vs. Treesit?



No Contest!

Resistance to Oil in Ecuador

Over the last year, environmentalists and members of the community of Mindo (north-west Ecuador) occupied tree-sit platforms in the Mindo-Nambillo cloud forest, blocking construction of the 300 mile long OCP oil pipeline. This is the first action of its kind in Latin America. It's hard to imagine how bad the conditions have been for the tree-sitters, in the middle of the Amazonian rainy season!

Environmentalist groups have also been pressuring the German province of Westfalia, owner of the Westdeutsche Landesbank, which has invested $900 million in the pipeline and controls 43% of the shares. In Germany, the bank doesn't want to be associated with images of bulldozers running over environmentalists or with heavy-handed evictions. (British readers of *Do or Die* might be interested to know that Westdeutsche Landesbank is also funding the rebuilding of the national stadium at Wembley...)

The treesits were part of a long campaign of demonstrations to stop heavy machinery and OCP workers from entering the forest, to protect its diversity and the community's source of water. Many local people are enraged that the pipeline project will cause grave damage but give them the bare minimum in compensation. Similar to Nigeria's Ogoni, their region has yielded $60 billion in oil over the last twenty years, while 90% of its population continue to live in poverty. A general strike lasting eleven days was declared in late February 2002, demanding more social works for the region. 60 oil wells were seized, cutting national production by 20%. People set fire to cars and buildings, including the offices of the electricity company. With the all-important oil supplies being threatened, the government moved quickly to repress the strike. A state of emergency was imposed by the army, who even ordered the capture of the local mayor, and any sympathetic radio stations were shut down. The strikers paid a heavy price for their defiance. Two children and two adults were killed by the soldiers and more than three hundred were wounded, as helicopters rained down tear gas on the population.

But even this onslaught did not intimidate local people into submission. After tree-sitters were arrested in March 2002, as described in the account below, the main highway to Quito (Ecuador's capital city) was blockaded in solidarity. Two OCP trailers carrying pipeline tubes were even 'confiscated' and cheekily paraded around the town square, having first been painted with the slogan "OCP out of Mindo".

In June 2002 there were more state attacks—this time on farmers who were blockading OCP machinery along various sections of route near jungle town of Lago Agrio. 100 small farms have so far been affected by the pipeline, with 55% of farmers saying they have been pressured or threatened by OCP/army strong arm tactics to try to force them to allow work on their land and accept derisory compensation rates. Farmers were beaten and tear gassed by police and soldiers.

In November 2002, 100 Mindo residents, students and members of the Italian Green Party occupied an OCP work site inside the Cloudforest



Reserve. They blocked workers and machinery from entering, and were tear gassed in skirmishes with military police. Two local residents and an Italian Green Party member went up to the ridgeline, to the community-owned property 'Guarumos', where OCP is illegally working without permission from the community. All three were arrested and taken to Quito detention centre.

The Mindo-Nambillo forest is a high-altitude cloudforest and the first stage of the Amazonian rainforest. It is home to more than 450 species of birds, 46 of which are already threatened with extinction. As usual with this kind of mega-project, OCP's research on its social/environmental impact was based on conveniently incorrect data, enabling them to take the pipeline through the shorter route between the Amazonian rainforest and the port of Balao.

OCP is a consortium of different companies with a single aim: oil exploitation by any means. One of the main shareholders is the Spanish oil company Repsol, who are also involved in a 400 km gas pipeline in Bolivia that crosses the territories of the Guarani and Wenhayeek Natives without their consent.

Ecuador's oil production will have to be doubled in order to fill the pipeline, requiring a 5 year, $2 billion investment in new refineries and infrastructure for oil extraction, transport and manufacturing. It is likely that millions of hectares of hitherto intact rainforest and Indigenous territory will be opened up to feed the pipeline's voracious appetite, with the usual devastating consequences. But none of this matters for the companies and the Ecuadorian state; for them it's a goldrush, and they are prepared to kill in order to get it built.

Oil extraction has severely damaged Ecuador since the 1970s, when major oil reserves were first found in its Amazonian rainforest, swiftly becoming the biggest source of income for the country. This has had a dire impact on the environment and on the Indigenous and Mestizo (mixed-race) communities who live in the sacrifice zones.

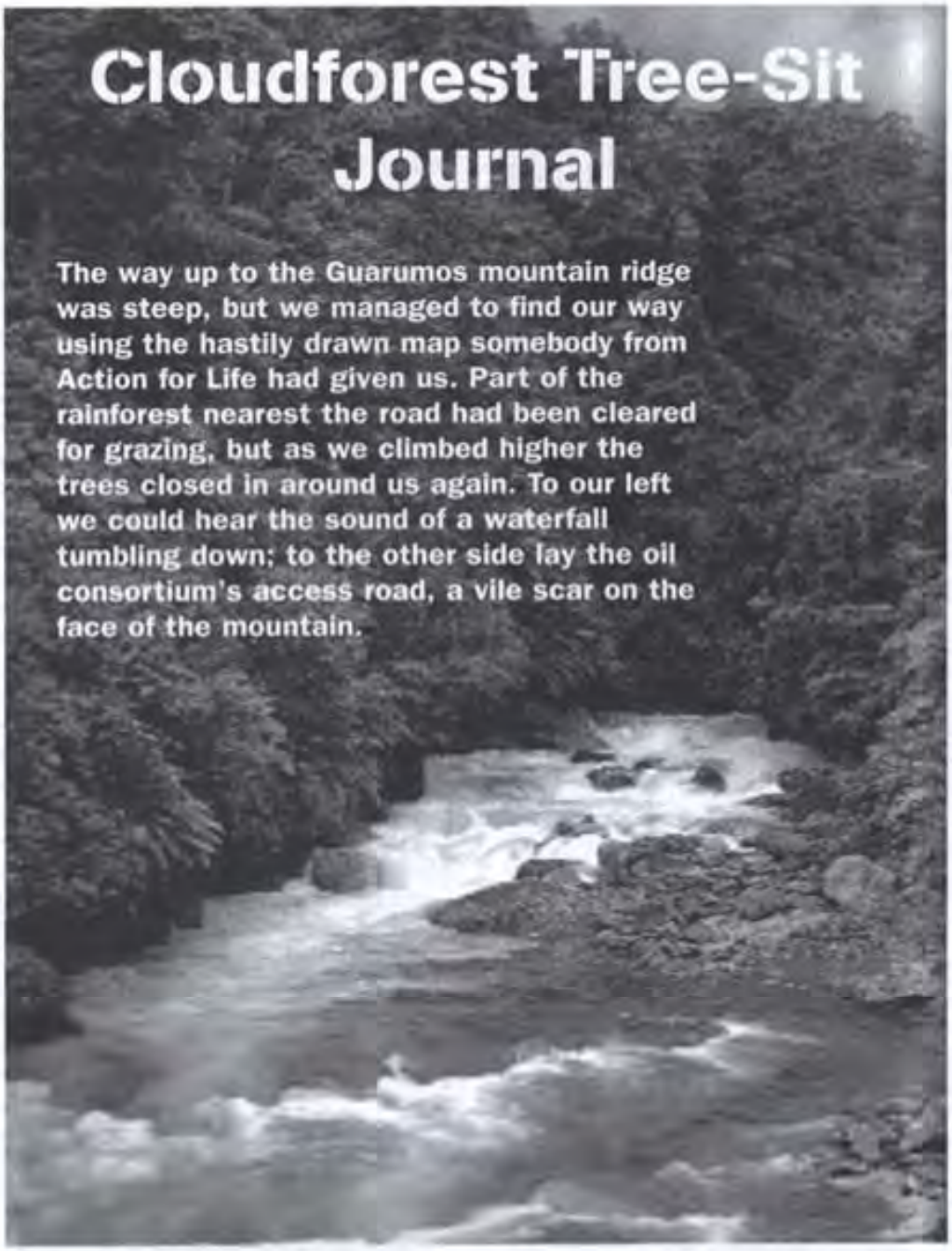
Construction of the pipeline, which was due for completion in June 2003, is currently suspended. The consortium reported in late 2002 that they are six months behind and more than $200 million over budget. The project's financiers also face international protests after a three day summit of 40 NGOs in December 2002. These groups vowed to step up the campaign against the OCP consortium in the home countries of the consortium members: Canada, US, Spain, Argentina, Germany, US, Italy and UK.★

President Tackles Clown Menace

Opponents of the pipeline made themselves an enemy in the shape of Ecuador's ex-President Gustavo Noboa. He publicly threatened Acción Ecológica (Friends of the Earth Ecuador), accusing the organization of being hypocritical and said: "In the past we knew who they were; we knew they were the radical left; now they call themselves greens, ecologists..." He shouted that he would declare war on the ecologists, that he would fight them "trench by trench" and that he would not allow "four clowns to fuck the country".

Source: World Rainforest Movement bulletin No. 46, May 2001

Cloudforest Tree-Sit Journal



The way up to the Guarumos mountain ridge was steep, but we managed to find our way using the hastily drawn map somebody from Action for Life had given us. Part of the rainforest nearest the road had been cleared for grazing, but as we climbed higher the trees closed in around us again. To our left we could hear the sound of a waterfall tumbling down; to the other side lay the oil consortium's access road, a vile scar on the face of the mountain.

Otherwise everything was extremely peaceful, and it certainly didn't cross my mind that within five days I would be banged up in the municipal slammer.

The Mindo rain forest is a relatively small area located just north of Quito, independent of the Amazon system. It takes its name from the nearby village of Mindo, where locals decided several years ago that they would stop clearing land and instead develop ecotourism. Not that they harboured any false illusions about the saintliness of this industry, but they had to make a living somehow. The forest is one of the most important biodiversity hotspots for bird species in Latin America, and a gold medal was won here 2 years ago for the greatest number of species spotted in a single day, anywhere in the world. The number of orchid species also runs into several hundreds and there is an exceptional range of different wildlife, including big cats and spectacled bears.

When we reached the tree camp we were greeted by locals from Action for Life, who gave us a tour of the various treesit platforms and then brought us out along the ridge. This organisation was set up by Mindo inhabitants when the OCP consortium (Kerr McGee, Alberta Energy, Occidental, Agip, Repsol YPF and Techint) announced their plans to run a major oil pipeline through the rain forest, along the back of the Guarumos ridge. There were several reasons why this apparently wonderful idea didn't appeal to the locals very much. The region is seismically



unstable, with a number of active volcanoes nearby. The old pipeline, which follows a different route around Quito, has leaked like a sieve since its construction in the 1970s. Villagers say they have been assured by the OCP that modern technology would limit potential leaks to only a few thousand barrels. Small comfort indeed! To build the pipeline they also need a strip of land 30 metres wide. However the Guarumos ridge narrows in places to only 30 centimetres (12 inches), with a sheer drop on either side. The consortium would presumably have to blast away half the mountain before they could even begin to work.

I spent several afternoons out on the ridge, sitting completely alone in the middle of dense cloud, simply communing. The sensation of being embraced by a living entity was too much even for a hardbitten cynic like myself. The ground underfoot was rich humus that crumbled away when you walked on it, and there was growth everywhere. The endless cycle of decay and rebirth was immediately palpable. What was utterly incredible was that it was all going to be swept away within a few weeks or months, using bulldozers and dynamite.

The rest of the time was taken up drinking coffee under the main tarp, chatting with the locals and other foreign visitors. Most of the Mindo people were down in the village, preparing for Easter and the big influx of tourists it would bring. The foreign contingent was large, with people from Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, Colombia, the US, Germany and France.

The cops came on Monday morning, sixty of them from the Special Operations Commando. They were armed to the teeth and also fully kitted out with climbing gear. Most of us were on our way down when we ran into them; I actually made it to the road before an unfriendly-looking fellow brandishing a semi-automatic rifle invited me to step onto a coach. We were never formally charged and in legal terms the whole operation was more of a "disappearance" than an arrest.

Five people had remained in the camp but they decided not to occupy the platforms. There was not enough time to chain themselves to the trees and crucially the mobile phone had been allowed to run flat so that it was impossible to alert the village. A number of people are killed most years in popular clashes with the security forces so resistance in such isolated conditions could have proved extremely dangerous. It never occurred to anybody to criticise them for backing down.

Our first night in prison was a lonely and rather frightening affair, particularly for those of us who had seen the film "Midnight Express". Latin American prisons can be as horrific as the authorities choose to make them, but fortunately the prison guards had decided to treat us with deference. The male foreigners were housed on the third floor with a dozen other prisoners on drug charges, considered to be the gentlest of the inmates. The cells measured about 60ft by 20ft and ours had wonderful views of the city. The two Ecuadorians spent their first night on level two, where there were about a hundred housed in a cell built for forty. They were brought up to our cell the following day, along with three more men from Mindo who had simply gone to the protest camp to see if the police had left anything at all behind. The women were put into the quieter female section; there was a high wall just in front of their window but they did have a television to watch.

By Tuesday the situation had changed completely. The women of Mindo had hijacked a number of OCP trucks and were blocking the road through for all pipeline traffic. Ecological Action in



Quito had also got moving and we were hitting the number three or four spot on national news bulletins. Some of the radio programmes were absolutely behind us, while we heard that the TV coverage was a bit more twisted. Nothing new in that, since Latin American television tends to be about as truthful as an in-house training video for fast food workers. One presenter hinted darkly that we were all in the pay of the subversive organisation known as the International Green Party!

That night the foreigners were taken to the police commissioner's office for a farcical deportation hearing, where we were handed a charge sheet (finally!) informing us that we were accused of violating our visas by engaging in a political act, as well as a lot of other nonsense the OCP had strung together. Big carnival-style protests had greeted us on our arrival, completely fazing our armed police escort, and chants continued to drift up to us from the street below as we sat around smoking until late into the night, waiting for the cops to type out our submissions. Even though it was all a foregone conclusion, the police commissioner (a regular villain straight from a Batman strip) announced that he would inform us of his decision the next day, and that he would also be holding a press conference.

In the end we heard from the radio that we had now been officially deported, and that we would be kept in prison until we had a plane ticket back to our own countries. Nothing was said about the five from Mindo who continued to be held without charge, and whose situation was the most worrying of all. The cops were late for their own press conference, so Ecological Action took over the microphones and staged their own event in front of the cameras.

During this time we got a lot of support from fellow prisoners, from the local green movement, and some of us also had partners on the outside. Visitors were able to get right into the cells, and they brought us huge amounts of food, cigarettes, razors, etc. We shared these out around everybody in the cell. Every day people climbed the hill beside the jail and waved banners at us, banging drums and chanting. When this happened it felt as if the bars were being torn away. Needless to say it really riled the screws.

The next step was a habeas corpus appeal to the Mayor of Quito, but since Easter was already upon us we couldn't do anything till the following Monday. Most of the foreigners voluntarily left the country since the lawyer had informed us that the deportation itself could not be appealed, only our imprisonment. Some of us stuck around as we felt it was symbolically important for a few foreigners to accompany the Ecuadorians in the Town Hall hearing. I spent Easter Sunday climbing around on

"Reasons to be cheerful..."

"Until now it was impossible to transform the Amazon. It was too vast. But now it can be done."—David McGrath, Amazonian Studies Professor.

Even though the Brazilian rainforest is currently being destroyed at the rate of 2 million hectares (8000 square miles) a year, 'only' 14% of it has been lost over the last century. This may all be about to change, as what the World Wide Fund for Nature calls the "final and definitive assault" on the Amazonian rainforest gets underway. A gigantic new £29 billion development programme called 'Avanca Brasil' (Advance Brazil) may be the death knell. It plans 6,200 miles of new or improved 'superhighways', dams, power lines, mines, gas and oil fields, waterways, ports, logging concessions and other developments. The roads and waterways will make it much cheaper for Brazil's grain producers to export to European markets, and will open up the Amazon to soya farming. New roads in the Amazon also bring a flood of settlers—either the rich, who engage in land speculation, or Brazil's desperate landless poor, who dream of a new life on the frontier. Whatever the motivation, the end result is the same: deeper and deeper incursions into the forest.

The likely impact of Advance Brazil was put into context by a team of scientists who had spent five uplifting years modelling Amazonian deforestation rates. Their terrifying conclusion was that by 2020 as little as 5% could remain in intact condition, with as much as 42% totally denuded or heavily degraded. The rainforest would start to dry out, with a massively increased risk of fire and thus further loss of forest cover, followed by possible desertification. Not surprisingly, these findings were hotly contested by the Brazilian government. So the scientists went back over their data with a fine tooth comb—and they discovered to their horror that if anything their forecasts were too conservative...



Avon Ladies of the Amazon

the bunks and bars like a demented monkey, while a gang of nuns handed out bread and sang psalms at us. I'm not religious, but at least their presence meant the guards couldn't apply the usual dose of tear gas on the guys in the exercise yard below.

Monday. A full week after our arrest, and somebody forgot to put my name on the habeas corpus list. Andrea the German had also been inexplicably left off it. For a couple of hours I sat in the cell feeling completely gutted, while my new friends in the narco community tried to console me. Then suddenly a phone call came through and we were rushed across the city in a taxi.

The habeas corpus event was a complete victory for us in every sense, lots of media, hundreds of people supporting us inside and outside the building, our lawyers really rapping, and finally freedom later that afternoon. We emerged from the jail into a sea of friends and supporters, only to be bundled into cars and driven to a safe destination a few miles away. No chances were being taken. In the end we converged on a flat high up over the city, where an entire crate of beer was waiting for us and a middle-aged couple served us coffee out of a silver pot.

Next day immigration gave us back our passports and said we were free to stay. Most of us felt it wiser to leave. The psychological pressure had been enormous, and at one point I just burst into tears in the middle of the street. The Ecuadorians were obviously extremely relieved as they had been threatened with all sorts of interminable sentences, but they also realised they would need to lie low for a while. The Germans in particular were very pleased as their Embassy had bullied them constantly while they were inside. We wondered if this had anything to do with the fact that West LB Bank, one of the banks financing the pipeline, is part-owned by the State of North Rhine-Westfalia. In fact, only the Italian consul showed any interest in speaking out against the most obvious injustices of our "trial".

Then we heard the OCP were busy bringing fresh charges of sabotage against us. Since then Action for Life has bought a patch of the forest and made an attempt to re-establish the camp. They were again evicted—this time from their own property—by the "Special OCP Police Group" and imprisoned without charge for 24 hours. There were fresh arrests after a protest in Quito, and it took another habeas corpus hearing to free them. US Redwood squatter Julia Butterfly was deported for taking part in the protest (they were so desperate to get her out of the country, the police car taking her to the airport crashed while speeding!). Work on the pipeline goes on behind closed doors, as it were.

In all of this, certain factors must not be forgotten. Ecuador has a huge foreign debt, and 40% of its national budget goes to servicing the interest on it. This means that the government is little more than a puppet dancing on the end of IMF strings. If the country is governed by an authoritarian and highly repressive elite, it is probably because popular democracy is not in the interests of the Northern countries that consume Ecuador's raw materials. Ecuadorians have a history of being downtrodden both by foreign and local oppressors, and this will most likely continue as long as the petroleum industry dominates world politics.

As for the tree camp, was it worth it? Yes, definitely, even though it collapsed at the first sign of attack. It did provide a vital focus for resistance to the pipeline, and the resulting campaign against the consortium and their financial backers (West LB, Citibank, BBVA...) has surely meant victory for the pipeline can only come with heavy political costs attached. At the very least, future campaigns will have a strong base to build on.★



The spectacled bear is the only bear species in South America and is endemic to the Andes. It is a flagship species for the Tropical Andes hotspot—the richest and most diverse in the world. It is still hunted for food and for sport in many parts of its range.



Mujeres Creando

The Feminism of the Streets

This interview was conducted with a member of the Bolivian anarcha-feminist group Mujeres Creando ('Women Creating'), at the 3rd People's Global Action conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

How did you become politically active and involved in Mujeres Creando?

The group has been going for 10 years, but I got to know them 9 years ago through some of the activities that the initiators of the group were organising at the university, like murals and different actions. I was very curious about what they were doing. It was a completely new kind of group. There was absolutely no talk about that kind of feminism at the time—a militant, radical feminism, a feminism of the streets, of everyday life. Of course the government was talking about the rights of women on the radio and in the papers, and about certain laws for women, but never about a feminism which engaged you in any form of struggle or politicised you. By contrast, the feminism of Mujeres Creando was so real and tangible. By the time I began to get involved, I was realising that political activity does not only happen in political parties or in organised groups; it happens as soon as you are conscious of your actions and your decisions—an intuitive kind of feminism. Within the university, there were a lot of groups on the left—Trotskyists, Maoists, Guevarists—but none of them appealed to me, or let me feel as though I could be myself. It was very different with Mujeres Creando. I think that through feminism, women come to know themselves and each other, with all our potential, our strengths, our weaknesses, and we discover a freedom that we keep on developing.



How would you describe the politics of Mujeres Creando?

When we got together we said, "We're a group of women and we're a different kind of organisation to the ones around us, where the revolutionary subject is the proletarian, full-stop". And we said, "No!" Why? We tried to demystify this whole ideology. There are groups and sectors in society who are oppressed and these are no less important. So with our starting point as women, and our identities as women, we can assert our own struggles and fight against oppressions in society. We also started by recognising that we are women from a particular social class, that we have our own ethnic origins, that we are different ages, and that we are part of society. In this sense, we don't only struggle for women's rights or issues that affect women, but against all types of oppression—from a feminist proposal of society.

How do you organise as a group and take decisions?

I think that above all, things really happen because somebody takes the initiative. We don't consult each other about everything we do.



"Be careful with the present you are creating—it should look like the future you dream of."

although there are things that we each take responsibility for working in specific areas, for example, some of us organise at the university, others with domestic workers, others with rural women. If there is an initiative that we all like and can all participate in, then we get involved and help to organise it. I felt that in the Peoples' Global Action meeting there was a lot of democratic decision making and a lot of respect for everyone which is great, but that the energy for initiatives was actually lost and people were neutralised. For us, the important thing is not to neutralise each other and that every woman takes her own decisions and puts forward her initiatives, without feeling inhibited.

What kind of actions have you organised, and how have you done this?

We have a long history of actions! A fundamental element in our group is *creativity*. We are street activists, we are creative women, but we are not artists, and we don't want to convert ourselves into an artistic elite. We take up our right to create and to do new things. This goes hand in hand with our struggles. Creativity is not separate from but complements our political practice. After we brought out our newspaper eight years ago, we then moved into graffiti, and into street actions, or 'creative actions' as we call them. The street for us is an important centre of political activity, because it allows us to interact with and be in permanent contact with people. But our actions don't only take place in the streets, sometimes we occupy other spaces.

At the beginning, we focused a lot on the dictatorship. We mainly use symbols, rather than being explicit. We also use theatre: to symbolise blood, we use red dye; for death, we use crosses; for joy, we share bread and flowers with people. We've been doing these kind of actions for a long time. Two years ago we did a TV programme called Creando Mujeres which covered the different issues we work on. We touched on the subject of the dictatorship, on NGOs [Non Governmental Organisations], on work, on the question of justice. For example, we did an action at the Palace of Justice where we went in and filled the offices with rubbish. We also touched on lesbianism, Barbies, racism—all of which we've worked on.

Can you talk about your involvement with the group of small debtors?

When we worked on this issue of debt, it was no longer just us—we were working alongside the organisation of debtors which is a large movement whereas we are only a small group. So we had to re-think the idea of creative actions because we were working with a very large number of people who wanted to get involved in peaceful protest. Later on it turned into something violent, out of sheer desperation and a whole host of reasons that I'll explain later.

We organised more collective actions where everyone took part, women and men. In one of them we painted a mural: the people took their shoes off, put their feet into paint and then they lifted each other up so they could leave their footprints on the wall. The children also put their

hands into the paint and left their handprints.

What did this symbolise?

It symbolised the whole journey that these people had made. The first time we did an action together, they had already been in La Paz for a month, from many different districts, and they still hadn't come to the negotiating table. It symbolised the harsh and difficult journey that they had made. They suffered a lot of repression as a movement—in another action, we threw ourselves on the ground with them in front of the police so that we wouldn't be attacked. At the end, once an agreement was signed that benefited the debtors, we organised a kind of festival with flowers and bread. The children began to share out the bread with everyone, a symbol of the food of the poor, and of the poor who share what they have.

Can you give you give us some background on the debtors' bank occupation, and the involvement of Mujeres Creando in this?

What happened is that we had been working very closely with the debtors. Their organisation was fundamentally made up of women: 70% were women and 30% were men, and the leadership was made up of women, which is why we worked so closely together. We had openly denounced the abuse of micro-credit in Bolivia, as there were very high interest rates and a lot of irregularities in the charges. People's debts had doubled and tripled. When they arrived in La Paz they were already asking for the forgiveness of their debts. We soon realised that these were people who had been indebted to micro-credit institutions for eight, nine, or ten years. They had been trying to pay off their debts all this time, but they reached a point when they couldn't pay any more—they were bankrupt, they didn't have a penny left. They had lost their businesses, their jobs, their few means of production. We realised this as we talked to them.

We organised a range of activities with them, from actions to reflecting

How to Get Your Bank Manager's Undivided Attention



Nearly fifty heads of families have committed suicide, in a sign of the desperate situation that Bolivia's small debtors find themselves in. The entire family of one participant in the protests in La Paz had agreed before she set off to poison themselves should anything happen to her. But the debtors were still being ignored, even after 6,000 of them had slept on the streets of La Paz for three months, carried out civil disobedience and even attempted to burn some of the banks down. So on the morning of the 2nd of July they resolved to take more drastic action. Two hundred people occupied the Bank Superintendency, taking sixty staff hostage, while other groups took over the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia offices and the People's Defense building. Simultaneously, forty activists and fourteen children raided the Archbishop's office in the city of Sucre and declared a hunger strike. Some of those at the Superintendency said that they had nothing to lose and that they were ready to kill themselves if the police tried to enter the building. They carried molotovs while others were swathed in sticks of dynamite. The luxurious carpets of the building were drenched with petrol, and the doors were wired with dynamite. Top-level functionaries of the banking authority were tied up in their offices and bundles of dynamite were tied to their bodies to prevent any kind of police intervention. The activists wore dozens of dynamite sticks around their bodies and some carried old military firearms. Hundreds of police massed outside, and plainclothes officers attempted to storm the building, only to be repelled by dynamite and molotovs. After a tense stand-off throughout the day, all the hostages were released at 7.45pm, and the occupiers made their escape at 3am, spared from a looming police attack by the presence of hundreds of their fellow debtors.

At the same time as the debtors' actions, peasant farmers were blockading highways in the Altiplano region, demanding land and an end to neo-liberalism. After two of them were killed by government troops, peasant leader Felipe Quispe said: "Now there are no choices left because the government does not want dialogue; the government will not listen to legal means, to the democratic method. Then what else can the poor person do? There is no option but to choose more revolutionary, more honest methods, and these methods are waiting under every poncho." In retaliation for the death of their comrades, the farmers began dynamiting electricity pylons.



on issues such as non-violent direct action. We took films along to the place where they were staying in the university. We did courses explaining which international institutions were financing the Bolivian banks and financial entities. In a lot of cases these banks were actually misusing aid provided for micro-credit.

The debtors had been in La Paz for 3 whole months and all that time they didn't get a chance to sit down and be heard by the presidents of the associations, of the banks, the private funds, mutuals, and NGOs. During this time, many of them fell ill, and many had respiratory infections as they had been tear-gassed a lot. We brought out a newspaper with them and sold it together, so that the general public would revise their opinion of the debtors—people were saying that they were good-for-nothings, who just didn't want to pay their debts. But then people began to realise that it wasn't that simple, and that in reality the financial institutions were committing usury and extortion, that they were cheating people and exploiting their ignorance, making them sign contracts that they didn't understand.

The debtors became really desperate. We were not involved in the action, because we do not agree with using violence, and we didn't actually know about it in advance. It was a group that decided to occupy the Superintendency. We found out about the occupation on the radio, and immediately we got involved as we had done so much work with them up to that point. One of us went to the Superintendecy to make sure that violence didn't break out and to try and prevent a massacre from taking place, as the police were ready to go in and massacre the people inside the offices. Another companera joined the negotiating table. The participation of Mujeres Creando was fundamental as it was a very tense moment, and in that situation the debtors weren't able to think very clearly. We were able to get everyone to sit down together and in the end an agreement was reached that benefited the people. They didn't get their debts cancelled but a lot was put under scrutiny and the Superintendency began to look into what was happening with financial institutions in relation to micro-credit. We managed to stop the bailiffs seizing people's property—their houses and their possessions, for 100 days, from July to October. In cases where they had complained of irregularities, these were revised, and in cases where the women had paid out more than they should have, this debt was cancelled. There were many successes.

All of these people owed less than $5000. Of course there are many with much larger debts than this but we didn't want to get involved with them as them as they are more capitalist. These people were among the poorest in Bolivia. Now they are carrying on organising in their communities. Together with Mujeres Creando, we are going to organise an international seminar on usury, on high interest rates. This is a policy of capitalism, of neoliberalism. But these are people who will have to continue borrowing money—they have no money and no resources, and we need to find a way in which micro-credit can benefit them rather than making them poorer. We want to carry on the work we have started together.

What other kinds of actions have you organised against neoliberalism?

Well, we've also done actions against Coca-Cola and McDonalds, we've brought out publications, we were one of the first organisations to denounce the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) here in Bolivia, as a group of women in Germany sent us the document which we translated and published. We have promoted quite a lot about what happened in Seattle, in Prague. We've had various visits from people who were involved and we've given them the space to come and tell us about this.

Do you feel part of a global movement?

Yes, I think so. You know, our aim is not to become the vanguard in any society. We have our struggles and we propose the changes we want to society and we try to provoke, but we don't think that we are the only ones that are going to change society—we know that we'll do it with other

Report from the Barrios of Guayaquil, Ecuador—Global IMC, August 2001

What I witnessed can only be described as first rate examples of grassroots democracy in action. In both barrios, meetings were convened by the president of the barrio committee to discuss the day's events, people's needs, and how to go about meeting them. In one, the committee also discussed the blockade they had organised to protest government policies, and how they would continue pressing the district prefect for access to drinking water. Not only was I witnessing an incredible example of self-organising to better defend rights, it was also an incredible example of the activism of empowered women. In both barrios women were presidents of their respective committees, and the overwhelming majority of committee members at the meetings were women. The sad reality is that barrio women bear the hardest burden of Ecuador's impoverishment. Half the women belonging to one of the committees were single mothers presiding over small shacks housing up to seventeen children.



Water War Victory! *In 2000 an inspirational uprising of the people of Cochabamba managed to kick out the American transnational Bechtel, who had bought the city's water supply in a World Bank-supported privatisation. Prices immediately rose to match those in the US, in some cases up to 400%. The people responded with mass demonstrations of tens of thousands, a general strike and road blockades lasting days. They faced thousands of police who attacked peaceful demonstrators with tear gas and shot dead one 17 year old boy. Street fighting carried on for days, with hundreds of protesters injured. Faced with continued resistance, in April 2000 the government finally gave in and the city's water was returned to public ownership.*

organisations around the world and in Bolivia, and although we disagree with many forms of organisation, we know that it is a common struggle. We also realise that we have to struggle here where we are, in our own society.

What we want fundamentally is to co-ordinate with other autonomous feminists around the world. In 1998, we organised the first meeting of autonomous feminists from Latin America and the Caribbean. In Latin America, there is a division, a political split, between the 'gender technocrats' or institutional feminists who work within government, or within large NGOs, and the autonomous feminists. We were appointed as the organisational commission for this first meeting of autonomous feminists, to deepen our reflection and debates. There we looked at globalisation in a lot of depth. We put forward many alternatives, as autonomous feminists from Latin America, and explored ways of co-ordinating our struggles. We plan to organise co-ordinated actions with other women, and to co-ordinate with other groups such as anarchists and ecologists.

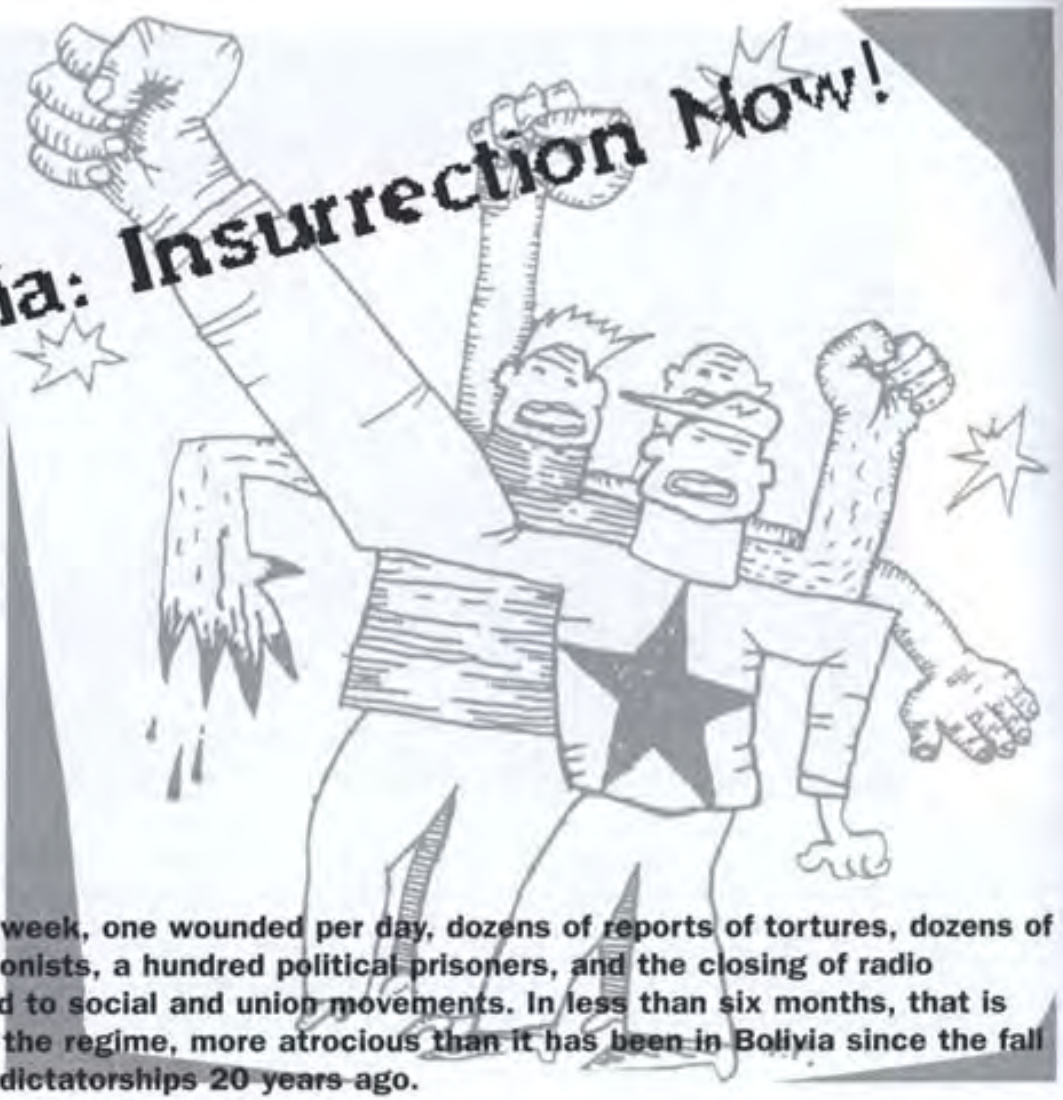
We've been in contact with Spanish companeras as well. There are things that feminist women from Europe, from the North, can be active on; for example, on the question of funding which comes to Latin America in the name of women and is always mediated by big NGOs and by governments. This type of solidarity is helpful to women in Latin America and helps to combat colonialism. There are things that we would like women from the North to do in their own countries that in some way helps Latin American women, for example on immigration or xenophobia—not as a form of charity, but as part of a joint struggle.★

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Bolivia: Insurrection Now!



One death per week, one wounded per day, dozens of reports of tortures, dozens of persecuted unionists, a hundred political prisoners, and the closing of radio stations related to social and union movements. In less than six months, that is the balance of the regime, more atrocious than it has been in Bolivia since the fall of the military dictatorships 20 years ago.

The tone of these days is complemented by the media attacks, which criminalise all social protest, orchestrating the state's imposition of an economic and political system on society. Everything is under the rule of capitalist imperialism, which exerts a rapacious incursion of geopolitical domination, which clashes with the mobilised wrath of the Bolivian proletariat.

The working class, which has been on the ascent since 2000, is progressively fortifying its unity and clarifying its objectives. The push of the working masses has forced union leaders to join the ever more radicalised fight of the class which is freeing itself in Bolivia.

Facing the violence of the state and capital, the proletariat is defending itself. In the last month, three soldiers and a policeman have been finished off in Chapare; while in Sucre a group of small debtors, defending themselves from foreclosure, threw gasoline at a squad of police and set them on fire. In the locality of Pocitos, thousands of border workers made a group of elite police flee and burned the border post with Argentina. On 2nd February 2002, a march of thousands of workers, cocaine farmers, college students, small debtors, teachers, health workers, water workers and workers without retirement, ended up throwing stones, firecrackers and paint at the police station in the city of Cochabamba, in protest at the ferocious repression exerted by the elite forces, the 'dálmatas', who are accused of torturing political prisoners with electrical charges applied to the gums. Finally a group of young people dressed in black threw a homemade bomb, which injured five policemen, including a senior officer.

Over the last 2 weeks, Cochabamba has become the epicentre of the protests, with thousands taking to the streets: raising barricades, making bonfires, setting vehicles on fire and attacking shops selling luxury goods, as well as the court building. They laid barbed wire and glass to stop the passage of the brutal body of police, which when it finally arrived, captured even children of 11 years of age and used heavy arms. This fact was cynically accepted by the government minister, who explained it by saying that they had finished their supplies of gas.

The social movement in Cochabamba, which includes coca growers, demands the abolition of parliament and the formation of a popular

assembly. The disturbances exploded after the expulsion of a member of parliament, the farmer Evo Morales. He is the union leader of the coca producers; the so-called cocaleros, who are spread over the whole Chapare region and engage in the growing of coca leaf, the buying and selling of which the government recently decreed illegal in the zone, thereby condemning over 35,000 families to hunger. All this is under the orders of Washington and in the frame of the phoney war on drugs.

Traditionally, coca has been used for over a thousand years, and at present large sectors of indigenous and mestizo people use it habitually as a part of their culture. This is why the movement of coca growers has described the campaign of eradication and commercialisation of coca as like a cultural genocide. So, the troops of the military and police have assassinated more than eighty coca growers in this region alone, shooting and torturing several hundred, besides pillaging and burning whole towns.

The true intention of capitalist imperialism, the financier of this campaign, is the control of the Amazon and Andes regions, and is one part in the strategy of eliminating any social resistance in the region. The iron resistance of the cocaleros movement is partly explained by the flexible organization it practices, being based on the horizontal communitarian traditions of the Ayllu and Ayni, who have a self-managing tradition.

A similar organisation has also been developed by the natives of the plateau, who have added to the mobilisation by cutting the road routes, demanding among other things the expulsion of ENRON from the country. Transport routes of almost all regions of Bolivia appear to be blocked to different degrees. While the great majority of routes are cleared by the soldiers by noon, they quickly become re-obstructed. The significance of the interruption is not in the permanence of the barricades, but that it deters people from using the roads as they can't be relied upon. Several peasant organisations and those of indigenous people have warned that the battle for land will be more serious than that for coca, because it will favour the large landowners of the east as a result of the reforms of the political constitution of the state.

The social movement in struggle involves many sectors—four days ago even the police of Santa Cruz rebelled, demanding food vouchers! Although it does not act in a very premeditated and coordinated manner, solidarity between the different sectors is a constant and is challenging the government and the faith in bourgeois democracy.

The government of President Quiroga is a corpse that continues to govern thanks to the support of the American Embassy. Its existence is paradoxical in a convulsed country with such a great tradition for coups. It is an expression of the times that Latin America is living in, under the capitalist imperialistic yoke. The presence of an opposition which is rooted in the proletarian movement is imperative, one which is directed towards burying not only the corpse of the Quiroga government, but also the state and capital. None of the leaders of the different movements that are shaking the country are directing their fight beyond the level of revenge, against a regime that unloads the weight of its crisis onto the backs of the workers. These leaders just look after their own privileges. The bureaucracies must be overcome, otherwise we will become victims of the capitalist crisis that lies on the horizon and whose consequences we have already felt. Only a social revolution and the construction of a new society can offer a future to the workers who fight, not only to solve their immediate problems, but also to construct their self-managed, horizontal, libertarian communist future.★

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No Second Slavery!

Miners and Maroons in Surinam

Surinam is a little-known country on the north eastern coast of South America, with a population of only 400,000 people, 90 percent of whom live along the coast and in the capital city of Paramaribo. The interior is one of the last great pristine regions of the Amazon, with an area of untouched rainforest the size of England and Wales, and is home to six tribes of 'Maroons' and four Amazonian Indian peoples.

The Maroons are descended from African slaves who made their escape from the colonial plantations into the jungle. The forests were their refuge from the Dutch colonial powers and quickly became central to their survival. They organised independent new communities along traditional African lines, and their warriors used traditional medicines, which they saw as protecting them from bullets and giving them immense strength. Like the Maroons of Jamaica and the slave army of Toussaint L'Ouverture on Haiti, the Surinam Maroons have a proud tradition of resistance, having defeated the Dutch army with a campaign of guerrilla warfare in the 18th century. As a result the Dutch agreed to leave the interior alone, on the condition that not more than six Maroons at a time visited Paramaribo!

But this situation was unlikely to last into the modern era. In the mid-1960s as many as 17,000 Maroons were forcibly relocated to make way for the Brokopondo dam and hydroelectric plant. This was intended to provide energy for US company Suralco's new aluminium smelter, and to supply power to Paramaribo. Many people simply could not comprehend that their ancestral territories would be gone. In exchange for being uprooted, the Maroons were given minimal compensation—as little as 4 Surinam Guilders for families without children. Their new villages consisted of poorly ventilated corrugated iron shacks, and high voltage power lines ran nearby, while the communities had no electricity. They feel they've had no benefits, "only sadness". By contrast, Suralco and the government went out of their way to save the animals of the affected area, taking great pains to capture and relocate them to higher ground.



18th Century Maroon warrior

One of the resettled communities—Nieuw Koffiekamp—discovered a huge gold deposit on their new land, which they began to work using small-scale methods. (These small scale operations are not without their problems. They account for the majority of gold production in Surinam, and thus the majority of environmental degradation: e.g. mercury contamination and fouling of water sources, which leads to malaria epidemics.) Given that the government was now pinning its hopes on gold, as revenues from aluminium ore were starting to decline, it was perhaps inevitable that Nieuw Koffiekamp would not be allowed to occupy its land in peace. When Canadian mining company Golden Star set up camp in 1994, less than a kilometre from the village, its 800 residents hadn't even been informed that the Gros Rosebel mining concession had been granted. Now they were threatened with relocation once more. For them, this was tantamount to impending cultural and social death

for their community: the crucial links with their ancestors, land and kin—embodied in a network of sacred sites and burial grounds—would be further weakened and even destroyed. As if the Maroons and Indians didn't have enough to contend with already, the government also announced three huge logging concessions of a million hectares each, covering 40 percent of Surinam's area.

Even by the standards of the mining industry, Golden Star has an evil reputation. It operates the Omai gold mine, the second largest in South America, in neighbouring Guyana. In 1995 a dam containing waste failed, and the mine leaked 4 million litres of cyanide into Guyana's principal river, the Essequibo. This was the biggest such spill in history, affecting 200 kilometres of the river, but according to the company it wasn't a "serious" impact, merely "one of the many risks of doing business". They aren't above using trickery and intimidation to obtain their concessions as well. When Nieuw Koffiekamp residents adamantly insisted that they would not be moved again, Golden Star got feared former military dictator Desi Bouterse to put pressure on them. Bouterse, described as the most powerful man in Surinam, made public death threats against one of the



Millions of tonnes of deadly cyanide become a new tributary of Guyana's main river, the Essequibo in 1995. Swiftly declared one of the worst mine disasters in history, the cyanide leaked from the Omai gold mine owned by Golden Star Resources Limited.



Small scale gold mining in Surinam. A group of Ndjuka Maroon men standing by a dali or lonton (wooden dredging device) used to wash gold from soil, Selakiki, Surinam, 1995.

Nieuw Koffiekamp community leaders. At Golden Star's insistence thousands of small-scale Maroon miners were evicted from Gros Rosebel, with Surinam's Minister of Justice even threatening to carry out airstrikes against the miners if they did not leave. The company imposed a pass law on the villagers, restricting access to their subsistence gardens and hunting and fishing grounds in the concession area, making it difficult for them to survive. The area was patrolled by armed police and private security, who fired indiscriminately on anyone found in the zone. Golden Star also dug trenches and erected a huge earth wall around Nieuw Koffiekamp, effectively cutting the village off.

The reaction to Golden Star's arrival had been swift. In March 1994 an unidentified armed force—the 'Surinamese Liberation Front'—took 26 hostages and held them at the Brokopondo Dam, demanding that the company's permission be revoked. Later, the villagers themselves responded to the intolerable provocations they were experiencing by blockading the road to the mining camp for five weeks. A struggle ensued when police attempted to forcibly dismantle the barricade, and 50 of them fired on the blockaders. In August 1995 the Maroons and their indigenous allies held a Gran Krutu (Great Gathering) in which they made a new declaration of autonomy for the interior, calling themselves the Supreme Authority with the sole power to accept or reject development projects in their region.

The Maroons feel that if they don't strengthen themselves, the onslaught of foreign multinationals will mean that they will enter the second period of slavery. Maroon identity is inextricably linked to their struggle for liberation from slavery, which is always referred to as the "first time". Even today, hundreds of years on, they feel that this cannot be



Man with fish in "Environmental Disaster Area" surrounding the Omai gold mine. Fish, birds and mammals far downstream were poisoned by the cyanide and heavy metals such as asenic and copper, which can enter the foodchain and take years to dissipate.

discussed openly without risking severe spiritual repercussions—so the prospect of being enslaved once more is one of deep cataclysmic dread.

In keeping with their tradition of resistance they carried out one of the most obscure but successful ecological struggles of recent times, bringing the government of Surinam to its knees in the 1980s. An armed rebellion began in 1986 after Desi Bouterse sought to impose development plans on the interior, plans that would mean eviction of Maroon communities all over again. The Maroons formed the 'Jungle Commandos' and a vicious civil war raged for six years. Bouterse retaliated by launching a series of atrocities against Maroon settlements, most infamously at Moiwana village in late 1986, where 50 unarmed civilians were gunned down. To this day the massacre has not been investigated. But the Jungle Commandos forced the government to the negotiating table, by mounting attacks on economic targets which closed down the aluminium industry, even managing to cut off power from the Brokopondo dam. This struck at the very heart of Surinam's economy.

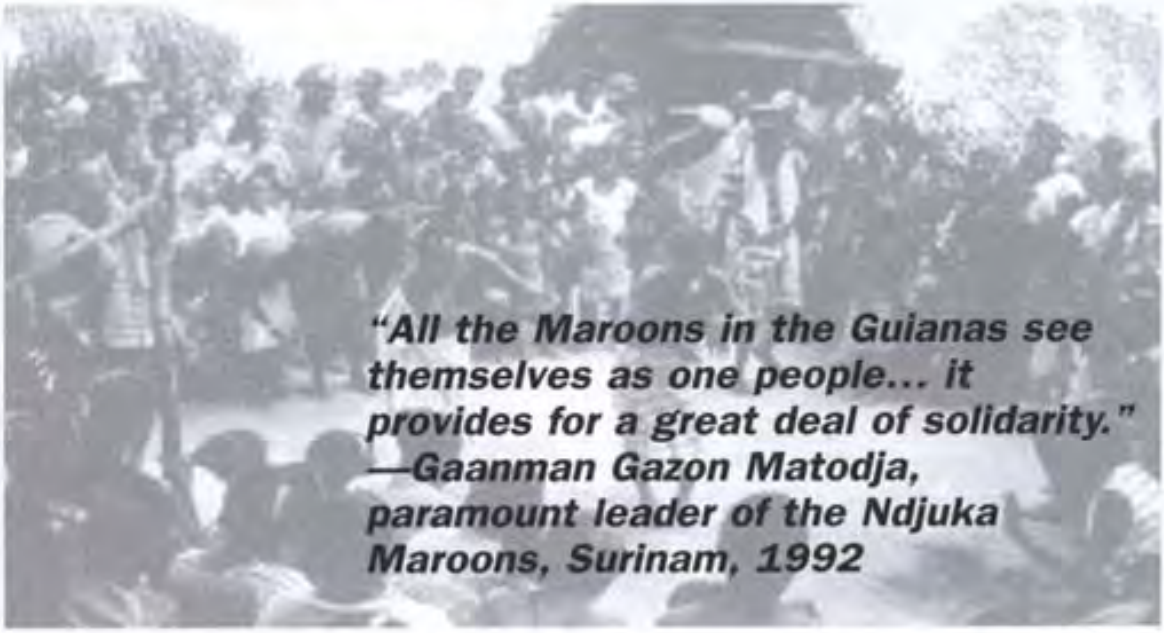
A tenuous peace was declared in 1992, with the promise of 'Economic Zones' for the Maroons and Indians—supposedly securing their land rights and community development. But as Nieuw Koffiekamp's experience shows, the promises that the Maroons had fought so hard for were betrayed.

Within a few short years, Surinam had chosen to prostrate itself before the multinationals again.

As of late spring 2002 the mine at Nieuw Koffiekamp has still not been constructed. For the last five years the low price of gold on international markets has made it economically unfeasible and kept the community hanging on by a thread. Construction is due to start in the near future, and the villagers are split over whether to finally give in to relocation, having been worn down by the long years of struggle against the mine. Half (up to 75) of all the other indigenous and Maroon villages in Surinam are menaced by similar mining concessions, and their fate rests on Nieuw Koffiekamp's fight for survival. The government will not waver from its view of these communities as squatters, who can be moved on at will. Any other attitude might endanger 'investor confidence' and the all-important project of liquidating Surinam's rich biological and cultural diversity.★

Contact

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"All the Maroons in the Guianas see themselves as one people... it provides for a great deal of solidarity."
—Gaanman Gazon Matodja, paramount leader of the Ndjuka Maroons, Surinam, 1992

Our Bodies, Our Lives!
Feminist Health, Healing and Herbs



As part of the movement for women's liberation in the second half of the 20th century, women came together to question the way a medical elite has controlled and defined women's health and disease. They looked at the way a male-dominated medical profession—as part of the rise of the patriarchal church and state—was imposed over existing healing traditions in Europe.

In order for this new medicine to establish itself, it had to subordinate the knowledge, skills and autonomy of female lay healers who had been the main source of care up to that point. During the witch hunts of the 14th and 15th centuries, thousands upon thousands of women were burned, in part for their capacity to treat the sick, help women with birth control and abortion, and support women during childbirth. Women also looked at how indigenous healing practices had been (and continue to be) destroyed as a result of colonialism and imperialism.

Like the general consciousness-raising groups that formed the basis of the women's liberation movement, women created small self-help groups and clinics for the exchange of experiences and information around health. They saw the need to challenge existing notions of health and reclaim knowledge that had been destroyed or guarded by so-called experts. Women examined their bodies together, shared insights, found self-help remedies to many common health problems and began spreading ideas. Various groups of women also put together publications that really addressed women's needs, including realistic drawings and photos of their bodies, along with all the relevant information that had been explored.

A couple of years ago a few women in Brighton, inspired by so many of those ideas and publications, set up a women's health collective. Despite the many complexities, we met weekly and were able to share and explore some really radical things. We met to gather information and experiences around health (in the broadest sense of the word) and to understand it in a political context. We were looking at how capitalism, racism and patriarchy make people sick. We also looked at how the 'New Age movement' distorts the potential of alternative medicine by selling the idea that we can heal ourselves in isolation, without a larger collective movement for change.

It was the first time for most us that we had talked in depth about our health; about mental and spiritual health, anatomy, sexuality, sexual health, menstrual cycles, pregnancy, abortion, and experiences of the medical system, etc. As a collective we did self-examinations together and found ways to treat ourselves with herbs, massage

and general support. We have also been able to support some women through herbal abortions, as we had access to important books and could give daily support. Although we do not meet weekly any more, we're still trying to produce some zines of information we've researched, and put on some more workshops. If you want more details of these, or to contact the authors of this article, you can email us at:
anarchafeministhealth@yahoogroups.co.uk

More Information

This information is still very marginalised, so it's important that these ideas should be shared as much as possible. For more details on the women's health movement, radical critiques of health, as well as good DIY health advice, have a look at:

A New View of a Woman's Body by The Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers (Feminist Health Press, 1995). ISBN 0 96299 45 02. We cannot recommend this book enough. It's hard to get in the UK, but the authors of this piece will be able to supply copies soon. If you want more details get in touch with: Bookshop Collective, c/o The Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JA, UK.

Herbal Abortion: A Woman's Guide to DIY Abortion complied and edited by Anwen (Godhaven Ink, 2002). Costs £2.50 (including postage) from: Godhaven Ink, Rooted Media, The Cardigan Centre, 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ, UK.

Hotpantz: DIY Gynaecological Herbal Remedies. Costs around US$3.00 from: Hotpantz CP, 871, Succ. C Qc, H2L 4L6, Canada.

Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English (The Feminist Press, 1973). ISBN 0 91 2670 134. Available for £1.50 from: re-pressed distribution, 145 Cardigan Road, Leeds, LS6 1LJ, UK.

Also worth looking at are these two incredible web sites:
www.bloodsisters.org
www.geocities.com/sister_zeus/
Sister Zeus is essential if you are ever thinking of doing a herbal abortion, and it also has an email support group.

For speculums contact: Women's Health London, 12 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT, UK.
Telephone: 020 7251 6333★

Herbs

Using herbs is a very important way of regaining some control over our health. Picking is easy as the common wild herbs like nettle, mint, elderflower, hawthorn, fennel and marigold grow almost everywhere in the UK. Remember to never pick from a plant that has no neighbour, and always leave enough for the plant to provide for itself, as well as for others (not just humans) to use.

Nettle



Possibly the most useful and easiest herb you can get your hands on. Pick in the spring before it flowers and gets too hardy. The top few leaves are the best. Hang to dry in a warm dark place, and once dried, store in an airtight jar. Nettle is one of the best tonics, rich in iron and vitamin C. Drink lots of this if you are generally feeling weary.

Raspberry Leaf



This is by far one of the best uterine tonics. It stimulates menstrual flow by toning the ovaries and uterus, as well as improving their functions. Can relieve cramps and regulate flow, and it's also good for diarrhoea, hormonal problems and pregnancy. You can pick the leaves through the growing season, and dry them for use for the rest of the year.

The Complete Illustrated Herbal: A Safe and Practical Guide to Making and Using Herbal Remedies by David Hoffman (Parragon, 1999). ISBN 1 84164 167 7.

Bartram's Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine: The Definitive Guide to the Herbal Treatment of Diseases by Thomas Bartram (Robinson, 2001). ISBN 1 85487 586 8.

SPACE INVADERS.

RANTS ABOUT RADICAL SPACE



In the last few years, there has been a small wave of new radical social centres in Britain. A number of people involved in Earth First! and the direct action scene have been involved in opening these co-operatively owned and managed spaces. Some of these places are up and running, others are still in the early stages. As is healthy in any movement, there are different views on this subject. Here we present two different pieces, one critical of these social centres and another from someone heavily involved in one of the new projects.

SOCIAL DIS-CENTRES.

Mortgages, loans, investment, property development, licence applications, accountancy, endless legislation, business plans, backbiting, membership lists, the dead time absorbing activists and the debt, oh the debt!

Welcome to legal social centres! Have a pleasant stay. The Cowley Club in Brighton just opened. It's a posh looking bar. It has a bookshop, the prices are cheaper than normal, the front door of the building is made of Indonesian hardwood (Solidarity South Pacific?!) and the plants were bought at Ikea. It has no dedicated meeting space (yet), only the bar area—revealing its priorities in the design. In themselves, legal social centres are what they are; a social enterprise—cafés, bars, possible gathering spaces. But the danger is that, springing up on the back of the direct action movement, they will divert activist time and energy into an essentially non-radical and liberal project. A project perceived, by dint of association, as a radical social space.

The Cowley Club is not the only new legal social centre. There is the Sumac Centre in Nottingham, which has filled a community space left behind by the now defunct Rainbow Centre. The 1 in 12 Club in Bradford is a longstanding example of a legal club. The recent social centre boom has taken a

lot of time and energy in the last couple of years, and caused some tension amongst those involved (directly and indirectly). In a way, people feel they have had to take sides as people's politics are thrown into sharper relief. An example of this is some of the discussions that have emerged, the sudden imposition of legal hurdles and ownership allowing more liberal concepts to push into the agenda: should people be paid or not, the merits of CCTV, how the need to appear to be a legitimate café and drinking hole means that people should perhaps refrain from offering too many hardcore books in the library or bookshop or from holding radical meetings or events 'for a while'.

The Sumac Centre considered asking people not to hold Earth First! Winter Moot meetings there due to the threat of not getting their bar license. We were collectively requested to respect the fact that the Sumac Centre was in a vulnerable position and did not want to be too obviously connected with the Moot. While I respect many of the radical people involved in the creating and running of the space, this request implied that we were obliged to have some allegiance to it as a project, even though we had not been able to use it for the purpose for which we thought it had partly been created. Instead there is a sense of coercion attached to these centres, from 'drink here rather than elsewhere, comrade', through to 'don't set up free squatted spaces that might compete'. These notions coupled with walking on eggshells around the demands of legislation results in policing. An insidious self-policing of radical agendas by those more willing to make concessions, creating division and fucking around with grassroots support—no 'room at the inn' for autonomous groups who potentially compromise the legal status of the centre.

How do we fight against property speculation and ownership, gentrification, and corporate public space with a legal social centre that has more in common with these things than not? How can we engender radicalism in our society if people's first point of contact with non-mainstream politics is a space built on compromise, which exists only because the state says it can? The bricks and mortar, the signatures on legal and financial papers, the SWP-style membership structure, the boredom on the faces of volunteer staff paying off the bank, the ghetto—all these things that come with toeing the line, turn our politics into rhetoric. Running a legal social centre is, at best, the equivalent of working for an NGO.

It may be 'green' money that has enabled people to build them, but pursuing social change through the mainstream means being forced to acquire 'skills' applicable to the terms and conditions of mainstream ventures, it means creating a respectable business to gain the



confidence of investors. What does any of this have to do with a movement in revolt against the machinery of capital and which fights the idea of exclusion and powerlessness based on social, political and economic leverage?

But, we hear the Management Committees cry, these centres are for the people, they are welcome, it is their space too. Well sort of, but let's take the idea of membership. If meetings do take place in The Cowley Club, for example, and run into bar time, those attending the meeting must sign in to the club. We complain about a lack of security in our culture and then set up formalities requiring people to put their names and addresses to political activity. The idea also clearly promotes the feeling that other people are in charge of your access to social space, either alienating you from that space because you aren't a member or from those outside the space if you are. Furthermore, buying £400,000 buildings is not something everyone can do, it does not empower other people to do the same, it only perpetuates the idea that some people are consumers dependent on the product of those, the elite, who have the power and connections to access resources that most people can't. People can 'work' for the centres, they can get nominated into the inner circle, the decision-making body, but how challenging, radical or empowering a process is

that? A squatted social centre or an action can inspire us *and* we can do it ourselves too.

If we think we need 'access points' for new people to be inspired by our political perspective, then surely this is best achieved through practising direct action—not through acquiring crippling mortgages, obeying a myriad of regulations set by the state and spending years doing DIY of the conventional sort. The energy that has gone into legal social centres during what has been an action-quiet couple of years might well have found other avenues for action had a lot of very energetic people not been engaged in property development. And it doesn't stop when the centre is 'up and running', as the mantra goes.

My best experience of a social centre (A-Spire in Leeds) is my counter-argument. I like A-Spire—a lot. And although I haven't personally been to them, the OK Café in Manchester and Radical Dairy in London are projects that through their process and their inherent conflict with the state have been truly radical and desirable spaces. Squatted spaces are temporary autonomous zones reclaimed from property owners and councils. They explode through the cracks in the system and when they are crushed—often forcibly—they leave pieces of themselves everywhere, in the hearts of the people who went there, in new behaviour, new alliances, new thoughts. They are a practical attempt to get free from the state, to be free from the compromises and creeping obedience of a legal space.

Everyone there holds the squatted space together, with no formal membership, no nominations, no rulebook, just based on a self-determined responsibility for each other and the people who may use or simply neighbour the space. As a radical project, the group process of working together to choose and crack a building, open it up, decide what it's going to do and run it until an eviction, develops collectivity, responsibility, mutuality and autonomy. It has no management committee, just a bunch of people who've come together. It does not have to make money, no one gets paid for anything, there are no legal rules or bureaucratic strangleholds limiting what can be done with the space beyond those we internally discuss and evaluate. After much discussion about whether to be selling anything at all, A-Spire had a really cheap bar with proceeds going direct to various radical projects (not to 'pay off debts and the mortgage') but you could bring your own too, it had a donations-café (with skipped and stolen food), a free shop, an indoor skating ramp, an art space, and many meeting spaces. It was radical to a level that I believe a legal social centre can never be.

It is radical because the squatted social centre endeavours to get to the heart of the matter by removing itself from questions of legality and compliance. The space is laid bare. The people that occupy the space are laid bare. Each squat, each A-Spire or OK Café or Radical Dairy is a new world. Psychologically, the space is liberating. It is an action. It is about clearing a way through formal structures and accepted ways of organising social spaces. It is about how we relate to each other outside the dominant system. It is hard enough to explore fundamental questions of social transformation, process, mutuality, inclusivity, and hard enough to break down ingrained power structures and behaviours in a squatted space which has gone a long way to clearing its head of legal constraints and practical ownership, but it is even harder to find those the questions if you still shuffling along head and shoulders bowed under the added weight of legal and state apparatus or to reach anything resembling autonomy.

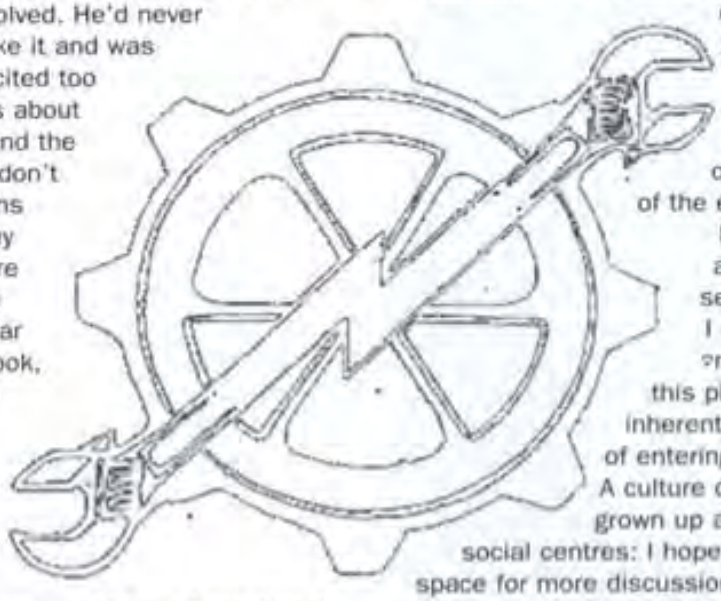
The squatted social centre is radically politicising in and of itself. As radicals, we try to challenge or bypass laws, regulations, routine, hierarchy. Not only this, but I would argue that by desiring and seeking permanence through legal social centres, in a sense we collaborate with the system. Every time we leave the state behind, every time we accept that what we have created in a squatted space may get moved on, we confirm our refusal of the system because we understand that the state will only allow to be permanent that which is compliant, corrupt, of no threat.. By accepting transience, by re-evaluating a desire for permanence in a world we wish to move on from, we expand our ability and desire to transform the world as it is into what we want it to be. The temporary autonomous zone is characterised by an intensity, militancy and dynamism only possible under those circumstances. For the time it exists, it is everything—not a daily or weekly shift in a permanent space.

In my experience, people are very different in a squatted social centre. They are more open and creative, more communicative and questioning. While doing the bar at A-Spire one night I spent a long time talking to a young guy who'd just left prison and heard that A-Spire was



YOUR LOCAL FRIENDLY SQUAT – PUB.

happening (this is a very important word—a legal social centre doesn't happen!), that it was pretty cool and decided to give it a go even though he didn't know anyone involved. He'd never experienced anything like it and was really excited. I was excited too and we talked for hours about our lives, and politics and the politics of the space. I don't hear those conversations happening at the Cowley Club, and I'm pretty sure that had it been a legal social centre with regular clientele and sign-up book, this guy might well not have come in, would certainly not have been that excited by it and I doubt whether I would have communicated with him in the way I did. There would have been less to talk about for a start. A job is so much less exciting and dynamic than an action.



That intensity creates an explosion of political understanding and bonding that is harder to achieve in a permanent, legal space. When the last A-Spire was evicted, it brought everyone together, it introduced people to crackdown by the state. It wasn't rhetoric, it wasn't an eviction described to someone new to evictions over morning coffee or read in a book. It was a clear and actual political situation, an experience of 'us against them', inspiring solidarity. It was difficult yet invigorating. If the Cowley Club or the Sumac Centre got closed down, I believe it would divide rather than unify. We would probably see blame put on the heads of other people in the community rather than on the authorities. It would be a cause of resentment between those who have put money and work into it and those who have 'transgressed', who have 'disrespected' the space.

To me, the legal social centre is a worrying development, selling the illusion of a politicised and radicalising public space when in fact it can by its very nature be nothing of the sort. It poses about in a hoody and mask keeping pretty well clear of the front line. The desire for accessible space is the same desire that underpins autonomous, squatted spaces—to reach out beyond the ghetto. But setting down roots in polluted ground is not going to develop healthy politics or healthy communities. They are a sell-out and a buy-in. We already compromise on so many things (from a place to live, to schooling our kids). Surely we can conspire to at least keep our public spaces radical and admit that if we have to make that many compromises to keep them, then they're probably not worth having?

Disclaimer: This piece probably contains factual errors, omissions, wild sweeping statements, vicious lies and blissful abuse of punctuation! It's an opinion piece. In terms of the ethos and spirit of what I think 'we' stand for and what I would like to see in society in general, I stand by the caution and criticism expressed in this piece regarding the inherent liberalism and dangers of entering establishment space. A culture of tense whispers has grown up around the recent legal social centres: I hope this article will open up space for more discussion about what legal social centres should expect from the communities they demand energy and allegiance from, and I hope that we can distance ourselves enough from these extremely stressful and confusing projects to reflect more deeply on the political character of the spaces we are creating.★



STABLE BASES



The last couple of years have seen a few social centres with an anarchist and radical ecological outlook opening up by buying their premises, with other similar projects aiming to open soon. These spaces have been created to fulfil a need that has been felt for a long time—the need for social spaces under our collective control.

What goes on there can be as varied as the people involved, but a few current uses that spring to mind are—cheap bar, cheap café, library, infoshop, space for meetings, gigs, film shows, kids' events, self defence sessions, office space, self-managed housing, advice and solidarity for benefit and work problems, and not least an easily accessible way for people to wander in off the street and find all this!

So far, so good, but there are two main ways of getting a building to house these kind of activities. The first is to buy one, as has started happening recently, the second is to squat one.[1] All things being equal, it's obviously a better idea to just occupy what we need than it is to borrow loads of money and buy somewhere. Unfortunately though, all things are not equal, and there are different problems with both options.

The problems involved in buying a building are fairly obvious. Typically, the buildings have been bought with money from 'green' or 'ethical' banks, co-operative support groups such as Radical Routes, and small loans from groups and individuals, all of which involves a few people dealing with a lot of bureaucratic bollocks. There are various state agencies to deal with, although this is mostly during the renovations stage (fire and building standards regulations etc.). Once the centre's open there's much less of this, with the two main exceptions of keeping accounts, and alcohol sales. For the latter you need a licence, you have to keep to certain opening hours (unless you're somewhere where lock-ins are common of course) and if the bar runs as a members club people have to give a name and address when they join, and sign in with that name when they come for a pint. Most importantly though, there can be a need to make a certain amount of money every month to pay the debts off (although this can come largely, or entirely, from rental income from housing, i.e. probably from housing benefit).

There are also problems with squatting the spaces we need, the main one being that whatever you do isn't going to be there very long! Before getting involved in a (hopefully) more permanent space, I'd been part of lots of squatted social centres, which lasted for an average of four to six weeks each. While they were there, they were often great places, and sometimes shitholes, but I got very frustrated by the constant moves. Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZs) sound good on paper[2], but I'm a lot less keen on them when waiting for

angry builders and cops to show up first thing in the morning, after shifting everything across town in shopping trolleys, four weeks after you last went through the process. The first time it's an adventure, the tenth time it's a pain in the arse. Inevitably, this kind of hassle means that there are long periods when there's no space of this kind around at all. When the space does exist there's usually no incentive to develop the building much—if it's going to be evicted soon, why bother to fix the toilets, or make it wheelchair accessible? And if somebody wants to sort out a venue for a gig, or a talk in a month's time, the best we can say is that there *might* be somewhere for it... Of course none of this is a problem with squatting itself, it's more a reflection of the current weakness of the movements that squat buildings. Resistance movements in other times and places have been able to take and hold the spaces they needed, and that is something I want to see developing here and now. Squatting in the current situation is certainly one way of trying to move towards this, but it's not the only way.



Some problems can potentially arise with any social centre, whether it's squatted or not. For a start, there's always some people who have the time, inclination, and energy to put more into a centre (or any other project) than most, and it's hard to run things in a way that means these people aren't seen as the *de facto* leaders. Certainly, having no formal structures is no guarantee that this situation won't arise. The fear of repression causing a more or less subtle self-policing within centres can also be a problem, whether it's fear of losing a licence, or fear of provoking an eviction. I've heard similar sentiments expressed in squats, other social centres and road camps, and it's a tendency that we should beware of—while it's not always clever to shout about what we're doing, these kind of considerations shouldn't put us off doing things that we'd otherwise want to do. Another common problem is the ghettoisation of social spaces, whether deliberate or unintentional. Creating spaces where we can put some of our ideas into practice also means there are more possibilities for reconnecting radical politics to the working class communities around us. Not so much by 'getting our ideas across',[3] but by providing a way for different people pissed off with the way things are to meet, talk and act together, and a resource for people to explore their own ideas. Obviously, this can only happen in social centres if people come to them, and centres need to be welcoming. In my experience it's not class war or riot posters on the walls that put most people off, it's feeling like you need to have a certain haircut, or be a certain age, or be middle class (to give a few common examples) that excludes people. Nor does exclusivity have much to do with legality—squats can be accessible places on the high street; just as bought buildings can be exclusive hangouts for a particular scene. I'd like nothing better than to see the emergence of a movement strong enough to occupy the spaces it needed and keep them for as long as they were of use. But that movement undeniably isn't here now. What is here now is a movement that needs space for its activities, space for living our lives. Sometimes that space is squatted and temporary, sometimes it's in co-operatives and less temporary. I don't see a conflict between the two—more stable bases should be a way of fomenting and co-ordinating action, including squatting. At the moment, they're not likely to conflict, because squats don't last long enough to 'compete'—if squats do become able to fulfil the same functions as more long term centres, then I'll be the first to celebrate and throw the mortgage repayment forms in the bin!★



Notes

1) In other European countries there have been, and are, other options such as being given buildings by lefty councils, or squats being offered permanent contracts. These have typically been ways of trying to buy off militant mass movements, and aren't likely to be a realistic choice here right now.

2) Hakim Bey's theory of temporarily liberating space in a 'guerrilla' fashion, with TAZs coming into existence, melting away and reappearing at another time and place, in another form. It has could be argued that this is a way of convincing ourselves that current weaknesses, during a low ebb of class struggle, are actually virtues.

3) Since anarchist politics probably has at least as much to gain from a closer connection to working class communities and struggles as vice versa.



SOCIAL CENTRES

Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh

17 West Montgomery Place
Edinburgh EH7 5HA
Tel: 0131 557 6242
Web: www.autonomous.org.uk

Draws together many campaigns for social and ecological issues into a revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism!

The Cowley Club

12 London Road
Brighton BN1 4JA

Social centre in the heart of Brighton with members bar, vegan café and radical bookshop. Has regular events.

London Action Resource Centre (LARC)

62 Fieldgate Street
London E1 1ES
Tel: 020 7377 9088
Email: info@londonarc.org
Web: www.londonarc.org

Collectively run building providing computers, roof garden, reference library and space for non-hierarchical projects for radical social change.

Sumac Centre

245 Gladstone Street
Nottingham NG7 6HX
Tel: 0845 458 9595
Email: sumac@veggies.org.uk
Web: www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/welcome.htm

Vegan café, bar, radical information, resource library and space for radical events.

56@ Infoshop

56 Crampton Street
London SE17 3AE
Email: 56a@safetycat.org
Web: www.safetycat.org/56a

Radical bookshop, anarchist archive, wholefood co-op and bike workshop.

Kebele Community Centre

14 Robertson Road
Eastville
Bristol BS5 6JY
Tel: 0117 939 9469
Email: info@kebele.org
Web: www.kebele.org

Ex-squatted social centre with café, bike workshop, anarchist library, housing co-op and more.



1 in 12 Club

21-23 Albion Street
Bradford BD1 2LY
Tel: 01274 734160
Email: info@1in12.com
Web: www.1in12.com

Anarchist-managed social centre with cheap beer, punk gigs, information and resources.

Warzone

3-5 Donegal Lane
Belfast
Tel: 028 902 44640
Email: acp16@dial.pipex.com
Web: www.martinx.demon.co.uk/about.htm

Anarcho-punk social centre that's been going since 1984. Includes a café, gig space, practice room, food co-op, recording studio, arts studio etc.

The Initiative Factory

29 Hope Street
Liverpool
L1 9BQ
Tel: 0151 709 2148
Email: dockers@gn.apc.org
Web: www.gn.apc.org/initfactory

Club run on co-operative principles by sacked Liverpool Dockers. Profits go towards an employment-training centre.

The Autonomy Club

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Tel: 020 7247 9249

New social centre in the East End sharing the same building as the long-running Freedom Press bookshop, distro and publishers.

We haven't listed squatted social centres because they move and change frequently. For information of these, you could try contacting the London Social Centres Network:

Email: londonscn@yahoo.co.uk
Discussion list:
londonscn-forum-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
Events list/newsletter:
londonscn-events-subscribe@lists.riseup.net



South Pacific Solidarity

Throughout the Pacific Rim wild nature and wild culture are under attack. Loggers tear down the forests. Mining corporations rip open chasms in the earth. Stateless tribal societies are either exterminated or assimilated. But against the death culture rebellion grows. The victorious eco-insurrection in Bougainville, and the strengthening indigenous resistance in West Papua are just two examples.

For ten years the British radical ecological movement has taken inspiration from Pacific struggles, and in return has carried out sporadic solidarity actions against companies and embassies. In the middle of 2002 many decided we needed to consolidate to make sure we give more consistent support. Since then actions and support work has blossomed. Listed below are just some of the solidarity actions that we in SSP (Brighton) have received reports about.

Papuan Prisoner Picket (26/06/02) In response to the arrest of Papuan Highland activist Benny Wenda, a three-person picket is held at the Indonesian Embassy in London. Getting there just before opening, the masked picketeers succeed in turning away quite a few freaked-out embassy staff and visitors. It takes the Diplomatic Police an incredible 45 minutes to turn up—despite being in Grosvenor Square round the corner! Four months later Benny escapes from jail.

Paint Bombs (08/10/02) Toyota are responsible for logging in West Papua, a position that marks them out as clear enemies both of nature and of the tribal people whose land is logged. One of their main UK bases near Redhill was visited and the front covered in red paint.

RTZ Blockaded in North Wales (08/10/02) Anglesey Aluminium was blockaded for nearly six hours by a group of 15 people making novel use of a clapped out mini-van and a tripod. The van, laden with two cement filled oil barrels was towed in at 8.30am before irrevocably, and finally, breaking down outside the main entrance to the aluminium smelting plant. Someone stuck their hand through a hole in the side panel and locked onto one of the barrels. The other barrel fell through a hole in the floor of the van, tyres deflated on account of their being slashed and another person stuck their arm in and clipped on. So, that wasn't going anywhere for a while. A long tailback rapidly ensued. Meanwhile a scaffold tripod went round the back entrance just in case anyone had sneaky ideas about slipping in or out that way. After a couple of hours the plant opened an unbeknown third narrow entrance, allowing light freight and traffic access, but larger, heavier vehicles were prevented from entering or leaving for another 3 1/2 hours. A large

number of police arrived but no arrests were made. Anglesey Aluminium are 51 percent owned by Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) who jointly own the Freeport mine in West Papua—the world's second largest copper mine and the largest proven gold deposit, worth $40 billion.

Indonesian Embassy Occupation (09/10/02) The Indonesian Embassy in London was occupied in solidarity with the people of West Papua. Occupiers chained themselves to railings in a third floor window shouting "Papua Merdeka" (Freedom for Papua) to the on-looking crowd. The Indonesian flag was pulled down and the Papuan 'Morning Star' flag was about to be raised when Indonesian officials dragged the flag raiser who had climbed up the side of the building back into the embassy. A group of activists gathered outside with banners reading 'Free West Papua' and 'Victory to the OPM'. The building remained occupied for nearly an hour. Four were arrested.

New Tribe Missionaries Raided (11/10/02) More than fifty people took direct action against the New Tribes Mission (NTM) UK Headquarters in Grimsby, in solidarity with resistant indigenous people of the Philippines and Papua. NTM have stated that they intend to preach to every tribe on the planet by 2025, such as the Agta of Northern Luzon and tribes in Mindanao. NTM build airstrips in jungles, have their own planes to ferry first missionaries and then businessmen, Coca Cola and the military. First comes Christianity and then corporations. Indigenous movements in West Papua have declared missionaries one of the 'Four Enemies of Tribal People' and say that they are as responsible as mining or logging companies for ecological and cultural destruction.

The activists visited NTM wearing West Papuan masks, invaded and occupied the offices. They severely outnumbered the missionaries working there. Essential information and equipment was removed which will prove valuable to research for resistance to NTM. Other people sabotaged and damaged essential computer hardware, software and other office equipment; others argued with workers; others demonstrated outside or in the village nearby with banners. A timing device was planted in a toilet that later opened a valve on the cold water supply leading to flood damage during Friday night and Saturday morning. All the protestors left the scene without arrest, although missionaries attempted—and failed—to stop people leaving. Following the action the cult pulled some strings and the cops raided nearly half a dozen properties over a period of four months. Around twenty people were arrested, but police attempts to frame people failed, and at the time of writing all but one of the cases has been dropped.





"We are not terrorists! We do not want modern life! We refuse any kinds of development: religious groups, aid agencies, and governmental organisations, Just Leave Us Alone, Please!"—The Liberation Army of the Free Papua Movement (TPN/OPM)



"This is a popular ecological revolution that evolved from an act of self defence. We could tolerate the mine no longer. We couldn't stand idle and so we set up a militant type organisation to contain what the security forces were doing to us."—Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)



"We are the eco-warriors of the Third World country... So I pulled the GM crops and stomped with my feet. What I felt was, This is it! So this is the poisonous one, it must be annihilated!"—Davao EF! (Philippines)

BG Group PLC—Making Nature History (18/10/02) BG are involved in the extraction of

Liquid Natural Gas in occupied West Papua. Activists intervened at the Natural History Museum in a special preview of the *BBC Wildlife* Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition sponsored by BG; another example of corporate greenwash. A banner was put at the entrance, leaflets were handed out and we ended up in a long argument with the editor of BBC Wildlife. 'If BG Group continue exploiting natural resources soon all we will have left of biodiversity will be the photos.' On other days activists were thrown out by security and the exhibition was well stickered. In 2003 for the first time the competition has no outside sponsor.

BP Targeted at CBI Conference (26/11/02) At the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) conference the BP stall—and its corporate front men—were drenched in fake blood to counter the greenwash the company uses to cover its ecocidal, genocidal business. The action was done against the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and in solidarity with the tribes of West Papua. Two people were arrested and charged with £5,500 worth of criminal damage. In an apparent attempt to push for assault, one of the blood soaked execs went to hospital—oh dear, maybe he got some in his eye.



Manchester BP Garage Blockaded (18/12/02) Activists blockaded a petrol station in Moss Side, Manchester, for over four hours as an act of solidarity with the people of West Papua. Two scaffolding tripods were erected at the entrance and exit of the petrol station, and an activist was suspended in a hammock hanging from one of the tripods. Others handed leaflets to passers-by explaining about the situation in West Papua.

Demo at PNG High Commission (29/01/03) The Papua New Guinea High Commission was picketed the day PNG intended to launch attacks on West Papuan refugees and OPM camps. News of the demo got to PNG press. Despite being small the demo harassed the staff—there are only three—enough for one to be almost hysterical about it six months later at a meeting of Papuan mission organisations attended by a solidarity activist.



Manchester EF! shut down Angelsey Aluminium

BP AGM (24/04/03) Around 200 campaigners held a noisy demo outside British Petroleum's Annual General Meeting on at the Royal Festival Hall in London. Inside several suited and booted protesters shouted, threw incredibly disgusting liquid stench around and generally caused a disturbance. Called by Rising Tide the action aimed to highlight BP's involvement in global climate change and global genocide, particularly in Columbia, West Papua and along the planned Baku-Ceyhan pipeline.

Timber Merchants Targeted: In early Summer, as we go to press, we have recieved unconfirmed reports that a number of timber merchants stocking Papuan and Filipino timber were targetted across the country, with window smashings and graffiti.

On-the-ground Solidarity Work

As well as solidarity actions 2003 saw people travelling to the Pacific. In January four activists went to the Philippines to make links with EFIers there and travel into tribal areas and make contact. They were the first non-Filipinos to visit eco-radical prisoner Raul Zapata in the nick. Communities were happy to find out about the actions against NTM—who are very active there—and by way of gratitude bizarrely made two of the visiting EFIers honorary 'tribal warrior prince/princess'. Resistance to logging, GM and dams is especially fierce and joint action between Britain and the



Philippines is planned for the future. In March this year, in the latest Agta tribal area to get the loggers attention, a red flag was hung from the trees—signifying death to those who enter.

Prisoner Support and Direct Cash Aid

Solidarity South Pacific (SSP) is presently raising money to send medical aid to West Papua, fund tribal patrols in the Philippines against illegal logging, support radical prisoners and their families, and bring requested educational materials to the no-go zone in Bougainville. Much of this unglamorous funding work can have a real effect. Thanks to exchange rates even small amounts of cash can be a real aid to radicals abroad. In the Majority World you definitely get more punch for the pound. This is not charity—just one weapon of solidarity we have available to us in the relatively monetarised west. Co-ordinated prison support days where lots of people have phoned up and harassed local police stations in West Papua have increasingly been very effective. The Papuan Highland Tribal Council believes this type of pressure has directly resulted in activists remaining alive.

Get Active

Publicise the Struggles: Organise an event in your town. We have films and displays available and someone from the SSP groups will usually be willing to travel to do a talk and film show. Contact us if you are interested. Put up SSP posters in your town, university/school or workplace. Download our poster from the website. If you edit a zine, newsletter, journal or the like, put in an article about the Pacific. Given notice we can write one for you.

Harass the Attackers: Genocide and ecocide in the Pacific is rooted in the global industrial system. Britain is the base for many of the organisations responsible. The SSP website lists corporations and organisations involved in the destruction—check it out and see if there are any near you. Make sure to tell us (preferably anonymously) of any actions or demonstrations you carry out—we will pass it on to the Pacific peoples concerned. News of even small actions can really raise the spirits.



Raise Funds: Organise benefits, fundraising stalls, or simply donate to one of our direct aid funds. Any money received will go direct—none will be taken out. Cheques or (for more anonymity) postal orders should be made out to 'Agta Support Group' and sent to the SSP Brighton address. A note saying where you want money to go to should accompany any money.

Support Prisoners: Pressuring courts, police stations and prisons can have a real affect, with relatively little effort. You do not need to speak Indonesian, Pidgin or Filipino; English is fine—though we can e-mail you a list of handy phrases if you're feeling adventurous.

To get put on the urgent action 'Papuan Prisoner Support List' email: koteka_prisoner_support@xsmail.com Donations for prisoners and their families in West Papua can be sent to Brighton SSP. For Papuan prisoner support cheques and postal orders should be made out to 'Koteka'. For Philippines prison support cheques should be sent to the same address but be made out to 'Agta Support Group'. More details are in the Prisoners of War section later in the magazine.★



Free SSP Newsletter

To get a copy of our newsletter and find out more send an SAE to Solidarity South Pacific, c/o SDEF! Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY, UK. We also produce and distribute a number of pamphlets, films and CDs about struggle in the Pacific.

www.eco-action.org/ssp

MISSIONARIES

THE FIRST ENEMY OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

BY WIWA-WEWO, PAPUAN LANI TRIBESMAN

The missionaries poisoned my father and his colleagues with their philosophy. I know, from my deep heart, that they suffer a lot because of being Christianised and civilised. I know that they miss their world, the world that they have experienced, that vanished in the early 1960s, the world that missionaries would describe as "primitive and animist!"

Religious believers are required to believe theirs is the true religion. They stand against the beliefs that already exist in areas where they go and they also condemn other religions as misleading. Their typical statement is this: "There is only one way to heaven, therefore, if you do not do this and that, you are in danger of hell!"

If someone threatens me with anything, a knife, a bow and arrow, a gun, the Gospel, the Koran, culture, education or whatever, then they are terrorising me. Those who terrorise are commonly called terrorists. If I am wrong please correct me, but this is my basic understanding about terrorism. However, ironically, religious groups are called 'good people'.

No doubt, it is obvious to me that all troubles that come into the Lani community are brought in through the door marked 'religion'. Therefore, if people come into my village and destroy my life, my worldview, my culture, then the first thing to blame is the religion. They have started the cultural genocide, and they claim to be 'good people', preaching good news and messages of peace. What on earth is this?



It is typical of the West. They have a belief that there is always right and wrong, and that they are best to judge them. This concept relates to all other things like the way of talking, the way of working, the way of governing, the way of farming, and so on. It is clear to me that religions have been used by the civilised community as a tool to brainwash and control the minds of people. When I became a Christian, I can see how foolish I was to respond to this world's powers. As a Christian, I need to forgive those who kill me, I must forget what happened yesterday, I must give my eyes if my ears are taken away. Religion is a tool used by those in power to control the human beings of this earth.

This is an edited extract taken from the pamphlet *Just Leave Us Alone: A Letter From a Papuan Tribesman*. For a copy send £2.40 (including postage) to the Brighton SSP address listed above.★

"Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the NTM exists to assist the ministry of the church through the mobilising, equipping, and coordinating of missionaries to evangelise unreached people groups. Millions of tribal men, women and children are isolated from the Gospel. Someone must go tell them about God's gift of salvation. Someone needs to live among them, love them with Jesus' love, learn their culture and language, and then teach the people in their own language about the Saviour. NTM coordinates missionaries, sent by local churches, to take the Gospel to tribal people. Missionaries then plant churches. They disciple believers, translate the Scriptures, and train teachers and leaders, who in turn reach out to their own people and to neighbouring tribes."

—Taken from the NTM homepage.

NTM US: www.ntm.org
NTM Europe: www.ntm.org.uk
NTM Germany: www.summit-ntm.de
NTM Australia: www.ntmdownunder.org

Present Day Plunder on the Barbary Coast

The Occupation of Western Sahara



Some commentators have noted that America's reasons for involvement in Iraq may have been less motivated by a desire to eliminate 'weapons of mass destruction' than with ensuring American control over Iraq's oil fields. Meanwhile the pirates of the legendary 'Barbary Coast' today take the form of Morocco and its Western allies plundering resources, including potentially significant oil fields, in the illegally occupied 'backyard' territory of Western Sahara.

Having fought for independence for 27 years, are the people of Western Sahara set to join the appalling list of peoples who are displaced, tortured and disenfranchised because they stand in the way of the richest people earning even more money?

Background to the 'Backyard'

Western Sahara is situated in northwest Africa, bordered by Morocco to the north, Algeria to the east and Mauritania to the east and south. Western Sahara was a colony of Spain and the people (the Saharawi) speak Hassaniya (a dialect of Arabic), mostly with Spanish as a second language.

In 1975, Spain announced that it would be pulling out of the colony. The Spanish dictator Franco was on his deathbed and there was a rush to get the anachronistic colony off Spain's hands. Polisario (The Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro) had been organising resistance to Spanish colonialism since the '50s. Spain promised a vote on self-determination, as had happened with decolonisations in the rest of Africa.

However, there was immediate competition to seize the sparsely populated and mineral-rich Western Sahara. Morocco and Mauritania both claimed sovereignty over Western Sahara, and the case went to the International Court of Human Rights in The Hague. The Court ruled in favour of the Saharawi people's right to self-determination. But Morocco and Mauritania had other ideas, and in a secret meeting in Madrid, Spain signed an agreement to hand over the territory to them, in return for, amongst other things, fishing rights to the rich waters off the coast.

As usual, the enforcement of international law was dependent on whether it served the interests of the most powerful nations. In this case, it clearly didn't, and the situation in Western Sahara was studiously ignored by the nations of the world. Well, that's not entirely true—the US in particular and also France have long given substantial covert support to Morocco's military. Not to mention Britain, which, as part of Labour's 'ethical foreign

The 'Green March'



policy', was recently found to have issued licences to upgrade guns on the Moroccan front line.[1]

In November 1975, King Hassan II of Morocco organised 350,000 ordinary Moroccans and soldiers in civilian clothes into the 'Green March'. This ostensibly peaceful march crossed the southern Moroccan border and took the capital of Western Sahara, El Ayoun. It was closely followed by a military invasion and an air offensive. As Morocco occupied from the north, the south was taken by Mauritania.

There was a mass exodus of most of the population of Western Sahara. Those who could fled deep into the desert and others were left behind in the occupied cities. The Moroccan airforce bombarded the Saharawi refugee camps in the desert using napalm, causing hundreds of deaths and pushing the refugees towards their only possible avenue of escape—walking through the desert to the small border with Algeria in the northeast corner of Western Sahara. The refugees eventually established camps in the southwest of Algeria, near Tindouf.[2]

The War and the Wall

In May 1976, having completed the refugee evacuation, Polisario began offensive military actions, spreading the war beyond Western Sahara's borders into southern Morocco and Mauritania. The war pitted Polisario's 2,000 well-trained and dedicated desert guerrillas against 20,000 or so young Moroccan conscripts and Mauritanian forces.

In the early years of the war, Polisario concentrated on attacking Mauritania, by far the weaker of their two enemies. Polisario guerrillas severely weakened Mauritania by repeatedly cutting the Zouerat-Nouadhibou railway line that was the main route for the export of iron ore, on which Mauritania depended for 80-90% of its export earnings. Impoverished Mauritania couldn't afford the costs of the war and despite Moroccan offers of military assistance, in July 1978 a military coup in Mauritania brought a new government into power, who announced a ceasefire with Polisario and agreed to withdraw from the parts of Western Sahara that they had originally occupied. The Moroccans moved into these areas as the Mauritanians withdrew.[3]

Despite the obvious advantages of Moroccan air power in the open desert, the Western Sahara proved hard to police for the Moroccans—isolated garrisons became vulnerable, being easily cut off and overwhelmed by Polisario forces. Also, after the ceasefire with Mauritania, Polisario used Mauritania as their main base for striking at Morocco. The small Mauritanian armed forces were unable to control the huge stretches of desert and didn't want to risk antagonising Polisario, who had so effectively destabilised the country before.[4]

War continued between Morocco and Polisario, who were gradually making inroads into liberating the eastern side of the country. At the beginning of the '80s these inroads were becoming too close for comfort for the Moroccans. Assisted by a billion dollar pay-out from the USA, they built one of the largest man-made structures in the world—a giant wall 1,500 miles long, separating the Polisario-controlled eastern section of Western Sahara from the Moroccan-controlled parts in the west. Polisario attempts to disrupt the construction of the wall led to some heavy fighting, but by May 1982 it was complete. The wall (or *berm* to the Moroccans) is

Western Sahara Chronology



Riding camels into battle.

At the end of the 19th Century the whole of Africa was divided up between the European colonial powers. France and Spain were the two main powers in northwest Africa and they argued over the borders of their possessions. From the beginning there was resistance from the traditionally nomadic peoples of the area. For 40 years the 'Spanish Sahara' resisted all efforts at pacification.

1934

France threatens to occupy the Spanish Sahara in order to stamp out the Saharawi

manned every 5 kilometres by soldiers (over 120,000 in all) and it is lined on both sides by at least 200 metres of anti-personnel landmines.

Polisario have been very effective despite being outgunned. Their main advantages have been their knowledge of the territory; their use of physical and climactic characteristics (e.g. sirocco sandstorms) to impede Morocco's technological advantage; and their use of rapid hit-and-run style tactics, choosing the location and timing of attack, whereas the Moroccans are stuck defending their wall.[5]

But despite this, the wall has resulted in what amounts to a military stalemate. With neither side able to win decisively in the field, military activity was scaled down in the mid-1980s. Polisario control a big chunk of the country, but anything of any importance (the fishing ports, the cities and the phosphate mines) is on the Moroccan side of the wall.[6]



On this map can be seen the Moroccan wall or 'berm', the phosphate mine at Boucraa, the conveyor belt from Boucraa to El Ayoun and the iron ore transportation railway in Mauritania between Zouerat and Nouadhibou.

Global Politics, Local Realities

As the support given to Morocco by the US and European countries is mostly covert, there are no 'official' reasons given to justify it. Clearly the atmosphere of international politics at the beginning of the '80s was dominated by the Cold War. Polisario was backed by leftist Third World governments like Libya, Algeria and Cuba. By contrast Morocco is a conservative monarchy. It is obvious which side was going to get support from Western Europe and the USA. Also important for both Europe and the US is Morocco's control over the Straits of Gibraltar. The Straits provide all of southern Europe with the only route out to the Atlantic Ocean. There may have been concern amongst European governments that to upset Morocco could destabilise the area.

Algeria has always supported Polisario since before the Spanish left. Algeria says that it supports all liberation struggles. It is also highly

resistance threatening its territories. This leads to Franco-Spanish military co-operation to achieve the final 'pacification' of the interior of Western Sahara. Spain takes possession of its 'colony'.

1949-1959

Discovery in Boucraa of the biggest high grade (70 to 80% pure) phosphate deposits in the world.

1956-1958

Riots and bloody battles between Spanish troops and the Saharawi resistance.

1958

In a co-ordinated effort between France and Spain called the 'Ecouvillon Operation', the Saharawi Liberation Army was destroyed in order to save the Spanish Sahara and the nearby French possessions.

1968

Rebirth of the Saharawi resistance movement with the formation of Liberation Movement for Saguia el Hamra y Rio de Oro under the leadership of Sidi Brahim Bassiri.



probable that Algeria would like to have a trade route out to the Atlantic through Western Sahara. The Atlas Mountains make routes out through Morocco difficult, and in the '80s Algeria was fighting its own border dispute there.

Eventually, the war ended with a UN-brokered ceasefire in 1991. A referendum for the Saharawi people to decide the future of the territory was planned for 1992. The two sides have been unable to agree on who can vote in the referendum. Polisario have always maintained that the voting list for the referendum should be based on the Spanish census, taken in 1974. However, Morocco has repeatedly insisted that all the migrants it has moved into occupied Western Sahara since 1975 should be entitled to vote. In January 2000 a voter list of 86,000 was published by the UN. Immediately, Morocco lodged 130,000 appeals. Due to this persistent obstruction from the Moroccan side, the referendum has still not taken place.

Living in the Refugee Camps, Living in Occupied Western Sahara

The majority of the Saharawi people, 175,000 people, continue to live in refugee camps in the harsh environment of the Sahara desert. Every Saharawi family is divided. The rest have the 'luxury' of living in houses in the occupied territories under Moroccan military rule, where disappearances, torture and arbitrary detention are the norm. They are locked into Western Sahara just as firmly as the others are locked out.

Between Tindouf and the Algerian/Western Saharan border are four highly organised refugee camps. In the first years of exile there was widespread disease and hunger in the camps as the Saharawi adjusted to life in exile, expecting at any moment to be able to return to their homes in the cities of Western Sahara. However, over time these camps have developed and now have hospitals, schools and irrigated gardens. Nevertheless, the Saharawi still continue to live in tents in the expectation that they will soon return to Western Sahara—to build permanent dwellings would be to concede that they were going to be staying in the southern corner of Algeria. For the same reason they plant vegetables in their gardens but not fruit trees, not expecting to be around long enough to harvest the fruit.[7] All families have a large square tent, and over the years most have added a mud brick kitchen and bathroom.

Saharawis were almost all nomads 50 years ago. Today there are still a few families who maintain the traditional Berber nomadic life, keeping camels and travelling over the desert.[8] Patterns of movement are obviously restricted by the wall and large areas of landmines. Nonetheless, 'sedentary' Saharawi who may have fled from the cities to the camps sometimes take a walk with the camels down to Mauritania and back. Nomadism is a key aspect of Saharawi identity and even those not practising a fully nomadic life appear to reserve and need the right to roam.

The area of desert where the refugee camps are situated is in a part of the Sahara desert that is officially considered inhospitable with an environment incapable of supporting human life. The gardens the Saharawi have built defy this notion. Plants are grown with painstaking attention to irrigation and water conservation. Even so, there are not nearly enough vegetables grown to feed everyone, and in the past fresh vegetables have been limited to the elderly, the sick and to children.

1970

On June 17, Bassiri's movement organised a large, peaceful independence demonstration at Zemla (El Ayoun) against plans to turn the Sahara into a Spanish province. Many civilians were killed when the Spanish Foreign Legion massacred the demonstrators. The Liberation Movement was outlawed.

1973

Spain begins phosphate exports in May. But Polisario begin their armed struggle against Spain by attacking the El-Khanga Spanish army post.

1974

In January and March Spanish and Polisario forces clash at Galb Lahmar and then at Aoukeyra. Algeria begins for the first time to give some low-key support to Polisario. On September 30, Polisario supporters sabotage two control stations of the FosBoucraa mine's conveyor belt.

1975

Phosphate exports reach 2.4 million tons, making Western Sahara the sixth major phosphate exporter in the world.

Spain pulls out and secretly hands the territory

Everyone in the camps lives off international aid, and the lack of famine is testament to the highly structured systems of food distribution and management of civic responsibilities. In the last few years money has been introduced to the camps and shops have consequently emerged. Whilst in principle all Saharawis are equal and treated equally, access to currency and the opportunities offered to those who can study and work abroad is increasingly creating some disparity. Families that have members working or studying abroad are more likely to own a television, radio or other luxury goods.

The refugee camps boast one of the highest literacy rates in Africa (and the world!) at 90%. All children attend primary school in the camps, and at the age of 11-14 most go away to school in Algeria to finish their studies. Algeria also provides some university places. Cuba provides huge assistance with education and there are around 2,000 young Saharawis at university there, especially in the medical field.

In the occupied zone of Western Sahara there are thousands of Moroccan families, lured by tax incentives, living mostly in the three main cities: El Ayoun, Smara and Dhakla. Also, tens of thousands of nomads from the north were trucked into El Ayoun in 1991 to help Morocco win the promised referendum. They are still waiting there in huge squalid camps around El Ayoun, subsisting on government food rations.[9] 70% of the population is now from 'the north', but it seems that the Saharawi still maintain a distinctive identity, despite constant surveillance and persecution.

The voter identification process during 1995-1999 brought families together from the two sides of the wall, many of whom had had no contact with one another since 1975. Mobile phones have transformed communication, but few people have them and there are problems with reception. There is daily contact between human rights workers in Spain and the people in the occupied zone. But on the whole very little is known about life there because of restrictions on foreign journalists.

The Ecology of Occupation

King Hassan II and his successor, King Mohammed VI, justify the occupation of Western Sahara by arguing that it was part of former 'Greater Morocco' (as was a good bit of Algeria, some of Mauritania and Mali, and the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla prior to European colonisation). This is coupled with a denial of a distinct Saharawi ethnic group—they're really just pesky Moroccans pretending to be different to cause trouble. Moroccan children are taught in school that the territory of Western Sahara is justifiably Moroccan and that the Saharawi don't



The Wall

to Morocco and Mauritania.

On May 14 Polisario guerrillas seize the commander of Spanish forces in Guelta Zemmur.

On October 31 the Moroccan army crosses the Western Saharan border, clashing with Polisario as it tries to occupy Farsia, Haousa and Jdiriya.

November 6 sees the 'Green March' of 350,000 civilians into Western Sahara, followed by military occupation. Mauritania occupies from the south.

Between November and February Saharawi refugees begin to leave the cities.

Moroccan troops arrive in El Ayoun on December 11.

1976

The Moroccan airforce bombards the camps in the desert and the exodus towards the Tindouf area begins.

In January Polisario attacks the FosBoucraa conveyor belt, forcing a halt to phosphate mining for several years.

In May, Polisario begins offensive military actions inside Morocco and Mauritania.

In June, a column of Polisario guerrillas crosses 1,500 km of desert and shells

Don't Try this at Home Kids!

UJSARIO is the youth wing of the Polisario. They carry out underground work in the occupied territories. As well as pro-independence graffiti and spreading political material, they have also developed a novel new form of propaganda—catching cats and dogs, clothing them in Polisario flags and then letting them loose in the streets!



really exist, so it is no surprise if much of the population believes this right royal nationalist rhetoric. However, logic dictates that no matter how proud a country is of its grandiose past, it just isn't worth spending an estimated $1-5 million a day to keep a patch of sand for a backyard.[10]

In 1961, a mining engineer made a declaration to the Supreme Council for Scientific Studies in Madrid, stating that among the minerals that had 'already been discovered' in Western Sahara were nickel, chrome, platinum, gold, silver and copper. More recently uranium and titanium have been found, as well as one of the greatest reserves of vanadium, which is used in the production of hard steel.

However probably the largest factor motivating the Moroccan occupation is Western Sahara's abundant phosphate reserves. The open mine at Boucraa has reserves estimated at ten thousand million tonnes over an area of 1,200 km^2—the richest phosphate mine in the world.[11] The mine is run by the Moroccan company FosBoucraa, with the profits going to the Moroccan royal family. Phosphate is one of the main ingredients of Nitrogen, Potassium and Phosphorous (or NKP as it is usually called), which is the main modern agricultural fertiliser. Phosphate is very rare but without phosphate reserves primarily in Western Sahara and Australia, modern industrial agriculture would be impossible. Indeed, it is the demands of industrial agriculture that have been largely fuelling the conflict in Western Sahara.[12]

The largest conveyor belt system in the world—99 miles long—carries phosphates from Boucraa to the port at El Ayoun. This was especially targeted by Polisario during the war to great effect. It was impossible to defend along its entire length and Polisario managed to halt production at the mine for several years, causing a huge economic impact. However, the completion of the wall in 1982 allowed the reopening of the mine, which had been closed since the beginning of the war.

Fishing and Fighting

Western Sahara also has a fishing ground richer than any other in the continent, and probably the world, off its coast. The cold currents of the Atlantic that are pushed inland by the Canary Islands mix with the warm waters at the coast, providing an ideal spawning and feeding ground. There are over 200 species of fish, 60 species of mollusc and dozens of species of squid, octopus and crustaceans, including prawns.

As already mentioned, Spain made sure they got their sticky hands on some of this before they left. However, their licences with Morocco to fish in Western Saharan waters expired in 1987 and were re-negotiated through the EU. Each time the agreement was renewed, Morocco imposed stricter conditions, until in 2001 the EU and Spain refused and the agreement lapsed. The European fleet are a bit miffed about losing their Saharan fishing grounds and a recent television programme reported that EU fishing trawlers are creeping

Nouakchott, the Mauritanian capital.

1977

In April Polisario starts attacks on Spanish fishing boats.

On May 1 Polisario guerrillas raid Zouerate in Mauritania, the centre of the iron ore industry, killing two French citizens and taking six others captive.

Polisario shells Nouakchott for the second time on July 3.

On November 13 Polisario boards the *Saa*, a Spanish fishing boat, and captures three Spanish fishermen.

After two more French nationals are captured by Polisario in an attack on the Zouerat-Nouadhibou iron ore railway on October 25, the French airforce starts using Jaguar jets to bomb and strafe Polisario guerrillas in Mauritania.

1978

On April 20, Polisario guerrillas board a Spanish fishing boat, *Las Palomas*, and capture 8 of its crew.

In May French Jaguars attack Polisario guerrillas again.

around the marine borders of Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and exploiting areas off Mauritania.[13]

Even though the European fleet left Western Saharan waters in 1999, fish stocks are still severely depleted and the area has yet to recover from the damage their drift-net fishing has done. Drift nets act as gigantic rakes, trapping not only all the fish irrespective of size which are in their path, but also destroying the habitat and the holes where the fish living on the sea bed spawn.[14]

Needless to say, whilst the EU has benefited from sales of fish from Western Saharan waters for 25 years, none of the money went to the Saharawi. Morocco earned an estimated $100 million a year from the EU fishing fleet in Western Saharan waters. These sales were controlled by a few fishing companies that just so happen to be owned and run by three top army officials.[15]

Referendum and Refineries

After 27 years of occupation, any resolution to the conflict in the Western Sahara seems ever more remote. Recently, the UN seems to have more or less turned its back on Saharawi independence by suggesting a 'framework agreement'. This euphemistic title actually involves Morocco retaining sovereignty, whilst providing limited autonomy to the Saharawi.

In a recent book, a former top UN diplomat reveals that the UN secretly planned to sell out the Saharawis as far back as 1997. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan had decided to ditch the idea of a referendum and appointed James Baker to be his personal envoy to Western Sahara specifically to push through a deal for Western Sahara to stay under Moroccan control. While both Annan and Baker were publicly declaring themselves committed to the referendum process, privately they were trying to do a deal with Morocco to stitch up the Saharawis.[16]

Morocco's obsession with maintaining control over Western Sahara may not be unconnected with deposits of crude oil known to exist both inland and offshore. Oil was first discovered in the late '60s. At first found in the form of bituminous shale, processing plants were not developed because the processing costs were prohibitive at the time.[17] However, in 1982, the Moroccan government concluded an agreement with Shell for construction of a $4.5 billion treatment plant capable of providing the highly developed



Similarly to the Eritreans in their war against Haile Selassie's Ethiopia (See 'Tunnels of the World' in Do or Die No. 8, p. 59), Polisario have made good use of secret underground bases. Top: an army base built into the rock face. Above: an underground field hospital.

On December 27 Polisario announces the launching of a new offensive and shortly afterwards guerrillas fight their way into Tan-Tan in southern Morocco.

1979

On June 13 Polisario guerrillas stage another attack in Tan-Tan.

In August Mauritania renounces its claim to Western Sahara and promises to withdraw completely. Morocco annexes the southern half of Western Sahara once the Mauritanians pull out.

In the second half of the year Polisario guerrillas overrun the Moroccan base of Lebouirate, fight their way into Smara and capture another Moroccan base at Mahbes: "The amount of Moroccan armour visibly lost to the Polisario is a defence arsenal which many small countries would be delighted to own..." (Shyam Bhatia, *The Observer*)

1980-1982

Building of the 'berm' or wall separating Moroccan and Polisario-controlled territories. FosBoucraa phosphate mine reopens from behind the safety of the wall.



Bizarrely enough one of the main groups doing international support work for the Polisario has been the Woodcraft Folk—a sort of left-wing pacifist version of the Scouts. They've done exchanges programmes between Saharawian and British kids.

Top: Polisario president Abdel-Aziz is presented with the Woodcraft Folk's annual report during a 1993 Woodcraft trip to the refugee camps. Above: During a Woodcraft-organised visit to Britain in 1990, Saharawi children were taken to see Hadrian's Wall–a ruined monument to an earlier tyrant's attempts to wall out the barbarian tribes.

Contact: The Woodcraft Folk, 13 Ritherdon Road, London SW17 8QE, UK.

techniques needed to exploit bituminous shale. It is not known whether the plant is up and running.

Recently, two contracts for prospecting offshore in Western Saharan waters have been granted by Morocco. One contract has gone to the American company Kerr McGee and the other to French-based Total.[18] Not surprisingly, America and France are the two main backers of the 'framework agreement'. French President Jacques Chirac has even referred to Western Sahara as Morocco's "southern provinces," a clear indication of where the West sees the future of the territory.

On what was supposed to have been the eve of a referendum for the Saharawi to choose between integration with Morocco and independence, it seems the oil industry and its Western backers are aiming to leave Western Sahara in Moroccan hands and while allowing Western oil companies access to Saharawi oil reserves.

In January 2002 the UN legal department issued an opinion that any exploitation of the oil resources must have Saharawi consent and any profits should benefit them.[19] However, this seems increasingly unlikely to happen as arch-scumbag James Baker, the man in charge of resolving the conflict, has his own close ties to the oil industry and to Kerr McGee. His James Baker Institute at Rice University funded a study on 'Strategic Energy Policy' written by a director of Kerr McGee; and Baker's law firm, Baker & Botts, recently assisted in a $1.5 billion bond issue by Kerr McGee.

Baker was US Secretary of State under George Bush Senior. He also is a partner in the Carlyle Group, the controversial Washington-based arms trading company.[20] Helpfully for his job in Western Sahara, Baker has had previous experience in rigging dodgy elections—as George W. Bush's personal fix-it man in Florida, he helped organise the fiddling of the presidential elections. Also helpful is the appointment of his former colleague and close friend Margaret Tutwiler as the US ambassador to Morocco. One former associate of Tutwiler confided that "she was obviously placed

1991

Beginning of UN negotiated ceasefire. Morocco sends thousands of settlers to the territory and attempts to block the referendum process by forcing the UN to accept them as voters.

1991 onwards

Morocco continues to disrupt peace process and chances for a referendum.

2001

Morocco divides offshore oil exploration rights on the Western Saharan coast between a US and a French oil company.

2002

The UN Legal Department declares that Morocco is not the legal administering power. Western Sahara remains a Non Self-Governing country awaiting decolonisation. Kofi Annan adds partition to the options open to the Security Council for the future of Western Sahara.★

there by Baker and his oil buddies to help cut oil deals."[21]

As international politics becomes ever more cosy in its bed with multinationals, it is difficult to believe that this blatant plunder of Western Sahara will be stopped. After all, oil companies have an extensive and infamous history of supporting any 'stable' government, no matter how vicious, who will assist them in suppressing local peoples who get in the way of earning a dollar.

Peacekeeping Package Tours?

Not wanting to concentrate exclusively on resource extraction industries, it seems that Morocco is realising the potential of extending their success in the tourist industry to their valuable backyard.

Abdellatif Guerraoui, the Moroccan wali (governor) of Western Sahara has identified tourism as one of the main developing sectors of the occupation-economy of Western Sahara and has said that "we will also interest the tour-operators so they put on charters to the region."[22]

And in a 'stranger than fiction' turn of events, ClubMed is rumoured to be acquiring accommodation once used to house the UN peacekeeping mission. Personally, I can't wait to see how ClubMed would promote it in their next glossy brochure—"Yes! You too can experience the bureaucratic foot-dragging of Moroccan administration and live out your fantasy of being an international peacekeeper..."

Presumably, whilst Saharawis are effectively kept as prisoners in their own land, tourists staying at the ClubMed resort would be allowed to walk around freely. Will they be offered desert safaris, being sure to keep to marked routes in this indiscriminately mined country? We will have to wait and see if exotic desert holidays will be offered in the occupied capital city.

Where to Now?

There were several motivations for Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara. It continues to be a valuable distraction for the army, who, in the run up to occupation in 1975 had organised several coups against the King. Additionally, it is clear that the wealth to be gained from the destruction of Western Saharan ecology was a key factor. The territory represents a potentially huge profit earner for Morocco. This becomes important as although Morocco's economy is in crisis, the ruling elite is clearly determined to appropriate as much money they can. Morocco can hardly afford to finance its international debt, and yet the royal family and army generals live a life of corruptly luxuriant comfort, with some $200 million allocated to service the monarchy in the 2001 budget.[23] Morocco's friendship with American and European governments and multinationals has precluded international outcry at the ongoing occupation, and the disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture common in occupied Western Sahara.

Given the costs involved in maintaining the wall and infrastructure, it is difficult to explain why Morocco hangs on to their backyard so tightly. Initially, Mauritania and Morocco said in justifying their occupation, that it was unfair for such a small population to control such wealth. The economist Von Hippel has argued that Morocco's continuing occupation represents a case of 'sunk-cost reasoning'.[24] They have invested so much time and money in Western Sahara that to pull out would mean not only losing the investment, but could also lead to a serious loss of face for the government and royal family.

Hence, a political stalemate has been reached, for which the Saharawi have lived through seventeen years of war and eleven years of waiting for a referendum. They have packed their bags and all of their possessions on many occasions, believing that a visit from a UN representative or some other new political development might bring an imminent decision. Let's hope one day soon they can pack their bags and return home for good.★

In memory of Mohammed Fadel ould Ismail ould Es-Sweyih.

Western Sahara Ecology

The temperature can reach a scorching 135ºF in summer and plunge below freezing in winter. Most of the area consists of sand dunes that move with the seasons. There are almost no landmarks, roads or tracks and only a few small thorny trees and gorse bushes. It sometimes doesn't rain for years at a time and there is almost no surface water. Sirocco sandstorms can blow for days on end, covering everything in sand. However the world's biggest desert is far from deserted and the Sahara is home to a surprising variety of life—from burrowing lizards, snakes, sunspiders and scorpions to falcons, gazelles, antelopes, jackals, badgers and hyenas. The Sahara is also home to around 40 species of rodents, including gerbils and mice. Other small mammals include insect-eaters such as hedgehogs and shrews, and carnivores such as foxes, cats and weasels.

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1) 20 June 2002, www.waronwant.org
2) *New Internationalist*—'Desert Dawn: War and Peace in Western Sahara', No. 297, December 1997, p. 12
3) *Op. Cit.* p. 13
4) *Guerrilla Warfare from 1939 to the Present Day* by Robin Corbett, (Guild Publishing, London, 1986) pp. 165-6
5) 'Western Sahara under Polisario Control: Summary Report of Field Mission to the Saharawi Refugee Camps' by Michael Bhatia, *Review of African Political Economy* Issue No. 88
6) *Op. Cit.* 4, p. 166
7) *Guerrillas: The Inside Story of the World's Revolutionaries* by Jon Lee Anderson (Harper Collins, London, 1993) p. 112
8) See www.arso.org 'Geography, History and Culture' section. For an in-depth study see *Western Sahara—The Roots of a Desert War* by Tony Hodges (Conneticut, Lawrence & Hill Company, 1983).
9) 'First light in the Sahara' by Katherine Butler, *The Independent*, May 18 2002.
10) Estimate made by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London.
11) *The First State of Western Sahara* by Mohammed Fadel ould Ismail ould Ses-Sweyih (French edition, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2001) English edition forthcoming.
12) See 'Farmageddon!—Confronting Industrial Agriculture' in *Do or Die* No. 7, p. 42. On the web at: www.eco-action.org/dod/
13) 'Unreported World: Selling the Future', Channel Four, 16 November 2001.
14) Ahmed Chater in *Le Matin Eco-Maroc*, March 12, 2002.
15) Khatry Beirouk—'Morocco's Lawlessness and Anarchy a Threat to Spain', on the web at: www.arso.org/kbeirouk2001.htm
16) Western Sahara Campaign Press Release, May 5, 2003.
17) Wim de Neuter, article in *The Saharawis: Anger and Hope*, translated by Western Sahara Campaign UK, 1999. Originally published by Oxfam Solidarite Belgique.
18) www.arso.org
19) Hans Correll, Under Secretary for Legal Affairs, The Legal Council, January 29, 2002.
20) Western Sahara Campaign Press Release, May 5, 2003.
21) 'Big Oil and James Baker Target the Western Sahara' by Wayne Madsen, *CounterPunch*, January 8, 2003, www.counterpunch.org
22) *L'Economiste*, December 19, 2001.
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24) K. Von Hippel (1996)—'Sunk in the Sahara: The Applicability of the Sunk Cost Effect to Irredentist Disputes' in *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 95-116

North African Anarchy

'Set Sail for the Lands of Insolence!'

Throughout the Middle East there are several different ethnic groups which have been referred to as "inhabiting lands of insolence" because they live in defiance of centralised government authority.

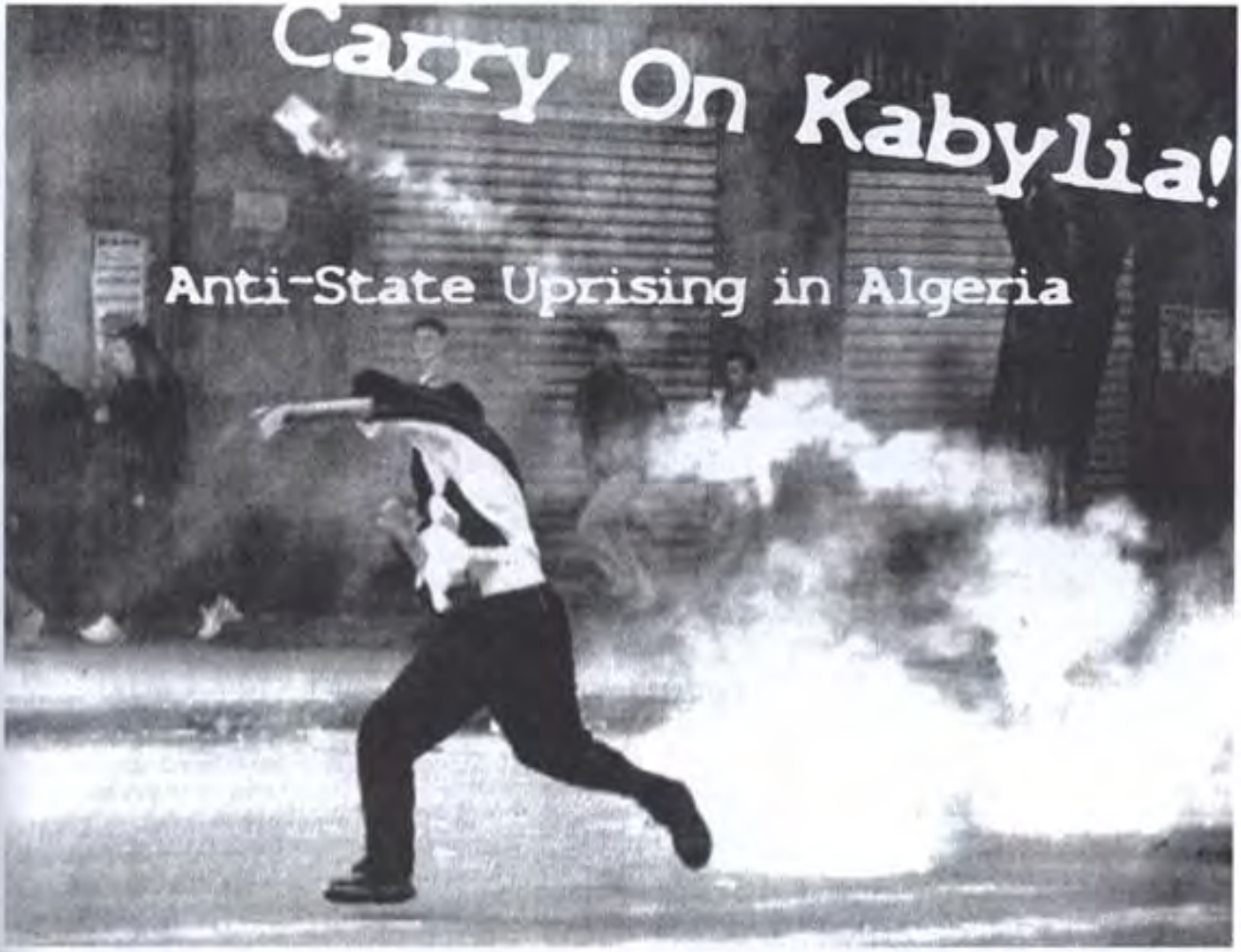
They are tribally organised, with highly decentralised, anarchic politics. The Berbers (or as they call themselves, the *Imazighen*, meaning 'free men') who dwell in northwest Africa are probably the most anarchic of these peoples.

In recent decades, due mainly to improved military technology, all Imazighen across north Africa have fallen much more under the control of centralised nation states. But until the 1960s the Berber peoples of the Sahara were essentially nomadic and in this traditional tribal society no one tribe exerted any direct or indirect power over any other. Each of the 40 tribes that made up the Saharawi was represented in an overall governing body called the Assembly of Forty. This is in contrast with other neighbouring societies, for example Morocco, where there was a hereditary monarch with absolute powers, or Mauritania, where the strongest tribe dominated and extracted tribute from the weaker tribes. Each Saharawi tribe was divided into sub-tribes which had so much autonomy that a colonial historian from Spain described them as living in "complete anarchy". Disputes were handled either in a friendly way or by compensation according to Islamic laws. More serious disputes were taken to the counsel of the chiefs of tribes, called *Ait Arbein*. To this day a similar structure exists in the administration of the Saharawi refugee camps.[1]

Another traditionally anarchic Berber group are the 'Kabyle'—Imazighen farmers of northern Algeria—a group that was noted with favour by Kropotkin. Kabyle villages are independent entities. From 10 to 20 comprise a tribe, but this has no effective function, being at most a voluntary association or alliance called upon on rare occasions for mutual defence. About a dozen tribes are found in Kabylia. Each village has a council, made up of spokespeople from each neighbourhood which decides on all matters of communal importance. There are no policemen and no jails, and in cases of conflict the village council usually seeks to mediate between disputants and to find a compromise, the aim being not so much establishing guilt, but restoring group harmony. Councils operate on the basis of established set of customs peculiar to each village and act only when agreement is unanimous. The two main sanctions available to the village council are banishment and ostracism (seen as a symbolic putting to death) and ultimate power rests with the community's willingness to carry out these sanctions.[2]★

Notes

1) From www.arso.org/05-1.htm and www.oneworld.org
2) *People Without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy* by Harold Barclay (Kahn and Averill, London, 1990) pp. 38 & 96-99



An uprising began in Algeria in April, 2001. Riots began after police murdered a high school boy on April 18 in Beni-Douala, an area of Tizi Ouzou in the region of Kabylia about 70 miles east of Algiers. Riots and demonstrations quickly spread to other villages in the region. Rioters attacked police stations and troop detachments with stones, molotov cocktails and burning tyres, and set fire to police vehicles, government offices, and courts. Government attempts to quell the uprising failed.

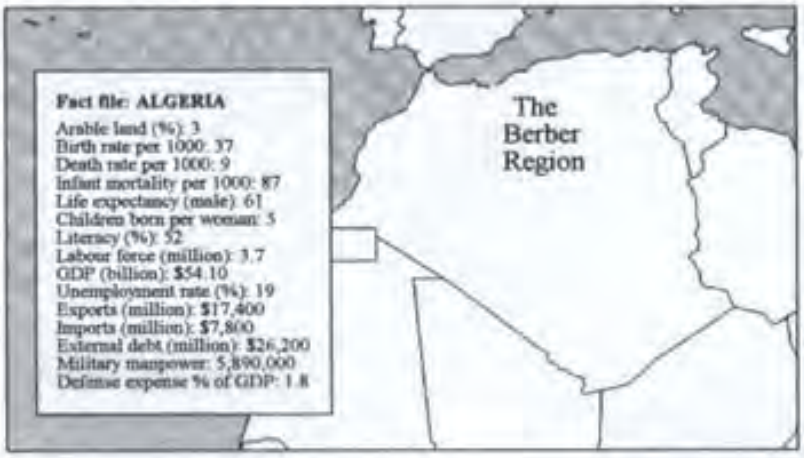
From the beginning, the rebels showed an unwillingness to negotiate and refused all representation. By the end of April, targets of collective rage broadened to include tax offices, all sorts of government offices and the offices of political parties. Rebels blockaded the main roads and looted government buildings and other property of the rulers. The entire region of Kabylia was in open insurrection. The state sent in its guard dogs to repress the revolt, leading to open conflicts with deaths and injuries on both sides.

By the end of the first week of May, the insurgent movement began to organise itself in village and neighbourhood assemblies (the aarch) that coordinated their activities through a system of delegates who would be bound to a very interesting "code of honour" a few months later. The only political movement that might have had a chance of recuperating the revolt, the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) very quickly showed its true colours by offering to aid the president of Algeria, Bouteflika, in organising a "democratic transition".

The coordination of aarch has been organising demonstrations, general strikes, and actions against the police and the elections.

By mid-June, the rebellion had spread beyond the borders of Kabylia, and in Kabylia state control had been nearly completely routed. Offices of the national police were thoroughly devastated, and the police themselves were shunned. Because no one in the region would sell them food and other needs, the government was forced to ship in supplies to them by helicopter and heavily armed convoys.

At the end of June, the coordination of the aarch refused to meet with a government representative,



clearly expressing the attitude of the insurgents. In mid-July the coordination of Tizi Ouzou adopted the "code of honour" which required delegates to pledge themselves "not to carry forward any activities or affairs that aim to create direct or indirect links to power and its collaborators", "not to use the movement for partisan ends nor to drag it into electoral competitions or any other possibility for the conquest of power", "not to accept any political appointments in the institutions of power" among other things. This pledge was put to the test almost immediately when unionists and partisans of the left tried to infiltrate the movement for their own ends. The failure of this opportunistic attempt to hijack the movement was made evident during a general strike on July 26, when demonstrators chanted: "Out with the traitors! Out with the unions!"

Huge demonstrations continued. In mid-August, the insurgents banned all officials from the Sournmarn valley. This was not just due to a government celebration that was to occur there, but also because government officials had begun to contact certain unidentified delegates of the coordination who supported the idea of negotiation. Rather than weakening the struggle this government ploy led the insurgents to ban all government officials from Kabylia. The minister of the Mujaheedin had to cancel a trip to Tizi Ouzou, and the Minister of the Interior was greeted with a rain of stones when he came to install a new prefect.

At the beginning of October, the government banned a demonstration that was intended to present a list of demands called the Platform of El-Kseur to President Bouteflika. A massive array of counter-insurgency detachments was used to block the demonstrators. These demands mainly deal with relief of the immediate effects of government repression against the uprising (end of judicial action against insurgents, release of prisoners, etc.), but also include the demand for the immediate departure of all police brigades from the region. The ban of this demonstration provoked further conflicts between insurgents and the forces of order. On October 11, the interregional coordination (of the *aarch* and other self-organised assemblies and committees) decided that they would no longer submit the demands of their Platform to any state representative, that the demands were absolutely non-negotiable and that anyone who chose to accept dialogue with the government would be banished from the movement. Disobedience was total: taxes and utility bills are not paid, calls to military service are ignored, the upcoming elections are refused.

On December 6, some self-styled "delegates" claiming to represent the *aarch* planned to meet with the head of government. In protest a general strike was called in Kabylia. Sit-ins blockading police barracks turned into violent conflicts throughout the region, some of which lasted for three days. Offices of the gas company, of taxes and of the National Organisation of the Mujaheedin were burned in Amizour. In El Kseur, there were looting raids on a court and a judge's house.

The struggle continued throughout December and January with protests and road blockades. It intensified when a delegation from the *aarch* was arrested in front of the UN office in Algiers on February 7, 2002. On February 12, a general strike was called throughout Kabylia to protest the reappearance of police on the streets. The entire region was shut down. People assembled in front of the police barracks and there were conflicts.

At the end of February, president Bouteflika announced that there would be elections on May 30. The movement responded by confiscating and burning ballot boxes and administrative documents. At the beginning of March it called for a boycott of the elections throughout Algeria.

Bouteflika tried to appease the rebels by offering compromises, which were refused, and by



Local people occupy the gendarmes HQ in Azazga after the paramilitary police are forced to quit the Berber region.

moving police forces out of two major cities. He followed this with mass arrests of delegates of the *aarch*. On March 25, security forces attacked a theatre in Tizi Ouzou that was being used as the office of the citizen coordination and 21 delegates were arrested. After police searches many other delegates went into hiding. Soon, conflicts broke out. The government issued 400 arrest warrants against delegates, leading to further demonstrations. Conflicts continued throughout April.

Despite government repression, the anti-electoral campaign of the *aarch* went forward in May with calls to action, marches and the destruction of ballot boxes. Students demanding the release of prisoners greeted President Bouteflika with a rain of stones when he went to the university of Algiers on May 20. The next day the students occupied the university demanding the release of their comrades.

On May 30, election day, the entire region of Kabylia had less than a 2% voter turnout. People showed their preference for direct action by barricading the streets, occupying the offices of the prefectures and the municipalities, and strewing the public ways with the remains of burned ballot boxes. A general strike paralysed the region. There were conflicts with the police and election offices were attacked and destroyed. In the whole of Algeria, voter turnout was less than 50%, showing that the refusal of elections had spread beyond the borders of Kabylia.

All through June, rebellion and social conflict continued throughout Algeria. On June 19, the government again tried to derail the movement, authorising movement prisoners to meet to discuss a proposal of a government emissary arranged



Protesters dismantle the facade of a gendarmerie.



through the mediation of two supposed delegates. The movement disowned these delegates, and the prisoners refused this government ruse to pressure the movement into negotiation over the Platform of El-Kseur in exchange for the provisional release of those arrested. Instead the prisoners issued a communiqué confirming their confidence in the coordination and their unwillingness to negotiate the demands of their Platform or their release and that of all the other prisoners.

By August, violent conflicts and an ultimatum issued by the movement forced Bouteflika to pardon all the arrested delegates of the *aarch*. Upon release, the delegates declared that the struggle would continue.

In October another election was called. The movement met it with a general strike and demonstrations. There were conflicts with the police everywhere. Once again, about half of the eligible Algerians boycotted the elections. In Kabylia, in spite of the participation of the FFS in the elections, 90% of those eligible refused to participate in the elections, and in the rest of Algeria 50% of those eligible did not vote.

Toward the end of October, the authorities cracked down. Police raided various halls where assemblies and coordination groups met and hundreds of insurgents and delegates were arrested. Some of the imprisoned insurgents began a hunger strike in late November. This expanded in December so that insurgents in prisons in Bugia, Tizi Ouzoti and Bouira were hunger striking. Thirteen of the thirty-nine who started the hunger strike were still fasting after forty-two days. They were placed in isolation to prevent them from "infecting" the other prisoners with their spirit of revolt. Throughout the hunger strike there were a number of demonstrations in support of the prisoners, but many were severely repressed. The prisoners ended their hunger strike on January 13 2003 at the request of comrades and family.

It is hard to know where this will go from here. The Berber rebels continue to vigourously defend their autonomy. Thousands regularly occupy the streets of Kabylia—there was another huge demonstration at the end of April. Repression has been intense, and it seems that many people grow

weary, but the problems that provoked the uprising remain.

This insurrection is of great interest to anarchists. There have been no leaders, no parties, no charismatic spokespeople and no hierarchical or representative organisations of any sort behind it. It has been self-organised by those in struggle in a horizontal way and with specific guidelines to prevent the possibility of recuperation by parties, unions, politicians or other unscrupulous individuals, and these guidelines have been actively reinforced by those in struggle. The movement has remained equally opposed to all of the contenders for power: the military, the government, Islamic fundamentalists, the left and the unions. It managed to keep police "quarantined" to their barracks for long periods of time. It carried out two election boycotts. Once it even forced the government to release arrested comrades. And it carried out the daily tasks of an ongoing insurrectionary struggle. All through autonomous direct action. Now it is undergoing intense repression, and solidarity is needed.

Here is a statement of solidarity issued by some Italian comrades at the end of November:

"Insurgent Algerians,

"The struggle that you have been carrying forward against all society's rulers since April 2001 is an example for us and for all the exploited. Your uninterrupted rebellion has shown that the terrorism of the state and the integralist groups, allied for a decade in the slaughter of the poor to the benefit of the rich, has not lessened your ferocity. You have understood that faced with the infectious disease of military dictatorship and the plague of Islamic fundamentalism, the only choice is open revolt. In the union of two capitalisms, the liberal one that privatises and fires people in mass and the socialist bureaucratic one that tortures and kills, you have responded with the unity of a generalised struggle."

"We imagine what it means for a state and its police to find themselves facing a mass of rebels whose posters warn: 'You cannot kill us, we are already dead' as occurred in June 2001. But we can barely imagine what it means for a region with a few million inhabitants, like Kabylia, where the police are barricaded in their barracks, 'quarantined' by the insurgent population; in which elections are deserted en masse, the ballot boxes and the offices of political parties set on fire; in which the city halls are deserted and boarded up."

"The politicians who sit in the parliament with zero votes obtained have revealed the lie of representative democracy and the arrogance of a power that is increasingly mafia-like to all. You have managed to shatter the plans of anyone who tried to give your struggle a regionalist or particularist image.

"The universal content of your demands—such as that of the immediate and non-negotiable withdrawal of the police—can no longer be hidden."

"The autonomy of your movement, organised horizontally in the *aarch* (village assemblies), can only unite all the leaders of Algerian society and their accomplices in other countries against you. A revolt without leaders and without parties won't even find favour among the professionals of international solidarity who are deprived, in this case, of charismatic figures or sub-commandantes to idealise. Up to now, you have only been able to count on yourselves. And the repression presses hard, with hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries, people disabled for life, so many missing, the torture and arrest of many delegates of the *aarch* and many demonstrators. With prisoners on hunger strike and many insurgents forced to go underground."

"Now the radicality of what you have already done finds other accomplices in the world, in order to break the information embargo and the murderous violence of the state. The bullets that strike are also given by the Italian government and Italian industries, Eni in the lead. The weapons that are used against your demonstrations are often of Italian manufacture."

"COMRADES, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. MAY YOUR REVOLT EXPLODE EVERYWHERE."

—"Some friends of the *Aarch*"★



Children throwing around lists of candidates in an abandoned polling station in Tadmait.

CARRY ON CAMPING!

DIRECT ACTION SITES STILL HANGING IN THERE



Although the number of protest sites has been in decline since the late 1990s, the tactic may thankfully be starting to have a renaissance. Despite their possible shortcomings (for example see articles in *Do or Die* No.8, pp. 155-158), they can attract new people to radical ecological action and can still be highly effective at slowing or halting ecologically destructive developments. This is a brief round up of current sites, though more are planned.

Arundel, West Sussex

A new site set up in summer 2003 at Tortington Common, in response to the proposed 'bypass of the bypass' at Arundel.

Over five square km of ancient woodland is threatened, including 100 foot Oaks and Yew trees. Torrington Common, Binsted Woods and the wetlands of the river Arun will all be affected.

The proposed road is part of the planned South Coast motorway, which is being surreptitiously built in segments—further ecological destruction will occur across the South Downs if the new bypass is built at Arundel.



Defences are being built and direct action is being planned; as ever, people and climbing tat are needed in what could become a major campaign.

The site is west of Arundel, 15 minutes walk from Ford railway station on the South Coast line. Tel: 07736 964 653 or 07792 248 192 (text messages preferred) Email: worthing@eco-action.org Web: www.scar-uk.fsnet.co.uk

D'Hoppe Forest, Belgium

Yes, we know, not in Britain, but probably closer to many of us than Scotland! D'Hoppe is a small village in Belgium whose surrounding forest is adjacent to the Brakelbos nature reserve. The city owned forest, which provides a rich natural habitat, is being attacked by sand quarrying, untreated sewage and an unlawfully functioning landfill operation.

The forest has been occupied since April 2003—tree houses have been erected and a camp established. Direct action has occurred regularly, targeting the council, the environment ministry, and blockading roads. A whole week of action is happened at the end of June 2003.



The site is located near D'Hoppe/La Hoppe, 8km east of Ronse/Renasi along the N48. Buses 21-25 from Ronse pass the village. From D'Hoppe station continue along the road and take an immediate right. Two hundred metres into the forest there's a path on the left towards the site. Tel: 00 32 497 630 312 Email: info@foert.org Web: www.foert.org

Faslane Peace Camp, Scotland

At 21 years, the longest running camp in the UK, Faslane Peace camp has continually acted against the nuclear weapons and submarines at Faslane Naval Base, and despite threats of eviction, the camp has survived.

In April 2003, a mass blockade involving a diverse mix of over 600 people happened. Many activists used chain and plastic tube lock-ons to successfully close down the base. Direct action will continue at Faslane to make Scotland nuke free!

The camp is right outside Faslane Naval Base, Shandon, Dunbartonshire, Scotland. Tel: 01436 820 901 Email: contact@faslanepeacecamp.org.uk Web: www.faslanepeacecamp.org.uk



Bilston Wood, Scotland

Protestors have erected a site at Bilston Glen to stop the 'realignment' of the A701. The proposed road, which is to be built under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) will destroy mature woodland and lead to further industrialisation.

Part of the woodland is an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), and contains a medieval bridge and tower. Direct action is needed to prevent the destruction of an important ecosystem.

To get to the camp, upon entering Bilston (8 miles south of Edinburgh towards Penicuik on the A701), there's a footpath opposite the VW garage. Go down the path towards the bridge to the site. Tel: 07986 632 429

Email: info@bilstonglen-abs.org.uk Web: www.bilstonglen-abs.org.uk



Nine Ladies, Derbyshire

The site at Nine Ladies has existed since September 1999. It exists to stop the planned quarrying of Stanton Moor, part of the Peak District National Park. As well as supporting fallow deer, badgers and other wildlife, Stanton Moor is also a Bronze Age burial site including the Nine Ladies stone circle.

The presence of the site has deterred quarry expansion in the Peak District, and direct action has taken place throughout the campaign. Nine Ladies consists of four camps, and is under immediate threat of eviction. As ever, people and equipment are needed.

The OS National Grid reference for the site is SK 247 634. To get there by bus catch the R61 or TransPeak (both TRENT) to Rowsley (Peacock Hotel). Turn left following the sign for Stanton-in-Peak. Keep following this road until you reach a junction, then take the sharp left hand turn, which is signposted Stanton Lees. Carry on past a phone box, and the site entrance is on your right and may have a vehicle (or several) parked near to it. By train you can catch the train to Matlock and proceed from there. There are now various signs marking the entrance. The path leads towards an old barn, near which is the communal bender and an information trailer. Tel: 07876 311 709

Email: sparky@nineladies.zoom.co.uk Web: www.nineladies.uklinux.net★



FUELLING CONFLICT



TAKING ON THE BAKU-CEYHAN PIPELINE

The Baku Tbilisi Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is BP's latest project. Running from the Caspian Sea through 8 conflict zones in Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan, this 1,000 mile long oil pipeline will bring 1 million barrels of oil a day to Europe and the US for the next 40 years, and will have a devastating impact on the ecology and human rights in the area.

The pipeline is the key to unlocking vast oil reserves, the burning of which will wreak havoc on the earth's climate. The BTC pipeline will bring us oil equal to 150 percent of the pollution produced by all vehicles in the UK each year and 250 percent of the carbon dioxide pollution that the UK said it would cut under the Kyoto climate change agreement. Furthermore, BP will have no social or environmental responsibility (e.g. for leaks) even though the pipeline is planned to run through earthquake zones. Oil will be spilt by tankers and washed up on our shores. National parks and huge mineral water sources will be sacrificed. Both current and future local and EU laws and protection will be bypassed.

In terms of human rights, we only have to look at BP's track record (and that of any other oil company such as Shell in Ogoniland, Nigeria) to know what this pipeline will mean for the people on the ground. The area around the pipeline will be run under special 'BP law'. In other places such as Nigeria and Colombia, this has meant killings and disappearances by brutal paramilitaries, paid for by host countries and by us, through public money and BP tax dodges and corruption. This militarisation of oil extraction areas also gives the UK an opportunity to sell more arms.

Local communities will not see any benefit from this pipeline. It will trash or evict Kurdish villages and farmland already under violent occupation and assault by the Turkish state. They will lose their land, their independence, their skills, and some of them will lose their lives. No one except BP and its project partners will benefit from this proposed pipelines system, yet BP is asking that 70 percent of the $3.3 billion project be financed by public money. It is courting the UK government and banks such as the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Financial Corporation (IFC—an arm of the World Bank) which generate their funds from taxpayers' money. If these banks don't cough up the money, the pipeline cannot go ahead. At present, although the British government are 'minded' to give BP the £65 million they need for the pipeline, and the construction company AMEC are lined up to build it, the project is not yet an absolute certainty. Which gives us an opportunity to stop it.

Direct Action in the UK

Earth First! and other groups have been visiting many of the companies involved in the pipeline. In December 2002, the London HQ of Environmental Resource Management (ERM), bullshit environmental consultants for the pipeline, was occupied by London Rising Tide. Independent researchers found that consultations had not been done in local languages and that many villages had

been ignored and key locations excluded. The consultants from ERM claimed to have talked to 100 percent of villagers in Hacibayram in north eastern Turkey—a village that was, at the time, completely abandoned following local conflict! BP was contacted from the ERM Chief Executive's office and a spoof consultation about the day's occupation was done. In January 2003 a group of people visited the Manchester offices of ERM and demanded to talk to David Woodward, BP's Head of Azerbaijan.

In February, Leeds EF! occupied the top floor offices of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the City of London, interrupting an executive meeting about the BTC pipeline. They refused to leave until they had spoken to those responsible for signing off the project. In response the very eager-to-appease Public Relations, Environment and Economics directors attempted to 'dialogue' with the group for four hours. The discussion confirmed that the EBRD had already promised BP the money and were now just working out how to justify it! When asked to name one oil pipeline ever that had delivered the benefits promised to affected communities, they couldn't. An invitation to return has not yet been taken up! Documents were also found with the Bank's prepared answers to criticisms.

Also in February, Oxford Rising Tide greeted and gave out leaflets to BP shareholders outside BP HQ on the day the quarterly results were announced.

In March, another group occupied the offices of RSK in Cheshire—a greenwash company similar to ERM but this time providing Cultural and Heritage Impact Assessments, and with a client list that makes your blood run cold. Because not much was known about RSK—and because the group had no desire to listen to bullshit—the group decided on a silent occupation, refusing to engage with any of the staff and simply gathering whatever information they could from files and computers. RSK are heavily involved in managing the image of the oil industry all round the world.

Also in March, the International Petroleum Exchange (IPE) in the City of London was stormed. The trading floor was closed down as traders threw punches and insults at the occupiers, one of whom had to get stitches in his forehead. Two people managed to occupy an office overlooking the trading floor, barricading themselves inside for 40 minutes until they were dragged out by the police's riot squad. In all the IPE was closed down for three hours in an action designed to crystallise the link between oil and the war in Iraq. For more information contact:
infernalpetroleum@yahoo.co.uk

In April, the BP Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Royal Festival Hall in London was disrupted by Earth Firstlers. Heavy security was got past and the reception stunk out (boil up comfrey and nettles, leave to cool, then piss in it to activate a really noxious smell. You can also add fishbait—lugworm or smelly cheese—for a worse stench!) Two people got into the auditorium itself where rants were shouted and CEO John Browne was heckled. Barry Halton, BP Baku NGO Relations, 'dialogued' with a locked-on activist by sending for bolt-croppers.

The Baku pipeline is a big deal—not only because it's a nasty project but also because it is happening at a time when the first phase of the oil wars has begun—with the invasion of Iraq by the corporatocracy led by Bush and Blair. This is not an isolated case, it's not just BP, but we can make a start with BP, which is already on shaky ground. Because of visits like those described above and due to pressure exerted by groups like Rising Tide, the Baku pipeline has already been put back by 6 months. At 1 million barrels of oil a day, every day's delay means the loss of millions of dollars. Furthermore, despite an aggressive greenwash strategy (including a BP sponsored 'Ecology' exhibition at the Natural History Museum in London) concerns about BP working practices in Alaska and Colombia have already caused investors to question their involvement with BP. There is no future and no sense in the oil industry—it cannot be reformed, it has to be dismantled. So get out there and shut BP down!

Futher Information

For information on the pipeline contact Rising Tide, the UK grassroots network against climate change, at: info@risingtide.org.uk

Check these websites:
www.bakuceyhan.org.uk
www.burningplanet.net
www.bpamoco.org.uk
www.bankwatch.org
www.erm-concerns.com

Also worth looking at is *Some Common Concerns: Imagining BP's Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey Pipelines System* produced by various campaigning groups (ISBN 1 900175 49 5)

Take Action!

Get a group together and go and visit one of the following: ERM (London and Manchester), the EBRD (London), AMEC (London and Cheshire), RSK (Cheshire), Lazard Brothers (London) and any BP petrol station or office.★



WITHOUT A TRACE



Dominant culture rarely interests itself in evidence other than that which shows willing and enthusiastic complicity from its subjects. Acts of refusal and revolt are effaced from the historical record when they expose the tenuous control of authority. Even when they do appear, presence, motives and behaviour are all mediated through the lens of elite partiality which works to deny that we are capable of generating the ideas and means of our own liberation.

That much most of us recognise; it is the premise of class history developed in the 1960s by the likes of EP Thompson, Christopher Hill and Eric Hobsbawn. But theirs is also a particularist history, focused as it is on the same level of *public* appearance as that of the Establishment. Just as real life is elsewhere than on television, so the history of resistance is at the very least written between the lines of the official record of leaders, followers and climatic events. In the interests of self-preservation, the ruling class and its official recorders—journalists and other such vermin whose social position depends upon the maintenance of class society—invariably work to keep attention only on a protests leaders (whether real or imaginary) and particularly on those with superior status or privilege.

But as well as those who lack the influence to have their words and actions recognised as important are those who have no intention whatsoever to be identified. It is this realm of individual and collective refusal that has proved the most resilient to exposure in the historical record.

A vast area of active political life is ignored for the simple fact that it takes place at a level we rarely recognise as political. Trained by the mass media to applaud the spectacular action rather than the incremental and prudent, all is in the appearance, the *image* of revolt as reproduced through that same mass media. But much political activity is elaborated among an intentionally restricted public that excludes or is hidden from the gaze of authority. So it is not only that the historical record is kept by elites, for elites, but that subversives themselves have an interest in concealment of their activities (for starters, this gives us greater personal security and self control). Such acts as these were never meant to be recordable, and they were often successful only insofar as they were invisible. The most successful poisoning of class oppressors, for example, are those never known as such. Just like the perfect crime, the subversive act seeks to escape all detection, cover its tracks and avoid appearance in the archives; for the perpetrators to strike (anonymously) again. Only those who wish to be martyrs, self-publicists or media personalities would wish to wait around to offer their names and have their picture taken.

Though the point, by its very nature, is impossible of proof, *apparent* docility is the measure of subterfuge, and is only broken by



those crises of ruling class confidence that allow insurrectionary breakthrough. Our ability to capitalise on these favourable moments must be understood in the context of a long term struggle that is only successful insofar as it is invisible.

So a view of politics focused either on the official and formal relations of power (the command performances of consent), or on open protest and rebellion, represents a far too narrow concept of political life. The body of historical knowledge that we must grapple with is for the most part only a record of that which has broken through to the public sphere. There are undoubtedly important instructive events and occurrences among them which can give strength, through popular memory, to protest and resistance. But the lens of hindsight and reportage is a distorted mirror. 'History' records what is most spectacular and most easily located: the start, the peaks, the decisive break with the past. We see the climax, the (only possibly decisive) invasion of public space. As such it implodes the development of movements of refusal and social transformation, for it freezes our attention on a single frame in time, disconnected from that which made it possible. As Dickens remarks in *Barnaby Rudge*; "We note the harvest more than the seed time." Despite the claims of the media, these moments almost never come from nowhere; they are, rather, the acceleration of continuing processes through timely public manifestation. The agitation and preparation that precede and underpin the demonstrative act are *always* beginning and never end. It is at the point of certain rupture that the perpetrators of everyday acts of refusal consider it safe to appear on the public stage. Unless provoked by the State into desperate measures, open collective defiance is rarely undertaken unless it is practical and likely to succeed. Until that time, the mechanisms, structures and struggles which necessarily precede it remain a closed book.

It is the accumulation of 'petty' acts of defiance and refusal that make critical upsurges possible. They are not a substitute for revolution but a necessary condition for it. That is why the insurrectionary moment invariably escalates so rapidly—"as if from nowhere"—and is why revolutionary elites (the clownish ringmasters of the vanguard) always find themselves hopelessly overtaken.

No More False Prophets

An understanding of previous movements for change is not merely an exercise in historical interpretation. Knowledge gained is the means by which we can understand how to take effective action, ourselves, today. When we recognise what has been, we can plan for what might be.

Movements that attempt to create a groundswell of opposition by initiating public (usually publicity seeking) protests will always meet with general indifference not because most people don't care, but because we are a lot more realistic about the utility of such initiatives than the protestors.

The art of the possible is discovered rather in those anonymous, immediate (but not by any means spontaneous) short run collective actions that apply the principles of guerrilla warfare to everyday life. Cryptic and, above all, *surreptitious* actions are best adapted to resist an opponent who can probably win any open confrontation. We must be ever ready to melt away as soon as faced with unfavourable odds.

Spontaneous forms of popular action can be, and are, deliberately chosen because of the tactical advantages for all those involved. What might be called 'low intensity class warfare' is always pressing, testing and probing the boundaries of the permissible—so as to take swift advantage of any fissures that may open up in moments of crisis. It is not then our 'incapacity' to sustain permanent political organisation (most sensible people vote with their feet and avoid these formations like the plague) but that the choice of fleeting, direct action represents a popular tactical wisdom developed in conscious response to the political constraints realistically faced. Anonymity and avoidance of formal organisations are enabling modes of resistance, a measure of our understanding of both the danger and the futility of spectacular mediated action.

While such action precludes formal organisation, it most certainly does not eschew

effective co-ordination, achieved through the informal networks of affinity, kinship, traditional and intentional community, workplace and, yes, even perhaps ritual and religious practice. Socially embedded networks, developed at the level of the everyday, are as opaque to the authorities as they are indispensable to subversive activity. Let what's left of the Left engage in monumental plans for grandiose national—now even global—federations. (Federations and movements of what? Parades before the worlds TV cameras? No thanks.)

Effective subversion must be organised out of the gaze of domination, in a sequestered physical, cultural or social location; those areas that are least patrolled by authority. (Anarchist and eco-activist meetings are mostly conventions for police informers, wannabe reformist politicians and loonies.)

For those who look only on the surface of things, those seduced by the spectacular *image* of defiance, the strategy posed here might be seen as a retreat from 'conventional' class struggle. But all things are precisely not as they seem; this is the very form that traditional successful class struggle has *always* taken. The clandestine, apparently innocuous, maybe even anti-political assembly provides the fluidity, the guerrilla mobility, for effective subversive action.

No Name No Slogan

For us, there are immediate uses and gains in formations such as these; no leaders to round up, no hierarchical organisation to wield power over us in our name, no membership lists to investigate, no manifestos to denounce, no mediators to meet (and then join) the power holding elite. No public claims are made, no symbolic lines are drawn, no press statements to be deliberately misconstrued and trivialised by journalists. No platforms or programmes which the intellectuals can hijack as their exclusive property, no flag or banner to which to pledge a crass and sectarian allegiance.

Then what concrete forms will our subversion take? Well, the forms it *already* takes; theft, feigned ignorance (all the better to dissemble our intentions), shirking or careless labour, foot-dragging and the go-slow, zero work (with a little preparation we might come to enjoy the next depression), secret trade and production for sale (for barter—or even better for free), squatting, defaulting on all payments for anything, evasion of taxes, destruction of official records, sabotage and arson, assassination, impromptu riot (for the hell of it) and the detournment of State sponsored celebration into moments of joyous destruction.

If we were to undertake all this with the objective of attaining a complete self reliance in the satisfaction of all our needs and desires, we may well find it sufficient for the move from surviving within this system, to superseding it.

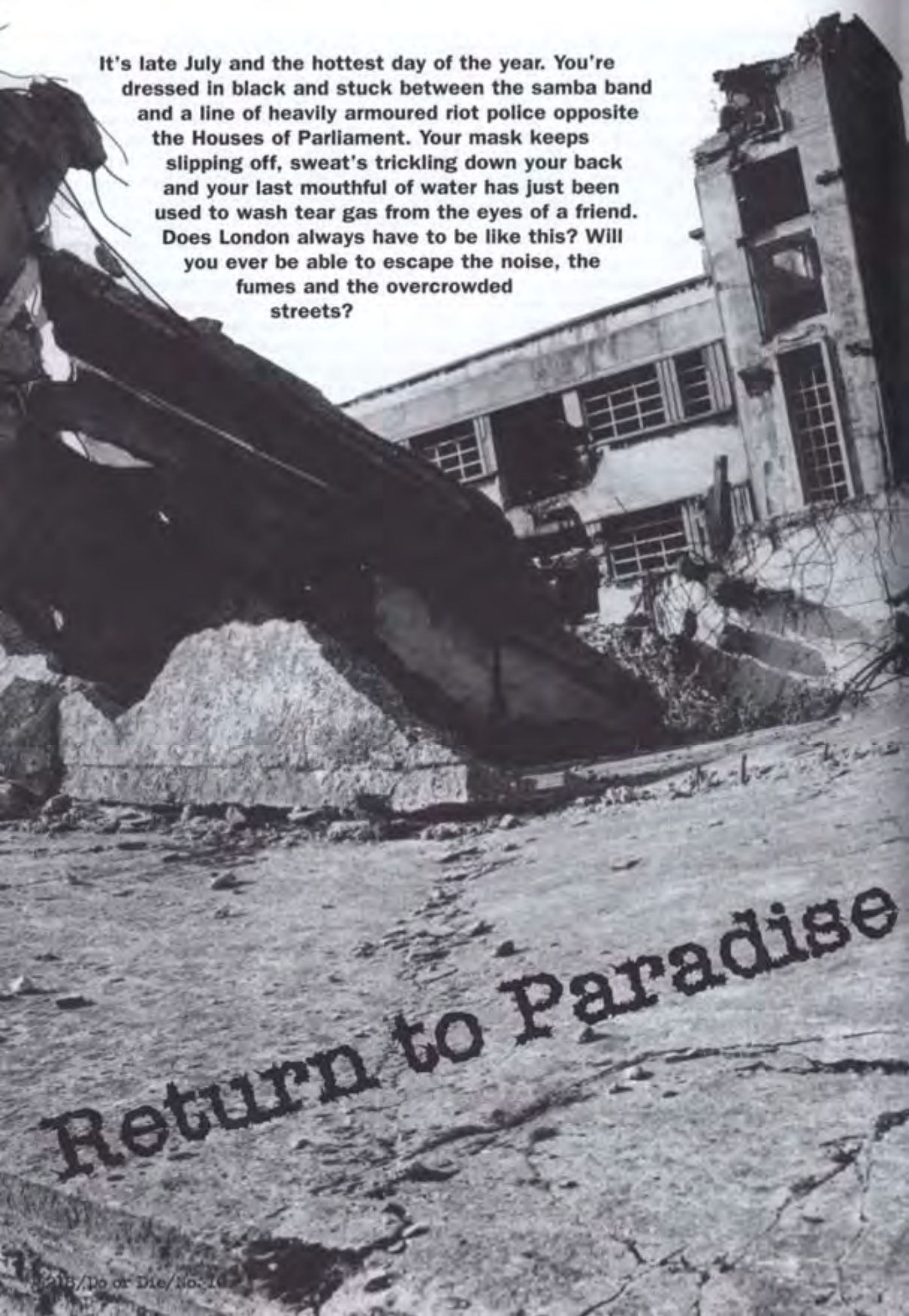
Let the daily celebration of life be but a dress rehearsal for insurrection. It is the accumulation of small, instrumental acts that will bring authority to its knees. Let us rise!★

Symbiosis



1. A close association of two interdependent animal or plant species.
2. A similar relationship between persons or groups. [Greek: a living together]

The Tuatara Lizard (*Sphenodon punctatus*) has a symbiotic relationship with two birds, the Diving Petrel (*Pelecanoides sp.*) and the Sooty Shearwater (*Puffins griseus*). The Tuatara is a living fossil—the only remaining example of the reptilian order Rhynchocephilia; the rest of this group of animals have been extinct for about a hundred million years. The Tuatara has lived almost without change for two hundred million years, passed by evolution thanks in part to its isolation on islands off New Zealand. It sports a crest of elongated movable plates along its neck and back giving rise to its name, which means 'spine bearer' in Maori. Not reproducing until the age of twenty, it lays its eggs in burrows—usually those inhabited by birds. The eggs remain in the nest for up to sixteen months (a very long time for a lizard or a bird!). Once hatched, the lizard can live for up to three hundred years. The birds with which it associates live in colonies with burrows close together, giving the lizard a measure of safety, as the birds have a noisy early warning system if danger threatens. From the birds' point of view, the lizard protects eggs and nestlings from nest thieves and cleans the burrows of parasitic insects.★



It's late July and the hottest day of the year. You're dressed in black and stuck between the samba band and a line of heavily armoured riot police opposite the Houses of Parliament. Your mask keeps slipping off, sweat's trickling down your back and your last mouthful of water has just been used to wash tear gas from the eyes of a friend. Does London always have to be like this? Will you ever be able to escape the noise, the fumes and the overcrowded streets?

Return to Paradise

"Hell is a city much like London," wrote Shelley, one hundred and eighty years ago. But it hasn't always been this way. Let your mind wander ten times further back, one thousand eight hundred years before Shelley's time, when the vista in Parliament Square was very different. Where you are now a sweet stream is flowing down from the hills of Hampstead. Just ahead are the reedy shores of the meandering Thames. On the right, where Westminster Abbey will stand, is Thorney Island, named after its wild abundance of brambles. Behind are peaceful meadows fringed with willow.

Even a thousand years ago, when Edward the Confessor was considering Thorney Island as the site for his great abbey, this was a tranquil, rustic place. "A delightful spot, surrounded with fertile lands and green fields", one monk wrote in his life of Edward.

Could the clock be turned back and London once more be a sylvan paradise? If you've ever been filled with a secret wish to see the traffic vanish, the buildings tumble down and London's hills and valleys once more filled with flowers and trees and birdsong, you are not alone. Towards the close of the last century, naturalist Richard Jefferies was so disgusted by the capital's filth that he wrote *After London*, in which Londoners are mercifully extinct and the city rapidly reverts to marsh.

But what would really happen if London went back to nature? Let's suppose that this weekend Londoners flee after a Chernobyl style nuclear accident. Or that tonight's news reveals that a genetically-engineered virus has been set loose, as in the recent film *28 Days Later*. Or that Londoners suddenly all get so sick of city life that they take Shelley's advice to flee "to the wild wood and the downs". How long before abandoned London turned back to a rural paradise? How would it look in 5, 50 or 500 years? How would nature take control?

2003-2008

"Most cities already have the biological potential—microorganisms, soil nematodes, earthworms, up through the larger vertebrates—to rapidly begin the natural processes that humans interfere with just by being around," says John Hadidian, director of the Urban Wildlife Protection Program of The Humane Society of the United States.

The initial changes are familiar to every city dweller who goes into battle against invading weeds and shrubs. Within the first year, dandelions and other weeds begin growing in the gutters and emerge from the cracks caused by frost and flooding in concrete, paving slabs and walls.

But they only exploit existing weaknesses. Shrubs like buddleia are far more aggressive. Its roots are powerful enough to penetrate bricks and mortar to find moisture, says botanist Anthony Bradshaw, formerly of the University of Liverpool. Buddleia grows fast, and its light seeds are easily dispersed by the wind. Brought to Britain from the Himalayas to adorn Victorian gardens, buddleia is already everywhere in London, poised to rid the city of its concrete and brick.

The litter from these plants, plus the thin layer of mosses and lichens, gradually settles as a fine layer of soil on top of the concrete and tarmac, allowing other plants to spread. Within five years, roads, pavements, parking places, and the great squares of the city are carpeted with weeds and a rich turf of clover.

Nitrogen-fixing plants like clover flourish first because the soil contains much sand and detritus from disintegrating brick and concrete and is still poor in nutrients. For the same reason, alder, which can also fix nitrogen, would be one of the first trees to establish itself. These plants gradually make room for less adaptable species. An understorey of grasses and shrubs gradually spreads over the city. As the soil layer builds up, deeper-rooting plants take hold. Trees start to grow and their roots smash through what's left of the pavement and tarmac that has sealed the earth from the sun while humans held sway.

The city of Pripyat, near Chernobyl, shows how quickly nature can take its revenge. Pripyat was the most modern of Soviet towns, built with little expense spared for nuclear workers at Chernobyl. Now, says Donald Bruce, a former nuclear inspector who visited Pripyat in April, the concrete paving stones in one of the city's squares have been smashed and, in places, pushed up almost a metre by tree roots, as if a giant earthquake had struck.

The pace of change speeds up after London is hit by fire and flood. Early autumn around five years after abandonment is a likely time for fire. The streets have built up a shallow litter of grasses and fallen leaves. A dry spell and a lightning strike sets the city ablaze. Fire guts the buildings that still dominate the London landscape. As the houses burn and roofs come crashing down, nutrients are released from their timbers and from leaf litter, providing the fertiliser to speed London's return to its past. "The plants would really charge in, taking advantage of the nitrogen available from burnt material," says Hadidian.

Before the fire, London is merely derelict. In the next five years, plants are poised to really take over as another powerful force of nature—flood—begins to hit the city.

2008-2013

With humans gone, floods are inevitable. On 12th January 1996, the Thames flood barrier was closed for three consecutive tides to hold back damaging surges generated by a combination of a major storm and spring tides. Without the flood barrier, says Mervyn Littlewood, a tidal engineer at Hydraulics Research, Wallingford, a surge tide could charge into central London and damage the embankments that protect it. "Then in a comparatively short time you would get regular inundation from spring tides." Even without a storm, says Littlewood, neglect ensures that the river's earth embankments are slowly eroded or damaged by subsidence. Several times a year, and then more frequently, land along the banks of the Thames floods and gradually reverts to marshland.



At the close of the first decade after abandonment, the wildlife really begins to come into its own. Familiar weeds, like rose bay willowherb that grew in places endlessly disrupted by humans, yield to the true flowers of nature. Orchids once more bloom in central London. The river, railways and canals, which provide broad avenues linking central London to the surrounding countryside, help the old inhabitants spread back into town.

The advance parties are already here. The Camley Street Natural Park beside the Regent's Canal in north London is in an area that was once part of the Middlesex forest. Andy Littlewood, who manages the park for the London Wildlife Trust, says that it contains five common spotted orchids whose seeds probably arrived via the canal from some distant source. It also contains a large pond whose fish population is sustained by fry from the canal. Should London ever be evacuated, Littlewood believes the park itself would act as a seed store as well as an animal pool for colonisation further afield.

With the plants come butterflies, bees and other insects and invertebrates. Larger insects, birds and finally mammals follow as the food chain rebuilds itself. Soon, even the centre of the city is full of butterflies as well as kestrels, foxes, hedgehogs, bats and—where the floods leave pools and marsh in the area closest to the river—toads, frogs and newts. Birch trees flourish in the developing soil.

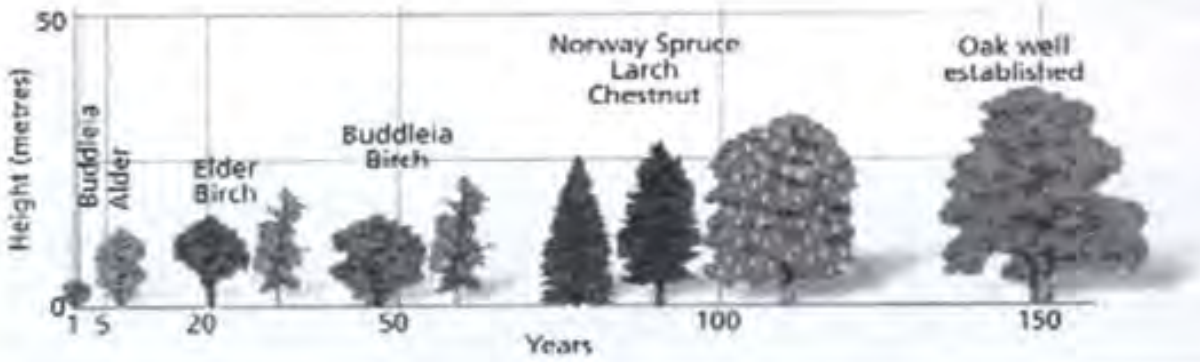
But not all abandoned London's wildlife is entirely natural. The two grey wolves in London Zoo have upped and bred with pet dogs gone wild. Bernt Jones of Uppsala University in Sweden, says that larger dogs like German shepherds could well survive in the wild and prove suitable mates for the wolves. Smaller breeds of dog would simply provide their lunch.

Cats do better. A 1993 study of the stomach contents and behaviour of feral cats showed that 75 percent of their diet came from food put out for them, while the rest came from scavenging. But other studies have shown that urban cats kill a lot of prey which they do not eat—mostly birds, followed by small mammals such as rats and mice. According to Hadidian, it would be much easier for cats to "rediscover their wild genes" than for dogs.

Many animals that we think of as 'wildlife' vanish in the first decade, as they depend on the food and shelter provided by humans. Trafalgar Square is bereft of its vast flocks of pigeons and house mice disappear altogether. Sewer rats fare no better. "The reason we've got rats is because we've got people," says Dave Cowan of the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Central Science Laboratory in Slough. Voles, fieldmice and other rural species would return to fill the niche, says Oliver Gilbert, a reader in landscape architecture at the University of Sheffield.

But as birch saplings encroach on the Mall, and much of central London is full of burnt out buildings, overrun with creepers and with shrubs growing out from ledges and cracks in their walls, the besieged city still holds out against the onslaught of nature. The concrete and steel office blocks in the City financial district and out east to Canary Wharf are immensely strong. Although the streets have turned green, the concrete buildings merely look neglected. Windows are broken, or have fallen from their frames, and the concrete is stained by the smoke of fires. But their structures are in as good shape as ever—or even better.

Without people, there'd be no pollution from vehicles or industry, says Tim Burstein of the Department of Materials Science at the University



A succession of trees take over the city, with oak eventually dominating away from the flood plain.

of Cambridge, and rain would be less acidic than it is now. That helps preserve concrete, which is alkaline. The condition of the buildings is good news for cliff-nesting birds. At the end of the first decade, the complex of pipes and stairwells that adorn the Lloyd's building supports a huge population of kestrels, sparrowhawks and even a few rough-legged buzzards from Scandinavia.

2013-2063

Some other great steel structures—the bridges of London—would not find life after humans so congenial. Blackfriars bridge and some of the other metal bridges that span the Thames need regular repainting and thirty years would be enough for them to fall into disrepair, says Littlewood.

The massive masonry piers hold up for a long time, but fifty years after abandonment the bridges are collapsing. "You would end up with a series of weirs down the river where bits and pieces had fallen in," says Littlewood. Salmon returned to the Thames in the 1970s, after it was cleaned up, but have not yet spawned there. In the new pollution-free London, salmon leap their artificial weirs on the way to the spawning grounds upriver.

Twenty to thirty years after the humans leave, birch woodland would rapidly fill the open spaces, says David Goode, director of the London Ecology Unit. Elsewhere an impenetrable understorey of elder thicket—perhaps rising to five metres in height—dominates. As the birch matures and some trees fall, creating even more ground litter, sycamore and maple move in.

"The whole built townscape would change quite dramatically in something like 30 years," Goode says. Ivy, carried by birds from the Victorian cemeteries where it proliferates, is growing down from the roofs of skyscrapers, giving Canary Wharf and Centre Point a spreading green cap. Ivy also clambers up from the ground, probably reaching a maximum height of 40 metres, says Gilbert.

Wooden constructions would be the first to vanish completely, says Hari Srinivas of the Department of Social Engineering at Tokyo Institute of Technology, followed by the materials that glue a building together—partitions, insulation—materials that insects destroy by nesting in them. House sparrows, pigeons and other birds that nest inside city buildings are usually accompanied by insects that live in their nests. When the birds leave, the insects colonise carpets, fur and plants.

The remains of houses built of brick and stone are still clearly visible amid the growing forest. Steel pipes and copper cables are rusted but still recognisable. But as trees grow and take root among the rubble, more and more walls come crashing down. Leaf litter begins to pile up over the brick and rubble, softening its hard angles. Several centuries more are needed before they are reduced to mysterious hummocks beneath the turf and the giant towers of concrete, still dominating the skyline above the trees, are brought down.

2063-2563

London's brick buildings have been gutted by fire, undermined by water, battered by storms and infiltrated by plant roots and insects. Those nearest the rivers—the Thames and its tributaries, including London's many underground rivers such as the Fleet, which flows alongside Farringdon Road—are the first to go, says Heather Viles, a lecturer in physical geography at the University of Oxford.



Now concrete and steel structures, too, are succumbing. After 200 years many buildings are crumbling, if not on the brink of collapse. While the concrete remained alkaline, the steel bars that reinforce it held fast against corrosion. But carbon dioxide dissolved in rain has gradually carbonated the surface of the concrete and edged its way in, while acid from decaying organic matter in the ground has infiltrated concrete foundations.

Once the steel corrodes, the end is swift. The corrosion products take up about three times the volume of the steel itself, says Burstein, so as the steel rusts, it expands until its concrete covering crumbles off. "This is probably the major failure you would see in buildings like Canary Wharf and in the City, as that steel reinforcement begins to corrode," explains Alan Poole of the Geomaterials Unit at Queen Mary and Westfield College, London.

Add to that the effects of rising groundwater. Already, says Viles, London has problems largely because the exodus of industry from the city means that less groundwater is being pumped out for commercial use. As the water rises even further, large buildings with concrete foundations in the clay sink and tilt.

The foundations of Canary Wharf are a huge mass of concrete and reinforcing steel. Two or three hundred years after abandonment, as the clay becomes waterlogged and the steel corrodes, the whole tower begins to tilt. In the mid 24th Century, the Great Leaning Tower of Canary Wharf is a major tourist attraction. The great grandchildren, many times removed, of those who abandoned London now take ecocruises along the river, its banks lined with elder and willow and the flood plain beyond with poplar and ash. In the distance, a huge oak forest spreads over the low hills towards Hampstead Heath. The low-lying Isle of Dogs has reverted entirely to marsh. Rearing up above the reeds and mud is the vast, ivy-clad tower, tilting at a crazy angle, a monument to the hideous city that was.

The river dominates the landscape. From above, a circling buzzard sees an utterly changed London. After 500 years without human intervention, the Thames is nothing like it is now. "The river through central London is narrower than it should naturally be, because of reclamations at the side," says Mervyn Littlewood. "If it was allowed to look after itself, it would probably be shallower and wider." Eventually it reaches the width of pre-Roman London when Southwark, at the south side of London Bridge, was marsh and mudflats. Much of the city reverts to flood-plain forest.

Adventurous hikers now follow the woodland trails through central London. But the naturalists among them can detect the work of humans. London has never reverted completely to its true origins. Humans brought too many plants and animals from abroad. "Since man arrived with his trade and interest in horticulture and crop plants, the rate of immigration has speeded up enormously and species from all over the world have arrived," Gilbert says.

The forest of Greater London contains many of the exotic species introduced by humans that could adapt and survive without them, such as the hybrid "super grasses" bred for disease resistance and persistence. In the drier areas, the oak forest is interspersed with foreign species such as sycamore, Norway maple, Turkey oak and some conifers.

The birds are not all native. Ring-necked parakeets, which originally came from Asia, are doing well. Wolves, or wolf-German shepherd hybrids, roam the forests preying on roe, muntjac and sika deer and feral pigs descended from the stocks at London Zoo and city farms. In the suburbs, the descendants of sweet chestnuts that once lined the streets are flourishing.

Some time, perhaps five hundred years after abandonment, the Great Leaning Tower of Canary Wharf finally crashes down. "Eventually it would collapse, probably one stormy night," says Poole. It's unlikely that it, or any modern building would last as long as some great stone medieval constructions. "Look at Ely Cathedral—1,000 years old, slight lean, but remarkably stable," says Burstein. "The superstructure might be shaky but the substructure is surprisingly resilient." In a flood plain like London's, inundation of foundations and natural soil movements would leave very few buildings standing after 1,000 years. By that time, both the oak and the flood plain forests would be mature and the rubble of Canary Wharf would have sunk into the marsh. London is no longer a blot on the landscape.★



The Pygmies of the West African Rainforest

Size Isn't Everything



They live in the woods in ramshackle benders poorly constructed from a few sticks. They blow any money they have on cheap rancid alcohol. They seemingly do nothing all day long, eat vile slop cooked up over the campfire and mercilessly scrounge off anyone they can, living in a situation of totally chaotic anarchy. Sound familiar? No, not a description of your average protest site but of a group of people who have been living like that for considerably longer.

This is of course only a superficial first impression of the pygmies of the Congo basin rainforest. Taken collectively, they are the largest group of anarchist gatherer-hunters in the world, and certainly one of the oldest continuous human cultures on earth. For thousands upon thousands of years they have lived harmoniously with the forest, in tune with its ecology as few other people are.

For over 15 years, New Jersey native Louis Sarno has lived in the rainforest of the south western corner of the Central African Republic with the indigenous Ba-Benjellé pygmies, in what is now part of the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Reserve. Inspired by the music of the pygmies, Sarno began his journey with little more than a plane ticket, a tape recorder, a few quid bunged to him by musician Brian Eno and a naive notion about pygmy life, largely influenced by Colin Turnbull's classic *The Forest People*.

Outwardly lazy, scrounging and near-alcoholic, the Bayaka pygmies Sarno met had seemingly lost all desire to hunt or make music. Only when he had lived with them for some time (on a diet of tadpoles) was he allowed to join them in one of their hunting camps in the rainforest, where they still lived in relative harmony with nature.

Do or Die talked to him on one of his rare trips out of the forest.

Arrival in the Forest

When did you first go to live with the Bayaka and what was it that originally inspired you to go?

I first got there in December 1985 and I've been living there continuously pretty much since 1989. I was interested in the traditional music of the

Bayaka, so that's the thing that drew me there originally. And I've always liked forests—I'd never seen a rainforest before but I figured I'd like a rainforest too.

How did you find it when you got there? Was it what you expected?

In the beginning, it wasn't really what I expected at all. The Bayaka were living not in the forest but on the edge of the forest and there was a logging company there and a sawmill and a lot of them were working for the sawmill. They lived right across from the saw mill, so when I originally arrived you could see these piles of logs just down the road, dead trees that had been cut down—so it wasn't really what I expected in the beginning, not at all.

But the people themselves, the Bayaka, seemed nice enough and so I just started recording music there and the music was really good. I had some problems getting them to let me hear the real music but once I did it was really good so I decided to stay.

What was their attitude to you?

A white man coming from some other place—he's bound to have wealth with him and things they could take and distribute—they could get a lot of money and gifts from me. So I think that's how they viewed me at the beginning and I don't think that view of me has completely disappeared. I mean, now I'm part of the community, but there's still that aspect—if I am a member of the community, I'm a member of the community that has more possibilities of wealth than the rest of them, so they still look to me for things. If someone is in debt, they often come to me to see if I can help them out or if someone doesn't have any batteries for their flashlight, they'll come to me.

Traditional Bayaka Life

Could you say something about the traditional life of the Bayaka? What makes them different to the other people who live around them?

Well, the Bayaka are hunter-gatherers so that means that they usually get their food on a daily basis and they grow very few crops, so they get their food by foraging in the rainforest and hunting. And ordinarily they would go to the forest several times a year, for a few months each time or maybe for one long period, and they have these hunting camps. Hunting is a communal activity—the women and the older children and the men all take part in these net hunts. They enclose a big area of forest with nets and then they chase game into these nets. And they do honey gathering, they gather various nuts and seeds in the forest which they can make sauces out of, there are some mushrooms and there's an edible leaf from a vine that they eat a lot of. Then usually in the dry season they come back near the Bantu villages because they have to work in the plantations of the Bantus. They do this work for a little bit of manioc because not growing their own food they depend on wild yams but there's not really enough wild yams to support them all the time so they need to supplement that with manioc and manioc has become increasingly important as the staple in their diet. They get it from the Bantus either by buying it with meat or by working in the plantations in exchange for it.

"As I developed the stamina for hunting, I began to enjoy our expeditions more and more. Hunting was fun! I thought of the contrasts between hunting and agriculture. Who in his right mind would want to trade such an invigorating day's work for the drudgery of life in the fields? And for what? Manioc? Bananas? Hunting gave you meat. And each day's hunt was full of little adventures, excitement, moments of idyllic contemplation or laughter. No two days were the same."

The thing is traditionally Bayaka families are owned by Bantu families. Particular Bantu families own particular Bayaka families and this ownership is inherited by the oldest son of the Bantu family. Sometimes depending on whether the Bantus are good people or bad people the relationship can either be beneficial or can really be a drag to the Bayaka. At any rate they don't like being owned, they don't like being considered the property of somebody else. Where I am, that relationship has pretty much broken down with the arrival of the sawmill because that gave the Bayaka other economic alternatives. Before if a Bayaka wanted a pair of shorts or anything, they'd have to get it through their Bantu and when getting a piece of clothing from the Bantu owner—it would be something the Bantu would maybe have thrown away that he gives to the Bayaka—then they have to work for that. And so that's the traditional



relationship. That's the relationship when I went to Congo for instance—it's still very strong there. Particular Bantus would say, "That's my Bayaka."

With the sawmill came elements of the national authority—police and gendarmes, so that kind of subverted the traditional authority of the Bantu chief and also a lot of the Bayaka had this chance to work for somebody else and a lot of them took it. It was for them like a liberation, even though they may be worse off working for the sawmill because they work really hard and they get very little money and then they often still get exploited by the Bantus as well. The Bantus loan them money at 100% interest rate and so they loan them like 5,000 francs and then on payday the Bayaka have to pay back 10,000 francs. The Bayaka take these loans because they don't really think about the future that much, they think more about fulfilling present needs and desires, so if a guy wants some cigarettes and a drink and he has no money he'll go and borrow some money from a Bantu at 100% interest rate. But the older, traditional relationship of slavery has broken down and it's just been replaced by very bad exploitation by the more sophisticated Bantus over the Bayaka.

Rapid Changes to Bayaka Life

Have things changed a lot in the time that you've been there?

Yes, I would say things have changed in that the Bayaka now have a school in the village where I am and although a lot of the children don't attend the school there are some attending and the new generation is slowly learning to read and write, getting some basic literacy. Another change is that there's been a loss of forest knowledge in the new generation. A lot of the new generation can still live in the forest but it's less than before—I think there's been an overall net loss. The younger generation is turning a lot more to take part in the outside world—they want to be part of a larger world and listen to pop music and things like that. And in the nearby town, the population of immigrants from the savannahs has increased drastically, putting more pressure on the rainforest. The forest has been cut down for plantations and the logging company—the latest resurrection of the logging company—is just wreaking havoc with the forest—chopping it up into these little parcels with roads criss-crossing everywhere. So in that sense there's definitely less wildlife now, the forest is less healthy than it was. And the government has given the Bayaka the right to vote—adult men, anyhow, have the right to vote—not that it does much good—they're all going to be voting for Bantus—they're not going to be voting for Bayaka.

How do the Bayaka regard the changes that have happened since you've been there?

Well, when you're there at the time, you don't really see the changes as any kind of abrupt thing, they just happen gradually. If they think about it, they'd think, "Yeah well, there's definitely less animals than there were before and the forest is more chopped up than it was before." But then a lot of them will say, "Yeah, but don't worry, the forest will grow back." They just see that the forest has always been big and so to them the idea that you can put an end to the forest is kind of ridiculous.

How has their way of life changed from what it might have been traditionally? The changes you have observed since you went there 15 years ago seem like quite rapid changes, but you were saying even when you first went there they weren't living exactly as they might have done traditionally.

They still have the traditional forest camps and things like that—they'll go out for months at a time, sometimes for half a year in hunting camps to gather honey and go hunting, but increasingly some of them have other jobs. Some of them work for the logging company and now conservation has moved in—since I've been there, some national parks have been set up and there are some areas of these parks that the Bayaka aren't allowed to go into anymore and other areas where they're still allowed to have traditional methods of hunting and gathering. With the national parks and reserves, the Bayaka get the possibility of conservation jobs. Some of them work as research assistants—there's a project to habituate gorillas to human presence so that tourists can pay to see the gorillas and so some of the Bayaka are working for these Americans who are habituating the gorillas. Some other Bayaka work taking the anti-poaching guards out in the forest. They work as trackers. They're the ones who find the traces of poachers. And the Bayaka who work for the logging company, they know the species of trees, so they know which species is the one that can be cut, so they're the ones that go and find the trees and mark them.

When I came, the Bayaka could work for the logging company and that was about it—there were no research jobs or anything like that. Some of them have these research jobs, which are actually the *creme de la creme* of work. The Bayaka who work for the researchers are treated very well, they get paid well, if someone in these Bayakas' family is sick, the researchers come and make sure they get medicine and everything so they have nice clothes and they do quite well. They work three weeks at a time and then they have three weeks off, and so in their three weeks off they can go into the forest if they want to and go hunting for a while. The Bayaka also have the old option of hunting for the Bantus—but that's not really in the Bayaka's long term interest, shooting animals for other people, because that's taking away from their own food.

Total Anarchy

Has the traditional social structure of the Bayaka groups changed?

No, within themselves they have the same traditional social structure, which is basically anarchy. They have no chief, there's no one who can give orders or anything like that. Everyone just does what they want really. Traditionally most Bayaka co-operate with each other, because you get the best results, you get the most food, if you co-operate. For instance, when there's a hunt going on, most people take part in it because they want to be able to have some meat, but any particular person that doesn't feel like going hunting, he doesn't have to go—there's no coercion involved, there's no kind of putting up a prison or anything like that. They use embarrassment and things like that to try to keep social control. If something's getting out of hand they might laugh at the person or make fun of them, sometimes criticise the person as well.

But there's no chief and because they can't really sort out a very serious problem amongst themselves, they have to appeal to the outside and they would normally go to the Bantu chief who would then make a judgement on the case. Nowadays it would be the mayor's office, because the Bantu chiefs of the Sangha Sangha people have lost their power really, so they don't have much influence on the Bayaka anymore. So now they go to the recognised authority which is the mayor's office to settle those kind of more serious disputes.

But amongst themselves it's still anarchy. And that's fine, that works fine in the rainforest—it does cause some problems when they try to have a larger village-like structure on the road, because there are certain activities that are really for the benefit of the whole community but no one wants to do them, and there's no one to order them to do them. Maybe the village is kind of filthy and you want to clean it up, but everyone thinks, "Why should I clean it up?—It's not my mess," and with everyone with that attitude it just gets worse and worse. Normally in a camp in the forest that sort of problem doesn't arise because they don't stay long enough in one spot for things to get out of hand.

It's quite a strange contradiction that the way the society was traditionally organised was anarchic within their own group but then being owned as slaves by the Bantus.

Well, when you have total anarchy usually that can work—if you have a small group it will work. But occasionally if you have a real serious problem—for instance if someone kills somebody else—because they don't have coercion in their society—what can they do? They don't have the means to punish the person. But they would like to see the person punished if it's some really serious thing, but they themselves just can't do it and so they have to appeal to someone on the outside. And it's just how it goes I think—that's a sacrifice they make, since none of them want that kind of authority to impose their will on the others, none of them have that authority, so when they sometimes need that kind of authority, for certain extreme cases, they have to appeal to the outside for that.

I know it is a contradiction, but I think that's the price they pay for having this kind of anarchy. And like I say it works really well with small groups, but when you get a large group it starts to have problems because then almost any activity will be disrupted by others. With a small group if they hold a dance, pretty much everyone participates, but with a much larger group, you'll have some people who just want to play the pop music on the radio, and it's going on at the same time as the other people holding a traditional dance. They can't tell each other what to do, "Turn off that radio!"—they just don't do that, so they sort of just let it go on—they hold their dance, the others are dancing to the pop music all sort of right next to each other—it does cause a little chaos sometimes.

Have there been more differences in wealth and poverty within the Bayaka with some people having jobs?

A little bit, not really that much—they have their mechanisms for really levelling out any uneven distributions. Any one of them that makes some money—say working for the gorilla habituation—they come back with money, but their family's going to make demands on them, the relatives of their wives are going to make demands on them, friends are going to make demands and so you know... As soon as they come back with the money, very quickly it's finished. And that happens to me too, that's why I always have problems



there, because no matter how much I go with, they just get on my case until I have nothing and then it's like things are calm again. And so they have this way of equalising the distribution of wealth in their community and there might be some slight unevenness—people who work for the researchers for instance, they might have enough money to buy a nice cassette player that's a piece of junk, but it looks nice, some cheap thing made in Nigeria. They have this cassette player, but even that, it's not just theirs, it gets loaned out, everybody borrows it and uses it, so they might be the owner, but anyone else can borrow it if they ask, or even without asking, and so these things get passed around. So there's not that much unevenness in terms of income and wealth distribution. They have their mechanisms which so far still handle things pretty well.

Life in the Forest

So what sort of relationship to the forest and to their surroundings do the Bayaka have?

Well, the Bayaka exploit their surroundings in what has always been a sustainable way. When they go net hunting, the net hunting is not so efficient that it kills all the animals—the Bayaka are aware that there are animals that get away and that that's good. And when they go gathering honey, sometimes they chop the tree down, but a lot of times they climb the tree and take the honey out and the tree's left standing. They know the forest tree by tree. They know particular food trees in the forest and they make most of their things out of forest products. They have crossbows they make completely from forest products and women make baskets and sleeping mats. They make rope out of forest vines—they use the fibres and they make a rope, and they take them and make their hunting nets with this rope. So they really live pretty much in harmony with their environment—when they make a hunting camp in the forest, six months later, if you go to that spot after they've left the hunting camp, it's completely reverted back to forest.

So it doesn't have that much impact on the forest?

It hardly has any impact. I mean, if you have a trained eye, you can tell where Bayaka have lived—that they have been here a year six months ago or a year ago. Often, if someone didn't tell you, you would never know that this was a spot that people had lived in and held dances and all this kind of stuff—you would never know. The houses that they make, just out of sticks and leaves, they decay very quickly. On their own they don't do much destruction at all to the forest—the forest can close up the little wounds that the Bayaka make into it almost immediately.

WWF Nature Reserve

You've said something about the nature reserve and that some of the Bayaka have got jobs working with the gorilla habituation project. I was wondering what sort of impact the establishment of the nature reserve and the involvement of the World Wildlife Fund has had on life in the area and on the rainforest itself?

The most immediate effect is that now there are certain areas of the forest that the Bayaka are not allowed to go into anymore—they're not allowed to go into the parks. Some beautiful areas are now off-limits to the Bayaka. On the other hand, if it wasn't for the conservation project, all the forest there would be logged—so at least there are some areas where logging is not allowed. Unfortunately, most of the areas where logging is forbidden, the Bayaka are not allowed to go into either. There's only this one little piece which is always under threat, which the Bayaka can still go into—it's the last bit of primary forest that they have legal access to and the logging company's always trying to get it and World Wildlife is not defending it that strongly. The WWF is almost ready to sacrifice it just to protect the park itself.

The Bayaka have made a kind of unwilling sacrifice for conservation—they've sacrificed a big part of the forest for conservation and it would be alright if the conservation project was managing to protect the animals, but it's not even really managing to do that. It maybe protects the elephants a bit, but that's about it—the small animals are being poached by the Bantus that have come to work for the logging companies. There's this wide-scale poaching going on and the World Wildlife is supposed to stop it but they're very ineffective at putting an end to it, so any possible benefit of protecting the food source of the Bayaka is not really there. I suppose the WWF protect it a little bit—they've slowed down what would otherwise probably be completely out of control poaching. But the primary purpose of the reserve is to protect the wildlife from poaching—not to protect it for the Bayaka. I'm sure the

project would be very happy if all the Bayaka suddenly got Ebola and died—it would make their job simpler, you know.

So do the parks help protect the Bayaka's food source at all?

Well, the parks act as a reserve, because if the parks are safe then there will always be animals and a lot of them will come out of the parks. I don't agree particularly that the Bayaka should be not allowed to go into the forest, but it's kind of complicated, because although you might like to make an area that the Bayaka are allowed to go into but nobody else is, it's very hard to exclude the Bantu if you don't exclude the Bayaka. The reason for this is that the Bantu believe they're better than the Bayaka and that you cannot give any kind of rights to the Bayaka that they cannot have themselves.

There were some educated Bantu guys who work for the conservation project and they were in some discussion about wildlife, and the leader was saying, "Here you have our closest relatives the chimpanzees and the gorillas, and over here you have humans." And one of the guards said, "Yes, but where do the Bayaka fit into that?" The Bantu men were thinking that the Bayaka were going to be inbetween the humans and the chimps, you know, sort of not quite with the humans and not quite with the chimps. That's what the Bantu really believe. So the idea that you could let the Bayaka go into a part of the forest that you won't let the Bantus in doesn't go over too well. So if you allow the Bayaka into say, the parks, and you allow hunting in the parks because that's totally traditional, eventually you're going to have to let the Bantus in as well. They'll intimidate the Bayaka and the Bayaka will bring them in, because in the end the Bayaka are afraid of the Bantus. White people come and try and help the Bayaka out and try and make things more equal for them, but you know, white people come and then they go—but the Bantu are always there, so the Bayaka pay primary attention to what the Bantu want and they'll conspire with them against the white man because they have to deal with the Bantu all the time.

So are the Bayaka a bit of a thorn in the side of the people managing the project?

The Bayaka are a thorn in the side because the Bayaka do not like the project, because they do not like being told that they're not allowed to hunt certain animals. For instance, the Bayaka love elephant meat and they're not allowed to hunt elephants. Elephant meat is a big thing for the Bayaka—for instance, it's often the only meat that widows ever get. Because widows don't have a man hunting for them, they often don't get a share of the meat, but when an elephant is killed, everybody gets a share of the meat. And they're quite good at killing an elephant and keeping it totally hidden, so that you never see the elephant but at night time the food comes out. I think they should be allowed to hunt a few elephants just the way the Inuit should be allowed to hunt some whales, because the Bayaka are not the reason why the elephants are endangered—it's certainly not because of the Bayaka. It's like the Inuit are not the ones that have endangered the whales, so why should they then have to alter their traditional life because of our own greed?

Endangered Wildlife

What's the main threat to the wildlife in the area?

It's the population pressure—people are just shooting the animals. They're all being killed for the bush meat trade, not just to eat—the Bantu don't just kill for subsistence, they kill for profit. Most of the Bantu people that have come here, they're outsiders, they're not the original rainforest Bantu. There is a tribe, the Sangha Sangha—they're the ones that used to own the Bayaka, and they're a fisher people, so if they wanted meat, they would send their women out to Bayaka hunting camps with manioc and the women would barter with the Bayaka for meat. That was an acceptable tradition.

But with the outsider Bantu who have come from the savannah, they have no respect for the forest, they have no investment in the area, they've come there to make money—and so they see cutting trees as a way to make money, they see killing animals as a way to make money. So these Bantu aren't going to be happy if there's one tree standing that they could make some money by cutting down, or if there's one animal they could



A hunter in the Jemba region of Cameroon with a bongo and several duikers on their way to market—this is indicative of what is taking place throughout the Guineo-Congolian forests of West and Central Africa.

make some money by killing. They feel they have the right to take it all for profit and they don't really look at the needs of the Bayaka and certainly these outsiders are very horrible to the Bayaka. Now the Bantu that are nicest to the Bayaka are the original Sangha Sangha, the ones that used to own them. They at least recognise the Bayaka's humanity because they've lived in conjunction with them for so many generations. It's these outsiders that have come that are much more shrewd in their exploitation of the Bayaka—it's a relationship of pure exploitation. They just think of the Bayaka as totally inferior.

These outsiders have big manioc plantations, which they're cutting down the forests to make, and a lot of times the Bayaka steal the manioc from their plantations. So now the plantation owners have even been saying, "We've got to get rid of the Bayaka—we've got to push them out of this area completely, because they're just thieves." I said, "Can you really say that? When you came here, this was the Bayaka's land and now you're saying that you have to push them away, that they shouldn't be able to live here anymore because they steal from your fields?" But that's what they've been saying.

Rainforest Ecology

Could you give people an idea of what the area is like, of the ecology of the area?

The area is rich in wildlife—there's the forest elephants, which are now recognised as a different species from the savannah elephant. There's the lowland gorilla—still plenty of those. There are chimpanzees, leopards, crocodiles, bongo—which is a really large forest antelope, pythons, and all kinds of monkeys and birds. So it's a very rich area in terms of wildlife and nature—it's really very beautiful. It's a rainforest, which means the soil is very poor quality soil. There's really no topsoil, everything is just drawing nutrients out of other things that are decaying, so the nutrients are immediately pulled up again and there's no topsoil that's formed. So when you cut the forest down it only has a limited number of years that it can be used agriculturally before it becomes pretty useless. And once it becomes useless it's really almost too late for real rainforest to grow on it anymore. You just start getting these other kind of weeds, and it becomes more of a savannah type of vegetation.

The whole area was originally covered in rainforest and there's still a lot of rainforest there. There are some dirt roads they've built now but when you get away from where the logging has been going on, it becomes this primary forest. On one side, across one river, you get into Cameroon, which is rainforest that is also being logged, but selectively, the same as where we are, although



A bongo in the Congo

selective logging is also very destructive. Then across the border the other way, through the forest, you get to the Republic of Congo, and immediately across the border it's now a national park in Congo and there's no hunting allowed in this park, although it used to be an area that the Bayaka hunted in traditionally. Then if you cross through that park and you get to the other side, it's just forest, still old forest, but it's forest that's going to be logged at some point because it's outside the park and all the forest now in Congo has been parcelled out to logging companies. So if it's not in the park then it's going to be cut at some point.

Is it logging that's really the main problem?

Logging is the worst thing. And it's not just from the cutting of the trees—it's the whole process—it starts increasing the population, it brings in immigrants who then have guns and it just starts a whole cycle of destruction that just gets worse and worse. And as long as you have logging there, you're never going to have conservation working. One aspect of the logging was good—it liberated the Bayaka from Bantu ownership. But, other than that, it's been a negative thing—you'd like to have some sort of social progress, but maybe without the environmental destruction. And it's hard you know, it's hard to know what to do, it's especially complicated with the Bayaka situation because you have these two different groups—the Bayaka are the most indigenous, but you have these other indigenous people that dislike the Bayaka, so you have this kind of conflict going on which makes it especially complicated.

With the logging—is there involvement from large Western corporations?

Right where I am it's a French logging company and they're really a bunch of criminals. It's almost like a money-laundering operation. Their parent company—the big parent company—they're the same company that make the Mirage fighter jets for France—nice people. So it doesn't even matter if the logging company is losing money, because they're such a huge corporation worldwide, with their hands in so many things, that if they have a loss-making logging operation, they're still going to



maintain it. The French want the company to maintain it. To the French, it's like they're countering the German and American influence, which is the conservation stuff. It was France's colony, so they don't like the German and American influence that's moving in—so they tacitly back the logging company.

Music to the Forest God

You were saying that what originally drew you to the Bayaka was the music—does music play a very important role in their lives?

Yes, music is very important to them, because they have these ceremonies where they call these forest spirits out, and that's to guarantee that they get food in the hunt and so making music is a way of guaranteeing that they're going to feed themselves. And also they have music after a death and they have music all the time really. It's very important—it's like the one big artistic expression that they have because they don't really much go in for visual arts and there's no sculpture, no painting—about the only thing they have are these little tattoos they make on their faces and these little haircuts that they give each other—it's a bit like the hip-hop stuff... they shave their heads and then they make little designs with a razor. Hip-hop I think has gotten it from them or it's just coincidental, but they've been doing that for a long time. Other than that they don't have any real artistic expressions so it's the music that is the real big thing for them.

I guess traditionally they were nomadic or semi-nomadic so having sculptures isn't obviously much use if you're going to be moving around.

In the rainforest the most important thing is your ears—you hear things. You know what birds are there mostly because you hear them, not because you see them and so they have this highly developed sense of hearing and also a very musical sense, because they start music when they are babies and babies hear music all the time—their mothers go to the ceremonies singing and they're holding the baby in their arms. So by the time they can talk, they can already sing, they can sing little Bayaka songs, just as they learn to talk.

Some of their songs—the fables—contain bits of their ancient history. The fables have an ancient dreamtime sort of history, you know—when God was on the earth and all the animals could talk and this is how things got set up. And some of their other songs are just little topical things, like, you know, "Oh, your marriage is no good, get another marriage." Maybe some guy is married to his cousin or something and they think that's incest so they sing, "That's not a good marriage, find another wife"—this kind of thing, their songs have words like that.

I guess partially through what you were doing and through other people their music has got some exposure to the wider world.

I think it had exposure already before I was doing recordings. There have actually been quite a few records over the years of Bayaka music from different countries—from what was Zaire and Cameroon, Central African Republic and Gabon. They've always been admired for their music. The first recorded mention of pygmies in historical times was from some ancient Egyptian records from 4,500 years ago when in the tomb of this Pharaoh they have this communication from this guy who was sent down to look for the source of the Nile and he describes entering this huge forest and finding this small people, this little people, people of the trees who sang this glorious music to their forest god. And the Pharaoh said bring two of them back and let me see this wonderful dance that they do and hear the songs that they sing to their forest god. So these are records that were found in this Pharaoh's tomb—there's no way of knowing if it was the same sort of music but I bet it was the same style of music. So even back then they were praised for their music.

The Missionary Position

Is the government of the Central African Republic actively trying to civilise the Bayaka?

Yeah, they'd like them to civilise. What you have is missionaries—that's a really insidious thing. You have these missionaries—they do some good for the Bayaka, but they do bad as well. Baptist missionaries that have come nearby, they don't like the Bayaka to do their traditional dances. They teach them these songs about God and say that they would prefer that they sing these songs about God to the traditional stuff. And then you have the Catholics that have been working there for 30 years now—they're a little easier, they used to be against the traditional stuff and they've kind of loosened up about that, but they also teach these

songs to the Bayaka, and that kind of causes a cultural pollution. You start getting these young children, instead of singing their own songs, they start singing these church-type songs, so it means they're singing their own music less and it weakens the tradition. And you know, they help with some things, like medical stuff, so it's a mixed blessing.

And the Bayaka really have to take help from wherever they can get it, because there is so little on offer to them. The Catholics were especially good at trying to get the Bayaka to settle more and have plantations. And I think it's good for them to have plantations—because it does give them more manioc, and they eat a lot of manioc and it makes them a little more independent to have that manioc and they still can go into the forest for long periods of time. If they weren't working in their own fields, they'd be working in the Bantus' fields, working for the Bantu, so they might as well work in their own plantations.



And then they try to get them education, and I have mixed feelings about that—on the one hand, the Bayaka themselves were the ones that originally asked for school, they said they want their children to learn to read and write, and so, you know, I had to support that, because they wanted it. But on the other hand, at this point in time in that country—a literate Bayaka—what are his options? There aren't really that many. And if that schooling is at the sacrifice of forest knowledge then it becomes a problem. It's sort of complicated—they're kind of caught in between and I don't really know the answer. I've raised a boy there since he was two years old—he's now almost 13 and he's been going to school for a couple of years, but he plays hooky a lot, he doesn't like to go to school so he goes into the forest instead and then the teacher comes and yells at me because I'm irresponsible.

So attempts to get the Bayaka to join the mainstream culture haven't worked that well?

The Bayaka are pretty strong in their culture, especially because of the women—the women especially are very traditional. The women are very important economically and even politically in the traditional society—it's very egalitarian. But, I guess as it becomes the man who is working at a job, then I guess in a sense the woman becomes economically a little less important. But I don't know if that's completely true because she's still the one who does a lot of the food gathering. When the men get back from work, they still want to eat something and so it's still often the women that they then depend on to gather food. I don't think there's been that much of a change in the relationships. Bayaka women are very strong. I mean, the men don't have an easy time trying to push the women around—they're quite strong. Even if the men go working for the logging company or something, the women are pretty traditional and sort of keep the men from wandering too far from the centre, you know. There's always this return to the centre, so far.

Have a lot of the Bayaka converted? Are they Christian because of the missionaries?

Very few. I remember talking to the old French priest—he'd been there about 18 years when I talked to him and in 18 years he had one convert! The problem is they'll sing the songs and that's already pollution, when they start singing those songs. But so far, conversion attempts haven't been very successful.

With the Baptists it might be more, because the Baptists are more extreme and demanding. They got one Bayaka to convert and become a Baptist, so they had him go testify in the village where I live saying, "Your dead spirit stuff is all bullshit because I know, because I used to dance as this big spirit, and now I know that it's bad to do that and now I just sing songs to God and I'm telling you don't believe in Ejengi, because it's just a man dancing in the Ejengi suit..." It was horrible, reading stuff like that, that kind of testimony. The Bayaka in my village got very angry and they just chose not to believe him. They just said, "That's bullshit, you're lying to us, we don't believe you."

But the Baptists are going to keep trying to convert people. I'm sure they're doing it now that I'm not there, they're doing it again. So what I try to do—because we have the Baptists and the Catholics—I try and play the Baptists against the Catholics. I'm always telling the Catholic priest—because at first we only had a little Catholic church and now there's a Baptist church next to it—so I'm telling the Catholics, "Oh, those Baptists, they're getting more converts than you." And he's going, "No, no, no, this is our village, we were here first. They can have their own down the road—they can't have this one."



Pygmy children sitting on the centrifuge, all that remains of a French palm-oil factory at Manfouété in the Congo.

Maybe it's good if the Bayaka can see that you've got two different sorts of Christians disagreeing with each other.

Yes, I pointed that out to them. I said, "Look, there's already two different groups of white people telling you their God is the real god." And also I said, "This is like the fables that you guys tell about Kumba the god of the forest. Well, this is white people's version of that." So I said, "It's no more real or less real than your fables." and that's given them a good perspective. I think in my village they're pretty resistant. But they'll sing the songs, and that's the problem, because they just see them as songs and not as a style of music. And the more the children hear those songs, the more they grow up singing those songs rather than the traditional stuff and it causes a weakening of the tradition.

Forest Spirits

Could you say a bit more about the forest spirits that you mentioned?

Well, they have a belief in these spirits that they appeal to in order to have a successful hunt. According to the Bayaka, the forest has different spirits living in it and some of them they can call in for dances. I don't really know what to say about it—it's just a strong tradition—it's central to their whole cultural existence, their music and these spirits. That's why it's so bad that the Baptists are trying to get rid of the spirits, just replace them with something from the outside—like these God songs. You're taking something that's theirs, that they've probably had for many generations. But I think the missionaries have it wrong if they think that the Bayaka literally believe that the spirit who appears in the dance is a spirit and nothing else. Their belief in the spirits is almost a bit like the way we believe in Santa Claus or something like that. I don't think it's a totally die-hard belief. The spirit dancing has powers because it's a spirit—but I think the Bayaka know perfectly well that it's a person dancing. They just don't openly admit that. Their belief is sort of a belief by choice—they choose to believe in the spirits.

It's quite interesting, from what you were saying, that one of the main impacts that the missionaries have had is on the music because obviously the music is one of the most central things to Bayaka culture. Have they done that intentionally?

I don't think the Catholics did it intentionally, they just thought that because the Bayaka are very musical, they'd teach them the story of God in songs, and so they'd be more ready to accept it. But the missionaries did it without thinking that if they teach these songs and then the Bayaka sing these songs too much, it's going to start replacing the traditional stuff.

But then the missionaries became aware of it, because I started seeing this new generation of Catholic priests who were coming to my village and saying, "We're trying to get our Bayaka to renew their traditions—they've lost all their traditional dances. They only sing this church music that we've taught them. We want them to learn their traditions again." So they were coming down and trying to learn it from our village.

So they are actually trying to undo what they did?

Well, a little bit, I don't know how much, but a little bit. They became a bit alarmed at the extent to which the traditions were lost and the Catholic mission were trying to reverse that a little bit, trying to tell the Bayaka that their own traditions were good. I'd like to see some people come that just want to help the Bayaka, not try to change them, just help them carry on with their lives.

How Can We Help?

What kind of things could people do?

Protect the Bayaka's forest and do some sort of health programme, a consistent health programme. The conservation project has no health programme for the Bayaka, which I think is disgusting.

So, a health programme that wasn't linked to believing in Jesus would be a good thing.

Yeah, that wasn't linked to believing in Jesus. I mean, the missionaries help them. You don't have to say, "I believe in Jesus" before they give you medicine. But you know, one of the attractions for the Bayaka to make contact is the medicine and then the missionaries start trying to alter their beliefs.

If people did go out there to help in some way, what might we also be able to learn from the Bayaka?

Maybe we could learn not to be so judgmental—the Bayaka are not very judgmental. We're very judgmental people. We should learn to be more tolerant. Those are two things we can learn from them. The Bayaka are very tolerant. You always have the benefit of the doubt with the Bayaka. I can't say that we can learn to live in harmony with nature or something like that, but we can learn maybe to have more tolerance for differences in people and have a wider range of behaviour that we accept among people and not be caught up in the past, be willing to deal with things in the present.

A Life of Leisure

Why is it that the Bayaka seem to have lived in a more or less unchanged way for such a long time?

Well, I think because their way of life has been successful. As long as the rainforest is there, it's preferable to a life of, say, just farming or something like that, because farming is much harder work. With farming, you've got to labour in the sun, whereas hunting and gathering is much more enjoyable. It's more adventurous, every day is different and you're in the forest, which is a beautiful environment and the forest really is a land of plenty. Also I think partly they've been kept more traditional by the Bantu owners—it's the most traditional Bayaka who are still being owned by the Bantus. So I think it's partly the Bantus, because it's to their advantage to have the Bayaka stay the same, because then they can exploit the Bayaka very easily for labour, and they can get meat and honey and forest products and things like that from the Bayaka. And so I think it's partly the Bantu keeping them that way and also the fact that their traditional way of life is, generally speaking, a more fulfilling way of life—more leisure than we have, for instance, with our ordinary jobs and stuff.

I think it's only changing now because the Bantu/Bayaka relationship is breaking down and also because of changing economics—with these large logging companies coming—the changing economics are causing this breakdown in every way and as the forest becomes more fragmented then you start having parks, and then the Bayaka can't go into the parks and suddenly hunting and gathering is not so viable anymore and they have to supplement it with other activities which is what's happening now.

A friend of mine went to Burundi and there are some Twa pygmies there who used to be hunter-gatherers and now he says they're a sad lot. There's no forest left for them to go to, it's all been converted to agriculture, and they're like paupers scrounging to get a living. So having the forest is the real key to their survival.

Running Towards the Car

I also think it's interesting when you read anthropology books, there's this idea that most human societies started out in a more or less similar form—as very small groups of people with a hunting-gathering economy, but then there's this idea that there's some great ladder or progression and everyone's going to walk up the stages and they're all going to end up living in big cities like London. It's just quite interesting that not everyone has done that.

Not everyone has done that but probably most people want to do that. More and more Bayaka are wanting to—now they want to make journeys, they want to see more of the world, things like that. Instead of running away from a car passing on the road, they run towards it now. It's like they want to take part in the larger world and the new generation does not want to be like their parents. The young generation wants to be different, wants more than what their parents had. I think it's inevitable—people are lazy, so if they think there's an easier way to make a living, they tend to want that. And hunting-gathering, it's a great way of life—it's interesting and fulfilling, but it is hard and even though you do get more leisure from it, it's still difficult. You do get pockets of resistance, you know, you always find them amongst indigenous people, some small group that wants to keep the traditions, but that tends to be an older generation and when you start getting the younger generation, they want to change. And that's what's happening now with the Bayaka. Where I was in Congo, it's not happening yet, but it'll start as the logging invades and more outside influence comes—you'll start getting a younger generation of Bayaka who will start craving to take part in a larger world.

"I had come to regard [the Bayaka] as the most well-adjusted people in the world. Their undaunted preoccupation with enjoying each moment as it came, with no concern for the consequences, made them free from neuroses. They were an example to me of how the full potential of the individual could be realized in the absence of the complex constraints imposed by modern civilization."

They see it as an escape from being owned, they see it as an escape from ignorance. They start to look at their parents as ignorant, "Yeah, sure they know about the forest, but they don't know about how to read and write," so the parents get taken advantage of in a larger world, so the new generation don't want to be like that—they don't want to be taken advantage of. They want to wear clothes now, because one of the reasons the Bantus have given them to "prove" that they're inferior is the fact that they don't have clothes and so now the new generation have this thing about wanting to have nice clothes.

What opportunities do they have to try and fulfil that then? Presumably if they want nice clothes, they're going to need money, so they have to go and get a job.

Yeah, so they work for the logging company, because they think they might get money there for clothes, or they work for researchers and stuff like that. So there are a few opportunities now around. Not for most of them, but for a few people there are starting to be opportunities.

Is there an element of resistance to modernisation as well? You were saying some of the older people want to resist development?

The older generation—what they know is the forest and so they just want to stick with that. They stick to that way of life and they might think the younger generation are being useless or whatever, but that's just a generational thing. But it is true, the new generation—not as many people in the new generation can climb trees or run up to gather honey or stuff like that, but on the other hand the new generation doesn't find that as important as the older generation does.

Prospects for the Future

What do you think the prospects for the future are? Which way do you think things are headed?

Well, I think it's tied up with the rainforest—the Bayaka's fate is really tied with the rainforest. Because as long as they have the rainforest and living in the rainforest is a viable option, if they can get enough animals to live on and stuff, they'll be alright, because if things get too bad by the road and conditions are just too much abject poverty, they can go into the forest. But once that forest is not there anymore or it's just too impoverished to help them, then they're really going to be the poorest of the poor and then I think you'll really see the ending of their culture and maybe even as a people they'll just be totally broken. They're very adaptable, but they've always had the forest there as a thing they can retreat into but now the forest itself is under attack in a big way, in a large scale way that it never has been before. You have to have a successful conservation programme to have the Bayaka survive as a distinct culture.

Otherwise, really it's going to be transformed—their not having any material possessions in the forest is a good thing—you don't see it as poverty. When they are like that by the road next to these other tribes that have more wealth, suddenly they are just very poor people. And the forest is also where they can renew their spiritual traditions—it's where everyone gets back into the traditional activities. Even if they don't ever have much traditional music out by the road, when they're in the forest, they have all the traditional stuff again. So it's very important for schooling for the young generation, and for spiritual renewal for everybody.

The Beginning of the End

How much of the forest as a total is protected as reserves?

Well, in my area, I'd say about half of it is park and half of it is reserve now and the Bayaka are allowed to go into the reserves but not the parks.

Is it the case like in Congo, as you were saying, that anything not inside a park has been parcelled out for logging?

In Congo, they have a park and then all the rest of the forest is going to be logged. Where I am, they have two little parks and the rest of the forest is going to be logged except the tiny piece which so far they haven't allowed the logging company to get on. In Cameroon, they have a little park, which has been partially logged already but then they are logging the rest of the forest.

Finally, this more modern logging is going to reach Africa, because they've just been too poor to do logging in these places and now it's like the final attack, especially in northern Congo, also in Gabon—you have logging everywhere. Northern Congo and Gabon especially are just huge swathes of almost uninhabited rainforest, really some of the least known rainforests left on earth are in Africa—it's like the last great wilderness in a way and it's going to be logged now—it's really the beginning of the end of it now. It's a huge area—they'll be logging for many decades probably. But they start building the roads—they're building the roads through what used to be the impenetrable swamp forest, now they can build the roads right through it. You build the roads, you start having settlements and you know, it's the beginning of the end. It's happening very fast.★

Further Reading

Song from the Forest: My Life Among the Ba-Benjellé Pygmies by Louis Sarno (Boston, Houghton Miffiin, 1993) ISBN 0-395-61331-0. Unattributed quotes in the article are taken from this book.

Every Text Message a Tombstone

The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has been going on since August 1998 has resulted in at least 2.5 million deaths and 2.3 million refugees. This under-reported conflict is Africa's First World War. Oxfam has called it "the world's biggest humanitarian disaster."

Fuelling the conflict is coltan (colombo tantalite), a rare mineral used in almost all cell phones, laptops, pagers and many other electronic devices. The huge expansion in mobile phone use has made this mineral incredibly valuable. The world's fourth-largest coltan reserve lies under the tropical rainforest of the Eastern Congo and the rival factions in the war have been competing to control it, resulting in huge numbers of deaths and massive destruction to one of the most ecologically important areas in the world.

According to a UN Security Council report, American proxies Uganda and Rwanda have been looting the Eastern Congo with most of the proceeds going to the West. Companies like Sony, Nokia, Ericcson, and Intel increased their demand for the mining of coltan in the Congo in the late 1990s and Rwanda and Uganda took control of the mining areas. The Rwandan army made $20 million per month mining coltan in 2000. Both Rwanda and Uganda have been rewarded by Western governments and by the World Bank for their massive human rights abuses, massacres, torture and rapes with increased aid and debt relief.

Coltan is being illegally mined in the Kahuzi-Biega National Park and Okapi Wildlife Reserve, both UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Eastern Congo. Over 10,000 miners have moved into the parks and are chopping down the forest and killing the wild animals. The numbers of lowland gorillas, okapis, and elephants have significantly dropped. The gorillas are very rare and may be on the brink of extinction. Also the indigenous Twa and Mbuti pygmies are being killed, raped, kidnapped and cannibalised by the rebel factions, primarily backed by Uganda.

Surveillance

Your mobile phone is not only responsible for the slaughter of endangered wildlife and thousands of people but is also the most widespread tracking and surveillance device ever to be introduced. Mobile phone cell location surveillance was officially acknowledged several years ago. By logging the base station used by the handset to connect to the network, the authorities can locate its owner to the accuracy of a few hundred metres in cities whenever the phone is switched on, even if you're not making a call. Within two years, with new 3G technology, all mobile phones will have satellite-locating devices built into them which will be accurate to within a few metres. All the information on everyone's phone calls made and received and mobile phone location data is retained and can be accessed by the authorities at will.

The government is now also funding a secret surveillance programme called 'Celldar' which uses mobile phone masts to allow the surveillance of anyone, at any time and anywhere there is a phone signal, whether or not they themselves have a phone. The technology detects the shapes made when radio waves emitted by mobile phone masts meet an obstruction. Signals bounced back by immobile objects, such as walls or trees, are filtered out by the receiver. This allows anything moving, such as cars or people, to be tracked 'in real time'. The system, used alongside technology which allows individuals to be identified by their mobile phone handsets, will mean that individuals can be located and their movements watched on a screen from hundreds of miles away. Researchers are working to give the new equipment 'X-ray vision'—the capability to 'see' through walls and look into people's homes.

Health

And to top it all, there is serious concern over the health effects of mobile phones—they are pulsed at the same frequency as the cells in your body use to communicate (the "bioband"—0-400 Hz) and scientific studies have proven that radiation from mobile phones causes biochemical changes in the brain which could pose general risks to health and increase the risk of brain tumours. The 2000 government Stewart Inquiry concluded that radiation from handsets could cause "subtle biological changes". There is also an increased risk to children and teenagers, whose thinner skulls and still developing nervous system make them all the more receptive to the effects of mobile phone radiation.

Even those who don't have a mobile may be at risk from the radiation produced by mobile phone masts. There is a current government enquiry into whether mobile phone masts can cause brain cancer and leukaemia, prompted by the eruption of 'cancer streets' across the country where clusters of people are living near to mobile phone base stations. There is consistent evidence of headache, sleep disruption, impairment of short-term memory, nosebleeds and, more seriously, an increase in the frequency of seizures in some children already suffering from epilepsy in people living near to mobile phone masts.★

What more reason do you need? Ditch that gorilla-killer state tracking device!

www.mastsanity.org
www.theecologist.org

Wild Play



Pond Dipping Our Way to the Promised Land

Unless we act to stem the alienation of people from the environment (and illustrate the connections between ecology and our everyday lives) each generation will multiply the problems we face. If we are not to engage in ever more widespread and futile battles against destruction we need to start at the beginning—with the children.

The legacy of domination is that our ecology is under assault. Industry is destroying the diversity of life on Earth at an unprecedented scale. As James Lovelock (author of the Gala hypothesis) puts it: "It's as if the brain were to decide that it is the most important organ in the body and started mining the liver." That we find ourselves here is due, in part, to dominant culture's general alienation from the ecological communities which support our lives. Alongside the damage that we are causing to other species, this alienation is having a profound psychological effect on ourselves—as a species—enabling us to blindly stumble on, creating further problems. Our psyches have evolved in symbiosis with the environment, as the cultures we have formed further divorce us from it, it is no wonder that we act irrationally. It is a psychological, as well as physical, loss of connection.

Three steps towards a basis for a radical ecological sensibility can be defined as: nurturing a relationship with the natural world; developing understanding of our planets basic ecological processes; and encouraging and supporting participation in caring for, and developing in partnership with, our environment.

Cling-Film Wrapped Kids

For the majority of children, having a relationship with the natural world is becoming a lot more difficult. Not only does the cling-film wrapped sanitised world of the modern consumer disguise any connections to the natural world and its processes, but parental fear and capital-driven urbanisation are denying children access to 'natural' areas. In a 1995 survey by Barnardos, half of parents interviewed said that they would never let their children play outside without adult supervision. A 1999 study by the NSPCC claimed 8 out of 10 parents were too frightened to allow kids to play unsupervised in parks.[1]

How much time do modern parents have to supervise children, never mind make the effort to take them to play in natural areas, supposing they

can gain access to them? Even when children are allowed out it has been observed that their independent mobility range (or how far children are allowed to play) has shrunk for a nine year old to a ninth of what it was in the 1970s.[2]

Increasingly intensified use of our countryside is denying even rural children access to wild areas. Yet in the city the situation is much worse, where the environment is of adult design with priority given to economically profitable activity. The stark design of the modern 'play area' is less about children playing and exploring their world, and more about a 'safe environment' where children can 'pass the time'. 57% of children born in developing countries in this decade will be born into urban slums.[3] This is also a major problem in Britain and has been said to have contributed to the fact that the environmental movement here is predominantly white and middle class. The Black Environment Network has uncovered what it calls the cycle of participation:

"All the elements of this cycle are embedded in white middle class lifestyle. Most of them have gardens, so that children have the opportunity to mess around with soil and plants. At the weekends, it is usual to drive out to the countryside for picnics and walks. In other words, being in contact with nature is part of their lives. If one enjoys nature, one naturally grows to love it. If then, one is informed that what one loves is threatened, it is a natural human response to come out fighting for it. In such a scenario environmental participation is a natural phenomenon in white middle class life."

"For many deprived groups, it is therefore important to recognise that the process is missing because the first crucial step—contact with nature—is not in place. If we wish to release the vast missing contribution of ethnic groups and other disadvantaged groups, the environmental movement needs to put into place access to contact with nature in the immediate environment of such groups, and enable access to nature at large further afield."[4]

As can be recognised this is an issue of class as well as ethnicity. Ethnic groups can also have other barriers to wanting to get involved in natural areas; one of these is culture. The 'natural' environment in the UK is by and large 'wilderness' free. It is as much a social and cultural construct as it is a natural one. The tales that help define a sense of home in the natural world told by grandparents and parents may be of a different type of environment, imbuing different values. The overriding priority given by many environmentalists to 'natural areas' above a social ecology that links both the natural world and the more social and urbanised realms characterised in inner city areas, could be seen to have an underlying agenda of privilege and racial prejudice. A lot of 'lifestyle environmentalism' prioritises retreats to the rural over quality of life issues affecting the majority of urban dwellers. Greening estates, allotments, public space and the built environment can be a more immediate priority for many ethnic and disadvantaged groups.

Another group that may need additional support in feeling comfortable in the natural world are girls and young women:

"Cultural barriers and fears keep many of our daughters away from the woods and the fields. Tomboys are acceptable only until they reach the threshold of adolescence. Then, they are told, they must climb down from the trees they love and act 'a proper lady'. At this point, young women begin to live with a paradox. They are taught to spend their time attracting men, but they are also taught to fear violence from men. As a result, women may crave solitude but may fear being alone in the landscape. Over and over, they tell me that they feel vulnerable; they fear danger—not from the land, but from men. They fear violence and never quite forget about its most disturbing expression: rape."[5]

Education for Action

So, if a starting point for nurturing an ecological sensibility in children is lots of direct first hand contact with the natural world, this may have to be facilitated. This facilitation does not only include providing access to 'natural' areas, both local to them and more diverse areas further afield, but can also include breaking down psychological barriers about contact with the natural world. This may require targeted and focused activities that not only include techniques to bring people up close to nature, but also entice them to make that leap in the first place.



In non-industrial societies kids get a connection with nature immediately through daily life—no need for 'excursions'.

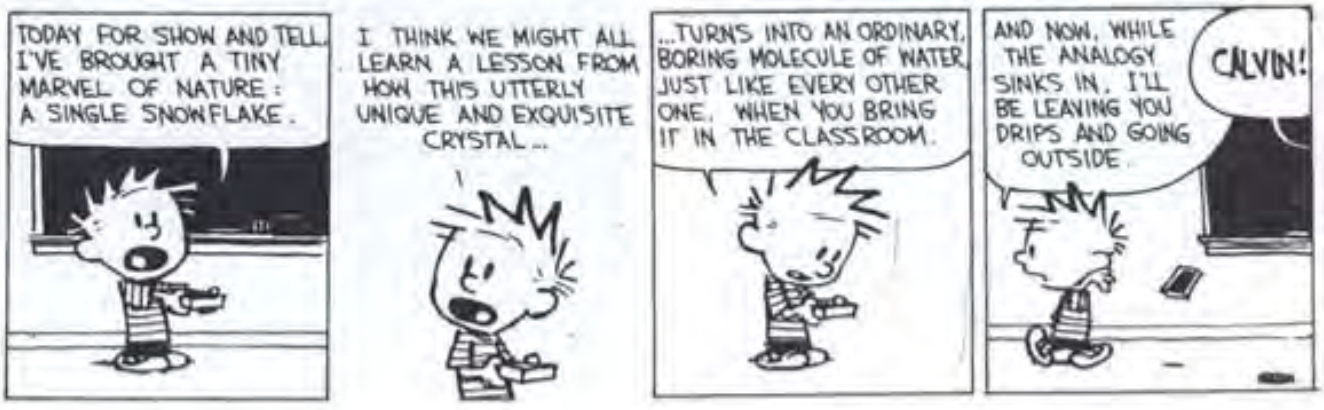
Once a positive relationship with the natural world is beginning to grow, the first step is caring about something, the second stage is developing understanding. One of the reasons that people can carry on their ecologically destructive habits is that they remain ignorant of the basic processes that underpin our world. These processes, if understood, would make many of our actions seem absurd. If effectively illustrated, through participating in practical activities, a child of eight can understand basic ecological concepts. Understanding how energy flows through our environment, and that we need green plants to process the sun's energy into food we can eat, shows the folly of covering the land in concrete and eroding the soil. Realising that we live on a finite planet and that all of our molecules are constantly recycled makes children understand the absurdity of plastic packaging landfill, and that poison put into the air and water cycles will, eventually, come back to haunt us. Illustrating the interconnections between all living things shows that you cannot act in isolation from the rest of the world, and that all of our actions have consequences. This, in conjunction with the fact that everything is constantly undergoing a process of change which is vital for evolution raises the question of why we are trying to simplify our environment and halt the flow of natural processes, and also gives us hope for the future. These are just a few concepts, which when considered together, build a basic picture that should be a prerequisite for anyone living on the planet, and can be seen as even more vital than the basic social and cultural skills that are taught in our schools.

But all of this means nothing unless people act. It is important that you then provide accessible ways that children and young people can get involved in caring for their environment, from making lifestyle changes to working together to look after and develop natural areas near where they live, play, or go to school. These may only seem like small things but it is important that young people can act on things that they can achieve, specific to their age and capabilities. Sitting in the classroom at school where environmental education is predominantly issue based (acid rain and global warming etc.) can be very disempowering.

Awareness of the issues is important but they are problems caused by adult society, and it is adult society that holds the solutions. Children are one of our most powerless minorities, so to tell them that their planet is dying, and the solutions are out of their control is very unfair. But, by taking part in activities which make small tangible changes and reinforce an ecological mindset, children can develop an understanding of the world which may stop them burying their heads in the sand when they are older. However, we must be careful to place this in context. Telling children that by reducing their impact through recycling and other lifestyle changes they can save the planet, is not only misleading but also implies that the state of the planet is their fault for not doing these things in the first place, rather than the underlying cause being social and economic systems based on domination and exploitation. Once again, this participation in activities may have, to an extent, to be facilitated and supported as consumer society does not encourage participation in the real world. Children may not be used to the concept of acting on things that they learn and discover.

At what age should we begin to work with children to implement this pattern of exploration, discovery, learning, and participation? At what age of a child's development are activities with different emphases appropriate? A place to start can be at the beginning. When a child is born it is a wild animal, not yet a social or cultural creature, its experience of the world is direct and real, unmediated by words and concepts. At this stage a child's development mirrors natural evolution, it is a cumulative process of auto-poesis (literally self-poetry), or self-making, self-organisation.

Rene Dubos, a writer on psychology and health states: "Development of the nervous system and even mental health depend upon a constant exposure to sensory stimuli and new experiences." Through play and discovery children organise their world, they build themselves. The natural world at its best is rich and chaotic, a torrent of responsive



stimuli. It is malleable, irregular and teeming with other life, exposure to which can help fire the imagination.

"Although his tools are cultural, the child's modelling impulses, perceptual and manual, appear to be spontaneous and biologically innate. These impulses are instinctive and inventive, whilst the child's materials are in the strict sense 'natural'. Being artefact as such is not the essential nature of any object. The natural properties of an artefact—its shape, colour, and especially texture and potential use—are the reality along with the identity. Looked at in this way a child's world making in play is a learning process... On this basis it is possible to sustain the view that the child does not merely grow but evolves out of nature into culture."[6]

An Adventure of the Senses

This process of stimulating the imagination continues throughout the child's development. In these early years up to the age of about five the child's main attachment is to their mother/carer. From the age of five the child takes tentative steps away from this attachment into the wider world. It is from this age we can supplement pure free play with more focused activities. It is important when designing play and learning activities to involve children in the natural world to take into account that children have a different perception of the environment to adults. How many times have you seen adults walking their children through the countryside and trying to show them magnificent views, just to turn round to find the kids poking around in puddles or making dens in the bushes? Adults tend to find beauty, tranquillity, and solace in the mindscapes of rolling hills or sea and sky. For children the natural world is much more immediate and intimate. Acting out scenarios in secluded dens, climbing trees for lookouts. They can spend a whole day just mucking about on the edge of a stream. The best way to design activities is to observe how children play, and develop on this behaviour. From the age of about five to seven children can begin to understand concrete concepts that can be shown practically through games and discoveries. Such things as; animals need shelter, water, air, and food for survival, and that they get these things from their environment.

From about the age of eight to around the age of twelve are the most formative years of a child's development. It is these years that are most likely to have the greatest impression on the person the child is to become. The world is becoming an incredibly interesting place, they are beginning to understand ideas, and if given the opportunity, to be exhilarated by life. It is at this age that risks are to be taken and discoveries to be made. Asbjorn Fleming, a Norwegian educationalist has noted:

Solitude

A simple yet valuable experience that is very powerful is that of solitude. With almost constant supervision, and the audio and visual bombardment of consumer society, many children very seldom have positive experiences of solitude. As well as being a valuable place for reflection it can also be an experience where children can appreciate the flows and rhythms of the natural world. A simple activity to provide this is known in earth education as 'magic spots'.

- Let each child choose a spot in the woods sitting with their back to a tree but so they cannot see anyone else. Then they sit still and silent until the normal activity of the woodland resumes around them, as if they were just another feature in their surroundings.
- For some children, the first time they do this it can be good to give them something to focus on—are there insects on the bark of their tree? What different sounds can they hear? What shapes are made by the play of light as the trees move above them?
- The first time you try it, start with five minutes then increase it to around ten minutes. If given the choice some children will often stay longer than this.
- Use small sitting mats so that the children are comfortable.
- If working with a large group of children, drop them off and pick them up one by one. Place them so that they face different directions and can't see each other.
- Get the group together before setting off. Have them reach up above them and grasp an imaginary curtain, the 'veil of silence', and lower it to their feet. After this no one can utter a sound until the 'veil' is lifted at the end of the activity. Remind them that the activity is not for meditating or 'listening to the little voice inside their head', but experiencing the world around them.

A variation on this activity is called 'night watchers' and is done after dark. This activity is the same as 'magic spots' but a night-light or small candle in a jam jar is placed behind each child. If the jar is placed behind them it does not spoil their night vision, but they and you are reassured by the little dots of light scattered through the wood.

"...play comes to children naturally with two related impulses, to use the body to its fullest while interacting with others socially. Inevitably it involves risk, conflict and even fighting but these are the thrilling experiences that children seek out and they drive forward physical and social development... There is a will and a drive to develop and it happens through real play. What this means is using the body as it can be used, finding out for themselves what the body is capable of... Much of children's play is about finding out what they are capable of and pushing themselves on."[7]

The natural world is the perfect place for this type of adventure. Unlike the adult designed challenges of the 'play area' or the athletics field, the natural world doesn't judge, it just is. "Can I climb that tree? Can I jump the dyke just here?" Children weave the landscape together with stories, they make it their own. This can be a very supportive relationship. It is a time in children's lives where they have very little control, they are at the beck and call of adult relationships and decisions. To feel at home in the natural world is a valuable thing. Amongst the buzzing lives of other species, it is a place where they can go to be alone without being lonely. These explorations and discoveries can also incite a curiosity which can drive a desire to learn. At this age they are able to be excited by ideas and are beginning to be able to understand abstract concepts and the interconnections between living things. If these concepts are placed in the context of their discoveries, and are illustrated by the children participating in a practical way, they can take on a reality that transcends textbooks.

Rites of Passage

The next stage of a child's development can be very difficult; it involves the transition from being a child to becoming a young adult—adolescence. At this time there is a lot going on in a young person's life—friends, music, developing sexuality, the future, and having a good time can predominate. They can also be possessed by a self-consciousness that can be almost crippling. At this time the most useful thing that can be done is to maintain an underlying contact and relationship with the natural world, and to help nurture the confident autonomous individual. This can provide a position of strength from which they can make informed decisions about the world that they are becoming active in. During this period a relationship with the natural world is of immeasurable value for the self-esteem, confidence, and security of young people. It has been said of the natural environment that:

"Nowhere, it seems, do human concerns matter less. And yet, nowhere is the simple fact of our existence so exhilaratingly clear. Nowhere do so few trivialising and demeaning assaults on egos exist. Nowhere do humans matter more... By forging connections with plants, animals, and land, by finding some ways to experience some relationship to the Earth, individuals can gain a sense of worth. Herein lies security."[8]

How important this can be is illustrated in this anecdote: "...in 1974, I heard this from a twelve-year-old black girl who had been bussed to a previously all-white Boston school: 'I guess I'm doin' all right. I'm studyin' and like teacher says, it pays off. A lot of time, though, I wish I could walk out of that school and find myself a place where there are no whites, no black folk, no people of any kind! I mean, a place where I'd be able to sit still and get my head together; a place where I could walk and walk, and I'd be walking on grass, not cement, with glass and garbage around; a place where there'd be sky and the sun, and then the moon and all those stars. At night sometimes, when I get to feeling real low, I'll climb up the stairs to our roof [she lived in a triple-decker building with a flat roof], and I look at the sky, and





Collecting berries in the forest garden. Moulsecoomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project in Brighton has been introducing local kids to ecology since 1994.

I'll say hello there, you moon and all your babies—stars! I'm being silly, I know, but up there, I feel I can stop and think about what's happening to me—it's the only place I can, the only place.'"[9]

When relationships have broken down within society or the family, young people can be faced with an overwhelming sense of isolation. The natural world can give a definition of self defined in relation to others, including other species; and the security of interconnected relationships to the rest of the world, a counterpoint to isolation and alienation. Finding your place in the world, and drawing comfort from diversity. As stated by Paul Shepard: "The culmination of this difference-with-affinity is a firm ground of personal confidence and membership in its largest sense."[10]

One way of developing these experiences is through camps and expeditions that encompass challenging activities. These can be intense experiences which involve immersing young people in the natural world. Talking into the flames of the campfire in the seclusion of the night can provide a safe place for them to voice and discuss their hopes and fears. Incorporating 'challenges by choice' can help them test themselves. These are just a few of the elements of something that is generally lost from commercialised society, a form of 'rights of passage', something to delineate the transition from being a child to becoming an adult. When working in small groups in this way challenges should be based around the principles of mutual aid, voluntary co-operation, and organisation without hierarchy, and underpinned by communication, fun, and a sense of adventure. We should not be educating people to become environmentalists, we should be helping young people become strong individuals, secure in themselves, who are able to work with others without domination, and have an abiding love of the natural world. It is from this position of strength that they can make their own decisions. However, we can hope that they will then be equipped to go on and participate within their communities and defend the things that they have grown to love and understand.

Children are amazing; educating them has connotations that we know best, that we know the things they should know, and that we can best raise them to behave and act fittingly. This form of domination is echoed throughout society—the management not trusting the workers to do the job, the government not trusting the citizens. The children are our hope. In environmental and social terms it's our limited imaginations that have brought about the state we are in, it will take unlimited imaginations to solve these problems. They will be solved by the children, but in order to do so children must be given the freedom to unleash their imaginations. As Einstein said, "imagination is more important than knowledge". What we can do, rather than educate, is to help nurture the experiences and understandings that will catalyse and empower children to think beyond the confines that we impose upon them.

"Since the imagination arises from the child's contact with nature, each child is a born ecologist. Thus: save the children to save the imagination to save the planet."[11]★

Notes

1) 'Why Are We Afraid for Our Children' in *Reared in Captivity: Restoring the Freedom to Play* (Playlink, Freepost EDO 5600, London SW9 6BR)

2) 'Don't Blame the Parents', *ibid.*

3) *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places* by Gary Paul Nabhan and Stephen Trimble (Beacon Press) ISBN 0807085251, p.11

4) 'The Cycle of Participation' by Judy Ling Wong FRSA, from *Ethnic Environmental Participation: Key Articles Vol. 1*, (Black Environment Network, 9 Llainwen Uchaf, Llanberis, Gwynedd, Wales LL55 4LL) ISBN 1874444366

5) *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places*, p.60

6) *The Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood* by Edith Cobb (Spring Publications) ISBN 088214360, p.57

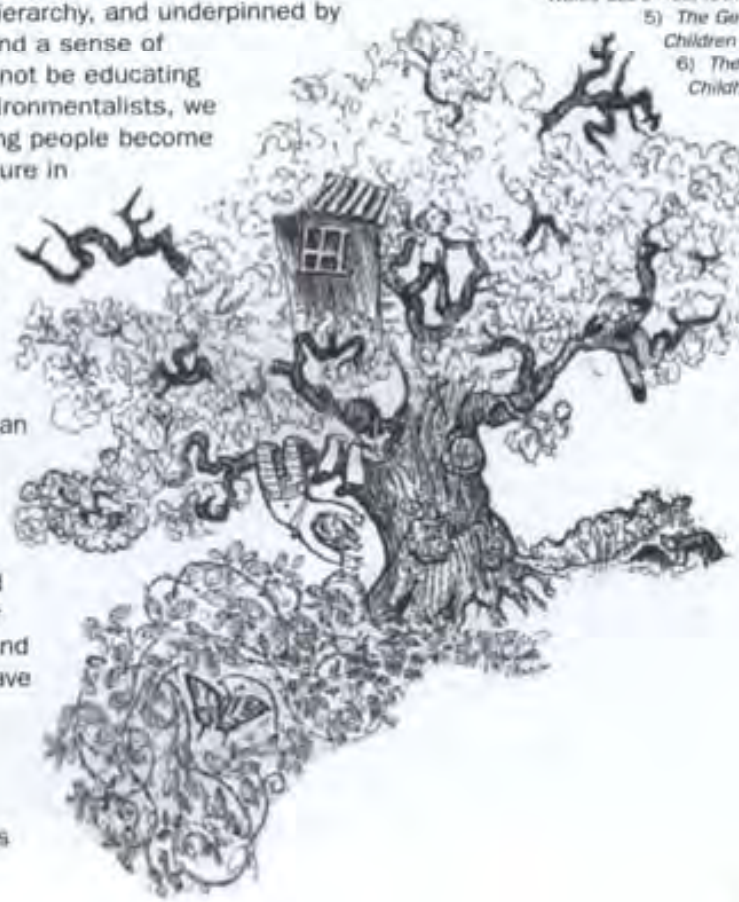
7) 'Risk and Freedom in a Norwegian Play space' in *Reared in Captivity: Restoring the Freedom to Play*

8) *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places*, p.22

9) *Ibid.*, p. xvi

10) *Nature and Madness* by Paul Sheperd (The University of Georgia Press) ISBN 0820319805, p.12

11) Quote by James Hillman from the front cover of *The Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood*



Ecological Education Projects

Forest Schools

Starting from as young as 3 years old, Forest Schools take children and young people (especially those with 'challenging behaviour') into the woods for several days a week. This happens come rain or shine. The children are taught skills like using bow saws, building dens, and cooking on open fires. The programme culminates with woodland campovers. Forest Schools are now being established across the country. Contact them at: Forest Schools, Bridgewater College, Bath Road, Bridgewater, Somerset TA6 4PZ. Web: www.bridgewater.ac.uk

Forest School Camps

These camps are for all ages and have been running in the UK for about 50 years. They have around 1,200 participants per year. The emphasis is on 'learning by doing', and involves woodcraft skills and adventure training. There is currently a move within the organisation to revitalise their radical and libertarian roots. This is being spearheaded by a group called Fire in the Belly. Contact them at: Forest School Camps, Filton House, 42 Payne Avenue, Aldrington, Hove BN3 5HD. Web: www.fireinthebelly.org.uk

The Woodcraft Folk

Sometimes labelled as a co-operative scouting movement, The Woodcraft Folk have groups operating in many parts of the Country. For more information get in touch with them at: Woodcraft Folk, 13 Ritherdon Road, London SW17 8QE.

The Institute for Earth Education

The Institute has been around for about 25 years and now operates in 7 different countries. It developed the principle of active learning adventures in the natural world that develop feelings, understanding, and participation. The programmes that it distributes and promotes are well-crafted and can provide the basis for very successful activities. Like all institutes the structure is very much 'the lengthened shadow of one individual', but the practical reality on the ground in the UK, where it has been operating for 10 years, is that of a mutual aid network. Contact them at: The Institute for Earth Education, Shorthills Environmental Centre, Nightinggales Lane, Chalfont St Giles, HP8 4SG.

Blue Planet Days

This is a project run by Millennium Debate of Oxford. They go into secondary schools for a day and run a series of events that include a high impact multimedia performance about our effects on the planet and workshops on various aspects of alternative culture and technology. Contact them at: The Millennium Debate, 46 Nelson St, Oxford OX2 6BE. Web: www.millennium-debate.org

Wild Things—Ecological Education Collective

We are a small workers co-operative, based in Nottinghamshire, that developed as a positive initiative from experiences in the road protests of the mid-1990s. We provide active learning adventures based on the principles and practice of earth education and adventurous environmental play and challenge activities, to children's and young people's groups from Nottingham and across the ex-mining communities of the Nottinghamshire coalfield. We currently work with over 1,000 children a year. Wild Things is establishing with other organisations a Wild Play Network, which aims to provide resources, activities and training to facilitate environmental play and discovery based learning throughout Nottinghamshire. It also aims to gain access to, and secure, a wide network of areas suitable for these activities across the county. Contact: Wild Things, The Sumac Centre, 254 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX.
Tel: 0845 4584727
Email: eco-action@wildthings.org.uk
Web: www.wildthings.org.uk



Zapa-Teacher!

Radical Education in the Zapatista Communities



In December 1994 the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) launched an offensive that took control of over a third of the state of Chiapas in Mexico. In this area 32 autonomous municipalities were established. In these municipalities the villages democratically decided on new community representatives.

A central aspect of this struggle for autonomy is to regain control of education within their villages, and in doing so promote the use of indigenous languages, as well as a syllabus that strengthens their cultures and is relevant to their own rural way of life. With this in mind the communities also choose their own teachers. What follows is a short interview with somebody who teaches in one of the villages in the autonomous municipalities.

How did you get involved in autonomous education?

I've been working in the communities for 7 years now. When I arrived in 1995, after the 9th February talks had broken down, there had started to be harassment in all the Zapatista communities of Chiapas. Then several caravans were organised on a national level to break the military siege, and to stand by as civil society Zapatista communities. I arrived in one community and when I arrived there was a women's checkpoint looking after the community while the men were working. I was really impressed by what was happening in that community. To see for the first time indigenous women with a lot of strength in their faces, with a lot of dignity in their faces, and then that's when I thought that I wanted to be here. I asked the community what I could do if I stayed, and they said that due to the Zapatista uprising teachers had left their communities and that they didn't like the teachers who had been there before. They said that if I wanted to, I could work in the community teaching young people to work with the kids.

And what were you doing before when you were living in Mexico City?

Well, I was studying and working, and I knew lots about what was going on here through the student committees in the university. And there were also Chiapas support groups, which got together in the university.

What is autonomous education all about? What are its values and goals?

When I arrived here, to start with, the people saw the need for there to be care for the children



as the teachers had left. Also, they were not in agreement with government education, because the official education was in Spanish when they spoke other languages. Because the teachers in many cases also acted like a political figure, they had a lot of weight in the community and sometimes were the ones who brought alcohol into the community. In other cases, there were teachers that even if they did their job, it was an education that did not fit the needs or culture of the community. Then the communities began to feel the need to have an education which was created in the community and with young people from the same community, people that didn't come from outside, and who wouldn't leave. Then bit by bit from 1995 which is when the San Andres peace agreements were going on, around the negotiating tables of San Andres the issues of autonomy began to be dealt with, and the municipalities began to organise themselves autonomously. Basically, they were Zapatista communities in resistance, and then from 1995 they began to form themselves into autonomous municipalities. And it was then that they decided that as autonomous municipalities it was important to have an autonomous education, and it's there the process began, and the people began to think about what an autonomous education would be. Then people talked about how they wanted an education that would help them to resolve their problems, that was in their mother tongue, that was with people of the same community, that respected their culture, and that's how autonomous education began to be organised.

What is the syllabus of autonomous education?

Well, there are many municipalities and autonomous education is working in all of them. Also there are different people from civil society who are supporting this education, so it varies according to the needs of each municipality and according to the agreements of each municipality. But the main things that we work in are reading and writing native languages, and that is quite a long process because there are still no set ways of writing in the native languages, so for indigenous languages there are no set materials. So the process of reading and writing in indigenous languages is still difficult, but it is something that the people say they want their offspring to learn. Therefore, I think that is a very important point, because it is important to read and write but it is also important that children lose their shame and get back their dignity, because before in school they were devalued. In this new education they are concerned that children participate and lose shame. So each municipality has its own way of doing this.

History is also taught—the history of each autonomous municipality has been pieced together and there have also been gatherings of old folk where the old people talk about how customs were in the past. They've also given a lot of significance to songs, theatre and health concerns. So, education is being formed from what is seen as a necessity in each particular municipality.

How many autonomous schools are there in there in the Zapatista areas?

Who knows? In the Zapatista area where we are there are seven municipalities, and there are schools in almost all the communities of those seven municipalities. But in the Zapatista area there are more than 1,000 communities, and of those 1,000 communities, I don't know how many schools there are.

How are the necessary materials for teaching and learning obtained?

Well, firstly there are no materials. Rather, it's like the educators work with what they can. So, there are communities which had a school before, and they work in that school with those materials. But there are communities where they had no school, and they have built a new school with wood and corrugated iron and then they paint a blackboard and they have their classes. But it's according to the possibilities of each community. Materials like books are very scarce. Materials sometimes come from the travelling caravans, or are sent from civil society and support groups. But there are loads of schools, so it's difficult for all of them to have what's needed to teach.

What sorts of problems are there with the efforts to educate autonomously?

Well, I think the problems faced are many. We face political problems, in the sense that for many years the educators have been working under pressure of military harassment or with the pressure and fear that the land would be taken away. Now the problem is facing government attempts to buy communities off. Sometimes in

the communities this is part of the strategy of low intensity warfare. If there is an autonomous education initiative, the government has its own education initiative and tries to co-opt part of the community. So those are problems to do with the conditions that the communities are living in.

"Education is our priority because that is where the manipulation of the government comes in." —A Zapatista from the Ocosingo region.

Other problems are that the educators have their job as educator as a service to the community, not as paid work. So the educator has to see to their group of children, but they also have to see to their family and their field, as well as having to do all the work which comes from their process of struggle. So really it is one of the most difficult jobs because it takes more time than being a health promoter or human rights promoter. As well as this I think that educators don't have sufficient resources; there's no materials. Also the process of education has been developing. Sometimes the mentality of the parents has been developing too, because to start with education was something that wasn't meeting immediate needs, so children were also part of their family's collective work. So these sorts of problems...

How do you see the future of the Zapatista movement?

Well, what I see is that it is becoming a very important process at the level of the building of the autonomous municipalities. Because I think the process that's going on in the autonomous municipalities is something which is already irreversible. And also they constitute hope and an alternative to the global system. Although it's about a local process which is the autonomy of the communities, the autonomous municipalities are also an alternative to all these global initiatives. So I think it's also the indigenous people's realisation that whether or not the government fulfil their agreements, the municipalities are already being built, and they are real, and they have a real autonomy. The indigenous people are not going to be like before. So I think that is what is going on, and it can't go back.

What sort of support can people from other parts of the world offer?

Well, I think firstly to be informed about what is happening here, and I think also there's lots of things to do everywhere if we learn from what is going on here in the communities. They are an example of what can also be done in other places. And on other levels, like more specific support for the autonomous municipalities, people can be in touch with each municipality directly, with their councils, to see what needs they have.

What do you think can be learnt from the struggle here?

I think the most important thing is the sense of community, and also that the process really is being built with everyone and amongst everyone, as everyone participates and everyone has a space in the process. It's not anything that is finished, it's a whole process with its cycles and stages; it's developing. Also I think there is a lot to learn from the way in which, as the government are not capable of meeting the people's needs, it is the people themselves that have to decide how they should sort out their needs.★

For more details on the Zapatista struggle we recommend the excellent book The Zapatistas: A Rough Guide published by Chiapaslink (PO Box 79, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB, England.) ISBN 0 9073 679 92. You can order a copy from them for £6 (including postage) or for an updated version on the web look at: www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net



Peat Alert!



The recent direct action campaign fighting to defend peat bogs from destruction has been going on for about two years now, taking over where others left off and injecting new spirit into the battle. This article is a basic introduction to the ecology and social history of bogs, the recent campaign, as well as an insight into the political machinations that seem to overwhelm so many ecological issues—just one more reason to ignore the lot and hit them where it hurts!

Thorne and Hatfield Moors

The Humberhead Levels, stretching from York to Gainsborough and from Grimsby to Doncaster, were created as ice retreated after the last glaciation, leaving a flattened landscape, much of which is at or below sea-level. Thorne Moors and Hatfield Moor are south of the Humber estuary and make up a total of 3,000 hectares of peat land. They are among the remnants of an extensive complex of lowland raised mires which started growing in the new landscape around 4,500 years ago. Thorne and Hatfield and are now the two largest surviving lowland raised mires in Britain.[1]

Although close neighbours, the two sites are far from identical. Their geology and histories are very different and their habitat ranges are distinctive. Just over half of Thorne Moors is re-grown abandoned peat workings, criss-crossed by drainage ditches, clinker towpaths and disused canals, with fen meadow, willow and birch scrub and mature woodland at the edges. In the midst of this mosaic are pockets of living, growing mire. Over 80% of the surface of Hatfield Moor has been stripped and worked for peat. Part of the remainder supports native Scots pine, and the centre of the moor is an important sandy heath land.

After centuries of damage and destruction, the area of raised bog habitat in the UK remaining in a natural state and still laying down peat (active bog) is 6,000 hectares: only 6% of the original area.[2] Of the 10,000 or so raised bogs in Britain, only one site supports bog habitat across its entire structure: Glen Moss in Scotland, which covers just six hectares. England, which originally held the largest area of raised bog, no longer has any sites where active bog predominates. Even within the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), there is more damaged area than pristine active bog.[3] The total amount of raised bog habitat in prime, natural condition is well below the 10,000 hectares recognised as the minimum area required for its secure conservation.[4] Active raised bog in Europe is now so scarce that it is listed under the European Council directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

What is Peat?

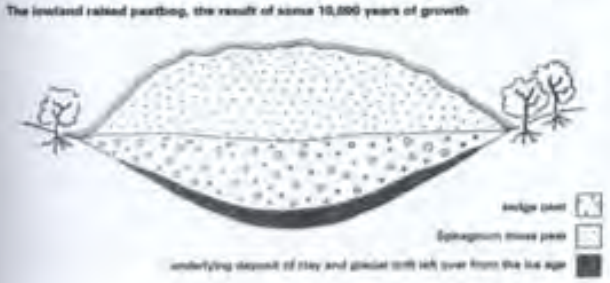
Raised peat bogs are formed in low-lying waterlogged areas. Rather than decaying, acidic

sphagnum moss is preserved due to the lack of oxygen, which means that a living bog grows at a rate of between 2mm and 15mm per year. Sphagnum moss is immensely absorbent; indeed until the Second World War dried moss was preferred to cotton wool in field hospitals, being also sterile and having antiseptic qualities. In the mid-18th Century the raised bog on Thorne Moors was over 20 foot high, and would grow up to 8 foot higher in the winter because of the wet weather. 'Quaking bogs', as they are sometimes known can be as little as 2% solids—the rest made up of water. One 19th Century naturalist, Adrian Woodruffe-Peacock, a Lincolnshire vicar, described it as, "trembling in waves when you jumped on its... surface, till the undulations were lost in the distance or at the edge of the nearest ditch".[5]

Due to the lack of decay, locked up inside the peat bogs is an irreplaceable archive of past climate conditions, vegetation and human activity dating back thousands of years. Ancient boats, human bodies, trees and pollen have all been found preserved in peat. As organisms grow they use carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas contributing to climate change), storing it as carbon, and as they decay the carbon is released. Peat is essentially undecayed plant-matter, storing between 500 and 1,000 gigatonnes of carbon globally.[6] Research in the USA suggests that alterations in the extent of peat bogs would change the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere by up to 20%, because living peat bogs absorb and contain CO2 as they grow, while drained (not to mention dug up and spread around) bogs decay, releasing thousands of years worth of stored carbon into the air.

Peatlands are unique because they are acidic and low in nutrients, creating conditions for a particularly specialised ecology. In addition, peatland habitats are ecologically distinct from each other, as variations in rainfall, geology and surrounding habitats encourage different species. Thorne and Hatfield are home to over 800 species of flowering plants and ferns and hundreds of species of mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi. At least three rare species of carnivorous plant are found on Thorne and Hatfield:

• The Round-Leaved Sundew and Butterwort live in the boggy bits and trap insects in the gunk they





secrete on their leaves, and then enfold them so that they are digested in the secretions, leaving only wings, claws, skin and the indigestible part of the insect's skeleton as the leaves unfold once more.

• The Bladderwort lives in water on the fen margins, and has no roots, but only a mass of fronds, each of which bears several tiny "bladders". Hairs on the mouth of the bladder are sensitive to insects swimming by, thus triggering the flat little sac to open up, which sucks in water and the unfortunate insect. Once trapped, the insect is not killed, but starves and then decays, releasing the required nutrients to the plant.

Hatfield Moor alone has 5,500 species of invertebrates—a truly astonishing figure, and there are different species again on Thorne. About 150 nationally scarce or endangered species have been recorded, including several which are unique to one or both of these Moors. They are also home to over 200 species of birds, including the Nightjar, Woodlark, Nightingale, Woodcock, Curlew, Peregrine and Short and Long-Eared owls. Hatfield is the only lowland breeding site in England of the Twite or Heather Linnet. Wintering birds of prey such as Merlin, Hen harrier and Marsh harrier depend on large expanses of undisturbed habitat to hunt over, and their numbers declined drastically as the area of the Moors under active peat cutting expanded during the 1980s.

Peat Cutting

Peat was traditionally cut by hand, a slow method, which enabled peatland wildlife to survive among the flooded peat cuttings and allowed the vegetation to regenerate over time. New peat 'milling' extraction methods in the 1980s brought intensive drainage and the almost complete removal of surface vegetation, along with the top layer of peat, from large parts of the Moors

"Drainage not only can affect the plants and animals that live on a peat bog, but also can change the character of the bog itself. The essence of an acid peat bog—what enables it to maintain its acidic condition—is its wetness. Once the soil dries out, plants die and decay as they would in any other habitat. The nutrients supplied by the decayed plant matter change the bog from a low-nutrient, acid habitat to a nutrient-rich, alkaline one. Nor can the effects of severe drainage be reversed by returning water to the bog."—Catherine Caufield, *Thorne Moors* (1991)

A network of ditches and drains is cut across and around the moor, draining water out and pumping it away. When the land is dry enough (around Easter or a bit later) rotivators are brought on, which churn up the surface, destroying the delicate soil structure of the peat and any palaeoenvironmental record contained in it. These are followed by bulldozers, which scrape the loose peat into ridges and then by harvesters, which hoover it up into the dumper trucks which dump it in long, high mounds next to a narrow gauge railway. At Hatfield it is processed all year round, stocks having just about run out by the time the next cutting season comes round. It is important to note that because bogs are mainly liquid, damage (through drainage) to habitats and the peat archive extends beyond the extraction area to affect the entire site.[7]

Recent Wranglings

From the 1300s, rights of turbary (peat-cutting) for fuel were exercised on both Thorne and Hatfield Moors for hundreds of years by local people. In the 1820s the government enclosed the land and awarded it to individuals, the local churches and schools etc. It was then possible to sell the land on. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Thorne Moors were very extensively commercially worked for peat, most of which was sold as bedding for horses. With the advent of the internal combustion engine this market virtually disappeared and little peat was cut between the mid 1920s and the early

William Bunting: Thorne Moors Greatest Defender!

In the early 1950s, an irascible, uncompromising man called William Bunting arrived in Thorne. Born in Barnsley in 1916 he had acted as a courier and smuggler for the anarchists in the Spanish Civil War. Fascinated by the moors, Bunting became a self-taught naturalist. His discoveries include a species of alga that lives on the antenna of microscopic water fleas, and as well as this he was the first person to draw attention to the Bronze Age wooden pathway under Thorne Moors.

Angered by the publication in 1952 of West Riding County Council's footpath map, showing no paths at all on Thorne, Bunting taught himself to read Latin, Medieval English and Norman French so to acquaint himself with the confused and arcane laws and administrative regulations on public rights-of-way. With this knowledge he fought the illegal enclosure of Thorne through the courts for the next two decades. He also continued to walk the old footpaths, removing obstacles and confronting angry landowners as he went. When walking on the moors he carried a gun, a walking stick concealing a razor-sharp sabre, a machete and his wire cutters. When asked if he had ever had occasion to fire a gun while on the moors, he roared, "What do you think I use them for, picking my bloody nose?"

In the early 1960s, conventional wisdom was that farming and peat digging had already ruined Thorne Moors and it was generally regarded as a piece of wasteland. The Yorkshire Naturalists' Trust voted not to object to a plan to dump fuel ash on the moors. Bunting, outraged, wrote scathing letters, compiled reports and badgered the organisation's leading lights to come and see for themselves. They reversed their decision. Bunting defeated numerous plans for similar schemes. As well as the planners and developers, Bunting also had to fight the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC—a precursor of English Nature) which had denied for many years that there was anything of interest on Thorne Moors.

In late 1971, Fisons excavated several deep drains that threatened to destroy completely the richest part of the area. With the heart of the moors at risk, Bunting and a group of naturalists, local residents and students from a number of northern universities took matters into their own hands. Calling themselves Bunting's Beavers, the group went onto the Moors practically every weekend throughout the spring and summer of 1972 to dam the drains. Fisons' workers were unable to keep up with them and by the early autumn dozens of dams had been built, some of them more than forty feet thick.

In October 1972, shortly after a BBC TV crew filmed the Beavers at work, Fisons dynamited 18 of the dams. The Beavers repaired the dams, and Fisons, which had been showered with unfavourable publicity, let the new dams stand. Fisons eventually entered into an agreement to protect that area from drainage and cutting, and to reinforce several of the Beavers' dams and eleven years later, the NCC bought 180 acres of it and declared it a National Nature Reserve.

William Bunting died in 1995, having been pensioned out of the army in the late 1940s with TB and diagnosed shortly afterward with a crippling inflammation of the vertebrae. He was ill and in terrible pain for much of his life, yet without his obsessive and aggressive protection, Thorne Moors would have been destroyed long ago.

We take his words to heart: "I suggest that the essence of conservation lies with one simple word, NO! Don't become like those prostitutes in the Nature Conservancy. Say no, mean no, fight to retain the places we have."

Source: *Thorne Moors* by Catherine Caufield (Sumach Press, 1991)

1960s. Planning permission for peat extraction covering almost the whole of both Moors was granted in 1950. In the 1960s the first mechanised forms of peat extraction—block cutting—arrived when Fisons and companies like them started marketing peat as a growth medium (compost) for horticulture. Fisons Ltd. reputedly owned the land (absolute title has never been proved), including sand and gravel extraction rights from the 1963 to 1994 when they became Levington Horticulture Ltd. in a management buyout.

The Scotts Company (UK), based in Ohio, bought out Levington Horticulture Ltd. in 1997. Scotts, as the current leaseholder on the land, held the mineral extraction planning permission granted over 50 years, which was due to run out in 2023.

From 1990 the Peatland Campaign Consortium (PCC) members and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were running a strong campaign to save peat bogs and promote peat alternatives. Indeed, in 1992 such was the success of the campaign that it was thought that it would be possible to ensure that:

- No peat was being extracted from SSSIs within 12 months.
- No peat was being extracted from bogs of conservation value within two years.
- Peat extraction would cease altogether in the UK within five years.[8]

The campaign was affecting Fisons' sales enough to bring them to the negotiating table. They approached the government for help, who left English Nature (a government agency) to sort it out. This led to 'The Counterpart Lease' between Fisons and English Nature which was signed in 1994. The lease required Fisons to donate 8,100 acres of freehold peatland to English Nature—some of which became a National Nature Reserve—BUT the holding company kept all mineral extraction rights (including sand and gravel which is under the peat) on 5,300 acres, in places where work had already started. Planning permission for peat extraction which was granted in the 1950s was to last until 2023. Once extraction had ceased the land would be restored and managed by English Nature.

As part of the agreement an average peat depth of 0.5m was to be left.[9] Note, however, that 'average' means they can (and do) dig deeper in some areas to allow access to the sand and gravel underneath, whilst not digging as deep in other areas as the bottom level of the peat undulates naturally.

In addition English Nature must "not knowingly (...) encourage or assist others to do anything which may directly or indirectly prevent, restrict or impede the use of the property for the approved use."[10]

So, although the deal brought roughly half of Thorne Moors into immediate conservation management, it also resulted in the ludicrous situation whereby English Nature was effectively made landlord to continued peat-cutting on the rest of the site and undermined the SSSI-peat consumer boycott. Even when three nightjar territories were found, mining was not halted in the area, even though the nightjar is a protected species. Outrageously, English Nature announced the agreement in a press release entitled "Agreement Saves Key Peatlands". However, this is what Dr Derek Ratcliffe, former Chief Scientist of the disbanded Nature Conservancy Council had to say:

"The deferred promise of eventually returning worked-over bog to conservation management has a hollow ring, since there is no acceptable evidence that peatland worked out by the modern methods of machine milling has any further value for peat-bog wildlife."

"Protesters have pointed out that English Nature had no need to rush into such a deal with Fisons... as the tide is flowing in the conservationists' favour and the firm itself was on the ropes. English Nature could have let the voluntary bodies batter away to stop the peat mining, as they had some chance of doing. What it has done is to rescue the developers." [11]

In 1995 English Nature recommended parts of Thorne Moors for proposed Special Area of Conservation (pSAC) status which would grant the council the power to override



old planning permissions.[12] The lesser Specially Protected Area status was also recommended at this time and granted in 2000.[13]

In May 1997 all hell broke loose when English Nature published a proposal to denotify 5% of Thorne and 35% of Hatfield, i.e. to rescind its Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) status.[14] Using reports funded by Scotts,[15] which showed that the hydrology of the site was so badly damaged by the peat working that it could no longer be restored, English Nature proposed that SSSI status was no longer warranted. In October a public meeting in Thorne (organised by Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum and Friends of the Earth) attracted over 400 people objecting to the denotification. Local conservationists were told (off the record) by English Nature staff that Hatfield Moor might need to be sacrificed to save the more precious Thorne Moor.[16] The Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum raised over £5,000 for palaeoenvironmental, ecology and hydrology reports, countering the Scotts funded research and proving that the moors were still quality habitat.[17] In December 1997 the Council of English Nature announced it would not be amending the SSSI boundaries of Thorne and Hatfield Moors.

In 1999, having been made a pSAC in 1995, parts of Thorne finally achieved cSAC (the step before complete Special Area of Conservation status is awarded but for all intents and purposes a SAC) and soon after the rest of Thorne and all of Hatfield was proposed for submission. Giving the whole moors SAC status could eventually require a mineral planning review to identify and assess permissions impacting upon the site (and copious procrastinatory consultations with regard to resolution/alternatives/buy out). The government and the Scotts Company endlessly batted the decision back and forth between them, via English Nature. Every other month English Nature reported 'expecting the proposals to have been submitted to Brussels by now,' but following objections from the Peat Producers Association, the Scotts Company and William Sinclair Ltd., the Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) continually delayed.

On February 18th 2002, Peat Alert! called a national day of action, hitting 8 Scotts sites at once (see Action section). On 27th February, Scotts surprised the rest of the peat industry by announcing a deal with DEFRA and English Nature. In essence, DEFRA finally stepped in to fill the financial gap the local councils could never hope to bridge, paying Scotts £20.3 million for the minerals extraction rights on all their pSACs. Scotts stopped cutting that day on Thorne Moors, Wedholme Flow and half of Hatfield Moor. The same day, the Peat Producers Association (PPA) changed its name to the 'Growing Media Association'.

The new agreement is over 300 pages long, and disappointing as far campaigners and activists are concerned: Scotts still have until September 2004 (three cutting seasons) to extract nearly a million cubic metres of peat from three or four fields on the southern and eastern sides of Hatfield. There will be independent monitoring of the amount taken. If, for whatever reason, Scotts are forced to stop earlier without having taken their quota, they will be compensated. English Nature will pay Scotts for the use of their equipment and some of their staff for 3-4 years as part of the restoration work.[18] English Nature are planning to flood large areas of the site and will therefore need to bring in another 300-600 cubic metres of peat[19] (no one knows where from) to create the 'bunds' (dykes). Given the size of its peat operation in comparison to the rest of its business, it becomes less

"Sooner or Later We All Have to go to the Bog"

The lowly bog could be the true 'climax' plant community into which all ecosystems will evolve. Peatlands cover over four million square kilometres of the Earth' surface, ranging from frozen tundra to tropical bogs. Conventional 'succession theory' holds that plant communities naturally and predictably evolve to a stable 'climax' vegetation, which is usually forest. According to the textbooks, peatlands are merely an occasional stepping stone on the way. Some scientists, however, disagree, saying they have found widespread evidence that the true point of most succession is the peat bog. One American proponent, Lee Klinger, says: "My studies... show a well documented progression from herbaceous communities to forests, which gradually become stunted and slow-growing until finally there is Sphagnum bog."

Once established bog communities are extremely stable, and only disappear because of external disturbances, such as human exploitation, changing climate, permanent flooding or fire. This new succession theory leads, bizarrely, to the conclusion that the most highly evolved communities contain the most primitive species. As Klinger says; "We go back from angiosperms to bryophytes in bogs. In the long term, perhaps algae will take over from bryophytes." Britain's leading bog specialist comments: "If you look in the bottom of the peat bogs on the Pennines you find the remains of birch woods that were there 5,000 years ago until they were overwhelmed by peat."

(Source: 'Forests Destined to End in the Mire', Fred Pearce, *New Scientist*, 07/05/94)





The Flow Country, Northern Scotland—This vast expanse of peatlands is globally important. Britain contains one-seventh of the world's blanket peatland and most of this is in the Flow Country. Threatened by exploitation, afforestation and climate change, this wilderness is in need of uncompromising defence!

surprising that Scotts is hoping that the kudos is worth more than the peat itself—particularly since there is so little left in any case.

In the meantime DEFRA is still refusing to submit the sites individually for SAC designation, which, if it were granted, could still take up to seven years to implement.

We really are beyond the eleventh hour—the experts fight over how to restore the moors, while companies continue extracting peat from them, bringing peatland habitats ever closer to the brink. No one knows whether it is even possible for the moors to regenerate. Ten years ago, predictions were dire, yet experts are still making increasingly desperate estimates about regeneration, still trying to provide evidence that the moors have enough ecological interest to warrant legal protection. At Thorne and Hatfield they have proved their case, but the peat industry is still winning there and on other sites, due to a frustrating combination of corporate greed and legal bureaucracy.

Other Peat Bogs

There are many smaller bogs in the UK, both raised mire and blanket bogs, currently being mined for horticultural products, principally in Scotland, Cumbria, the Fens and Somerset. However, these do not satisfy the British gardener's appetite, so the peat industry also imports vast quantities of peat. In volume terms, the UK market demand for peat stands at approximately 3.4 million m3 of which about 40% is imported, mostly from Ireland.[20] Since 1998 Scotts have had a deal with Bord na Mona, the Irish Peat Development Board, to process and distribute Irish peat via the Hatfield peat works. Ireland is famous for its peat, indeed it has vast reserves, but it also has several peat-fired power stations and plans for more.

On the other hand, the second biggest peat producer in the UK, William Sinclair Ltd., imports much of its peat from Estonia and Scotts is planning to increase Eastern European imports as its UK exploitation decreases. According to Alan Shaw at the Growing Media Association, up to 10 percent of the UK's peat now comes from the Baltics, and the figure is expected to rise. "I think [imports from Central and Eastern Europe] will grow, and I suspect the Baltic countries and Russia will become more important," he says. Around a fifth of Estonia is covered in peat bogs, most of which have inadequate environmental protection. Over the next few years, peat cutting will be exhausted in the low-lying coastal regions, and firms are putting considerable pressure on the government to move on to untouched bogland, some of Europe's last safe havens for wildlife. Peatlands in Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine are also particularly vulnerable. In addition to the horticulture industry, fuel companies are also eager to exploit the resource in Central and Eastern Europe. Peat fuelled power stations—an inefficient and polluting energy source—might prove tempting to countries in the region that are trying to resolve energy shortages. "Peat power companies in Ireland and Finland are working very hard to persuade people in Estonia to buy their technology," warns Richard Lindsay, a peatlands expert at the University of East London.[21]

Chronology of Action

In April 1992 Earth First! hit the headlines with its first publicised act of ecotage in the UK:



£100,000 damage to digging machinery on Thorne Moors.

Following that, Aire Valley Earth First! (now Leeds EF!) failed to stop work for a day, when they couldn't actually find any machinery—those were the days when you could get lost on the moors!

In Recent Years

Since 1997 a variety of groups from various backgrounds have been focusing on Thorne and Hatfield Moors. There have been numerous Leeds Friends Of the Earth (FoE) events in Thorne and on Thorne Moors, involving street theatre and petitions. On Good Friday 1998 FoE organised an action touring garden centres with costumes, banners, placards and leaflets. Leeds FoE have held annual garden centre pickets every Easter Bank holiday (a weekend when gardeners buy vast amounts of peat-based products). During the summer of 1999 the Wildlife Trusts joined FoE in holding public meetings to raise awareness and campaign for new wildlife legislation. In 1999 the government was persuaded to conduct an inquiry into English Nature and FoE drew up a table of the Peat Free status of local authorities. Other groups, such as the Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, and individuals have undertaken all sorts of campaigning including writing articles, sending letters to MPs and to Scotts, lobbying parliament and doing talks at local primary schools.

EF! Off!

During the summer of 2001 northern EF! groups began building up support for the campaign and trying to limit the amount of peat extracted.

An action was organised every month with three in August. They ranged from small unannounced autonomous actions to big well-advertised ones. Some were designed to stop work at the factory, while others were trespasses onto the moor. A whole range of different activities occurred from a kid's ceilidh, playing frisbee, shutting down the works, stopping cutting, filling in drainage ditches, stealing keys from machines, damaging the back-up generator, shutting down the processing computer, sabotaging machines, putting sand in the train engines, digging up the railway track and derailing the trains (you can derail the trains by chasing them—they can't go very fast on the unstable peat and above a certain speed they wobble and fall over!). All this occurred without a single arrest, although we did have a memorable game of chicken with the police helicopter.

An action was planned to coincide with the EF! Gathering at the start of August. A group of about 30 people headed off to the peat works after the action was announced in the morning meeting. When we arrived, police (with horses) had occupied the works. Speaking to workers after the event we were told that the police had claimed that 100 violent anarchists had planned to come and destroy the works. We were told that the police shut down the works for 3 days and left over 200 officers there

Peat-extraction protesters cause £100,000 damage

By Nick Cohen
Home Affairs Reporter

ENVIRONMENTAL protesters invaded peat bogs being stripped by Fisons, the garden products company, yesterday and caused damage to equipment estimated by the firm at £100,000.

In the early hours, tractors and mechanical diggers on the Thorne and Hatfield Moors, South Yorkshire, had engine wires cut and sand poured into their diesel engines. Pumps taking water out of the bogs were also disabled.

A spokesman for a group calling itself Earth First phoned a press agency and claimed responsibility for the damage. He said that the group had "decommissioned" equipment worth £1m.

Fisons said that the destruction was a "carefully-planned raid by ecological extremists designed to cause maximum disruption."

Earth First is one of the most militant ecological groups in Britain. It has no formal structure and is described as being a collection of like-minded individuals who are willing to take direct action.

Its members were recently seen trying to organise a campaign of peaceful civil disobedience to prevent [illegible] pushing a path for the M3 extension across Twyford Down near Winchester.

Environmentalists have been running a campaign against Fisons' mining of peat since 1990. Both Thorne and Hatfield Moors have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. They are two of only four lowland peat bogs left in England, and are home to 25 endangered species, including nightingales and nightjars.

Friends of the Earth, which presented Fisons with its "Green Con of the Year" award for the tactics the firm had used to defend peat-cutting, dissociated itself from law-breaking yesterday.

Robin Maynard, the pressure group's countryside officer, said: "While understanding the frustration of people seeing our best peat bogs suffering damage by commercial extraction, vandalising machinery is completely inappropriate. The people involved have actively played into Fisons' hands by allowing the company to divert public attention from its own ecovandalism."

Since the campaign against Fisons began, alternatives to peat have been developed and taken up by gardeners. Meanwhile, major retailers have refused to stock peat taken from Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

In January, Fisons gave 2,760 of the 8,100 acres of peat bog it owned to English Nature. No stripping will take place on this land but the other 5,440 acres will be stripped until the available peat has been removed in about 2025.

Friends of the Earth said at the time that the concession was not enough and that the campaign would continue until all the bogs were protected.

A spokesman for Fisons said that the company had large stocks of peat. The damage caused in the raid will not affect its ability to supply the market. "The only immediate consequence of their actions is that it will interrupt work that was under way to create a 2,000-acre nature reserve on Thorne Moor."

for the whole of that period. This must have been as a result of an advert deliberately posted on the gathering blackboard, announcing that we would be going back on the Monday after the gathering, despite there being no intention to do this! This was probably our most successful action so far!

There was also some night time action over the summer, including plenty of ditch filling and re-routing pumping equipment onto a track to create a mire impassable for their machines. Peat Alert! was born in autumn 2001. It was becoming clear that saving Thorne and Hatfield, the two largest raised mires in the UK, could lead to more rapid destruction for other peat lands, in the UK and abroad, so we extended our focus to reflect our ultimate aim: a complete end to peat use.

February 2002: Scotts Targeted Across the Country

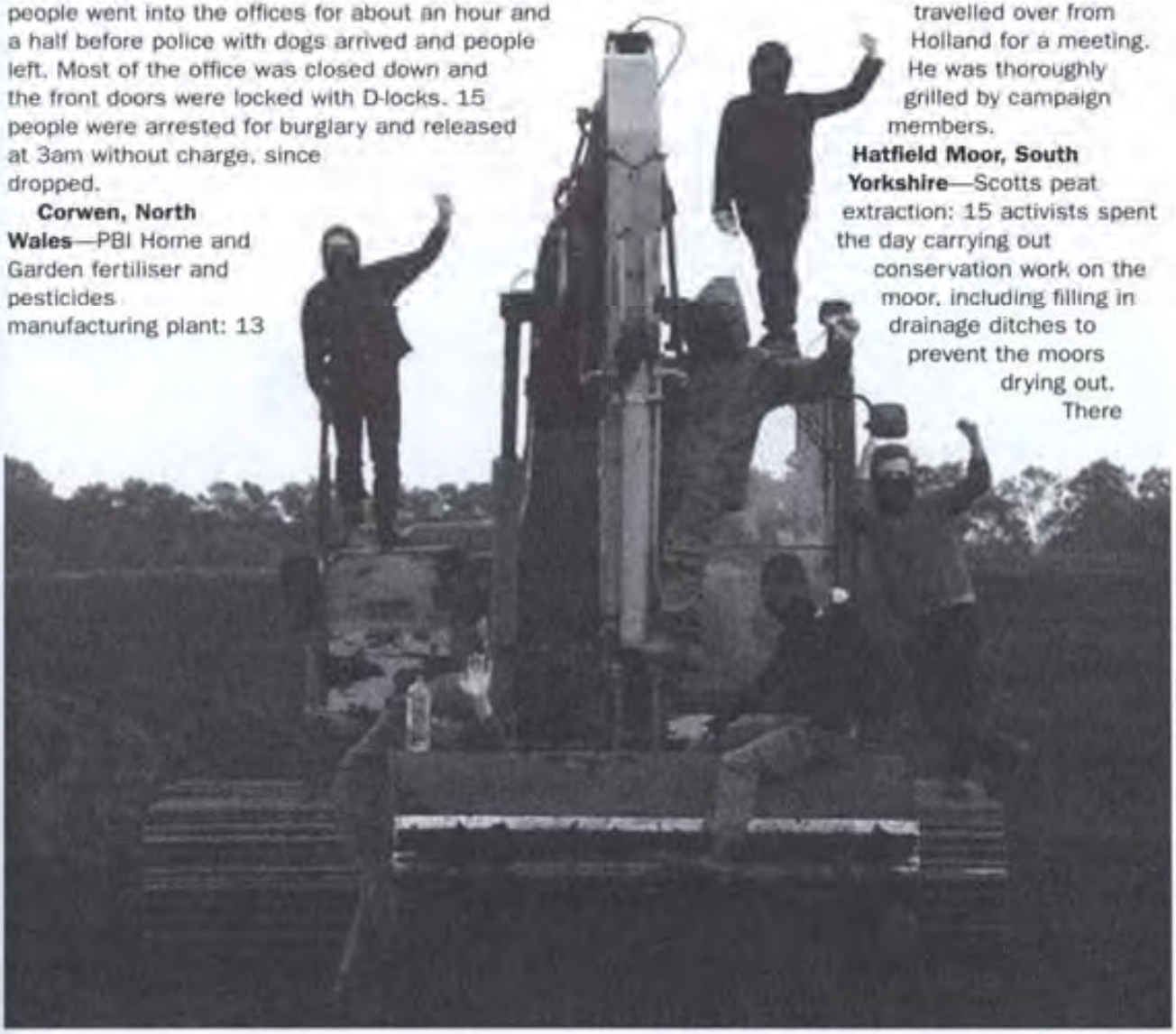
In 2002 we decided to up the ante and our first action targeted all the Scotts sites in the country in one day on February 18th.

Godalming, Surrey—Head Office: Around 20 people went into the offices for about an hour and a half before police with dogs arrived and people left. Most of the office was closed down and the front doors were locked with D-locks. 15 people were arrested for burglary and released at 3am without charge, since dropped.

Corwen, North Wales—PBI Home and Garden fertiliser and pesticides manufacturing plant: 13 activists arrived early in the morning, occupied the office and the factory floor and hung a banner overlooking the A5. The gates were temporarily locked shut. After a couple of hours hanging around getting in the way, more police showed up and people left, leaving one pretty pissed-off manager who claimed to be missing a back-up computer disc.

Bramford, near Ipswich, Suffolk—Scotts fertiliser plant: A group of 15 activists arrived at Scotts Fertiliser plant at 9am, but security guards were just securing the site after being notified of the Corwen action two minutes before. Four people got into offices with varying levels of success. Outside the entrance gate an activist D-locked themselves to a lorry as it pulled up, starting a tail back, which had up to twenty lorries in it with many more being turned away. The blockade lasted for 3 hours before police arrested five people for aggravated trespass and obstruction of the highway. Arriving at the site just after us was the director of the international fertiliser division, Eric von Karthoven, who had travelled over from Holland for a meeting. He was thoroughly grilled by campaign members.

Hatfield Moor, South Yorkshire—Scotts peat extraction: 15 activists spent the day carrying out conservation work on the moor, including filling in drainage ditches to prevent the moors drying out. There





The Easter Blockade 2002

were no police, so they just got on with it and left the moor around 5pm. They then went to the front gates and stopped work in the factory for about half an hour, leaving before the police turned up.

Wedholme Flow, Cumbria—Scotts peat extraction: About 10 people spent the day on the bog, building dams to interfere with Scotts' attempt to drain the land ready for harvesting in the spring.

Goole, East Yorkshire—Scotts fertiliser and pesticide manufacturing facility: At around 11.30 two women entered the offices, staying only to send a fax to Nick Kirkbride, UK Managing Director at the Head Office in Godalming, announcing their presence and opposition to Scotts involvement in peat extraction. At the same time a set of gates were locked shut by other activists.

Easter Blockade 2002

The week leading up to Easter usually sees a massive amount of lorry movement, as peat is distributed from the works in time for the bank holiday weekend. An action camp for the 4-day blockade was planned for nearby. Before the site was taken, both night time and day time actions on Hatfield Moor had been taking place, filling in ditches and blocking pipes to stop the peat drying out, plus other sabotage actions on the moors and at the works. At a bail hearing during the peat blockade, it was made known to the court that bags of peat stored at the Hatfield Moor peatworks had been slashed earlier in March, causing damage to stock worth over £30,000 (Scotts estimate).[22]

The campsite was a fortress! The site was an old RAF base and many things remained from its Ministry of Defence days including barbed wire fences and barricades, but we had our own four flags flying from the old radar tower. Before the blockade began, Scotts rang other campaigners to see if there was anything they could do to forestall it. One of the major objectives was to prevent lorries loaded with processed peat from leaving the plant. The whole week was heavily policed and both a Section 60 (stop, search, demask) and a section 14 (designated protest area only) were in place and police also managed to find lock-on equipment and a tripod hidden in ditches. Despite this, on day one about 100 people managed to block the access road as planned. After two and a half hours, however, 18 vans of riot cops moved in and arrested everyone who stayed in the road. On day two, Friends of the Earth held a demo in front of the works. Despite people being prevented from reaching the works, many lorries were prevented from leaving by the unnerved police! Smaller groups of people were also out on the moors ditch filling. We tatted down on Thursday, after a beautiful few days in the sun and fresh air. The week seriously disrupted their operations, massively reducing the amount of peat lorries leaving, costing the police a lot of money, showing new people the moors and achieving high levels of local support.


The 11th May trespass was held in memory of Benny Rothman who led the Kinder Scout mass trespass of 1932 and then 60 years later spoke at the mass injunction-breaking trespass at Twyford Down in 1993. He died on January 23rd 2002 after a lifetime of campaigning for countryside access, and pensioners and worker's rights. He was described as "a political and environmental workaholic."

Later on 1st May one of the two power lines supplying the works was chopped down. An anonymous tip off received by Peat Alert! stated that a small group of people visited Hatfield peat works at night. They attempted to bring down the two power lines that provide electricity to the works. One of the support posts for one of the power lines was successfully brought down, but unfortunately the other line proved to be indestructable. However, with limited power, major disruption was caused to their operation.

On 11th May another trespass was held on the moor and then on July 10th Peat Alert! received information that digging equipment was disabled and protective plastic on peat stacks was destroyed at Bolton Fell in Cumbria. Notices demanding an end to peat extraction were prominently displayed.

Another Week of Action in August

Diggers, dams and damage sums up a successful week of action against Peat extraction comprising six days, ten actions, over £100,000 of damage and only 5 arrests to prevent a breach of the peace. On Sunday 26th August a mass trespass was organised from the Northern Green Gathering. Thirty people, many of whom had never seen Hatfield, trespassed on the moor. Work was stopped and machines taken off the moor. A lot of ditch filling happened, and various sheets used to protect the stockpiled peat were cut.

On the Wednesday a small group of people met up on the way to Leeds, trespassed on the moor and did some ditch filling. However the recent rain and a lot of previous ditch filling meant a lot of the moor was flooded and we had problems finding ditches to fill! This is a great success as a flooded moor prevents both peat decomposition and Scott's ability to get machines on the moor and extract the peat.

The following day we visited Crowle Moor, on the eastern edge of Thorne Moors just north of Hatfield. We met up with a local campaigner who has been trying to protect Crowle moor from illegal peat extraction and flytipping. Crowle Moor was bought from Levingtons in 1992 by English Nature to prevent peat extraction, and given to Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust to set up a nature reserve. They, however, haven't stopped illegal peat extraction there, and don't seem concerned that a local family, the Crows, have mined rented land without the mineral extraction rights. When we encountered them extracting peat, we stopped work and climbed on their machinery. A stand-off ensued until they promised to take their machines off the land if we left, and as it was gone five we did. We also were fortunate enough to visit one of the few remaining examples of untouched peat bog in this country.

On Friday we travelled the distance up to Cumbria to visit L&P Peat, who mine Solway Moss for Humax compost, used for mushroom growing. Solway Moss is a site the government wants to submit for Special Area of Conservation status to Europe, however L&P Peat have threatened to take the government to judicial review if they do, preventing any of the peat sites being submitted. So we decided to let them know of our existence and what we thought of this.

A group of five people visited their office in Carlisle, to find info and demand they stop mining Solway Moss, withdraw their planning application to expand their works at Solway and withdraw their threat of judicial review. The police arrived within minutes and arrested the five to prevent a breach of the peace.

A much larger group went to visit Solway Moss, with the intention of stopping work. We were also met with the threat of violence, but managed to lock the gates shut and lose the keys. We then decided to leave, treating the action as a warning shot and first site recce.

On Saturday 31st August a group went to Hatfield peat works with the intention of stopping work. However, due to the recent rain and bank holiday they weren't processing peat and were just repairing machines. A quick run round the site caused damage to bags of fertiliser supplies, the losing of keys, gluing shut of control panels with



"We try to bring harmony to peat harvesting. We see that as conservation, not devastation. The people who are knowledgeable about it are really impressed about the way peat is extracted in the UK." —Charles Berger, President of Scotts, in 'For Peat's Sake', Geographical magazine, August 1999.



liquid metal, slashing of peat bags, dropping of metal into piles of peat (which will set off alarms as they go into the process, stopping it until they have found them all) and the recovery of internal Scotts documents.

Another group went back to Crowle Moor. Stopping off at the Crow family peat works, tyres were let down and valves broken before heading off onto the moor. Left alone with a digger for about a minute before the police followed, aluminium dust was poured into the fuel supply, which will cause the engine to seize up next time it is used. Then people played around on the moor stopping work for the rest of the day and ditch filling.

Peat Alert! received an anonymous communiqué that on Saturday evening a group of people visited Hatfield Peat Works and committed over £100,000 worth of damage by slashing the bags of the stocks of peat.

Finally on the Sunday we visited Tickhill garden centre near Doncaster, which uses peat from Hatfield Moor. Every area of the centre was stickered, flyers were placed on all windscreens in the car park and were handed out to customers.

In all, the week was considered a massive success and gave a big boost to the peat campaign.



More Sabotage

Peat Alert! received a communiqué stating that in early November a night time visit occurred at Solway Moss. In one night all of the peat cutting machinery and all the vehicles in the works, about 15 in total, were seriously damaged. L&P Peat's stock of peat was also visited that night with about a quarter of their stock slashed.

Also on the same night, Bolton Fell, a peat bog owned and worked by William Sinclair Ltd., was visited and three of their peat cutting machines sabotaged.

Both of these sites are candidate SAC sites, but the companies are both threatening to take the government to judicial review if they are submitted. These actions were carried out because of the companies' refusal to allow SAC status to proceed and because both companies are expanding in the peat industry.

As part of the need to refocus our actions on other companies like these and not just Scotts, Bolton Fell peat stripping site was visited on Sunday 14 December 2002. The works was very busy but the fields were wet and empty. Drainpipes were blocked with bags of peat, a footbridge was pushed into a drainage ditch and a small railway bridge was dismantled.

There will be more actions continuing with another big push over the summer cutting season. If you wish to get involved with the peat campaign, or for more information on resistance to peat extraction, contact: Peat Alert! c/o CRC, 16 Sholebroke Avenue, Leeds LS6 3HB. Telephone: 0113 262 9365 Email: info@peatalert.org.uk Web: www.peatalert.org.uk ★

Notes

1) Sue Wheat, 'For Peat's Sake', *Geographical*, August 1999
2) *Commission of Inquiry into Peat and Peatlands: Commissioners Report* (Plantlife, London, 1992)
3) *Guidelines for Selection of Biological SSSIs* (NCC, Peterborough, 1989)
4) *Thorne Moors* by Catherine Caufield (The Sumach Press, 1991)
5) Sue Wheat, 'For Peat's Sake', *Geographical*, August 1999
6) RSPB and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, *Deciding the Future of Thorne and Hatfield Moors, An English Wilderness* (Peatlands Campaign Consortium, Thorne and Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, Sandy, Beds., 1997)
7) J. Barkham, *For Peat's Sake: Conservation or Exploitation*, Science Festival 1992 (British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1992)
8) J. Barkham, *For Peat's Sake: Conservation or Exploitation*, Science Festival 1992 (British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1992)
9) Counterpart Lease, Moors Management Agreement
10) 'For Peat's Sake', *Geographical*, August 1999
11) 'For Peat's Sake', *Geographical*, August 1999
12) Special Protection Area, EU Birds Directive (1979), and Special Area of Conservation, EU Habitats and Species Directive (1994). Both have the power to override old planning permissions, and are therefore somewhat more useful than Site of Special Scientific Interest. In fact, SAC requires a review of all planning permissions which may affect the habitat.
13) 'Salvation or Sell-out', *Natural World Magazine*, No. 34, Spring/Summer 1992
14) English Nature's *Annual Report* 1995-1996
15) In British legislation a Site of Special Scientific Interest empowers the wildlife agencies to ensure the site is well-managed and protected from damaging activities—although this is somewhat meaningless as it gives no power to revoke extant planning permissions. Owners must give three months notice of

"damaging operations", which English Nature can then decided to act on—or not.

16) Admitted by an English Nature representative at a Thorne public meeting, October 1997.
17) Personal communication.
18) PPA web-site: www.peatproducers.co.uk/sac.html
19) Calculation is based on figures provided by English Nature in their 'Rehabilitation' proposals submitted to DMBC, also included in the new Agreement.
20) See: www.peatproducers.co.uk/useandconsery.html
21) See: http://bulletin.rec.org/bull104/gardeners.html
22) At a blockade bail hearing, 26th March 2002.



Jargon Buster

SSSI—Site of Special Scientific Interest, UK legislation, empowers the wildlife agencies to ensure the sites are well-managed and protected from damaging activities—although this is somewhat meaningless as it gives no power to revoke extant planning permissions. Owners must give three months notice of "damaging operations", which English Nature can then decided to act on—or not.

SPA—Special Protection Area, EU Birds Directive (1979), and...

SAC—Special Area of Conservation, EU Habitats and Species Directive (1994). Both have the power to override old planning permissions, and are therefore somewhat more useful. In fact, SAC requires a review of all planning permissions which may affect the habitat.

pSAC—proposed SAC—the point where English Nature has proposed it, but the government hasn't yet submitted it to Europe.

cSAC—candidate SAC—the point where the government has submitted it, but the European Commission hasn't yet awarded the designation. However, planning authorities must treat cSACs as if they were SACs.

The Future for Hatfield Moor and Thorne Moors

In her book, *Thorne Moors*, written in 1991, before the Agreement and various protections had been awarded, Catherine Caufield wrote:

"There are many species that the total reserves are too small to support in viable numbers including birds of prey such as merlins and hen harriers, which rely on the moors as a winter habitat, and the northern eggar moth, which requires a square mile of peat land to forage over. Nor are the reserves representative of the full range of habitats on Thorne Moors. Several of the most important habitats on the moors are unprotected and are scheduled for complete elimination within the next five years. 'The raft spider's habitat will disappear from the moors within a year, according to Fisons' cutting plans,' Brian Eversham (Wildlife Trusts/Co-chair of THMCF) says. In addition, the reserves, though they are not being drained themselves, are threatened by drainage elsewhere. So far, no way has been discovered to maintain the high water tables they need to survive while the land all around them is being drained."



"No peat bog in Britain has been successfully restored and the experience of peat-restoration projects elsewhere is not encouraging. In the early 1980s, after spending £33million on an attempt to restore five tiny parcels of bog, at a cost of £2 million per square metre, Dutch conservationists decided that it made more sense to protect unspoiled bogs. Since all Holland's peat bogs have already been destroyed, Dutch conservation groups have bought several of Ireland's most severely threatened peat bogs."

Although some progress has now been made in restoration techniques, the future on Hatfield Moor must be considered less favourably still. Most of Hatfield is now about 10 square miles of bare peat, cut from the living bog surface right down to the original fen moss. There are some refugia around the edges of this barren area, as well as Lindholme Island in the middle, but massive human intervention is needed to translocate appropriate flora and fauna to those places where wild nature simply would not reach on its own—or where natural processes would not tend towards bog formation.

Insurrectionary Anarchy



Organising for Attack!

***"From a certain point onward, there is no turning back. That is the point that must be reached."*—Franz Kafka.**

For us anarchists the questions of how to act and how to organise are intimately linked. And it is these two questions, not the question of the desired form of a future society, that provide us with the most useful method for understanding the various forms of anarchism that exist.

Insurrectionary anarchism is one such form, although it is important to stress that insurrectionary anarchists don't form one unified block, but are extremely varied in their perspectives. Insurrectionary anarchism is not an ideological solution to social problems, nor a commodity on the capitalist market of ideologies and opinions. Rather it is an on-going practice aimed at putting an end to the domination of the state and the continuance of capitalism, which requires analysis and discussion to advance. Historically, most anarchists, except those who believed that society would evolve to the point that it would leave the state behind, have believed that some sort of insurrectionary activity would be necessary to radically transform society. Most simply, this means that the state has to be knocked out of existence by the exploited and excluded, thus anarchists must attack: waiting for the state to disappear is defeat.

Here we spell out some implications that we and some other insurrectionary anarchists have drawn from this general problem: if the state will not disappear on its own, how then do we end its existence? Insurrectionary anarchism is primarily a practice, and focuses on the organisation of attack. Thus, the adjective 'insurrectionary' does not indicate a specific model of the future. Anarchists who believe we must go through an insurrectionary period to rid the world of the institutions of domination and exploitation, moreover, take a variety of positions on the shape of a future society—they could be anarcho-communist, individualist or primitivist, for example. Many refuse to offer a specific, singular model of the future at all, believing that people will choose a variety of social forms to organise themselves when given the chance. They are critical of groups or tendencies that believe they are 'carriers of the truth' and try to impose their ideological and formal solution to the problem of social organisation. Instead, many insurrectionary anarchists believe that it is through self-organisation in struggle that people will learn to live without institutions of domination.

There is also another, more specific usage of the term 'insurrection'—one that comes from the distinction Max Stirner, a 19th century German philosopher and individualist, drew between insurrection and revolution.[1] To Stirner, revolution implied a transition between two systems, whereas insurrection is an uprising that begins from an individual's discontent with their own life and through it the individual does not seek to build a

new system but to create the relations they desire. Both of these general conceptions of insurrection have informed insurrectionary anarchism.

In this article we will first explore some of the general implications of these two conceptions of insurrection. Then, as these ideas have grown out of the practice of struggle and from concrete experiences, we will explain these ideas further by putting them within the historical context of their development. While insurrectionary anarchists are active in many parts of the world at the moment, we are particularly influenced by the activities and writings of those in Italy and Greece, which are also the countries where insurrectionary anarchists are the most active. The current, extremely varied Italian insurrectionary anarchist scene, which centres around a number of occupied spaces and publications, exists as an informal network carrying on their struggle outside of all formal organisations. This tendency has taken on the 'insurrectionary anarchist' label to distinguish itself from the Italian Anarchist Federation; a platformist organisation which officially reject individual acts of revolt, favouring only mass action and an educational and evangelistic practice centring around propaganda in 'non-revolutionary periods'—and from the Italian libertarian municipalists[2] who take a largely reformist approach to 'anarchist' activity.

The state will not wither away, as it seems many anarchists have come to believe—some are entrenched in a position of waiting, while others even openly condemn the acts of those for whom the creation of the new world depends on the destruction of the old. Attack is the refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation and compromise in struggle. It is through acting and learning to act, not propaganda, that we will open the path to insurrection—although obviously analysis and discussion have a role in clarifying how to act. Waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act. Yet it is important to note that the force of an insurrection is social, not military. The measure for evaluating the importance of a generalised revolt is not the armed clash, but, on the contrary, the extent of the paralysis of the economy, of normality. If students continue to study, workers and office employees to work, the unemployed to solely strive for employment, then no change is possible. We could look to the examples of May 1968 in Paris, Italy in the 1970s, or the more recent insurrection in Albania for inspiration.[3]

Sabotage and Other 'Modest Attempts'

As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference; no matter what we are doing or with what problem we are concerned. But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference, it should not be thought of as inhabiting an abstract future. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts that do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically aware minority opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider sections of the exploited in a flux of rebellion which could lead to revolution. Over the last year, we have seen the beginning of this process at work in Argentina. Yet struggles must be developed both in the intermediate and long term. In other words, it is still possible and necessary to intervene in intermediate struggles, that is, in struggles that are circumscribed, even locally, with precise objectives that are born from some specific problem. This may be direct actions to resist the building of military bases or prisons; fights against the institution of property, such as squatting and rent strikes; or attacks on particular capitalist projects, such as high-speed railways, genetically modified crops or power transmission lines. These should not be considered to be of secondary importance; such kinds of struggles also disturb capitalism's universal project.

For these events to build, they must spread; insurrectionary anarchism, therefore, places particular importance on the circulation and spread of action, not managed revolt, for no army or police force is able to control the generalised circulation of such autonomous activity. Paying attention to how struggles have spread has led many anarchists to aim their critical focus on the question of organisation, for whereas centralised struggle is controlled and limited (one only needs to think of the examples of the many revolutionary movements in Latin America that until recently were controlled by 'The Party' to understand this), autonomous struggle has the capacity to spread capillary-style.

Therefore, what the system is afraid of is not just these acts of sabotage themselves, but also them spreading socially. Uncontrollability itself is the strength of the insurrection. Every proletarianised individual who disposes of even the most modest means can draw up his or her objectives, alone or along with others. It is materially impossible for the state and capital to police the whole social terrain. Anyone who really wants to contest the network of control can make their own theoretical and practical contribution as they see fit. There is no need to fit themselves within the structured roles of formally organised revolt (revolt that is circumscribed and controlled by an organisation). The appearance of the first broken links of social control coincides with the



"Gentlemen, gentlemen! Disorder, please, disorder!"

spreading of acts of sabotage. The anonymous practice of social self-liberation could spread to all fields, breaking the codes of prevention put into place by power.

In moments when larger scale insurrections are not taking place, small actions—which require unsophisticated means that are available to all and thus are easily reproducible—are by their very simplicity and spontaneity uncontrollable. They make a mockery of even the most advanced technological developments in counter-insurgency. In the United States, a string of arsons of environmentally damaging projects, some claimed under the name Earth Liberation Front, have spread across the country due largely to the simplicity of the technique. In Italy, sabotage of high speed railways has spread uncontrollably, again because anyone can plan and carry out their own action without needing a large organisation with charters and constitutions, complex techniques or sophisticated knowledge.

In addition, contrary to the mathematicians of the grand revolutionary parties, it is never possible to see the outcome of a specific struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. The passage from the various insurrections—limited and circumscribed—to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any method, nor can one know in advance that present actions will not lead to a future insurrectionary moment.

Roots of Insurrectionary Anarchy

As insurrectionary anarchism is a developing practice—not an ideological model of the future or a determinist history—insurrectionary anarchists do not take the work of any single revolutionary theoretician as their central doctrine: thus insurrectionary anarchists are not Bakuninists, for example, and feel no need to defend all his writings and actions. Yet Bakunin was historically important to the development of an anarchism that focused its force in insurrection. Unlike Marx, who built his support in the First International, mostly within the central executive structure, Bakunin worked to build support for co-ordinated action though autonomous insurrections at the base, especially in Southern Europe. And since Bakunin's time insurrectionary anarchists have been concentrated in Southern Europe.

In the responses to the Paris Commune of 1871 and in the conflicts of the First International one can see the formation of insurrectionary anarchism's basic concepts. Whereas Marx believed that the new political forms of the Commune (forms of democracy and representation) would advance the social revolution, Bakunin argued that political and organisational forms had held the social revolution back. Also influential to later insurrectionaries, Bakunin argued that it was one's actions that would spread the revolution, not words. In 1871 Marx and his supporters allied themselves with the followers of Blanqui—from whom the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" came—to cut Bakunin and his supporters out of a special conference of the International held in London. Bakuninists held their own conference in Sonvilier, arguing that hierarchical and political means could never be used to gain social revolutionary ends. As the Sonvilier circular states, it was impossible "for a free and egalitarian society to come out of an authoritarian organisation." Marx pejoratively termed the Sonvilier conference "anarchist," and those in Sonvilier called the London conference "Marxist" to mark its authoritarian attempt to control the International. In 1872, Marx succeeded in expelling Bakunin from the International and requiring all member organisations to advocate the conquest of political power as the necessary prerequisite to revolution.

Social and Individual Struggle

Another issue that has caused a lot of debate within anarchist circles is the supposed contradiction between individual and social struggle: again, this is a question of the organisation of struggle. This is a debate that has gone on and still goes on within the insurrectionary anarchist circles; Renzo Novatore stood for individual revolt, Errico Malatesta for social struggle, whilst Luigi Galleani believed there was no contradiction between the two.

Novatore, an Italian anarchist who died in a shoot-out with the police in 1922, wrote, "Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of

its members."[4] Malatesta, also an Italian and an active insurrectionary his whole life, was an anarcho-communist for whom anarchism was based in the organised attack of collective struggle, especially of the labour movement; yet, he was still very critical of any form of organisation that could become authoritarian. This was the basis of his 1927 disagreement with the Russian Platformists—who attempted to create a centralised and unitary revolutionary organisation.

Malatesta critiqued the proposal of the Platformists—who put forward their program in response to the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia—for attempting to discipline and synthesise struggle within a single organisation. In his critique of the proposal he stated, "in order to achieve their ends, anarchist organisations must in their constitution and operation, remain in harmony with the principles of anarchism; that is, they must know how to blend the free action of individuals with the necessity and the joy of co-operation which serve to develop the awareness and initiative of their members." While many social anarchists of today critique insurrectionary anarchists by claiming that they are against organisation as such, it is worth noting that most social anarchists and anarcho-communists active in the beginning of the last century did not view organisation and individualism as a contradiction, and that few anarchists have ever been against organisation as such. Maltesta's 1927 statement on the subject bears repeating: "Judging by certain polemics it would seem that there are anarchists who spurn any form of organisation; but in fact the many, too many, discussions on this subject, even when obscured by questions of language or poisoned by personal issues, are concerned with the means and not the actual principle of organisation. Thus it happens that when those comrades who sound the most hostile to organisation want to really do something they organise just like the rest of us and often more effectively. The problem, I repeat, is entirely one of means."[5]

Galleani, who emigrated to the United States in 1901 after facing arrest in Europe edited one of the most important US Italian anarchist journals, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, and was critical of formal organisation. In his articles and speeches he merged Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid with unfettered insurgency, defending communist anarchism against authoritarian socialism and reformism, speaking of the value of spontaneity, variety, autonomy and independence, direct action and self-determination. Galleani and his followers were deeply suspicious of formal organisations, seeing them as likely to turn into hierarchical, authoritarian organisations. The critique of formal organisation has become a central concern of most insurrectionary anarchists ever since.

Galleani saw no contradiction between individual and social struggle, nor did he see a contradiction between communism and anarchism. He was firmly against authoritarian communism, which he saw as growing out of collectivist ideologies—the idea that production and consumption must be organised into a collective in which individuals must participate. Galleani is one of main influences on those who today call themselves insurrectionary anarchists.

The debate about the relation between individual and social struggle, between individualism and communism, continues today. Some insurrectionary anarchists argue that insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to re-appropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between themselves and their conditions of existence—food, housing, etc. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their own terms. Individuality can only flourish where there is equality of access to the conditions of existence. This equality of *access* is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them. Therefore,

Why we are Insurrectionary Anarchists...

- Because we consider it possible to contribute to the development of struggles that are appearing spontaneously everywhere, turning them into mass insurrections—that is to say actual revolutions.
- Because we want to destroy the capitalist order of the world which is useful to nobody but the managers of class domination.
- Because we are for the immediate, destructive attack against the structures, individuals and organisations of capital, state and all forms of oppression.
- Because we constructively criticise all those who are in situations of compromise with power in their belief that the revolutionary struggle is impossible at the present time.
- Because rather than wait, we have decided to proceed to action, even if the time is not ripe.
- Because we want to put an end to this state of affairs right away, rather than wait until conditions make its transformation possible.

These are some of the reasons why we are anarchists, revolutionaries *and* insurrectionists.

by Alfredo Bonanno.



there is no equality or identity of *individuals* implied in true communism. What forces us into an identity or an equality of being are the social roles laid upon us by our present system. Thus there is no contradiction between individuality and communism.

The insurrectional anarchist project grows out of the individual's desire to determine how one will live one's life and with whom one will carry out this project of self-determination. But this desire is confronted on all sides by the existing social order, a reality in which the conditions of our existence and the social relationships through which our lives are created have already been determined in the interests of a ruling class who benefit from the activities that we are compelled to do for our own survival.

Thus the desire for individual self-determination and self-realisation leads to the necessity of a class analysis and class struggle. But the old workerist conceptions, which perceived the industrial working class as the central subject of revolution, are not adequate to this task. What defines us as a class is our *dispossession*, the fact that the current system of social relationships steals away our capacity to determine the conditions of our existence. Class struggle exists in all of the individual and collective acts of revolt in which small portions of our daily life are taken back or small portions of the apparatus of domination and exploitation are obstructed, damaged or destroyed. In a significant sense, there are no isolated, individual acts of revolt. All such acts are responses to the social situation, and many involve some level of complicity, indicating some level of collective struggle. Consider, for example, the spontaneous, mostly unspoken organisation of the theft of goods and the sabotage of the work process that goes on at most workplaces; this informal co-ordination of subversive activity carried out in the interest of each individual involved is a central principle of collective activity for insurrectionary anarchists, because the collectivity exists to serve the interests and desires of each of the individuals in re-appropriating their lives and often carries within it a conception of ways of relating free of exploitation and domination.

But even lone acts of revolt have their social aspects and are part of the general struggle of the dispossessed. Through a critical attitude towards the struggles of the past, the changes in the forces of domination and their variation between different places, and the development of present struggles, we can make our attack more strategic and targeted. Such a critical attitude is what allows struggles to circulate. Being strategic, however, does not mean there is only one way to struggle; clear strategies are necessary to allow different methods to be used in a co-ordinated and fruitful way. Individual and social struggle are neither contradictory, nor identical.

Critique of Organisation

In Italy, the failure of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s led some to reassess the revolutionary movement and others to abandon it all together. During the '70s, many Leninist groups concluded that capitalism was in the throes of its final crisis, and they moved to armed struggle. These groups acted as professional revolutionaries, reducing their lives to a singular social role. But by the 1980s they came to believe that the time for revolutionary social struggle had ended, and they thus called for an amnesty for movement prisoners from the '70s, some even going as far as to disassociate themselves from the struggle. This separated them from insurrectionary anarchists who believed that a revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism and the state still continued, for no determinist history could name the correct moment to rebel. In fact, determinist history often becomes an excuse for not acting and only pushes a possible rupture with the present further into the impossible.

Much of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist critique of the movements of the '70s focused on the forms of organisation that shaped the forces of struggle and out of this a more developed idea of informal organisation grew. A critique of the authoritarian organisations of the '70s, whose members often believed they were in a privileged position to struggle as compared to the proletariat as a whole, was further refined in the struggles of the '80s, such as the early 1980s struggle against a military base that was to house nuclear weapons in Comiso, Sicily. Anarchists were very active in that struggle, which was organised into self-managed leagues. These ad hoc, autonomous leagues took three general principles to guide the

organisation of struggle: permanent conflict, self-management and attack. Permanent conflict meant that the struggle would remain in conflict with the construction of the base until it was defeated without mediating or negotiating. The leagues were self-generated and self-managed; they refused permanent delegation of representatives and the professionalisation of struggle. The leagues were organisations of attack on the construction of the base, not the defence of the interests of this or that group. This style of organisation allowed groups to take the actions they saw as most effective while still being able to co-ordinate attack when useful, thus keeping open the potential of struggle to spread. It also kept the focus of organisation on the goal of ending the construction of the base instead of the building of permanent organisations, for which mediating with state institutions for a share of power usually becomes the focus and limiting the autonomy of struggle the means.

As the anarchists involved in the Comiso struggle understood, one of the central reasons that social struggles are kept from developing in a positive direction is the prevalence of forms of organisation that cut us off from our own power to act and close off the potential of insurrection. These are permanent organisations, those that synthesise all struggle within a single organisation, and organisations that mediate struggles with the institutions of domination. Permanent organisations tend to develop into institutions that stand above the struggling multitude. They tend to develop a formal or informal hierarchy and to disempower the multitude: power is alienated from its active form within the multitude and instituted within the organisation. This transforms the active multitude into a passive mass. The hierarchical constitution of power relations removes decision from the time such a decision is necessary and places it within the organisation. The practical consequence of such an organisation is that the active powers of those involved in the struggle are stifled by the organisation. Decisions that should be made by those involved in an action are deferred to the organisation; moreover, permanent organisations tend to make decisions based not on the necessity of a specific goal or action, but on the needs of that organisation, especially its preservation. The organisation becomes an end in itself. One needs only to look at the operations of the many socialist parties to see this in its most blatant form.

As an organisation moves towards permanence and comes to stand above the multitude, the *organiser* appears—often claiming to have created the struggle—and begins to speak for the mass. It is the job of the organiser to transform the multitude into a controllable mass and to represent that mass to the media or state institutions. Organisers rarely view themselves as part of the multitude, thus they don't see it as their task to act, but to propagandise and organise, for it is the masses that act.

The Opinion Factory

For the organiser, who takes as their motto 'only that which appears in the media exists', real action always takes a back seat to the maintenance of the media image. The goal of such image maintenance is never to attack a specific institution of domination, but to affect public opinion, to forever build the movement or, even worse, the organisation. The organiser must always worry about how the actions of others will reflect on the movement; they must, therefore, both attempt to discipline the struggling multitude and try to control how the movement is represented in the media. Image usually replaces action for the permanent organisation and the organiser.

The attempt to control the vast image and opinion-making factories of our society is a losing battle, as if we could ever try to match the quantity of images put forward by the media or get them to 'tell the truth'. Thus, many insurrectionary anarchists have been very critical of carrying on the struggle within the capitalist mass media. In Italy, this has put them at odds with organisations such as *Ya Basta!* who see the media as a key vehicle for their movement; in other parts of the world, the question of how anarchists should relate to the media has been a focus of debate in recent years—especially since 1999 in Seattle—and it is therefore important for us to spell out the critical position of some insurrectionary anarchists.

On a basic level, we need to ask, what is opinion? An opinion is not something first found among the public in general and then, afterwards, replayed through the media, as a simple reporting



of the public opinion. An opinion exists in the media first. Secondly, the media then reproduces the opinion a million times over, linking the opinion to a certain type of person (conservatives think *X*, liberals think *Y*). Thirdly, as Alfredo Bonanno points out, "[An opinion] is a flattened idea, an idea that has been uniformed in order to make it acceptable to the largest number of people. Opinions are massified ideas."[6] Public opinion is produced as a series of simple choices or solutions ("I'm for globalisation and free trade" or "I'm for more national control and protectionism"). We are all supposed to choose—as we choose our leaders or our burgers—instead of thinking for ourselves. It is obvious, therefore, that anarchists cannot use the opinion-making factory to create counter-opinions, and hopefully anarchists would never want to operate on the level of opinion even if we could somehow exert control over the content spewed out of the factory gates. Anyhow, the ethic of anarchism could never be communicated in the form of opinion; it would die once massified. Yet, it is exactly on the level of opinion that the organiser works, for opinion and image-maintenance are the very tools of power, tools used to shape and discipline a multitude into a controllable mass.

Instead of moving power and decision making into an organisation, most insurrectionary anarchists recognise the need to organise in a fashion that lacks the formality and authority which separate organisers and organised; this is called informal organisation. Because the organiser's nature is to plan and control, they often privilege the perpetuation of the organisation over other goals. Informal organisations, on the other hand, dissolve when their goal is achieved or abandoned; they do not perpetuate themselves merely for the sake of the organisation if the goals that caused people to organise have ceased to exist.

As in the case of the Comiso leagues, informal organisation is a means for affinity groups to co-ordinate efforts when necessary. We must always remember that many things can be done more easily by an affinity group or individual, and, in these cases, higher levels of organisation just make the decision making process cumbersome—it stifles us. The *smallest* amount of organisation necessary to achieve one's aims is always the best to maximise our efforts.

Informal organisation must be based on an ethic of autonomous action; autonomy is necessary to prevent our active powers from becoming alienated, to prevent the formation of relations of authority. Autonomy is refusing to obey or give orders, which are always shouted from above or beyond the situation. Autonomy allows decisions to be made when they are necessary, instead of being pre-determined or delayed by the decision of a committee or meeting. This does not mean to say however that we shouldn't think strategically about the future and make agreements or plans. On the contrary, plans and agreements are useful and important. What is emphasised is a flexibility that allows people to discard plans when they become useless. Plans should be adaptable to events as they unfold.

Just as an informal organisation must have an ethic of autonomy or it will be transformed into an authoritarian organisation, in order to avoid the alienation of our active powers, it must also have an ethic of no compromise with respect to the organisation's agreed goal. The organisation's goal should be either moved towards or abandoned. Compromising with those who we oppose (e.g. the state or a corporation) defeats all true opposition, it replaces our power to act with that of our enemies.

The scraps handed down to appease and divert us by those we oppose must be refused. Compromise with any institution of domination (the state, the police, WTO, IMF, 'The Party', etc.) is always the alienation of our power to the very institutions we supposedly wish to destroy; this sort of compromise results in the forfeiture of our power to act decisively, to make decisions and actions when we choose. As such, compromise only makes the state and capital stronger. For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, for those who don't wish to wait for the supposedly appropriate material conditions for revolution, for those who don't want a revolution which is merely the creation of a new power structure but want the destruction of all structures which alienate our power from us, such compromise is contrary to their aims. To continually refuse to compromise is to be in perpetual conflict with the established order and its structures of domination and deprivation. Permanent conflict is uncontrollable autonomous action that does not compromise with power.

Revolutionary Solidarity

Revolutionary solidarity, another central practice of insurrectionary anarchism, allows us to move far beyond the 'send a cheque' style of solidarity that so pervades the Left, as well as solidarity that relies on petitioning the state for relief or mercy. One example of revolutionary solidarity was Nikos Mazotis' action against TVX Gold in December 1997.[7] Many people in the villages around Strymonikos in Northern Greece were struggling against the installation of a gold metallurgy plant in their area. In solidarity with the villagers, Nikos placed a bomb in the Ministry of Industry and Development that was intended to explode when no one was in the building; unfortunately, it never went off at all. Nikos was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but is now free. TVX Gold is a

multinational company whose headquarters is in Canada, there are thus many points at which revolutionary solidarity with the villagers of Stryminikos could have been enacted. Fundraising on behalf of one's comrades is necessary and surely appreciated, but this can be combined with more active forms of solidarity with those who struggle against our common enemies. Revolutionary solidarity communicates the link between the exploitation and repression of others and our own fate, and it shows people the points at which capitalism or the state operate in similar ways in very different places. By creating links between struggles against the state and capital, revolutionary solidarity has the potential to take our local struggles to a global level.

Moreover, revolutionary solidarity is always an active attack; it always involves the recovery of our own active powers that multiply in combination—in solidarity—with the active powers of others. Many insurrectionary anarchists have been involved in the resistance against the *FIES* prison regime (*Ficheros de Internos de Especial Seguimiento*—Inmate Files for Special Monitoring) in Spain. This is a revolutionary struggle because it is not only aimed at a mere reform, but ultimately its goal is the disappearance of prisons, which involves a radical social change. It is a self-organised struggle, in which there are not any leaders or representatives, neither inside the prisons nor outside, but only solidarity that grows between exploited people both from inside and outside the walls.

One of the primary strengths of informal organisation is that it allows anarchists to intervene in intermediate or specific struggles without compromising principles or demanding uniformity of action and politics. Informally organised struggles may be composed of affinity groups with quite different political perspectives from each other. Some people may wish to open the possibility for insurrection, while others are only concerned with an immediate goal. There is no reason why those who share an immediate practical aim but diverge in their long-term goals might not come together. For example, an anti-genetic engineering (GE) group could form and decide to co-ordinate the tearing up test crops and to circulate anti-GE leaflets. In this case those who want an insurrectionary rupture with this social order and those who merely hate genetic engineering could easily work together towards this immediate goal. Groups that take a more insurrectionary approach to action, however, often end up in conflict with other groups working around similar issues. The Earth Liberation Front, an informally organised set of groups which have taken a position of attack on those they see as destroying the earth, have been vilified by the mainstream environmental movement. At the same time, they would probably be critiqued by many insurrectionary anarchists for focusing defensively on the protection of the earth and ignoring the social aspect of revolution. What is important to allow different groups to work together is co-ordination with autonomy.

For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, such co-operation will not close the door on their dreams. Informal organisation, with its ethics of autonomy and no compromise, does not control struggle, and uncontrollability opens the possibility for an insurrectionary rupture with the present social order.★

Notes

1) See *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner (Rebel Press, London, 1993) ISBN 0 946061 009
2) 'Anarchists' who generally turn their back on direct action, and use local politics to try and gain reforms and establish 'anarchist controlled' towns.
3) See *Albania: Laboratory of Subversion* by Anonymous (Elephant Editions, London, 1999) No ISBN
4) See *A Strange and Outcast Poet: The Life and Writings of Renzo Novatore* (Venomous Butterfly Publications) See: www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/vbutterfly.html
5) *A Project of Anarchist Organisation* by Errico Malatesta (1927) See: www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/6170/malatesta_project.html
6) *The Anarchist Tension* by Alfredo M Bonanno (Elephant Editions, London, 1998) No ISBN
7) When arrested Nikos refused to recognise the authority of the whole legal system. He made a radical anarchist statement to the court during his trial, giving the reasons for the bombing, and explaining his insurrectionary hatred for the state and industry. He's now released.

Further Reading

It's worth looking at these two English language insurrectionary anarchist journals:

Killing King Abacus, PO Box 993, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, USA.
Email: kk_abacus@yahoo.com
Web: www.geocities.com/kk_abacus

Wilful Disobedience, PO Box 31098, Los Angeles, CA 90031, USA.
Email: acraticus@yahoo.com
Web:
www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/vbutterfly.html

Many insurrectionary anarchist writings can be obtained from Elephant Editions publications. These, mainly pamphlets, can be ordered from them at: Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX, England. Many of them can also be found on the web at:
www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/ioaa/ioaa.html
For insurrectionary anarchist texts in Spanish check out the Palabras de Guerra website at:
http://flag.blackened.net/pdg/

When Will it be Time for Insurrection?



I have a theory. My theory is that every time the government or some corporation commits an act of destruction to the wild or humanity; if every time a corporation's oil tanker pollutes a coastline, or they mangle, plunder and destroy a wild place; if every time they do this, I take my anger and I place it in a certain compartment inside my brain, when it comes time for the insurrection I will be able to access those pieces of anger that I stored.

So I spend my days patiently continuingly attempting to stop the madness which drives the governments and corporations, and each day I hear of new atrocities. I go on another A to B demonstration, shout some slogans, and then at the end of day I again open up this special compartment and put the anger of some new atrocity in it, all in anticipation of the day when I shall need this anger to bring the Empire down.

But a new fear has overcome me. I perceive my anger calling me from inside this compartment, I hear the door unlatching from inside, and this new terrible question approaches me:

How shall I know when it's time for insurrection?

Will it be when the next river or lake is destroyed after being needlessly polluted? When logging companies have destroyed another eco-system and driven the native peoples from the land?

Is then the time for insurrection?

Or is it when a government or NATO or the UN bombs a country and murders thousands of people? When another multinational is complicit with the murder of indigenous tribes so another of the earth's natural areas can be plundered?

Is then the time for insurrection?

When your local factory exports another shipment of arms designed and destined to kill people like you and me? If corporations continue to wreak havoc upon the ozone layer, if ecology is cast blindly aside in favour of profit? If certain parties proceed in a manner which is clearly imperilling the lives of a multitude of glorious and beautiful animals and plants on our planet?

Is then the time for insurrection?

Or do we carry on simply demonstrating, handing in petitions, hoping the system will realise its faults and change, or hope for a future revolution when we've got the masses on our side and we will then be able to put everything right? Do we hope for this whilst the system carries on destroying us and the planet to such an extent that the world may not be worth living in when we finally get round to doing anything about it?

Do we carry on waiting and waiting until things get critical? Is it then the time for insurrection?

Or will it be too late...?★

A Sense of Place



Of all the hills in Shropshire's Welsh Marches, the Stiperstones is surely the most enigmatic. This long windswept ridge, topped with strange shattered quartzite rock and craggy tors has an awesome wildness. Through centuries of myth and legend it has held a unique grip on local consciousness, inspiring both love and fear.

And at its heart stands the dark outcrop called the Devil's Chair, "a mass of quartzite, blackened and hardened by uncountable ages," wrote Mary Webb in her 1920s novel *The Golden Arrow*. "The scattered rocks, the ragged holly-brakes on the lower slopes were like small carved lions beside the black marble steps of a stupendous throne. Nothing ever altered its look. Dawn quickened over it in pearl and emerald; summer sent the armies of heather to its very foot; snow rested there as doves nest in cliffs. It remained inviolable, taciturn, evil. It glowered darkly on the dawn; it came through the snow like jagged bones through flesh; before its hardness even the venturesome cranberries were discouraged. For miles around, in the plains, the valleys, the mountain dwellings it was feared. It drew the thunder, people said. Storms broke round it suddenly out of a clear sky; it seemed almost as if it created storm. No one cared to cross the range near it after dark."

The rocks of the Stiperstones were laid down during the Ordovician period, some 480 million years ago. The special quartzite which forms the ridge was subject to severe frost shattering during the last ice age, which resulted in the boulder-strewn landscape, sorted into circles of stones on the flatter areas and stripes down the steep sides. The strangeness of these formations fuelled further myths that they were caused by demonic wickedness. More durable rock remained as a dozen jagged tor formations, of which the Devil's Chair is but one.

Apart from this dramatic scenery, interwoven as it is with folklore, literary connections and centuries of human intervention through mining and farming, the Stiperstones also holds a unique combination of geological, geomorphological and biological interest. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve, as well as being a candidate Special Area of Conservation



(SAC) under the European Habitats Directive. But for all its claim as a sanctuary for wild nature, the ridge is also an industrial site, riddled with old mines, spoil heaps and derelict buildings. Small-scale lead mining has been practised here since Roman times and lead stamps of the Emperor Hadrian have been found. Because of the mines and ghostly spoil heaps of white quartzite one Stiperstones area was known as the Land of Dereliction. However, even this was "not so much an unsightly blot on nature, as subservient to her mood here, accentuating the desolate beauty of the same", observed 19th century historian Magdalene Weale. Life for the people who eked a living here was harsh and the mood can certainly be desolate, but its strange beauty is a result of centuries of the relationship between the labours of people and the wild spirit of the hill. It is this relationship which created the heathland.

Much of the Stiperstones is dominated by heather with the distribution of other heathland species dependent upon altitude and aspect. The western valleys are comparatively dry and sunny, south-facing slopes support bell heather and western gorse. North-facing slopes are dominated by ling heather and whinberry (called bilberry in other parts of the country). On higher ground, heather grows with cowberry and crowberry—its only site in the county. In wetter places, cross-leaved heath, bog mosses, cotton grass, bog asphodel and marsh violet grow. Pasture, which was originally carved out of the heather, supports heath speedwell and bedstraw and mountain pansy. There are hay meadows with yellow rattle and common spotted orchid, oak coppices, fragments of upland woods of birch and rowan and remnants of ancient holly groves. Perhaps of prime importance, and the reason why the Stiperstones is a candidate SAC, is the fact that it is a rare form of dry heath, one of only nine to be designated in the country. It supports red grouse, stonechat and nesting curlew and is visited by buzzards and ravens. Insects such as the emperor moth, green-hairstreak butterfly and upland wood ant are species of national conservation significance here.

Although the Devil's Chair still remains inviolable, the 'armies of heather' and the 'venturesome cranberries' have not fared so well since Mary Webb wrote about them 80 years ago. Although the upper part of the Stiperstones central ridge remains pretty much as it has for centuries, in the last fifty years much of the heather and whinberry has been lost. Forestry plantations, 'improved' pasture and ploughing have bitten off large chunks of ancient heath and grassland. Few remain of what Charles Sinker, one of Shropshire's most renowned botanists, called 'field after field washed pale with mountain pansies'.

Conserving Heathland

A couple of years ago, on the western flank below the Devil's Chair and behind a new sign proclaiming the Heritage Lottery Fund, lay a battlefield—hectares of tree stumps, burnt branches and bare ground. Was this the devil's work? If it was, it was not a scene of wanton destruction but the result of removing a commercial conifer plantation to reinstate the

Stiperstone's heathland. Scattered in the plantation's debris were tiny specks of purple flower on regenerating sprigs of heather. These struggling seedlings were the advance guard for the Shropshire Wildlife Trust's Back to Purple project. Purple is the colour of the bell heather and ling which flower here in summer. It is also the colour of the juice of whinberries, which people have picked for pies and preserves for centuries. In an attempt to reverse the tide of fifty years of attrition, the Trust, English Nature and Forest Enterprise aim to restore heathland in a broad and continuous run 10 kilometres along and surrounding the ridge of the Stiperstones.

Although the conifer stumps were cut low and the brash burnt, the mulch of remaining pine needles was so thick that natural heather regeneration was going to be very difficult. Horse-drawn harrows were used to break the mulch down but these got snagged on the stumps, so a hawthorn tree was cut and dragged behind the horses. This worked so well that a mechanical version of a hawthorn branch was devised to do the job. But for some jobs, like removing seedling trees from around the rocks, neither horses nor machinery are any use. This sort of work needs to be done manually, with dozens of forays by Wildlife Trust volunteers onto the Stiperstones to cut scrub and treat stumps. Local children have also been helping to pull seedling rowan, birch and pine, and taking them back to their tree nursery for planting out in school grounds.

Embarking on a high-profile campaign raises people's expectations and so leaving the process of natural regeneration to run its course is not enough. To speed up the heathland regeneration, and involve the local community, 10,000 heather cuttings have been taken from the hill and grown on in nurseries for later planting. These cuttings and heather seeds will cover the 100 hectares of cleared plantation, but it's really only just the beginning of the Back to Purple project. In the second phase of the five year restoration plan, the Wildlife Trust hopes to buy up and manage extensive parcels of land and restore them to heathland.

We may be more used to thinking about heathland as a lowland habitat, like the fictitious Egdon Heath of Thomas Hardy novels in Dorset, and those in Hampshire, Surrey, Devon, Suffolk and Norfolk. However, daft as it may seem—especially when you're struggling through a blizzard on the top of this hill—the Stiperstones has been recognised as the same sort of heathland found in lowland England, and not one of the deep peat moorland habitats usually associated with the uplands. Being classified as lowland heath has political clout which makes it nationally and internationally significant for conservation.

Heathland is a rare and declining habitat and a fifth of Europe's total remains in the UK—but only just, and, to our shame, heathland and the creatures which depend upon it have been decimated. Over 40 percent of British heathland has been lost since 1950, to forestry, agriculture and building development. The fragments that remain are threatened by scrub encroachment due to lack of management, as well as by housing, mineral extraction, uncontrolled fire, recreational pressure, military training and atmospheric pollution. Through its Biodiversity Action Plan, the UK is now committed to improving 58,000 hectares of its heathland and recreating a further 6,000 hectares. This ambition is being put into practice through a scheme called 'Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage', involving conservation partnerships like Back to Purple.

But there is a problem with adopting such a generic approach to lowland heath restoration, in that political obligations to bring back certain types of heather might divert attention away from other vulnerable heathland types such as grassland. There's a danger that importing the targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan to heaths like the Stiperstones will have a rounding down effect on the oddity and distinctiveness of the place. One question might be: given the variety of individual heathland plant communities, what shade of purple should we go back to? Another might be: what do we do about the abandonment of the cultural activities which produced the distinctiveness of each heathland? A bit of scrub bashing and the


Buzzard


Emperor Moth


Whinberries



occasional burn will not compensate for the centuries of human interaction which has now been lost. All heathlands have evolved from human activity and are as much about what people do to the place—like grazing, burning and cutting—as the plants which grow there. Perhaps most important of all the factors affecting the future of these habitats are our feelings and attitudes towards them.

Back to Purple is a bold scheme which aims to peel back the landscape abuses of recent years and return the ancient heathland—the purple pelt of this most enigmatic of hills. As Bernard Martin, a Shropshire Wildlife Trust volunteer says, "It's a legacy for the people to come. As I've got older I've seen places I used to visit as a child disappear because of pressures from increased population and farming and I feel I have to do something about it. When I'm dead and gone, I want my family to remember the Back to Purple project and say, "My grandad did that". In 200-300 years I hope people will look back on this—like we appreciate the vision of people in the past who created some of these wonderful places—and say, "they saved it just in time."

Given the vulnerability of special habitats like heathland and the expectations of those involved in their restoration, together with the rise in importance of quasi-scientific notions of biodiversity and sustainability, it may seem perverse to want to scrutinise all this a lot harder than we have. I maintain we should.

Faking Nature

Ecological restoration may appear to be an adaptation of a very old form of technology, like traditional farming which it parallels in some ways. It seems to be poietic—a poetical truth revealed through the relationship with place and the living beings of that place. But I believe this to be, at least in some important respects, false. The technology of the heathland restoration *is* removing damaging agricultural and silvicultural incursions into a valued landscape and its wildlife habitats, but it is also preventing the dynamics of natural processes of regeneration— the development of heathland into woodland—now that the cultural activities which formed and maintained the heathland have gone. Moreover, this kind of work tempts an uncritical acceptance of the principles of restoration, and of the sort of 'environmental engineering' which is used as mitigation for environmentally damaging schemes. New ponds are dug to replace ones destroyed by building an airport runway. New trees are planted to replace woods destroyed by a new road. Gardens and historic landscapes are restored as a way of increasing property value.

For Australian environmental philosopher Robert Elliot, such projects produce a fake nature: "One reason that the faked forest is not just as good as a naturally evolved forest is that there is always the possibility that the trained eye will tell the difference... The reasons why the 'faked' forest counts for less, more often than not, than the real thing are similar to the reasons why faked works of art count for less than the real thing. Origin is important as an integral part of the evaluation process. It is important because our beliefs about it determine the valuation we make. It is also important in that the discovery that something has an origin quite different to the origin we initially believe it has, can literally alter the way we perceive the thing... there is, I suggest, no compelling reasons for accepting the restoration thesis."[1]



Green Hairstreak Butterfly *Raven*

Conservation enterprises like the Back to Purple project can manipulate our beliefs about what nature is and thus lead to an acceptance of a fake or unauthentic experience of nature, according to the sophistication of the technology employed by the project. This is not to say that the heather planted on the Stiperstones is any less wild or any less natural than it would be if the restoration project had not taken place. But I am saying that our attitudes to nature are being shaped by a technology that is producing an inauthentic, falsified nature. It might be argued that as such conservation is not revealing poetic truth. But an examination of the falseness of what conservation produces reveals a truth about our relationship with nature. Why do we accept the fake, rather than nature as it really is? Is the lie, the fake, the false thing made in fact a truth? What conservation produces is based on the fears and anxieties concealed within technology, and its poiesis, its poetic truth, is a fear of nature itself—ecophobia.

If conservation is concerned with bringing about a particular kind of heritage which turns out to be a fake, the principles and attitudes of ecological restoration are open to the same criticisms that can be levelled at modern technology.

The usual understanding of technology is that it has developed because of scientific advance and that it follows, and is subordinate to, science. Fluid reality becomes bound by a conceptual system in which it must be fixed before it can be seen at all, and it is demanded that everything be seized and requisitioned for human use.

Of particular interest here is the essence of technology revealed through the objectification of nature and the way science calculates, catalogues and disposes of things, a process at the heart of modern notions like natural capital, biodiversity and ecological restoration. When we humans claim dominion over everything outside ourselves, and take control through objectifying, then things cease even to be regarded as objects and are only important for the uses we can put them to.

Allowing nature to be free of any human intervention is rarely, if ever, an objective of conservation. Natural environments and their living beings which have been protected, enhanced or created by conservation are open to management, study, examination, recreation and other forms of challenging.

And yet nature continues to challenge us. A year after the clearing of stumps and seeding of heather, I went back to the Stiperstones to see what had happened. The purple had returned alright but not the purple that was planned. Having lain dormant in the soil for a century or more, the area where the conifer plantation had been cleared was full of the purple flowers of thousands of foxgloves. This was a significant lesson. It was a woodland that was restoring itself, not the heathland that so much effort had gone into. It struck me as a cause for celebration. This was nature calling the shots, answering our interventions with a powerful and beautiful indifference.★

Notes

1) Robert Elliot, 'Faking Nature', in *Environmental Ethics*, edited by Robert Elliot (Oxford University Press, 1995)



HUNT SABOTAGE!

SAVING WILDLIFE WITH DIRECT ACTION



The Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA) was formed in 1963 by members of the League Against Cruel Sports who, according to HSA founder John Prestige, felt that "the League didn't seem to be doing anything." The early HSA was supported by the League. The first sabotage of a hunt was on Boxing Day 1963 on the South Devon Foxhounds at Torquay. Hunt saboteurs blew horns, blockaded roads, sprayed aniseed and tipped meat in front of the hounds.

The sabotage was so successful that the hunt was cancelled. Within weeks, more groups were founded in the Southwest and after the first year there had been about 120 sabotage actions. Hunt sabotage continued to grow until its peak in the 1980s where regional hits could involve hundreds of sabs. Its political profile changed during this development as the radical animal rights movement also grew and sabbing became an attractive activity for up-for-it anarchists. The state began a concerted crackdown in the early 1990s with the Criminal Justice Act which brought in the Aggravated Trespass laws aimed specifically against sabs, ravers and road protestors. Hundreds of arrests were made and over-the-top policing became a regular feature of sabbing.

The tactics of a sab group nowadays have been developed to provide the most effective forms of intervention to disrupt the activity of the hunt and to give a fox a chance to escape. While hounds are searching for a scent, horn and voice calls are used to draw them away from the huntsman. When a fox breaks from cover, sabs will interpose ourselves between the fox and the hounds after the fox has passed. We attempt to prevent the hounds following the fox by covering its trail with scentmasking sprays made from citronella essence and by cracking home-made whips, a signal for the hounds to stop and turn. Often the mere presence of a sab group at a regularly sabbed hunt is enough to prevent them from hunting, as they spend the whole day riding around trying to avoid sabs. Sabbing is a highly skilled activity learnt over many years but everyone has something to contribute and anyone can be in the right place at the right time to make a crucial intervention.

The aim of sabotaging a hunt is primarily to save the lives of individual animals. Where many direct actions and political campaigns are based around abstractions or form part of an intractably large whole, direct action in animal rights, and particularly hunt sabotage, focuses on the life and experience of the individual sentient being as the unit of value. This can make a refreshing change from some campaigns which may seem like a drop in the ocean. It is an exhilarating experience to see a beautiful wild animal escape its persecutors as a result of our intervention. There are few things more satisfying than a successful set-piece sabotage. Sabbing also affects the hunts economically as a successfully sabotaged hunt is a frustrating experience for the riders who finance it. During the last 20 years of hunt saboteur activity, attendance of hunts has declined and many have been forced to 'amalgamate'—meaning that one of the hunts effectively ceases to exist in all but name.

There is an element of class conflict in the confrontation between the hunt and the sabs. Hunters and their supporters are as a rule the rural land-owning class, a bizarre sect who are almost completely separated from the rest of society and yet have great influence over political and economic affairs. As they say themselves, "We are the bloody Establishment!" It is most satisfying to have the opportunity to ridicule them at one of their important social functions.

As hunt saboteurs we are witnesses to the all-out war against wildlife which seems to be the main activity in the so-called countryside. Open country is the playground of the rich, and a few patches of scrubby woods remain only because they are managed for hunting and shooting. These copses and areas of scrub are not of sufficient size or quality to maintain a great diversity of plant and animal life. Whatever animals do manage to survive are terrorised, poisoned, trapped and shot by gamekeepers, terrier men, blethering aristocrats

and various other professional or amateur sadists. While crossing the countryside to sabotage a foxhunt we will usually find much evidence of other wildlife abuse—shooting pens, snares, larsen-traps and often active shooters. I have seen a pair of rifle-shooters halfway through the day surrounded by the corpses of at least fifty wood-pigeons and a crow. Without our intervention they would have killed another fifty birds in the rest of the day. Walking, cycling or driving through country lanes it is all too easy to believe that the countryside is an idyllic refuge for nature, but looking a little deeper it appears more like an enormous factory of waste, pollution and animal abuse. Even the massacre of wildlife does not compare to the stinking farmyards, littered with dead machinery, where millions of sick and suffering animals are raised on antibiotics, hormones and cash-crop concentrates to feed up the next generation of European heart-attack victims who occasionally trundle past in their 4x4s. An irate farmer once said to a sab, "What would happen if I wasn't here managing this land? The trees would grow and the birds would come back! There'd be little birds everywhere! And then what would you do?" This fear and hatred of wild plants and animals is typical of the alienation from nature that agro-industrial workers suffer. As usual, hatred justifies abuse.

Being part of a hunt sab group has indirect advantages at least as important as its direct aims. A sab group is a classic example of the affinity group form of organisation. The co-operation of two or more autonomous sab groups is a glorious illustration of successful chaos in action. Sabbing requires quick thinking on your feet and absolute trust of one's fellow sabs in situations which may be physically or legally risky. It builds useful skills of navigation, observation, listening, spatial awareness, taking opportunities and perceiving risks, and dealing with confrontation and the police.

Sabbing is an activity in which there is almost certain to be a conflict with the forces of the state. The policing of hunts is ridiculously over the top. There have been incidents of over a hundred police officers for a sab group of five and sabbing is considered to be the biggest public order problem on the south coast during the hunting season. It is difficult to imagine that anyone could take part in the sabotage of a hunt and still maintain any naive sympathies for the police when hunt supporters who seriously assault sabs are not prosecuted and yet sabs are often arrested, prosecuted and fined for the most trivial trespass offences like "not leaving the land quickly enough when ordered to do so by a police officer". We can reliably presume that top police officers are in the same social circles as hunt supporters. Sussex Police were recently discovered sitting down at long tables in a barn for a full English breakfast with the South Downs and Eridge hunt.

Spending one or two days a week running around outdoors helps keep our bodies healthy and minds sharp, as does most sabs' vegan diet. And sabbing can even be fun—classic moments from the past couple of years include: three sab groups leaning against their vans and subjecting bloated Tory MP Nicholas Soames to a volley of abuse as his poor horse struggled along the road; gaining so much control over South Downs and Eridge hounds that they had to be dragged away on leads with a terrier man pushing from behind; the huntsman from the Crawley and Horsham hunt foolishly going out on foot due to frozen conditions and having his horn stolen; and all the foxes that we saw running away to survive after a successful intervention.★

Contact

For details of your local hunt sab group get in touch with:

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Occupational Hazards

Solidarity work in Palestine

In September 2000 a new upsurge of Palestinian anger at Israel erupted in the 'Al Aqsa Intifada'. The escalation of resistance and the subsequent increase in *overt* Israeli military repression pushed the conflict back onto the global front pages. One response to this has been that well over a hundred Brits, many from the direct action scene, have travelled to Palestine to act in solidarity as 'human shields'. This is an interview with a recent returnee. Here we do not aim to give an understanding of the conflict itself, but instead to give some idea of what this inspiring 'on-the-ground' solidarity work has been like, along with some of its problems.



Well the first question has to be, why did you go out there?

I first became involved in anti-war activism after the September 11th attacks. In the following period it became obvious that the Americans were going to go into Iraq. The anti-war movement was showing positive growth with all sorts of people becoming involved. I then became aware of the work of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in Palestine and how Israeli dominance in the Middle East is so crucial to American strategy. ISM's work seemed something concrete you could get involved in which had a real impact on an aspect of American imperialist foreign policy, as well as getting involved in the 'human rights' side of things.

I initially went over there quite sceptical about the way that ISM worked. I wanted to see what actually happened on the ground and whether this was a valid form of activity. Having got out there, it was an interesting contrast with the sort of activism that many of us do in Britain now. In a way it's right back to the stage where you're relying on media influence and higher authorities. As an anarchist activist, working with an embassy is pretty strange. You find yourself having to telephone them in order to secure protection from the Israeli occupation forces. This is a major disruptive tactic the ISM use. It requires a shift in perspective, there are issues and contradictions with my own personal philosophy... but it must be said, it works.

Can you briefly describe what it's like in Israel and the Occupied Territories?

There's a sudden marked transition between Arabic culture in the occupied territories and Israel. To a certain extent East Jerusalem, which is Palestinian, is quite Israeli. The way people drive, what they wear, the music is Westernised. Crossing over into the West Bank or Gaza, there's a sudden change: the way people dress; the extremes of poverty. It struck me when I came out of Gaza. You leave behind a taxi service of battered Ford Escorts which are just about kept

going and everything's cheap, very cheap. You then cross the border and it's Westernised: Westernised petrol stations; people paying with credit cards. There's a massive economic disparity between the two.

You notice the devastation within the Occupied Territories. Around Rafah there's rubble everywhere. In Palestine you've got 75 percent unemployment, so there are lots of people in the street. Obviously poverty is endemic. In Gaza people can grow their own food—this is one of the major things people do as there is an allotment system. But there's no work, people are running out of clothes and money. People are surviving on money they earned before the Intifada when they were able to work in the United Arab Emirates or Tel Aviv, but all that money is drying up and the economy is grinding to a halt.

It's a phenomenally lop-sided conflict where there are six Palestinians dead for every single Israeli that's been killed. It's a conflict between a population which is armed to a certain extent with AK47s, and a population which is backed by the Americans to the tune of several billion dollars a year. The Israelis totally dominate the Palestinians and the way they run their lives. I suppose I went out there with the idea that this was more of a civil war than it is.

The way I understand the conflict now, having spent some time out there, is that it is to all intents and purposes, a war of ethnic cleansing, but more subtle than that seen in the collapse of Yugoslavia. There are a variety of weapons the Israelis are using. One of them is obviously blatant physical force; helicopter gunship attacks on refugee camps, incursions, shooting youths in street clashes. Another is that Israel is doing its best to devastate any chance the Palestinians have of independent economic development. This in part is carried out through diplomacy (it was inherent in the Oslo Accords), but largely it's simply the military destroying infrastructure.

The final weapon used is psychological war. The Palestinian people live under constant threat, a fear of incursion and violent death. The role of the ISM is to resist these attacks, physically, by placing oneself as a human shield in front of the direct violence. The economic attack is difficult, but the psychological war is where I think ISM plays its greatest role. It lets the Palestinians know that internationals do know what is happening, and that to some extent their plight is being broadcast to the outside world.

It's ironic that out of the Holocaust, and the very understandable reaction to the Holocaust on the part of those survivors who went on to found Israel, you get a military state founded on an ideal of ethnic purity. All rising out of a genocide committed by the Third Reich. That was certainly one of the things that struck me about Israeli society.

Can you give us an idea of the day-to-day activities of the ISM?

I worked mainly in Rafah, the southernmost city in the Gaza strip. It's a city which has been split in half by the Israeli-Egyptian border. The Israelis are now building a huge wall right through Rafah and you have to really see this to understand what this means. This is a very old city. People have very deep roots. In building the wall, the Israelis are demolishing houses, not only for the wall, but also to clear a free fire zone 200m in front of the wall. What they do is they demolish people's houses with bulldozers; bulldozers backed up with tanks. They'll turn up at 2 am and give the family fifteen minutes to get out. They then bulldoze the house and that's it. They have actually knocked down houses and killed people before now. The family is left in a situation where the only available residence is a tent supplied by the United Nations.



The Israeli state daily bulldozes Palestinian houses in Rafah in its continuing project to bisect the city with a military wall. The void that was once homes is now a 200m free fire zone.

Now what ISM activists do in Rafah is to sleep in threatened homes. Incursions are frequent in Rafah where the Israeli military will come in at night with tanks, seal off an area, maybe demolish some homes, arrest people, sometimes just trying to flush out the resistance, to force them to open fire. If there's an incursion, we make ourselves as clear and obvious as possible. We inform our embassies that we're there, the idea being that the embassies will contact the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) and say that we are in the area and that they are risking an international incident if they kill one of us. Basically the effect is to dampen down what's going on; you can't stop it, but at least the individual family you are with have a lot more security knowing that you're there. You're not only helping that family though—you're psychologically boosting the whole neighbourhood



Rachel Corrie RIP









by your presence. It's a really positive individual thing, when bullets are coming into the house, to be able to go out on the balcony and wave a white flag and say "There are internationals in this house" and have the firing stop. It does of course work on this whole racist double standard which is in place... essentially using the racist attitudes of the IOF against themselves.

Another practical example happened when I was leaving Nablus, trying to cross a checkpoint. The Occupation Forces were causing there to be a massive queue of people trying to get through the checkpoint. Remember that these checkpoints fragment the communities, cutting people off from their families and places of work, interrupting the avenues of communication within Palestinian society. What happened was that the soldiers had knocked down the only sunscreen. There were men, women and kids trying to get through the checkpoint in the blazing heat of midday and the IOF were just keeping them there. We went to stand at the back of the crowd. Women started to spill out into the road in search of shade but the soldiers came out and started shoving them back with rifles. Suddenly they saw the two of us standing there with our backpacks, and that was it. It all stopped. With friendly smiles they waved us to the front of the queue but we stood there and watched for an hour and they started processing people just like that. So there's this weird way where that sort of activism works out there in a way that it wouldn't here.

You were with Rachel Corrie when she was killed. Can you tell us what happened?

Yes, I was unfortunately a participant in the action where Rachel Corrie died. This action was routine in Rafah. The IOF will turn up without warning and, under cover of tanks, knock down a house very quickly and leave. Other times they spend the whole afternoon pushing rubble about and clearing olive groves. We'd get a phone call from someone saying that this was happening; the group would then attempt to intervene, essentially using old style EF! digger diving tactics on these bulldozers. On this occasion, two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, we went there and spent about three hours obstructing the bulldozers. It became clear to me that they didn't particularly care... they were pushing it. It did seem at times that they were backing off, but at other times being very dangerous. So it did feel like the tactics were sometimes working.

And then with Rachel, there was a bulldozer coming in a straight line towards a house, one of the houses actually that people had been sleeping in which was slated for demolition, and she moved out to confront it. As the bulldozer moved forward pushing a pile of earth in front of it, she climbed

the pile of earth, very clearly visible to the driver. She slid back down the pile of earth, presumably to walk away from it. Something happened then to push her onto her face and she was run over by the blade. The bulldozer driver didn't even lift the blade, he reversed over her and reversed another 20m away. She was left just lying there and it was very obvious from the word go that something was badly wrong. She was taken away by ambulance and she died in hospital about half an hour later. This incident has obviously brought up a lot of questions about ISM and how well these human shield actions can work.



"You notice the devastation. Right round Rafah there's rubble everywhere. You've got 75 percent unemployment, so obviously poverty is pretty endemic."

Could you say something about the resistance to the occupation coming from within the Israeli population?

There are big links being built. Netta, who's one of the founder members of ISM is an Israeli Jew and she's actually married to a Palestinian. She's really crossed a massive divide there. Israeli citizens are not even allowed into Gaza, as an example. A large number of the internationals with ISM are Jewish, coming from the US particularly, who have come to act in solidarity and say 'not in our name'. But there are Israeli peace organisations, the refuseniks, Gush Shalom, Peace Now. These organisations do co-operate with ISM but they are unfortunately a tiny minority within Israeli society. There is a group called 'Jewish Mothers Against the Occupation'; they go down in buses to the checkpoints in the West Bank on the Israeli side and harangue the soldiers in Hebrew. So there is a resistance but it's not massive.

Another issue is that ISM, probably less so now since Rachel Corrie died and Tom Hurndall's been put in a coma, could be easily infiltrated. There is no background check or anything. You'll occasionally get 'collaborator' or 'Jew' shouted at you in the street, not by many people, but there is this idea out there that internationals could be a cover for spying in the communities. Which is why as an ISMer you absolutely steer clear of finding out anything about the armed resistance. You'll possibly get people trying to tell or show you things and your response has to be, "I don't want to know... You don't know who I am". I don't want to know because we do not want to be put in the position where people think there are collaborators in the ISM. That would be very dangerous!

What is the relationship between ISM and the Palestinian Authority (PA)?

There are issues about which Palestinian organisations you work with and what their ultimate aims are. The PA was put in place by the Oslo Accords as a way of running the Palestinian state. It's a Bantustan for the benefit of the Israelis. You quite often end up working with organisations like that. Really, what is waiting in the wings to take over Palestinian society is as politically suspect as the Israeli government. Although potentially it will not be as violent to its own people, there are still well corroborated reports of murder, torture and imprisonment by the PA. People are frightened of the Palestinian police and security forces. Large sections of the population have little or no faith in the PA. In the Gaza strip I got the impression that the PA were fully in control and that it was running everything, whereas in the West Bank they have far less influence. Nablus was run by a town committee, there was more autonomy. Amongst the terrible conditions, the attacks on the infrastructure etc. the town was running, all the municipal stuff was going on. It shows the potential without PA control and people are a lot



less respectful of Arafat in Nablus than they are in Gaza and Rafah. So there's a potential divide there if the Palestinians ever achieve autonomy.

I have heard the PA described as Stalinists, a totalitarian system waiting in the wings. There was a definite attempt by the PA to co-opt Rachel Corrie's death for their own political agenda. One of the more distressing things in Rafah is that it's a population under siege which is not taking collective measures to defend itself. For example, if your house is demolished, the PA don't sort you out with anything. There's still a system of private landholding. It leaves a lot of people homeless with nowhere to go, there's no backup for them, except what they get through their own kinship networks. There are a lot of wealthy people in the occupied territories: you see expensive cars, there is an elite. We were taken by the PA to something like a Pizza Hut where a week's wages was spent on each of us—corrupt as fuck. Collective resistance has been actively undermined by the fact that the PA are there to reinforce existing social and economic structures.

Palestinian resistance has become increasingly aligned with Islamic fundamentalism. How does this affect the ISM?

It is an Islamic resistance now, whereas 20 to 30 years ago the socialist-based resistance was far more secular. That generation were put in a no-win situation and they failed. So now the youth have gone over to a pan-Arabic Islamic view. There is now a lot of power in the hands of Islamic Jihad. In a way it is peculiar as an international activist to be there with the background and views we're likely to have which contrast heavily with fundamentalist Islamic attitudes.

In Rafah, during the Second Intifada, one of the first things that happened, so I was told, was that all the prostitutes and drug dealers were taken out and shot in the streets. The disco and the cinemas were burnt down. So, one of the first things the Islamic groups did was to put their conservative hold on society and Rafah was already fairly conservative. There are forces there at work which are very illiberal and that sometimes generated a lot of contradictions in terms of what you were supporting and what you were doing. I think this is where ISM does well in trying to stay clear of political entanglement and to actually be involved with ordinary non-politically aligned Palestinians, although some degree of political entanglement is inevitable. You do need assistance, and various political groupings do see ISM as an advantage to themselves. The way you get around these complications is to work with individual Palestinians and report on the situation as a whole.

Is there a difference between working in Gaza and the West Bank?

All my experience is based in Gaza and the significant difference you have in Gaza compared to the West Bank is that you still have an armed population. Basically life in the West Bank is characterised by incursions, extreme violence and daily harassment. The Israeli forces are in full occupation of the West Bank. They come into the towns any time they like with virtual impunity. There the population has been progressively disarmed over the years. In Rafah, in the Gaza strip, you do have a heavily armed population—you still have a Palestinian police force that's armed, and you see Palestinian soldiers. So you have a very different situation where Israeli soldiers don't get out of their vehicles. In some ways this enhances ISM's work because one of the quickest ways of dealing with ISM activists in the West Bank is to come in and arrest and deport them, whereas they don't do that in Rafah, because they're worried the armed resistance is going to kill them. So ISM work in the West Bank largely revolves around trying to put a direct human face on to Palestinian people by confronting individual soldiers.

It's difficult to do that in Rafah. One of the tactics the Israeli army use to avoid exposing themselves on the street is they occupy a house and then blast or knock holes in the walls to the next house and then move along to the next house and occupy houses like that. They hold the families there for that reason. This is a counter-insurgency tactic which not only protects themselves but acts

The Siege of The Church of the Nativity

In April of 2002, Israeli forces entered the West Bank town of Bethlehem. As the forces neared the centre of the town, approximately 150 to 200 Palestinian civilians and resistance fighters took shelter in the Church of the Nativity, believed by many to be built on the site of Christ's birth. The priests within the church, from the Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic traditions, initially tried to prevent access to the church but were overwhelmed. Thus began a siege which was to last for over five weeks.

The Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) denied food and medical attention to the Palestinians within. Early unsuccessful attempts by the IOF to storm the church and routine indiscriminate sniper fire into the courtyards and windows of the church had resulted in several Palestinians inside being injured, with approximately eight fatalities. The wounded were able to leave the complex but fear of the IOF meant that only the severely wounded did so.

At the beginning of May, a group of approximately 20 International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activists and affiliates succeeded in breaking IOF cordons to deliver supplies to the church. Ten of the activists including myself entered the church intending to stay for the remaining duration of the siege. We were welcomed wholeheartedly.

Approximately half the Palestinians in the church were civilians. The others either belonged to the Palestinian Authority's police and security forces or were members of resistance factions. Contrary to IOF claims, we saw no evidence that any of the Palestinians, priests, or indeed ourselves, were held against their will.

Conditions in the church were difficult but stable. The church is a large complex of churches, courtyards, offices, and priests' quarters, so space was not a problem and 'cabin fever' was to a large extent avoidable. Clean water was available: the toilet and washing facilities were sparse but well maintained and adequate. There was limited access to electricity allowing mobile phones to be charged, although the service was often turned off by the IOF. Food supplies were very low on our arrival. Food was rationed to one meal a day by a central committee, this meal consisting of half a cup of weak soup with a few lentils and pieces of pasta. Many Palestinians supplemented this with fried lemon leaves or a salty soup made of wild mustard leaves found in the courtyards. The rationing system worked well although there was some evidence of food hoarding. All the Palestinians were gaunt and weak, many were showing signs of severe malnutrition.

Nine days after we had entered, the siege eventually came to an end under the terms of an agreement brokered by US and European diplomats. Thirteen of the most wanted Palestinians would be exiled abroad, another 26 would be exiled to the Gaza strip. The remaining Palestinians would be freed after interrogation. This was widely regarded amongst the Palestinians as a failure, although relief that the siege was over was evident. All the internationals involved in the action were arrested and deported.

Our presence in the church eased the situation in a number of ways. Obviously, the delivery of food, medical aid and cigarettes was appreciated. The IOF's nightly bombardment of sound grenades ceased and sniper fire was reduced. It was clear that the morale of the Palestinians was improved by our presence, as was—we were told—the morale of their families on the outside. We were also able to use the media interest generated to draw attention to the plight of those inside and to counteract the IOF's claims about the siege. It is possible that we made the storming of the church more unlikely and had an effect on the speed and content of the agreement brokered to end the siege; however, I believe our effect on these aspects was minimal.

A major influence on the course of events was the existence of a strong support network on the outside. We were lucky to have a representative close to Arafat who was able to relay accurate information on the negotiations. We also had excellent media, moral, and legal support from individuals in Bethlehem and from networks in our home countries. Such support enabled us to weather the increasingly confusing situation towards the close of the siege as representatives of the IOF, the press, our own embassies, and the church presented us with partial and misleading information.

The Desert Water War

Part of the war is about the control of water. The Gaza area is very arid with a large aquifer underneath, and the population need it to supply all their drinking water. The Gaza strip has a series of wells along the eastern side which border onto Israeli lands and hills. As the Isrealis are trying to farm the desert they have a very chemically intensive form of agriculture. As a result the aquifers are becoming more and more contaminated by surface run off. The Israeli settlements built in Gaza are directly thieving the water from the aquifer by boring their wells to 120 feet. Due to agreements made in the Oslo Accords the Gazans are only allowed to drill to 90 feet. In November 2002, the army came and buildozed both of the main wells that supply Rafah with water and cut off water to half the population. As these wells were being rebuilt, the workers were shot at because they were right out on the edge in no-mans land, where the wells are. The Palestinian seige is implemented as much by these incremental infrastructural attacks, as it is by helicopter gunship bombardments.

as part of the psychological war. The maintenance of low level terror throughout the Palestinian territories brings background stress to the people's lives.

What is the attitude of ISM to Palestinian violent resistance?

ISM is unequivocal about respecting the right of Palestinians to liberate themselves from the occupation in any way they see necessary. So on the armed struggle, which is a totally valid part of the Palestinian resistance, ISM has an unequivocal stance as an organisation. Within ISM, which is very diverse, there are people with a Gandhian pacifist viewpoint. While I don't think they are right, I totally respect them for being out there and putting themselves on the line. It is opening up a space for non-violent resistance to a certain extent. But there are certain specific historical circumstances in which non-violent resistance works... and today Palestine is not one of them.

In the first Intifada there was a lot more non-violent resistance. At that stage the Palestinians were in many ways the underclass of Israeli society—they were the cheap labour and when they went on strike, that had a direct impact on the Israeli economy. What has happened since—and this is really what the Oslo Accords and the current situation is about—is that Israel is going to fence the Palestinians in and eventually get rid of them. Israel is importing its own underclass, because over recent years there's been a large wave of immigration into Israel of Ethiopians, Russians and various other people with a Jewish or supposed Jewish background. They have become the replacement underclass so the Palestinians no longer have the option of non-violent resistance; their passive resistance would make no difference to how the IOF behaves towards them.

Much of the daily 'violent' resistance has to be looked at in real terms. I mean, a half brick bouncing off a vehicle designed to withstand rocket fire is a symbolic, almost non-violent act. The IOF have shown themselves time and time again quite willing to kill people for doing that. Anyone who comes away from that situation feeling that there is an avenue for genuine non-violent resistance is, I think, mistaken.

Suicide bombing only evolved in the later stages of this Intifada. It's not a historical tactic of the Palestinians. I'm still not 100 percent sure of what I think about it. I think there is a genuine issue in that the Israeli society is totally militarised—all the men do three years, the women do two, everyone is in the reserves. This underclass being imported, one of the conditions is that they serve in the forces in order to get their citizenship. This throws up the interesting issue of the stratification of Israeli society itself to the extent that it isn't the Zion which was dreamed of in the '20s and '30s. It is a phenomenally militarised society and a very stratified one. The bulldozer driver and the tank crew who were present at the incident when Rachel was killed were Russians. The Ashkanasi and Sephardic Jews who were the founders of the country—their children don't tend to end up in the combat zones, so essentially you've got one underclass being pitted against another, in the classic mould.

So you have this very militarised society and then you get on a bus in Israel and there's a good chance that two thirds of the passengers will be soldiers in uniform with weapons. So in a way that gives a lot more understanding about what this tactic's all about. I'm not saying I endorse it, or approve of it. Some of it just seems pointless folly: I mean, three Islamic Jihad militants blew themselves up on a roadblock separating Rafah from Gaza and wounded two soldiers. It seems, you know, a bit of a dead end route to go down. However, as I've said before, ISM respects the right of the Palestinians to resist the occupation in any way they deem necessary.

What is the future of ISM?

Now is a very challenging time for the ISM. In a way the bluff has been called. For a long time it was a game of "We can do this because you can't kill us", because the media backlash and the international pressure would be so intense. Rachel Corrie's death was not an accident. The driver

deliberately killed Rachel, yet it probably wasn't planned from up high. Suddenly it landed in the lap of the state command: "Right, we've killed one of them now, what's going to happen?" I think they were quite encouraged by the response. There was some media attention in the US, but the US embassy turned around and fucked her off and her parents by accepting the IOF's interpretation of events. They claim a paving slab fell on her head while she was on open ground, coupled with the accusation that ISM members on the scene moved her body in order to incriminate the bulldozer driver, which is totally insane. The US embassy publicly swallowed that, so I think the IOF are quite encouraged. Having pushed it to that point, they found out that, in fact, not a lot happened. Then three weeks later Tom Hurndall, (an activist from Manchester), gets shot in a far more premeditated way, very obviously shot by a sniper from 300m away. The question is, is there enough international pressure being generated to stop it happening again? The ISM is going to have to consider how to work now if it's not as effective a human shield as it was.

Obviously it's impossible to look into the future clearly, especially in such a complex situation as Palestine. Nevertheless could you give us some of your views on the near future?

Well, this new Prime Minister, a Harvard educated millionaire, fits in well with the phenomenon of neo-liberalism. Gaza's only resource is people who are willing to work for 10 NIS (New Israeli Shekels) a day. There's 75 percent unemployment. So will Gaza become a neo-liberal colony, a sweatshop? Or will they be kept in a situation of total economic depravation in order to secure ethnic cleansing? It'll be interesting to see what happens over the next few years as a guide to the forces we are confronting; what their aims are.

The Jews are fairly unique in history in having maintained a cultural identity for 2,000 years without having a homeland. But now the Zionists are staking the whole of it on the continuance of American hegemony, which may last for another 100 years, but not forever. The reason they are able to behave as they do is because they've got the backing of a major superpower. They will have created so much hatred that should the Americans desert Israel at any stage, they would be wiped out. The nuclear option however is the dominating factor. Israel is the only nuclear power in the Middle East and this is its insurance. Quite what life would be like in Israel if the US deserted it and they were forced to rely on the nuclear retaliation option... It doesn't bear thinking about really. But it's also very much a question of what the Palestinians do to resist the occupation. I actually met a number of Palestinians who weren't in favour of resisting the occupation, who believed that the only hope for the Palestinian people lay in a pan-Arabic struggle. They thought that really it was pointless for the Palestinians to continue to provoke the Israelis. I encountered an awful lot of resignation to what was going on, people hoping it will one day end, but seeing no way out of it. Nobody had any confidence in the new Prime Minister, the 'roadmap to peace', or any benevolent intervention in the situation. The only people I heard speaking with hope were people who hoped for some sort of pan-Islamic resistance that would crush Israel.

Are there lessons that can be learned from ISM's activities which apply to other struggles?

There are places in the world where ISM couldn't intervene. An accusation often made by the Israelis against the ISM is that there are other struggles—by picking this one we must have a particular gripe against Israel as opposed to any other state that is committing atrocities. Well, the answer to this is that Israel is trying to pretend to be a democracy. ISM can work because Israel is actually concerned to some extent about what the world thinks of it and also about the potential for resistance in the US. The US subsidy to Israel could be influenced by bad publicity. So you're in a situation where if you tried to do ISM stuff in, say, Chechnya, you would simply be killed or immediately removed from the area. That does have to be emphasised.

However where the tactic is applicable it can be very effective. Elsewhere I have seen it really work in Chiapas in Mexico, where once again people are exploiting a racist double standard. By virtue of our passports and nationalities we have a certain degree of protection from the violence *some* states can hand out. Where applicable, that anomaly is one of the weapons we can use in international solidarity.★

Web: www.palsolidarity.org (ISM)
www.palestinemonitor.org

Further Reading

'Behind the 21st Century Intifada' in *Aufheben* No. 10. (www.geocities.com/aufheben2) Even though we are not in total agreement, we highly recommend this historical analysis from fellow Brightonians: "Both forms of nationalism, Zionist and Palestinian, arose out of the need to recuperate and repress the combativity of the proletariat."

'Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom' by Fredy Perlman, in *Anything Can Happen* (ISBN 0 948 98422 8): "The problem of freedom is always present: one might learn from the pogroms to resist or flee, or be brutalised enough to become a pogromist oneself."

Nablus 2002: Life Under Curfew

For much of 2002 Nablus was under 24 hour military curfew. Palestinians were not allowed to walk in the streets, shops remained closed and the city ground to a halt. Only ambulances and a few municipal vehicles were allowed on the streets. Nablus was dotted with checkpoints while tanks and armoured jeeps patrolled the streets.

The only internationals in Nablus at this time were from the ISM and a few affiliated groups. Very occasionally a Red Cross or UN vehicle would be seen in the city. No international press were present although there was a local Al-Jazeera film crew. It was clear that we were the only international witnesses to events in Nablus under curfew. Typical ISM activities in Nablus included:

- **Protecting homes** Many homes were under threat as part of Israel's 'Collective Punishment' policy where the family homes of resistance fighters are demolished. ISM activists would live with the families in these homes. It was hoped that their presence would deter the IOF from demolishing the house, although it was made clear that there could be no assurances of success. If the IOF arrived intent on a demolition, ISMers would try and negotiate more time. It was clear that these families felt safer in the presence of internationals.
- **Maintaining a street level presence** Everyday, the mobile units would be in 'conflict' with the street children. Stones versus armoured vehicles. Live rounds were the norm. Maintaining a street presence is important as it can moderate IOF behaviour. Care was taken to choose a place which was clearly visible to the IOF, out of the line of fire, and not too near to the children as this tended to make them show off and take greater risks, especially in the presence of cameras. Earlier attempts to be more proactive by preventing the IOF from having clear line of sight were not welcomed by the children, as it interfered with their stone throwing. Also, care had to be taken not to get in between the IOF and the resistance groups who would occasionally become involved.
- **Checkpoint watch** This would mainly involve observing the IOF in the hope that this would make them moderate their behaviour. Occasionally people would intervene if Palestinians were refused passage, however, care had to be taken as often intervention can make the situation worse. Getting to know a group of soldiers on a checkpoint proved to be an effective tactic. They would find it harder to behave intolerably in front of us and were more often swayed by intervention.
- **Accompanying ambulances** Ambulances are occasionally fired on by the IOF and are often refused passage or delayed. The presence of internationals has at times had a positive effect. However, this varies over time and from region to region, so this tactic was not always used. Negative effects have been reported, such as the possibility of developing a dependence upon internationals and an increase in IOF annoyance, causing more hindrance.
- **Occupied house visits** The IOF would frequently occupy houses. This could last for anything from a few hours to months. In most cases the family were imprisoned in part of the house. The behaviour of the troops towards the families varied a great deal. Internationals would attempt to take food to the families and remain in contact with them. We were often denied access.
- **Accompanying demonstrations** Accompanying, and occasionally organising, demonstrations. Although such demonstrations have little or no effect on the IOF's behaviour, Al-Jazeera would often cover the event and the effect on the morale, particularly the children's, was noticeable. It was, for many Palestinians, the only time they felt free to walk through their streets.
- **Accompanying Palestinians** At times, individuals would request accompaniment to cross Nablus or specifically ask us to run errands.
- **Roadblock removal** Occasionally activists would act alone or at the request of Palestinians to remove a roadblock, or at least make it passable to traffic.
- **Media work** ISM is often successful at getting first hand reports of life in Palestine into the Western media. This is an important part of ISM's work, but there is a clear division amongst activists between those who saw it as their primary role, and those who saw it as a side effect of their other activities. This is not an academic issue as it directly affected the kinds of action considered, and also, in my opinion, caused many to be over-sensitive as to how ISM is perceived.★

Preparing for Prison

The View from Inside

Imprisonment as a form of punishment can be traced back to Greek times, but until relatively recently long-term incarceration was extremely rare, only flourishing in modern times after transportation to 'the colonies' became unviable (in no small part due to the American Revolution).

Traditionally, those that offended against society were punished publicly, generally in the most brutal way, from the stocks to the gibbet. Public executions, often with attendant torture and/or mutilation, were the norm in this country until the 17th century. Even when they were abolished it was not out of any sense of decency or humanity, but according to the *Oxford History of the Prison*, because they had "become the occasion of rowdiness and disgust—both because the crowd had begun to identify with the victim, not the executioner, and because the spectacle had become revolting, offending a new sensibility about pain and bodily integrity. Thus, it became desirable to mete out punishment away from the public gaze."

Today, prison is still very much a closed world, and while within the past two decades TV cameras have occasionally been able to show a very limited view of life behind bars, they rarely capture anything more than that which the authorities wish them to see. The true misery of imprisonment is deliberately kept secret from the general public, while the right-wing press and unscrupulous politicians conspire to present a picture of cushy 'holiday camps' and 'health farms'. The prison authorities do everything within their power (legal and illegal) to prevent investigative journalists having contact with prisoners and vice-versa, while Michael Howard and Jack Straw imposed a ban preventing visiting journalists reporting anything at all. Though the ban has subsequently been deemed unlawful, the vast majority of journalists are so lazy, cowardly, and/or clueless that it might as well still be in place.

With the British prison population currently growing at a rate of four hundred a week, and New Labour's draconian policies criminalising dissent, as a political activist it is more likely that you will see the inside of a prison cell than at any time in recent history. For those committed to the overthrow of the state, imprisonment has to be seen as an occupational hazard, and as such it's



better to consider it beforehand, rather than when it's too late.

During my life I've spent time in over 20 British prisons (plus at least a dozen more I've visited or 'stopped over' at) including local prisons, remand centres, long-term Category B prisons, all Britain's maximum security dispersal prisons, a couple of Category A units and 16 segregation units. I've been around a bit, but I've never been anywhere near a low security or 'open' prison, and though I correspond with a number of women prisoners, I've obviously never been held in a women's prison. So while I think I'm pretty well qualified to talk about the prison experience, there are limits to what I know, and inevitably this piece reflects that.

If you know you're going to be imprisoned, at least that gives you a head start. Maybe you can even talk to someone who's been in your local nick, and who knows the rules and can give you an idea what to expect. The 'unknown' is the scariest thing of all, isn't it? Prison is the worst thing our society has.

The most common fear, certainly among men, seems to be that if they get locked up they'll 'have to go in the showers with Mr. Big.' Forget that—predatory homosexuality is as rare in British prisons as malt whisky, in fact in some prisons it's

The Prison Lexicon

While some words of prison slang are hundreds of years old, others are being introduced all the time. Here are just a few examples:

Pad: a cell.
Spin: a search (as in 'pad-spin').
Burglars: security or 'DST' ('Dedicated Search Team').
Bang up: time locked in cell.
Kangas (or 'Scoobys'): screws.
Midnight: Midnight mass—grass.
Ghosting: to be transferred to another prison, suddenly and without notice.
Jam-roll: parole.
L-Plates: a life sentence.
Cucumbers (or 'Numbers' or 'Protection'): 'Nonces' or 'Bacons' (sex offenders) and other 'Protection-heads' (debtors, grasses, cell thieves etc.) are usually segregated for their own safety under Prison Rule 45 (formerly 43). They should not be confused with prisoners held in the block (the segregation unit) under Prison Rule 45 GOAD (Good Order and Discipline).
Stiff: a smuggled note.
Bed-leg: a homemade cosh. The word comes from the small section of steel pipe used to separate prison bunks, which would be put in a sock to make a weapon.
Little fellers: cigarette butts.
The enchanted: prisoners on the 'Enhanced Privilege Level'.
Tram lines: a distinctive scar caused by a prison-made weapon which uses two razor blades melted into a toothbrush.
Shit and a shave (or shit and a shower): a short sentence.
Adidas sex-case: prison issue plimsolls.
Chip-net: safety net strung between landings.
Diesel: prison tea.
Jimmy or Jimmy Boyle: foil used by smackheads to smoke heroin.
Wet-up (or Jug-up): to scald someone, usually with a mixture of boiling water and sugar.
Stretch: a sentence or a year (a '10 stretch' is a 10 year sentence).
Peter: an older name for a cell, also for a safe.
Apple or Apple core: Score—20, hence 20 years or £20.
Salmon or Salmon and trout—Snout: tobacco.
Patches: a prison uniform with prominent yellow panels worn by prisoners captured after an escape or following an attempted escape.
Pie and liquor: the vicar.

a great deal rarer. There's probably more chance of you being raped or sexually assaulted 'outside' than in here. I have never actually come across a single occurrence.

Then there's the fear of non-sexual violence—are you going to be locked up with a load of thugs and psychopaths who'll cut your throat as soon as look at you? Again, this is largely exaggerated, but violence does exist in prison. However, it's a relatively simple matter to minimise the likelihood of being attacked. In my experience there's far less random violence in prison than in wider society. I was in an adult long-term prison at 19, and the only time I've ever been attacked it was by the screws.

Staying safe comes down to basics. Stay alert and learn some manners—prison is a close environment containing too many people, so manners are extra important. Be polite to people, treat them with mutual respect, don't be nosy or impinge on their limited personal space, never borrow things without asking, don't boast or bullshit, never grass anyone up, and even more importantly, avoid drugs (heroin) and stay away from junkies. When I was at Full Sutton in 1996, there was an average of one stabbing a week, but almost all of them were related to smack.

While adult prisons, particularly long-term ones, tend to be a fairly mature environment, 'Young Offenders Institutions' (for those under 21) can be different, and violence less easy to avoid. The general advice still applies though—be assertive not aggressive, but don't let people take liberties with you, and if necessary be prepared to fight. Some self defence training may give you an edge, but be warned that prison fights are always dirty—you can expect to be bitten, scalded, stabbed, coshed, and/or attacked by multiple assailants. Attacks are likely to take place in the showers or when the victim is still in bed.

In reality, it's not other prisoners you should be worried about, they will become your friends and comrades. In the harsh prison environment bonds will be forged that can last a lifetime. Your problems will come from the system, and from the screws, particularly if you're a person of integrity. From the very first moment you enter prison your principles, your sense of selfhood, and your very humanity will be under attack. If you are to survive unbroken, you must resist all attempts to turn you into a numbered, subjugated, compliant piece of jail-fodder, a 'Stepford Prisoner' who has had their spine and brain removed. You are, after all, not just an individual, but a member of a movement, and those that come after you will be judged by how you behave.

Unfortunately, for those of you entering prison today, the level of political consciousness among British prisoners is at the lowest point for many

years. Divide and rule scams like the loathsome 'Incentives and Earned Privileges' scheme have undermined solidarity, and in-cell TVs and heroin have helped a culture of selfishness to develop. You will hear people come out with things like, "I can't afford to get involved" or "I've done my bit" or "I just want to get out." Ignore these wankers, they're just trying to justify their own cowardice. Everybody wants to get out of these rotten places, but how do you want to get out—on your feet or on your knees? Resistance and solidarity will always exist within prisons, and if you have anything about you at all, your place is with that resistance, not with the grovellers and forelock-tuggers who shit on their fellow cons in the foolish belief that they can make a comfortable life for themselves in here.

Prison Receptions, the entry point into any jail (unless you go straight to the punishment block—the segregation unit), have changed a lot since the days when you were very likely to be met with a beating, but they are still inevitably an unpleasant experience. It is here that your prison file will be opened, that you will be given a number, where strangers will begin to address you by your surname only, where others will decide what clothes you can wear and what possessions you can have, and where you will receive your first strip-search. It is in Reception that the battle begins.

The first Prison Reception I was ever in was at Canterbury in 1980. There were certainly worse places back then, but there were still some vicious screws working there. In every nick in the country they used to read you a little speech at Reception, part of which went, "You will call all prison officers 'Sir'." So it didn't take long for my first confrontation to come, I would not, and will not, be forced to call anyone 'Sir'. Nor was I prepared to substitute 'boss' or 'guv'nor' as was acceptable in some prisons. Like a lot of principles it's ostensibly a small thing, it would be so easy to compromise, especially when almost everyone else does, but what are we without principles? Once you start abandoning them for the sake of convenience, who's to say where it will end? I remember a few years ago when I was forced onto a blanket protest at Durham. Having failed to intimidate and bully me into putting on the prison clothes, the screws tried persuasion—"You're alone down here in the punishment block, away from your mates, nobody will even know you've put them on." But I'd have known, and the screws would have known, and that was enough.

Today there's no longer an obligation to call your captors 'Sir', and many nicks no longer require you to wear prison clothes, but your integrity will still be tested, and you will have to struggle to retain it. Relinquish it, and I imagine prison will have far more of a lasting effect on you than if you spend the whole of your sentence in the block.

Screws often behave like playground bullies and when you come into a new nick, they'll try it on to see how much they can get away with. A classic example is to try to get you to 'squat' or bend over during a strip-search—tell them to fuck off. Every prison has its own rules about what you can and can't have, and they change constantly, but if you know you're getting sent down you can still try to be prepared. Often, little can be sent in after you're imprisoned, so have anything you need and might be able to have with you. Most prisons allow you to wear your own training shoes these days, so get yourself a good sturdy pair. Prisoners generally wear sports clothes, which are easily cared for, avoid black and dark blue colours which aren't always allowed, and go for cotton fabrics that will survive the prison laundry. A radio or small stereo will be useful, as will one or two books, and some basic stationery. A watch is more or less essential, ideally get one that doesn't require batteries, is tough and waterproof (so you can wear it in the shower), but not unduly expensive or ostentatious. While highly desirable, food and drink and toiletries won't be allowed. If you smoke (and it's a big advantage not to), you may be permitted to keep a small amount of tobacco. Make sure you have cash with you, so that you can buy phonecards and other items you need from the prison shop.

There was a time when every cell contained a copy of the prison rules, and prisoners were required to read them. Now the prison authorities generally do their best to keep them secret, because they are so regularly broken. You will find it useful to consult the Prison Rules and Standing



Orders, which outline your few rights and entitlements, and they should be available in the prison library. The Prison Service also publishes its own information booklets, but the contents are very selective. If you have difficulty getting hold of a copy of the rules, or think you are not getting what you're entitled to, as regards diet or exercise for example, either contact your solicitor or the Prisoners Advice Service at the address given elsewhere in this section. Prisoners' letters are generally censored, and so have to be handed in or posted with the envelopes unsealed. However, you may write to a solicitor or the Prisoners Advice Service in confidence under Prison Rule 39. Contrary to what you may be told, you do not have to allow a member of staff to seal the envelope for you, and if you do not have stamps you can ask for a 'Special Letter', which should be sent at public expense. Simply seal the envelope, write your name and 'Rule 39' on the back, and hand it in or post it in the box provided.

There is a good deal of variation in prison architecture, from the ancient cathedrals of human misery to the stark modern control-units. The accommodation parts of prisons are known as 'wings' or 'houseblocks', and they generally have cells on 'landings' or 'spurs' on more than one level, known as 'the ones', 'the twos' etc. Most modern prison cells are approximately 7ft x 11ft, but some are a good deal smaller, and in some prisons each cell may contain 2, or even 3 prisoners. Personally, I am not prepared to share a space that small with another person, and if necessary will opt for a single cell in the block. Prisoners are having to spend more time locked in their cells than for many years, but you should not be 'banged up' for more than 23 hours at a time.

Prison really is a bizarre institution to come into, and it'll take you a while to get used to it. Humans are an adaptable species though, and within a few weeks you'll probably find you're cracking on like an old lag. If you're on remand though, this can be a time when you fuck up, and it's something I always warn people about. Time is different in jail and particularly when you're first locked up, a couple of days can seem like a month. It's a harsh environment, and you'll be spending a lot of time with the same people. Many of these will turn out to be good friends, but always try to bear in mind that in reality, you've known them for days or weeks, not years, and that not everyone in jail tells the truth about themselves. In particular, be wary about discussing the details of your case with those you hardly know—too many people wind up in court with former cell-mates giving evidence against them. Also be careful about giving out your home address or personal details until you know your new friends a lot better.

There's a thousand scams and tricks in jail—cons are extremely inventive people and are always one step ahead of the screws. As you pick up your jail-craft, you'll learn everything from how to pass a cigarette from one end of the wing to the other, how to make prison 'hooch' without yeast, how to make weapons out of next to nothing, how to defeat electronic door systems, how to make a cup of tea without a kettle, and all sorts of other survival skills. When you first get locked up, you'll doubt that you could last more than week in this environment, but in all likelihood you will, and will even share in the gallows humour endemic to this otherwise joyless existence.

The human spirit can flourish and triumph in the face of the darkest adversity, but I'm not going to tell you that prisons are anything other than utterly rotten places, particularly for those of us who have to endure year after year of long-term imprisonment. Prison kills you physically and psychologically—it's a living death, like being buried alive. I once read about a Native American woman who suddenly woke up from a coma as if from sleep. She wanted to know where her husband and her children were, but she'd been unconscious so long her husband had remarried and her children grown up. It's a tragic story, but at least she didn't have the slow torture of having to watch, helpless, as her life slipped away from her, together with everything she cared about. That's how it is for most long-term prisoners, and many lose their families, homes, jobs, savings, and possessions even before their cases come to trial. Hang onto your integrity, because when the system's finished with you and spits you back out on the street, it may be all you have left.

But hey, nobody said it was going to be easy—if it was easy they wouldn't call it 'struggle' would they? As political activists we're the lucky ones in here, given a rare opportunity to get inside the machine and act like a virus. As an activist, you're not locked up to take a holiday—there's a real struggle to be fought in here, so keep militant and get involved.★

—Mark Barnsley, Whitemoor Prison, England.
We're glad to say that at the time of printing Mark Barnsley is now out of prison.

Prisons Mark Barnsley's been in:

HMP Canterbury (x3), HMP Maidstone (x2), Ashford Remand Centre (x2), HMP Wormwood Scrubs (x5), HMP Armley (x3), HMP Hull (x2), Wolds Remand Centre, HMP Doncaster (x2), HMP Lincoln, HMP Full Sutton (x3), HMP Brixton, HMP Wolds, HMP Garth, HMP Durham, HMP Long Lartin, HMP Cardiff, HMP Woodhill (x2), HMP Parkhurst, HMP Wakefield (x2), HMP Frankland, HMP Whitemoor.

Prisoners of War



It's simple: we can't really talk about being in struggle together in any way, or being a movement, if we ignore people imprisoned for involvement in the same activity. And we can't afford to either. It makes it a much larger step to take action if you know you'll be forgotten about if you get nicked. Prisoner support is a vital part of becoming a threat to the state and industry.

On these pages you'll find the details of people involved in our movements who have had the misfortune to be caught and incarcerated. It has been compiled in June 2003 and does not claim to be comprehensive. Check out some of the webpages listed in the contacts section if you need any more up to date information. You'll also find some ideas for supporting those inside.

Anarchist Prisoners



Critter and Rob

Robert Lee Thaxton, #12112716 777, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310, USA Rob, a long time anarchist organiser, publisher and writer, was one of the few from around the world who faced serious charges for the J18 Global Day of Action in 1999. When it kicked off in Eugene, Oregon, in the US, Rob threw a rock at a cop who was charging at him in an effort to escape. He was arrested and sentenced to 88 months in all for Assault II and Riot. He has recently challenged the prison rulings that the circled A be classified as a Security Threat Group symbol (i.e. forbidden gang symbol) and anarchist reading material be denied, and ended up serving time in the Hole for this. But the prisoncrats are re-writing the rules now!

Donations to and info from: PO Box 50634, Eugene OR 97405, USA.

Web: www.defenestrator.org/roblosricos



Harold Thompson, #93992, NWCC, Site 1, Route 1, Box 660, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079, USA Harold has been in prison since 1979, serving a life sentence for the murder of a man convicted of killing Harold's friend, the mother of his son, with 90 years added for a failed escape attempt. He is a passionate anarchist and jailhouse lawyer who never gives up. He has been busy filing lawsuits inside, more recently challenging a decision that will determine whether inmates across the US are able to receive mail containing 'political content'.

Donations can be sent to: 'Friends of Harold Thompson', PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2XL, UK.

For more on Harold check out:
http://membres.tripod.fr/HHTHOMPSON/welcome.html

Kamina Libre There are around 50 political prisoners in Chile. When the dictatorship fell in 1990 none of the laws changed, just the face and name of the regime. Therefore many who took up arms in the '80s are still inside and many continue to struggle against the 'democracy' presented by the rich and ruling class, penalised under anti-terrorist and interior state security laws. **Marcelo Andres Villaroel Sepulveda**, **Pablo Hernan Morales Fuhrimann**, and **Alvaro Christian Rodriguez Escobar** are all serving lengthy sentences for political actions, formed the 'Kamina Libre' collective in 1996. Its main objective is taking action for the release of all Chilean political prisoners and Mapuche (indigenous) prisoners. They have made great headway for prisoners' rights within the high security prison in Santiago, through riots, hunger strikes and disobedience. For example, they improved visiting conditions; secured the right to vegetarian meals and later to prepare their own meals; refused the imposition of prison uniforms; overthrew the censorship of reading materials and can now receive any kind of political material except anything to do with ETA.

Write to them via: kaminalibre@yahoo.es
Or in English via Santiago ABC:
stgo_cna@hotmail.com

Thomas Meyer-Falk, JVA Bruchsal, Zelle 3117, Schoenbornstr. 32, 76646 Bruchsal, Germany In 1996, Thomas was sent down for a bank robbery. He'll be inside until at least 2010. Because of his strong antifascist and anarchist beliefs, he's been subject to very harsh repression—solitary confinement, daily cell raids, suppression and censorship of mail (no packages, and his regular correspondence with some political groups has been denied by High Court Ruling), no access to education. On top of this his cell is in bad disrepair. When writing to him don't mention you are a political supporter. Besides hand-written letters, the only thing he can get in the post is three International Reply Coupons (IRC) at a time.

Tomasz Wiloszewski, Zaklad Karny, Orzechowa 5, 98-200 Sieradz, Poland Tomasz was sentenced to 15 years after killing a nazi in self defence in Radomsko during 1997.

Zolo Agona Azania, #4969, Maximum Control Facility, PO Box 557, Westville, Indiana 46391-0557, USA Zolo is a politically conscious activist, who has been on and off death row since 1981, having been wrongly convicted of the murder of a cop during an armed robbery. In March an Indiana judge refused Zolo the right to be tried in Lake County, the county where the crimes he is accused of occurred. Lake County has a black population that is over twice the size of Allen County, where Zolo is being tried. He has asked for people to print and distribute information about his situation.

For more info email: crsn@aol.com
Also see the website at:
www.prairie-fire.org/freezoloazania.html



Jerome White-Bey, # 37979, South Central Correctional Centre, 255 West Highway 32, Licking, MO 65542-9069, USA Jerome is a black anarchist prison activist who set up the Missouri Prison Labour Union to fight slave labour in prisons. The Free Jerome White-Bey Support Campaign and Legal Defense Fund Committee can be contacted via: Anthony Rayson, South Chicago ABC, PO Box 721, Homewood, Illinois 60430, USA.



Angola Three: Still known by their campaign name, The Angola 3—Albert Woodfox, Herman Wallace and Robert 'King' Wilkerson (King was released at the beginning of 2001) formed the first Black Panther Party chapter inside a prison. As a result, they were framed for the killing of a prison guard. All have spent long terms in isolation.

Herman Wallace, #76759, Camp J, Cuda 4/Left #9, and **Albert Woodfox, #72148, CCR Upper B Cell 13**, both at **Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, LA 70712, USA**

For more information check out their website at:
www.angola3.org

Matt Lamont, # 2057039, Intake Release Center 550 N. Flower Street, Santa Ana, CA 92703, USA On April 20, 2002, Matthew Gordon Lamont, a Long Beach anarchist activist, and Maxwell Lucas, a Food Not Bombs activist, were pulled over in the city of La Habra (Orange County) after being followed by two Long Beach detectives. They found a gas can in the car, arrested the two men and took them into custody. Maxwell Lucas, who is a juvenile, was charged with but not limited to the felony of possession of a destructive device. He is now out of jail. Matthew was charged with four felony charges of possession of a destructive

device, transporting of a destructive device, the use of a destructive device, and the possession of materials/instructions to make a destructive device. After being held in the Santa Ana jail facility in 22 hour lockdown high security for a year, he was sentenced in April 2003 to 3 years.

Eco-Defence Prisoners



Free in 1998 in the Fall Creek Tree Village. Free was the campaign's first tree-sitter.

Jeffrey 'Free' Luers, #13797671, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310, USA In June 2000, two US anarchists, Free and Critter, were stopped by police and ended up being charged with Criminal Mischief and Arson. They had been followed by undercover agents after setting fire to cars at a car showroom. They were both held on remand and faced lengthy trials with evidence that had been tampered with and lying police officers. Free was convicted of 11 felony charges and sentenced to an outrageous 22 years and 5 months, with no possibility of parole.

Check out the websites to see how you can support Free: www.freefreenow.org www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/prisoners/fc/free.html

For more information (please send an SAE) and for donations toward Free's costly appeal process, and/or his college education in prison, write to: Brighton ABC, PO Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ, UK or Free's Defence Network, PO Box 50263, Eugene, OR 97405, USA.

Email: howl_for_freedom@yahoo.com

Craig Marshall, #13797662, SRCI, Stanton Boulevard, Ontario, OR, USA Critter, Free's co-defendant, was sentenced to 5 years 5 months for conspiracy to commit arson and possession of incendiary devices. He has been experiencing a lot of harassment, including mail being delayed and the Joint Terrorism Task Force pressuring him to grass people up (he told them to fuck off). When writing to him, don't call him 'Critter'—this has been disallowed!

Inaki Garcia Koch, Carcel de Pamplona, C/san Rogue, Apdo 250, 31080 Irunez, Pamplona, Navarra, Spain In July 2001, Inaki was sentenced, along with seven others in their absence (who have remained on the run) to nearly five years for cutting cables on the construction site of the Itoiz dam. He was involved with Solidarios con Itoiz, a campaign fighting the construction of a dam and waterways project in the Basque country that is expected to have disastrous ecological impacts.

For more information check out the Solidarios con Itoiz website: www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/dams/itoiz/

Ted Kaczynski, #04475-046, US Pen. Admin. Max. Facility, PO Box 8500, Florence, Colorado 81226, USA Ted is serving multiple life sentences for the infamous Unabomber bombing campaign against symbols of technology: "The industrial

Statement by Free upon his sentencing—June 11th, 2001

I'm not going to offer excuses. I want this opportunity to explain my actions so that they are not misunderstood or misinterpreted. I didn't do this because I enjoy property destruction. I don't.

I did this because I'm frustrated that we are doing irreversible damage to our home planet. It is not an exaggeration to say that right now we are experiencing a period of extinction equal to that of the dinosaurs. Forty thousand species are going extinct each year. Yet we continue to pollute and exploit the natural world.

I'm not going to justify my actions. I can't do that any more than one can justify the destruction of the environment for profit. They are both wrong. I take responsibility for what I've done. You can judge my actions, but you can't judge my heart. It can not be said that I am unfeeling and uncaring. My heart is filled with love and compassion. *I fight to protect life, all life, not to take it.*

I took every precaution to insure that no one would be injured by this fire. If I thought for any reason that anyone—responding firefighters or police officers—would be injured, I never would have set this fire. It was not my intention to hurt anyone or place anyone at risk. I'm not going to ask the court to grant me leniency.

All that I ask is that you believe the sincerity of my words, that you believe that my actions, whether or not you consider them to be misguided, stem from the LOVE I have in my heart.

revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life expectancy of those who live in advanced countries, but they have destabilised society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World, physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world... We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system."

MOVE Prisoners MOVE was a mainly black revolutionary group with an ecological perspective who were consistently persecuted by Philadelphia police during the '70s. This culminated in the police firebombing of their commune in 1985 in which 11 people died. The 'Move 9' were framed for the murder of a cop and sentenced to up to 100 years each. The 9th defendant, Merle Africa, died in prison in 1998 under suspicious circumstances.

For more info contact: MOVE, PO Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143, USA

Email: onamovellja@aol.com

Debbie Simms Africa, #006307, Janet Holloway Africa, #006308, Janine Phillips Africa, #006309, SCI Cambridge Springs, 451 Fullerton Ave, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1238, USA.

Michael Davis Africa, #AM4973, Charles Simms Africa, AM4975, SCI Grateford, PO Box 244, Grateford, PA 19426-0244, USA.

Edward Goodman Africa, #AM4974, SCI Camp Hill, PA 17011-0200, USA

William Philips Africa, #AM4984, Delbert Or Africa, #AM4985, SCI Dallas Drawer K, Dallas, PA 18612, USA.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, #AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 East R. Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090, USA Mumia is an ex-Black Panther, radical journalist and MOVE supporter who was framed for the murder of a cop in 1981. His death sentence was recently overturned, and he is awaiting re-sentencing.



Mumia Abu-Jamal



August 8th, 1978: 600 cops storm MOVE's house in Philadelphia. Delbert Africa emerges with his hands up. The cops beat him to a pulp. In 1981, the three cops who beat him were found to have acted in self-defence and acquitted. Delbert is still in prison.

For more info contact: International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, PO Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143, USA.

Or see: www.freemumia.org

Raul Zapatos, Dorm 6-C, Maximum Security compound, Bureau of Corrections, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila, Philippines Raul is currently serving life for murder and frustrated murder in the Philippines. He was literally just doing his job—with the DENR, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, defending the forests he loved from illegal logging. Unfortunately, the DENR is riddled with corruption, and when Raul refused to turn a blind eye and stopped the local mayor's illegal logging in 1989, this resulted in the mayor, his bodyguard and armed policemen attacking Raul at his forest station while sleeping. Raul grabbed an M16 left by the military personnel assigned to his team, and returned fire. The mayor was killed and his bodyguard wounded. After 11 years of court action, on March 27th 2001, Raul was found guilty and sentenced to life. His case is currently under review.

See: www.eco-action.org/ssp for a sample letter to write to the Supreme Court to support him.

Helen Woodson, #03231-045 FMC Carswell, POB 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA Helen is serving her 19th year of a consecutive sentence totalling 27 years for three actions. This first was robbing a federal reserve bank and burning $26,000 on the lobby floor after distributing a statement denouncing the materialism and obsession with wealth and power that causes environmental destruction, wars and various other social ills. The second was mailing warning letters with .38 calibre bullets to various government and corporate officials. The third was a disarmament of a Minuteman II missile silo with a jackhammer.

The Government in Washington DC has taken a new tack in her case, and have ordered that the 'suitability' of her release be evaluated, proposing that she be permanently detained as a threat to national security. Helen writes: "Nuclear weapons, war, the destruction of the natural world, and government and corporate greed must be resisted. Whatever the outcome here, I will remain faithful to this witness, either with another action if I am released or as a permanent detainee if I am not. Obviously, though, my situation has implications for others. As the post-September 11 hysteria spreads, any serious opponent of official policy may become a target. I may be the first to be subjected to this particular process, but undoubtedly I will not be the last. Be forward, be serious, be conscientious, be joyful and be alive!"

Animal Liberation Prisoners

Benjamin Persky, #1410212600, George Vierno Center, 0909 Hazen Street, East Elmhurst, NY 11370, USA On April 21st, 2002, ten people were arrested in New York City for demonstrating against a backer of Huntingdon Life Sciences. During the protests, two posh New York apartment buildings were trashed as activists brought their objections directly to executives' doorsteps. Benjamin received the maximum sentence for his plea to a Class D felony—2 counts of 2nd degree criminal mischief. He has been sentenced to 2-6 years concurrently.

Emails can be sent to Benjamin at: lettersforbenjamin@riseup.net

Sonia Hayward, KV5943, HMP Cookham Wood, Rochester, Kent ME1 3LU, UK Sonia is serving 15 months for involvement in anti-bloodsports activity against the Old Surrey and Burstow Hunt and actions against Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Dave Blenkinsop, EM7899, HMP Bullingdon, Oxfordshire OX6 0PZ, UK Serving 10 years imprisonment. The sentence is made up of three parts. 1) Three years for a stave attack on the Managing Director of Huntingdon Life Sciences 2) 18 months for rescuing 600 guinea pigs from a lab supplier (Newchurch Farm) 3) 5 years for possession of incendiary devices.

Indigenous Prisoners

Eric Wildcat Hall, #BL-5355, Unit I/A 10745 Route 18, Albion, PA 16475-0002, USA Serving 35-75 years for helping ship arms to Central American indigenous activists.

Leonard Peltier #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048, USA An American Indian Movement activist, Leonard has served over 25 years in prison. Whilst assisting the Oglala Lakota People of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in the mid 1970s, a shoot-out occurred which led to Leonard being framed for the murder of two FBI agents. He is serving two consecutive life sentences. Despite the harsh conditions of imprisonment, Leonard Peltier has continued to lead an active life. From behind bars, he has helped to establish scholarships for Native students and special programs for Indigenous youth. He has served on the advisory board of the Rosenberg Fund for Children, and has sponsored children in Central America. He has donated to battered women's shelters, organized the annual Christmas drive for the people of Pine Ridge Reservation, and promoted prisoner art programs. He has also established himself as a talented artist and writer, and recently completed a moving biography titled *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1999) ISBN 0 312 20354 3.

Contact: Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, PO Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044, USA.

Email: lpdc@idir.net

Web: www.freepeltier.org



Leonard Peltier



West Papua Prisoner Support

West Papua, the western half of a large and diverse island shared with Papua New Guinea, has been under Indonesian military rule since the 1960s. Indigenous Papuans, traditionally living balanced and autonomous tribal lives, have continuously been displaced, tortured and killed, and their land exploited by corporations. West Papuans are demanding their freedom and have been resisting the Indonesian army for over forty years.

The repression against them is severe, and includes Indonesian police picking out those that are active and putting them in prison under terrible conditions where many 'disappear' or are poisoned.

These prisoners need support, and support from the West can make a difference in the way they are treated. One Papuan prisoner, who people in the UK phoned the prison about, reports: "I was being kept in the pitch black in an overflowing toilet. I was cuffed at my hands and feet. After two weeks the guards pulled me out and asked me why all these people were phoning and enquiring about me. They looked scared and I told them that now the world is watching them. I was returned to my cell but they now cleaned it, put a light in and removed the cuffs... It made me feel strong to hear people outside were supporting me."

West Papuans are collecting information about prisoners and publishing lists. Hopefully people will pick up on this and spare some time to phone a prison, or write to the prisoners or the prison governors.

There will also occasionally be co-ordinated efforts to get people to phone for specific prisoners on certain days.

Contact: koteka_prisoner_support@xsmail.com for information or check the website on which you'll find updated prisoner lists and news: www.westpapua.net/cases/hr/prisoner/index.htm

You can phone Indonesia from the UK for 15p per minute by first dialling 0905 306 0197, then the international number. They are 9.5 hours ahead of the UK, so it's daytime there around midnight or first thing in the morning in the UK. However the phone will be answered 24 hours a day so just ring when you can.

The most important thing is just to say the names of the prisoners a lot, even if the prison guards don't understand English, and make it clear you are phoning from abroad.

Some Indonesian phrases you can use (pronunciation guide in brackets):

Saya telepon tentang... (Sy-ar telepon tentang...)—I am telephoning about...

Hati hati. (Harti harti)—Be careful.

Kami jaga lihat anda sekarang. (Karmee jargar leehat anda seykarang)—We are watching you now.

Saya dari Inggris (Sy-yar dary Ingrees)—I am from England.

Kamu pratikan baik kesehatan mereka, minum, makan dan keselamatan mereka. (Karmu prateekan bike kay-say-hartan meraykar, minum, makan dan kay-selamtan meraykar)—Treat them well, give food, water and look after them.

ABC Spain Declared Illegal

On the 13th March 2003, a judge named Garzon in Madrid declared that the Spanish Anarchist Black Cross prisoner support network is part of the recruitment machinery of the proscribed organisation GRAPO (a Marxist-Leninist urban guerrilla group, and nothing to do with the anarchist ABC). Now the ABC are being investigated and the network is in danger of having all its premises closed, funds seized and valuable work disrupted. The same judge has been banning organisations and groups left, right and centre, even down to the main Basque separatist party Herri Batasuna, which meant that thousands of individuals, who then tried standing in local elections as independents were banned from doing even that. ABC Spain have commented: "ABC-CNA has never been 'legal', since we do not need to be acknowledged by our enemy, the state. As anarchists, we are above their laws and what the powerful deem legal or illegal, good or bad... We only care about the judgement made by our fellow dissidents, the unemployed, the rebels, our families and friends, and in short all those who put dignity before anything else and those who are against the commercialisation and subjection of their lives by a cruel, unfair, inhumane system which benefits only the few... If fighting for a better world is terrorism, here we are Mr. Garzon. Anarchy is unavoidable. And repression and reality make us stronger."

Kami tahu apa yang lakukan di lembaga. (Karmee tarhoo apa yang larkookan dee lembarga)—We know what you do in the prison.

Kami adalah teman mereka. (Karmee ard-ar-lar tayman meraykar)—We are their friends.

Papua Merdeka!—Free Papua!

Zapatista Prisoners There are still some Zapatista political prisoners, including **Angel Concepcio'n Perez Gutierrez** and **Francisco Perez Vazquez**, who were sentenced to 25 years, and **Carrillo Vazquez Lopez**, sentenced to 9 years. This is taken from a recent communiqué: "We Zapatista political prisoners of *La Voz de Cerro Hueco* (The Voice of Cerro Hueco) send spirited greetings to all from Tabasco: We political prisoners from Zapatista support bases continue resisting in prison, as do the comrades of Quere'taro. We prisoners in Tabasco are indigenous c'holes from Chiapas that are in a situation of bad conditions. We sleep on the ground and when it rains we are totally flooded with water as is the situation for other people in other parts of the world, but in prison it is much worse because we are imprisoned without committing any crime and we continue having to listen to the federal government lie that there are no more Zapatista prisoners, but in Tabasco and Quere'taro we are still in prison, resisting."

Send letters of support (preferably in Spanish) to: **La Voz de Cerro Hueco, Av Diego Duguelay 36c, Barrio El Cerrillo, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. ★**

Email: ajlum_vozcerrohueco@hotmail.com

Web: www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net has an up to date list of prisoners.

Email: chiapaslink@yahoo.com



Prisoner Support

Writing The best way to start supporting prisoners is to actually get in touch with someone inside. This is a vital thing not only to break down the isolation created by prison and bridge the gap between those inside and the movement outside, but also for you to find out what imprisonment is about and what you can do to help.

Writing off to a stranger might be a daunting thing. But remember, it's a person probably not unlike you. Why not just send off a card to start with, with some well wishes, a bit about who you are, and asking how they are doing. They might not reply—maybe they can't afford to at the moment, don't have the time or the energy, aren't good at writing letters or just don't want to. It can also happen that your letter got 'delayed' or 'diverted'—but don't give up that easily. If they do reply you will find out a bit more about them, and then you'll probably find it easier to respond. You can also ask things like what life is like inside, or what they plan to do when they're out. When they write to prisoners some people are afraid to talk about their lives or what they are up to, thinking this may depress people banged up, especially prisoners with long sentences, or that they are not interested in your life. Although in some cases this may be true, on the whole a letter is the highpoint of the day for most prisoners. Prison life is dead boring, and any news that livens it up, whether it's about people they know or not, is generally welcome. Especially if you didn't know them before they went to prison, they will want to know about you, what your life is like etc. You might develop a regular correspondence in which the writing should come easily.

Or why not pass round cards to prisoners at a meeting or amongst your friends? Prisoners have said that getting cards with lots of greetings from different people feels a bit like having nice little chats at a party.

When writing to a prisoner, remember to include a return address, also on the envelope. Use clean writing paper and envelopes. Don't start sending random things, such as political newsletters or stickers until you know the prisoner wants these things and is allowed to receive them. Be aware that some prisoners, especially ones with short sentences or good chances of early parole, might want to keep their heads down and not be labelled anarchist even through association. When writing to prisoners in the USA, it's also advisable to avoid drawing circled As as they're considered 'gang symbols' in many prisons and are forbidden.

It's nice to include a stamped addressed envelope if you're hoping for a reply, or an International Reply Coupon (IRC) if you're writing abroad—these are available at post offices. Also remember that it's almost certain that your correspondence will be read by the prison officials. So be careful with names, describing actions etc. It's best to treat it as if you were talking to someone on a tapped phone. Which doesn't mean you need to be paranoid and write cryptic gibberish. Do be prepared to share a bit and to talk about politics and what's happening, to keep the prisoner involved in the struggles if they want to.

These Things Happen Too!

In Lincoln Prison the nights of the 24th and 25th October 2002 saw, according to the Prison Service, "the worst outbreak of violence to hit British prisons since the Strangeways uprising of 1991." Hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage was caused. Over 550 screws and police from five counties took more than eight hours to regain control, surrounding the fences to prevent a breakout and declaring a no-fly zone overhead.

Lincoln Prison was 200 inmates over capacity at the time, and overcrowding has been blamed for the trouble, especially by the Prison Service, who are keen to 'deal with this' by pushing for a bigger security budget, more screws and more powers to suppress revolts and keep prisoners in line. But it's also the general inhumane and oppressive conditions of prisons, overcrowded or not, that have inspired and will continue to inspire resistance and the proud tradition of revolt inside.

Once you're in touch with a prisoner, you will be able to find out how better to help them—they might ask you to write a letter on their behalf, participate in a day of action or they'll let you know what they are allowed to receive in the post (i.e. magazines/music/books/toiletries... the restrictions on these vary from prison to prison).

Fundraising If there is one thing that all prisoners and those on trial need, it is a large amount of financial assistance. There's legal fees and paperwork costs when prisoners are involved in an appeal or in a trial, and day to day expenses such as phonecards, extra food and postage, all from overpriced prison commissaries. Having someone on the outside who can accept and take care of money for a prisoner is vital, with the prisoner being kept fully informed and in control of the money that is raised on their behalf. If you want to send money to a prisoner, it might be better not to just send it straight away, as they may not be able to receive it (though small postal orders to prisoners in the UK never seem to cause any problems). Ask the prisoner what the best thing to do is.

Solidarity Actions When anarchist prisoner Nikos Maziotis was sentenced to 15 years for the attempted bombing of the Greek Ministry of Development, others committed multitudes of actions in solidarity with him. Maziotis' sentence was reduced from fifteen years to five on appeal partially because of the threat of continued attacks should Maziotis be held captive any longer. (He ended up serving three and a half years and was released last August 2002). This can also backfire, though. Free (Jeffrey Luers—see prisoner list) was due to start his trial and some people attacked the same car dealership he was accused of setting fire to. Their communiqué stated that this was done in solidarity with Free and his co-defendant Critter. Of course, we can't really tell whether this had any impact on Free's particularly harsh sentencing, but it might have. So use your common sense!

Work on projects that are prisoner-directed This can range from projects directed by prisoners themselves, such as the Missouri Prison Labour Union or Legal Aid projects, for which you can show support and/or provide resources or other material help; to books for prisoners schemes, publishing prisoners' writings and art, helping prisoners' families, or working on campaigns against prison building, prison labour or the prison system generally.

Campaign Against Prison Slavery

Work in prisons has on the whole nothing to do with 'gainful activity' or 'rehabilitation' as people may think, but is about exploitation and punishment. Conditions are poor and beyond the reach of Health and Safety inspectors, pay is usually around £5 a week for full time work, if not less, and you may as well forget basic employment rights or trade union organising. Prisoners are a cheap workforce and more and more companies and corporations are striking deals with prison governors to employ this slave labour. If prisoners refuse to work or are 'not working hard enough', they are punished. Prison labour also undermines all workers' pay and conditions.

The Campaign Against Prison Slavery has been recently founded to challenge and end forced prison labour, and to expose the companies that exploit it.★

Campaign Against Prison Slavery, c/o The Cardigan, 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LG, UK. Email: againstprisonslavery@mail.com

Resources and Contacts

UK

ABC Brighton (Anarchist prisoner support)
PO Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ, UK
Email: mail@brightonabc.org.uk
Web: brightonabc.org.uk

ABC Bristol
c/o Kebele, 14 Robertson Rd, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY, UK
Email: bristol_abc@yahoo.co.uk
Web: www.geocities.com/bristol_abc

Activists Legal Project (Useful nformation about your rights and legal proceedings)
166 Cherwell Street, Oxford OX4 1BG, UK
Tel: 01865 243772

Email: activistslegal@gn.apc.org
Web: www.activistslegalproject.org.uk

ALFSG (Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group)
BCM 1160, London WC1N 3XX, UK

Earth Liberation Prisoners
BM Box 2407, London WC1N 3XX, UK
Email: earthlibprisoner@hotmail.com
Web: www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

Haven (anarchist free books to prisoners scheme)
BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (LDMG) (volunteers for the defence of civil protest and the right of public assembly)
BM Box Haven, London WC1N 3XX, UK
Tel: 020 8245 2930 (24hr answerphone)
Email: ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk
Web: www2.phreak.co.uk/ldmg/index.php

Prisoners' Advice Service (independent charity providing unbiased legal and other advice to prisoners and their families)
Unit 305, Hatton Square, 16/16a Baldwins Gardens, London EC1N 7RJ, UK
Tel: 020 74058045
Email: pas@tinyworld.co.uk

Vegan Prisoners Support Group
PO Box 194, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 3HD, UK

International

ABC-Network (US)
For an overview of the US ABC Network, and an incredible links page see:
www.anarchistblackcross.org

ABC Poznan, Poland (don't write ABC on envelope)
PO Box 5, 60-966, Poznan 31, Poland
Email: rozbrat@friko2.onet.pl

ABC Argentina
Email:
cruznegra_bsas@yahoo.com.ar

APLAN (Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network)
818 SW 3rd Avenue PMB #354, Portland, Oregon 97204, USA
Email: aplan69@hotmail.com

CNA-ABC Peninsula Iberica
Appo 1566, CP: 07009, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
Email: cnapalma@yahoo.es

North American Animal Liberation Front Support Group
Box 69597, 5845 Yonge St., Willowdale, Ontario, M2M 4K3, Canada

North American Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network
NA-ELPSN, POB 50082, Eugene, OR 97405, USA
Email: naelpsn@tao.ca

Prison Activist Resource Centre
PO Box 339, Berkeley, CA 94701, USA
Web: www.prisonactivist.org/index.shtml

US Books to Prisoners Schemes

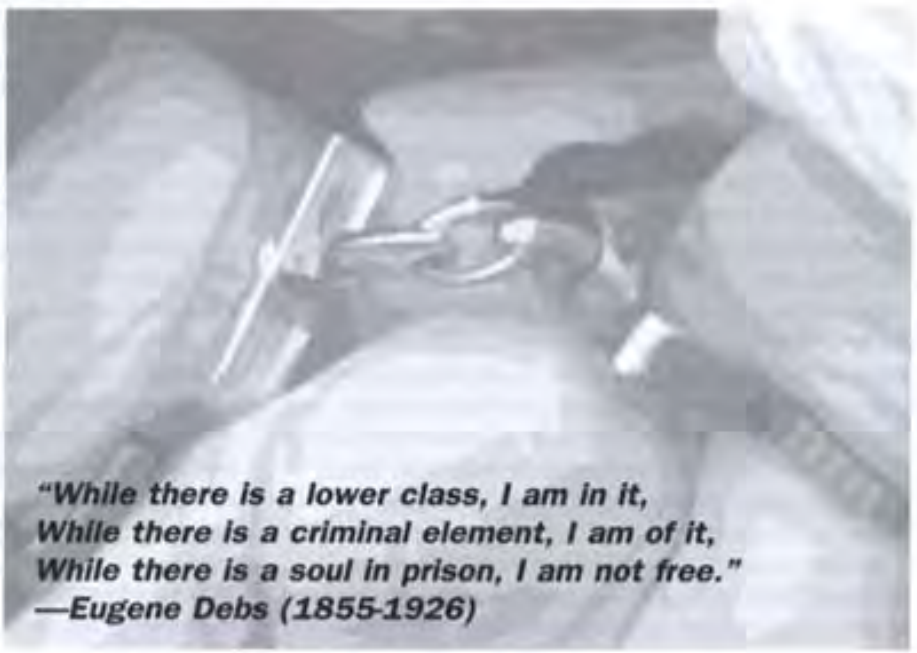
Books to Prisoners
c/o Left Bank Books, 92 Pike Street, Seattle, WA 98101, USA

Books Through Bars
4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143, USA

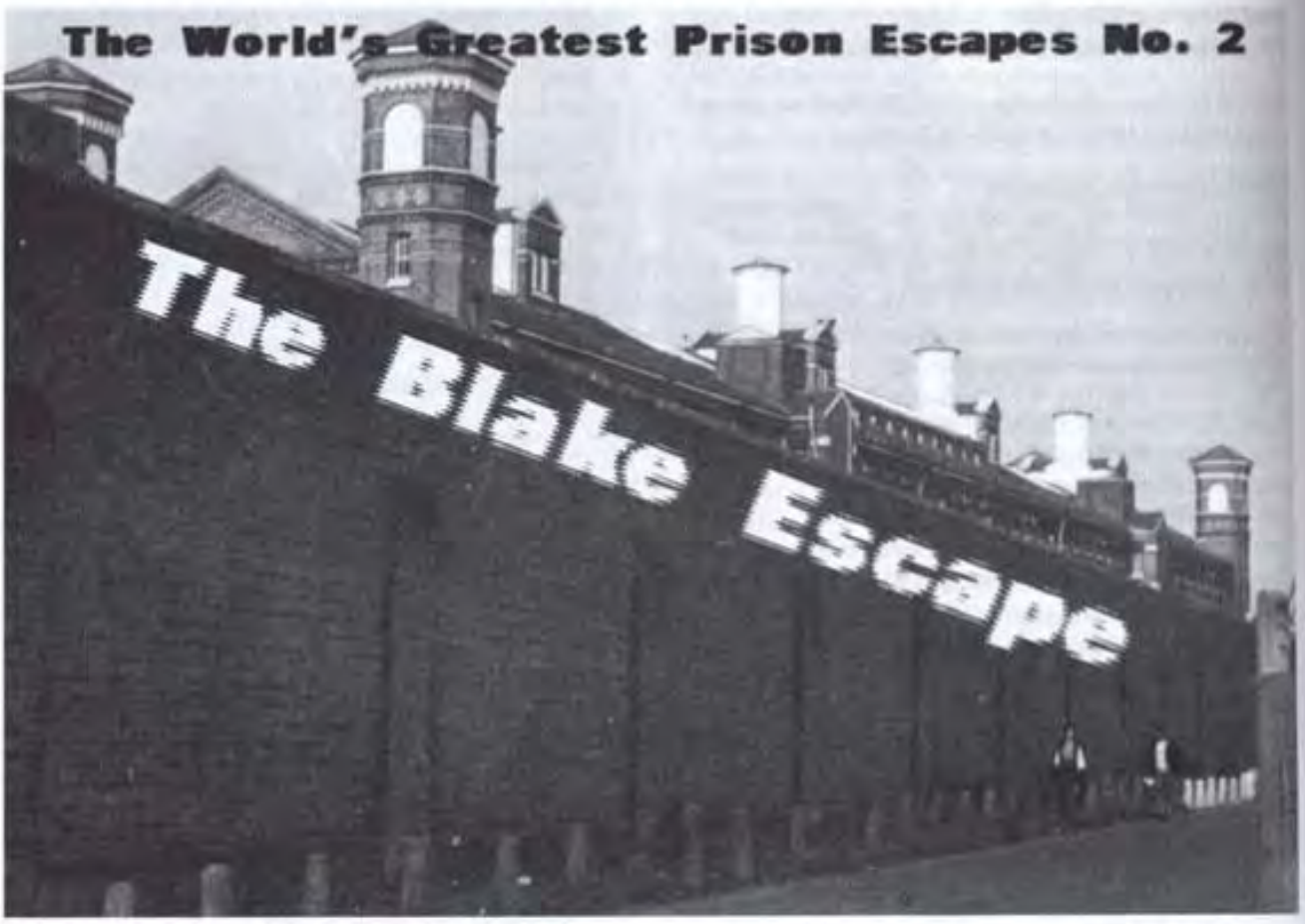
Prisoner Lit Project
c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA

Women's Prisoner Book Project
c/o Arise Bookstore, 2441 Lyndale Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55405, USA

Books Through Bars
c/o Bluestockings Books, 172 Allen Street, NY, NY 10002, USA



"While there is a lower class, I am in it, While there is a criminal element, I am of it, While there is a soul in prison, I am not free."
—Eugene Debs (1855-1926)



In 1966, the most notorious prisoner in Britain was miraculously sprung from jail. George Blake was a British double-agent serving 42 years for spying for the Soviet Union. At the time this was the longest jail sentence ever imposed by a British court.

For 22 years the truth of his escape remained a secret. Common wisdom held that it must have been a professional operation masterminded by the KGB, the IRA or even the British security services. However in 1988, two radical peace activists revealed that *they* had rescued Blake from prison and smuggled him out of the country to Eastern Europe.

Michael Randle and Pat Pottle were founder members of the Committee of 100 anti-nuclear direct action group and describe themselves as libertarians and "quasi-anarchists". In 1962 they had both been sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for conspiracy to organise the Committee of 100 demonstrations at the nuclear base USAF Wethersfield in Essex. They both had first hand experience of prison and it was their outrage at the "vicious" sentence imposed on Blake that led them to attempt to free him. They believed the sentence was "unjust" and that "helping him was a decent human response."

Being ex-cons in the same prison Blake was in not only enabled them to empathise with Blake, but also gave them contacts on the inside who could help with the escape. It also meant they had some knowledge of the layout of the prison and the level of security.

They had experience of covert planning from their time in the peace movement in the early '60s, a movement which managed to pull off impressive actions like the Spies for Peace campaign in 1963, when peace activists invaded a secret underground bunker intended for members of the government in time of nuclear war. The "Spies" stole documents from the shelter and sent them to all major national newspapers, revealing for the first time the existence of a national network of these 'Regional Seats of Government' and government plans for all-out nuclear war.

Randle and Pottle used their experience of direct action in planning the Blake escape. Pat Pottle said, "I was determined that if I was to get involved with the break it should not fail because of silly and obvious mistakes... If we were to be caught it should not be the result of inadequate planning."

While in prison for the Wethersfield actions, they had met Blake and also Seán Bourke (serving 7

years for sending a bomb to a senior policeman), who plotted the escape with them. After their release they kept in touch with the two longer-term prisoners and when Seán was staying in a half-way house, preparing for release from prison, he made contact with Randle and Pottle. He told them that Blake had appealed to him to help him escape, rather than spend the rest of his life in prison.

When the idea of escape was originally raised, Blake suggested that they contact the Russian Embassy for help. But from the beginning Randle and Pottle ruled out any idea of dealing with the murderous Soviet Union. It was their liking for Blake personally and sympathy for his 42-year "death sentence" which motivated them. As Michael Randle said: "It was to be an entirely unprofessional—almost one could say a DIY—affair."

Seán Bourke worked out a plan with Blake, exchanging notes via another inmate whose prison job took him between the pre-release hostel where Bourke was, and the long-termers' D-wing where Blake was kept. Bourke set up a small network of helpers to smuggle things into the prison and bought walkie-talkies so they could keep in contact even when he was released from prison. He smuggled one of these in to Blake, choosing a type which could not be picked up by police radios.

Their plan was as follows: D-block, where Blake was housed, was the block nearest to one wall of the prison. The prison blocks have large gothic windows at each end made up of a number of smaller panes of glass, divided by cast-iron struts. Blake was to make his exit from the prison landing through one of these windows. Removing two of the panes of glass and one of the struts would make a hole eighteen inches by twelve—just big enough to squeeze through. Blake had made himself a wooden frame of exactly these dimensions, which he kept in his cell to practice squeezing through. From the window, Blake would be able to drop down on to a roof below and from there down into the yard.

The panes of glass were removed from the window a couple of days before the day of the escape and the iron cross-bar was broken and then stuck back in place with tape, so that it could be quickly removed when the time came.

They planned to make the escape attempt between 6 and 7pm on a Saturday evening when most of the inmates and staff would be at the weekly prison film show. The only two screws on duty were normally watching television in a room without a clear line of sight to the window Blake would be exiting from.

Bourke would park a getaway car nearby and throw a specially designed rope ladder (the rungs were made of size 13 knitting needles—sufficiently light to be thrown but still strong enough to hold Blake's weight) over the wall at a prearranged point. There were security patrols that went round the perimeter walls, but Bourke had timed them and reckoned there was enough of a gap for the escape between each circuit they made.

There was a watchman posted in the prison yard who would be able to see the escape, but they figured that if they moved quick enough, Blake could be over the wall before the watchman had a chance to raise the alarm. And even when this did happen, they would have a few minutes head-start on any pursuing prison officers.

To work out how long it would take a search party to get round the side of the prison to the point where Blake would be dropping over the wall, Bourke took to jogging around the perimeter of the prison every morning, claiming he wanted to get fit before release, and timing his run with a stop-watch.

Bourke also made some dummy runs in the getaway car to work out the timings. On the day of the escape he just had to drive a short distance to the near-by flat they had rented under a false name which was to serve as a safe house. He was eventually released from prison and moved into the safe house just round the corner from the prison. Michael Randle raised money from friends, changed it in banks a couple of times to prevent it being traced and then gave it to Bourke to buy a getaway car (for £65!).

The day before the escape they went over all the plans, then burnt their maps and notes (and of course the sheets of paper underneath their notes, to remove the possibility of impressions being traced on underlying pages).

On the night, the escape went more or less to plan apart from Blake breaking his wrist in the 20-foot drop down the other side of the prison wall—a danger that they had failed to consider in the planning.

The ready co-operation of lots of 'normal' people in the escape attempt was a key factor in its success. There were many outraged at Blake's clearly politically-motivated sentence who were willing to help in small ways. For example, Randle and Pottle managed to find a sympathetic doctor who treated Blake's broken wrist—no questions asked.

Wild speculation began almost immediately after the successful escape—with the newspapers reporting that Blake was already out of the country and safely in Eastern Europe or that he had been spotted on a plane landing in Sydney.

Blake had lots of supporters in prison who sympathised with his predicament and were joyous at his escape. The police met with a "wall of silence" when they tried to get any information from Blake's fellow prisoners. One lag described the atmosphere in Wormwood Scrubs the morning

after the escape as being "like Christmas Day after Father Christmas has been."

The original plan for getting Blake out of the country was to disguise him by turning him black. While hiding out in the safe house, Blake was instructed to take a medicine called meladinin, designed for the treatment of vitiligo, a disease which causes white spots to appear on the skin. By taking extra large doses, and spending time under a sun lamp, Blake would be able to pass as an Arab, helped by his knowledge of Arabic, which he had studied in prison.

Randle and Pottle forged a prescription to get the large doses of meladinin, destroying the equipment used to forge the prescription afterwards, and going in disguise to the pharmacy to buy it. However, Blake never actually took the meladinin because he was worried about the side effects—large doses can cause liver damage.

It all started to go wrong when the boisterously over-confident Seán Bourke became increasingly sketchy. He had talked about getting forged passports from 'underworld contacts' but it later turned out he had no idea how to go about doing this. The meladinin idea and the false passports were finally abandoned and they settled for smuggling Blake out of the country instead.

It started to go from bad to worse. Seán Bourke had originally bought a getaway car in his own name. When this was discovered he was ordered to sell the car and buy another one under a false name.

But after Blake had been broken out and was holed up in the flat they had rented, it turned out that Bourke had lied to Randle and Pottle and actually used the original car which was registered to him in the escape. This was soon found by the police and identified as the car used in the getaway.

The 'safe' house Bourke had rented for Blake to stay in turned out to be a bedsit with shared facilities and a landlady who came in to clean once a week—not suitable at all for an escaped convict.

It later turned out that unbeknownst to Randle and Pottle, Bourke had purposefully endangered the whole project by sending photos of himself to the newspapers, phoning the police and telling them the whereabouts of the getaway car, and sending a death threat to the cop he had been originally sent to prison for sending a bomb to.

It appears that many of Seán Bourke's apparently bizarre actions and his blasé attitude to security were driven by a desire for notoriety—a desire to make a name for himself and then be able to make some sort of career out of this. This was indeed what he eventually did in a small way by publishing a book about the escape in 1970 that practically named all the other participants in the escape.

Due to the discovery of the car and the situation with the flat, Blake was moved through a series of 'safe' houses around London, mostly staying with friends of Randle and Pottle's. This proved to be almost as dodgy as staying in Seán Bourke's bedsit. The wife of one friend who agreed to temporarily shelter Blake told her analyst all about it—because of course the analysis "requires her to be completely frank and not to conceal anything from him". Needless to say Blake was swiftly found somewhere else to stay.

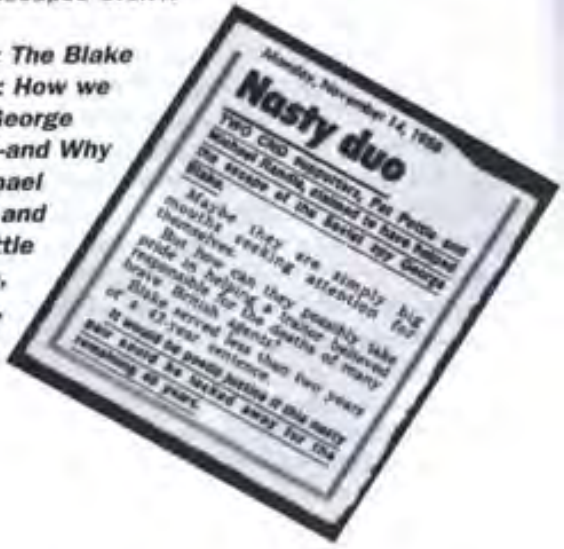
The police were looking for Seán Bourke because of finding the getaway car, so it was decided that he should also travel to the USSR to meet up with Blake and stay there until he was able to safely return home to Ireland. In order to do this, Randle and Pottle had to forge a passport—a process they describe in detail in their book (and they provide photos of how to do it!). But the techniques they describe, using plastic cement to mould the embossing on the corner of the photo, have now sadly been outpaced by technology.

However, after the escape they were able to use some of the skills they had learnt for other ends—forging passports to smuggle American draft dodgers to Sweden.

It was finally decided to smuggle Blake out in a camper van. Randle and Pottle got a friend with some knowledge of woodwork to build a compartment into a camper van. Michael Randle took his family on holiday to East Berlin in the camper van—with Blake hidden underneath. The wholesome family and the children in the back of the van, cheerfully sitting on top of the most wanted man in Britain, easily fooled the few cops and customs officers who happened to look in the back of the van. They never told the children they were sitting on top of an escaped spy, and managed to keep the whole thing from them.

George Blake was thus successfully delivered to East Berlin in December 1966, the conclusion to one of the most successful and most notorious prison escapes ever.★

Source: The Blake Escape: How we Freed George Blake—and Why by Michael Randle and Pat Pottle (Harrap, London, 1989)


Nasty duo

TWO CND supporters, Pat Pottle and Michael Randle, claimed to have helped the escape of the Soviet spy George Blake.

Maybe they are simply big mouths seeking attention for themselves.

But how can they possibly take pride in helping a traitor believed responsible for the deaths of many brave British agents?

Blake served less than two years of a 42-year sentence.

It would be good riddance if this nasty pair could be locked away for the remaining 40 years.

Zine Scene Revolution

Xerox Crazy Kids Sniffing Toner In the Office After Closing Time

Definition of a zine: "a small, handmade amateur publication done purely out of passion, rarely making a profit or even breaking even"—*Factsheet Five*

Another definition: "Zines are publications done for the love of doing them, not to make a profit or a living."—*Zine World: A Reader's Guide to the Underground Press*

"Doing this zine is good fun for me, and it's my zine so I can do what the fuck I like anyway."—The intro to *Sexual Chocolate* No. 1

Zines, short for fanzines, have been a means of expression and something to occupy yourself with for thousands of dissatisfied, bored, creative, cynical, enthusiastic, troubled, and passionate individuals. Zines give a voice to the everyday anonymous person. The basic idea is that someone sits down, writes, collects, draws or edits a bunch of stuff they are interested in or care deeply about, photocopies or prints up some copies of it and distributes it. The zine creating process is a direct one, remaining under the writer's control at all times. "Perhaps its outstanding facet is that it exists without any outside interference, without any control from above, without any censorship, without any supervision or manipulation. This is no mere formal matter; it goes to the heart of what fanzines are." (*The World of Fanzines* by Fredric Wertham, 1973, p. 71)

This idea has led to vast networks forming across the world of people trading zines, writing for each other's zines, creating resources for zines such as libraries, distributors and review collections, and forming an essential part of many countercultures. All this exists outside the commercial market; profit and other commercial concerns are usually irrelevant. "As you can see, issue #3 of No Reason is pro-loss and basically the principle behind this is that if you make a profit or even just break even then you are a SELL OUT. Ha Ha Ha Ha." (*No Reason* No. 3). The non-material reward is unbridled expression and a connection to a larger network of self publishing.



From *Mindbrain*

The Do-It-Yourself ethic holds strongly—make your own culture instead of just letting the mainstream feed you, participate instead of consume. When we go and make our own culture, it doesn't necessarily mean it's very good—there's a whole lot of fairly awful zines out there full of drivel—but you can't help but feel inspired by the authenticity and the genuine sincerity that can completely outweigh the dross.

Self-publishing has been a common outlet of 'the people' ever since printing was invented. A forerunner of today's zines can be found in the Amateur Press Associations (APA) that emerged in the early 19th century in the USA as a reaction to the penny press. Amateur writers formed networks to share their stories in small print runs and without pretensions. An 1875 APA-directory listed over 500 writers. There were separately organised APAs for black and women writers. Another forerunner can be located amongst the Science Fiction fan communities in the 1930s in the USA and the UK. The fans first communicated via the letters pages of big Sci-fi magazines, and went on to form clubs and share fan fiction and commentary on Sci-fi series. One of the first self published Sci-fi 'fanzines' was *The Comet*, printed in 1930 and started by a group called the Science Correspondence Club. Zines for comic fans followed suit. Comics news, commentaries and reviews were also soon complemented by self published comic books—the forerunner of minicomics, still flourishing today.

Then, the mid-'60s with all its political unrest saw the growth of alternative newsletters all over the USA and the UK. Every self-respecting underground scene had some type of access to a printing press and would churn out mostly locally focused political commentary. Many talented comic artists were involved in this, and carried on publishing independent comix (the 'x' stands for 'x-rated' and also serves to distinguish them from mainstream comics) after all the hippies got jobs. The very strict Comics Code had imposed extreme restrictions on the comic industry—no violence, sex, drugs, or social relevance basically—and self-publishing stuck two fingers up to the comic industry. There were a number of court cases against 'obscene' comic artists; these still occasionally occur today, even though the Comics Code Authority has lost most of its hold. But, to quote Art Spiegelman (the creator of *Maus*, and *Raw*, a magazine that revived alternative comics in the early 1980s): "The flaming promise of underground comix had fizzled into cold glowing embers. Underground comix had offered something new. Unselfconsciously redefining what comics could be, by smashing formal and stylistic, as well as cultural and political taboos. Then, somehow, what had seemed like a revolution simply deflated into a lifestyle. Underground comix were stereotyped as dealing only with Sex, Dope, and Cheap Thrills. They got stuffed back into the closet, along with bong pipes and love beads, as Things Started To Get Uglier." (*Read Yourself Raw*, 1987). The final co-option came when in 1974, Marvel comics—America's biggest and dominant comics publisher—launched their *Comix Book*, 'underground-like' comics but news-stand friendly (it only lasted five issues though).

The punk explosion in the 1970s rediscovered these traditions. Ignored and misrepresented by the mainstream press, punks took it on themselves to interview the bands that would never ever appear in the mainstream music press, review their records, and write about what punk



meant to them. Punk and hardcore focused fanzines still make up a large section of the zines you see today, but hundreds of thousands of other zines have expanded on this. There are fanzines for all other types of music, football, Sci-fi, sports, TV series, anything you can think of. There's political zines. Personal zines with artwork, biographical stories, rants, jokes. Fringe culture zines—covering topics such as UFOs, serial killers, conspiracies... Health zines. Comic zines. Sex zines. Literary and poetry zines. Religious zines. Network zines. Prisoner zines. Most zines though end up reflecting the writer's diverse interests, and provide lots of different combinations of the above and more.

The decline in the cost of PCs, the proliferation of photocopiers and cheaper printing costs have contributed to zines looking more diverse than ever, though many stick to the traditional messy cut and paste—the more unreadable, the more punk! To be fair, cut and paste techniques still produce some of the most memorable and interesting, artistic layouts. And some zine writers are almost perfectionist in their hand-pasted layout. "I'd forgotten how much I change my mind and how much I want my own photocopier. The bloke at the newsagents must think I'm some kind of xeroxaddict, in there 3 times daily for weeks... guess I am... there's something compelling about not getting it right the first time." (*Names Have Been Changed* #1)

Zines are usually distributed on a smallish scale. Reviews in other publications and word of

Name That Zine!

Trying to come up with a snappy title for your zine? Well, anything goes as the following zine titles show...

Mr. Poohead; *The Palindromist* (it's a zine about palindromes!); *Sniffing Behind the Cistern*; *Cubist Ants Shall Inherit the Earth*; *Gibbering Madness*; *Goth, Shmoth*; *Icthyoelectroanalgesia* (it's written by an archaeologist); *Itchy Bum*; *Me Me Me*; *Suburbicide*; *Kill Everyone Now*; *Zimmerframepileup*; *Adventures of an Unemployed Entomologist*; *Fist Fucked*; *Loafing the Donkey*; *Notes From the Dump*.

mouth among zine readers can get direct orders, other distribution points include independent mailorder lists and distros, gigs, conventions and some shops. Barter is common, publications are often swapped (even if you don't know what kind of crap you'll end up with). Quite a few zines are free to prisoners.

"Will you buy my fanzine? NO! Will you buy my comic? NO! Will you buy my tape? NO! Will you be my friend? FUCK OFF! Fanzine nerd, fanzine nerd, I've never ever had a bird..." (from the song 'Fanzine Nerd' by Anal Beard).

A zine writer is usually not trying to be the next Hemingway, or the next Bill Gates, or even the next middle manager. The opposite is often the case—zines celebrate being outside the mainstream, being a geek, having odd passions, resisting authority. "They celebrate the everyperson in a world of celebrity, losers in a society that rewards the best and brightest." (*Notes from the Underground* by Stephen Duncombe, 1997, p. 2). A complete misfit in society can sit down and share their otherwise ignored thoughts in relative freedom. It doesn't even need to pass an editor. And through zines they can find a community of people who will call themselves losers, outcasts and marginalised with pride (though you do get arrogant overly self-confident tossers desperately trying to be the cool ones too, as you do anywhere). There's zines devoted to libraries, charity shopping, '70s TV shows and roleplaying, in which the writers present their passions with pride and shamelessly obsess about the oddest things. And there are zines that contain personal writing that lays it all bare and present the writer with all their weaknesses.

The emphasis in zines is usually a personal one. Even in a zine with no personal writing, the editor/writer's personality can shine through. This also means that politics can be discussed in a non-academic, unpretentious way. "Zines should also act as a catalyst for individual thought and change. Your views as an individual are just as important as any politician's... It is up to us, if we want to challenge the staid, capitalist, dogmatic way of looking at things, to voice our own opinions and spread our knowledge and ideas ourselves, and by doing zines, reading, researching, talking to others, going on actions, having fun. We can all participate! It's up to us!" (*Attitude Problem* #32)

Zine writers will research and share information, call for action or just relate their stories, thoughts and feelings on the world—and listening to someone who doesn't think they're an expert or authority figure can be very refreshing.

Any type of rebellion will find itself being co-opted into the mainstream and surprise, surprise this has happened to zines too. In the USA in the early '90s the media 'discovered' zines and inaccurate and overly hyped articles started appearing everywhere, saying 'look at our cute angry youth and their quirky zines—and how do we get into this market?' 'Alternative' became a marketing term and some corporations started making their advertising resemble 'zines', or even replacing their advertising with zines, since then 'the kids' could identify with them.

The struggle to be 'down with the kids' can also backfire though: a zinester amused herself with feeding a *New York Times* reporter made-up expressions for a 'Grunge Lexicon' they were doing (e.g. 'swinging on the flippity-flop' and 'cob nobbler'). And it has also resulted in even more alienation with the mainstream amongst many zinesters, who can get quite lost in debates on how to not 'sell out' in the desperate bid to protect the underground they've created.

The last few years have seen a noticeable decline in zines in the UK. The print runs are getting smaller, long-running zines are calling it a day, distribution is more difficult. It's not easy to pinpoint what's causing this. Some say it's due to the emergence of e-zines (i.e. zines on the internet), some say the popularity and authoritativeness of big name and circulation zines are stopping kids shop around the zine networks, some say the whole zine network's just floundering. Who knows, but it definitely is a shame to give up on printed self-expression and all the fun that is zines.

"*Snarla* was the first girl fanzine I ever saw and it was so important, so explosive, so secret, something I could do. It was a way to explore these things we tried to hide or hide behind, a forum for public discourse that we could control and define." (*Doris* #16)

You don't just read a zine. You read a zine, and contribute and then participate yourself, either by corresponding with the zine writer or by making your own zine or by creating some other link in a counterculture. Not replicating the passive,



From *No Reason* No. 3

ASTOUNDING MYSTERIES OF THE PARANORMAL

UFOs . . . . . Don't exist
GHOSTS . . . . . Don't exist
LOCH NESS MONSTER . . . . . Doesn't exist
E.S.P. . . . . Doesn't exist
PSYCHIC PREDICTION . . . . . Doesn't exist
CRYSTAL ENERGY. . . . . Doesn't exist
REINCARNATION. . . . . Impossible
BIGFOOT . . . . . Bigfoot my arse

From Mindbrain

commercial consumer culture that dominates our world. Breaking through the barriers this world erects between us, and letting our passions and desires be known and felt.★

Zine Contacts

Distros, Review Zines, Websites, Listings—these are all places to get started on your search for zines. Remember when you write to include an SAE (stamped addressed envelope—though also remember you can't use for example US stamps in the UK, send International Reply Coupons instead).

Active Distribution, BM Active, London WC1N 3XX, UK. Email: jon@activedistribution.org (big punk anarchist record, zine and book distro, also do wholesale)

Bald Cactus Distribution, PO Box HP171, Leeds LS6 1XX, UK. Email: andy@baldcactus.fsnet.co.uk (music, and lots of zines and pamphlets)

Bypass, PO Box 2927, Brighton BN1 3SX, UK. Email: bypass@bedsit.fsnet.co.uk, www.bypass-zine.co.uk (long running UK review zine)

Death Wish Distribution, 39 Station Road, Thirsk, North Yorks YO7 1QH, UK. Email: smallsailor@another.co.uk (zine distro—lots of good stuff)

Echo Zine Distro, PO Box 11102, Shorewood WI 53211, USA. Email: www.geocities.com/echozinedistro (committed zine distro, wide variety)

Flat Earth Records and Distribution, 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ, UK. Email: info@flatearth.free-online.co.uk Web: www.flatearth.free-online.co.uk (mostly hardcore records, some zines)

Flatline-Imperium, c/o M99, Manteuffelstr.99, 10997 Berlin, Germany. Email: flatline_imperium@hotmail.com (zine and book distro based in Germany, lots of English stuff too)

Microcosm Publishing, PO Box 14332, Portland, OR 97293-0332, USA. Web: www.microcosmpublishing.com (DIY distro, lots of zines, with good descriptions)

Morgenmuffel Mailorder, PO Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ, UK. Email: katchoo63@yahoo.co.uk (zine and pamphlet distro)

Pander Zine Distro, PO Box 582142, Minneapolis MN 55458-2142, USA. Web: www.panderzinedistro.com (girl orientated zine distro)

Plain Wordz Distribution, PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1 3XX, UK. Email: plainwordz@hotmail.com (anarchist pamphlets, lots of prisoner writings, some books and benefit merchandise)

South Chicago ABC Distro (for address see Anthony Rayson interview, big zine distro with lots of prisoner writings)

Stickfigure Distro, PO Box 55462, Atlanta, GA 30308, USA. Web: www.stickfiguredistro.com/zines/mailorder (lots of zines, books, also a record shop)

Synthesis Distro, (for address see Laura Synthesis interview, zine distro)

Total Annihilation Distro, Evan, PO Box 298, Sheffield S0 5XT, UK. Email: www.anarchopunk.free-online.co.uk/bitter.html (punk and hardcore zines, a free review minizine also available)

Zine World: A Reader's Guide to the Underground Press, PO Box 330156, Murfreesboro TN 37133 0156, USA. (big review zine, No. 17 was 88 pages and cost $4)

More Websites

www.piscescatalog.com (mainly women orientated distro with zines, handmade crafts and novelties!)

www.bbr-online.com (mailorder and resource site mainly for 'speculative fiction' small press, e.g. Sci-fi etc.)

www.worldwidepunk.com/distro.html (big list of punk distros plus links to zine reviews, e-zines)

www.zinebook.com (lots of resources—archives, links to review sites, distros, interviews, how to distribute etc.)

www.angelfire.com/zine/spykidsdistro (zine distro run by a 15 year old zine editor in Oklahoma)



From Doris No. 15

Zinesters Interviewed

1. Please introduce yourself, who you are, what you do, and why you do a zine.

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

I'm a 47 year old anarchist, activist organiser, zine writer, editor and distributor. My distro, South Chicago Anarchist Black Cross Zine Distro, has about 250 titles available now. So I'm very focused on zines as a means to spread education and agitation.

Butch Regala from *Get In Touch*, Philippines:

I do the zine together with some other people or should I say my collective buddies or close friends that share the same thoughts, dedication, ideas, beliefs, and a lot more... but I don't mean literally okay?! These are just my personal thoughts. I'm 21 years old, still studying in college. And I'm still living with my parents, though I'm too old to be doing that. And seriously, I'm just an ordinary Filipino guy. And there isn't much interesting about my personal activities at all.

With the zine, we just want to help the local DIY scene/community here. And write something, share thoughts. And the great thing about making the zine is all my close friends I now made through making the zine or being involved with the local scene here and abroad, and I'm very happy about that.

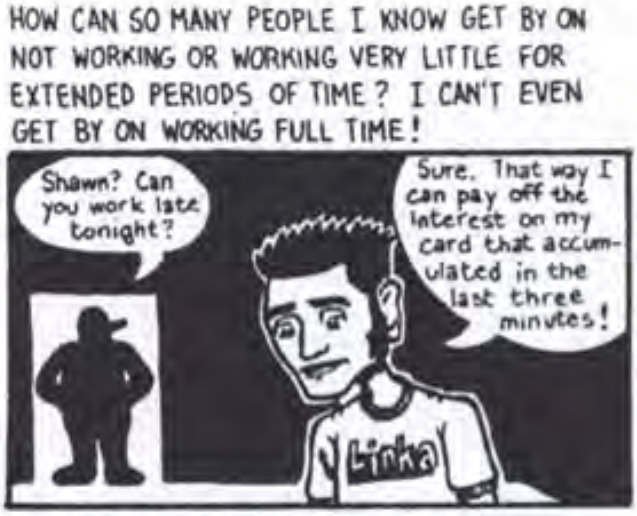
Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

I'm 26 years old and currently living in Portland, Oregon, on the West Coast of the US. I primarily work on two different comic-zine projects, under the umbrella title of 'TFR Industries'. The first is called *Ten Foot Rule* and it's my own personal comic that I've been working on since late '96. The other comic is called *Modern Industry* and it is an all-compilation anthology.

I've also submitted several comics, illustrations, and covers for various publications over the last few years. But of course, none of this pays the bills so I have to work a dead-end day job (nothing worth noting). I also volunteer at the Independent Publishing Resource Center which is great volunteer run organisation that provides the tools for people to make zines.

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

RtB is a loose casual collective formed in the winter of 2000. The notion that we should do a zine which focused on the various aspects of the DIY element in punk, promoting practical alternatives to ideas, media, economics, living and



From *Ten Foot Rule*

art was soon agreed upon and the goal was to offer 'the kids' a little bit of insight into 'who, what, where, when, how' the scene runs. Having 'old timers' on board meant an abundance of contacts were made available for distribution, advertising, contribution and being taken seriously in the early days of the zine. Over a year later, the zine ploughs on, providing plenty of scope into areas often overlooked by other zines and punks in general.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

I'm a 20 year old living in Mid-West America. I go to school and work at an after school programme for youth. I've been doing my zine for 3 years and am on Issue #7. Doing a zine gives me a voice, and a lot of mail in my PO Box.

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

I'm currently 27 years old and a research student in the Sociology department of Goldsmiths College; the famous haven of radicals and artists. I also shelve books in the library to pay my expensive London rent.

My lifestyle is pretty typical for a London anarchist type: vegan, cyclist, activist. I am also part of the collective that is setting up the autonomous centre 'Emmaz'. I started doing *Synthesis* zine when I was 20 because I wanted to be more involved in the underground scene and writing for me is easier than music... If I have a bee in my bonnet the zine is a focus for expressing and exploring the issue.

2. What does your zine focus on? What does it mean to you?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

My main focus gravitates to prison issues, but I really try to cover many, many situations and give them an anarchist explanation and critique. I try to present what I think are the talented writers and artists in the underground, who are quite often incarcerated in the nation's hideous gulag empire. This information is very important and is basically censored by the authorities, and working closely with prisoners with a powerful message necessitates this type of medium (zines). No one else will touch this information in such a comprehensive, brutally real manner, and dealing with ongoing situations. The new techniques used inside morph to the general population—those of us on the 'outs' in minimal security. Just today, the government placed the entire population vaguely on 'high alert' for the second time in a month. Sounds like the routine 'lockdown' so many prisoners have faced in these last few years.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:

Actually at first we just wanted to start a fanzine, and honestly, it's a typical hardcore oriented zine, with very usual stuff like interviews, reviews, columns etc. But the learning process issue by issue made it a little more serious and matured. And frankly the ideals we have change every once in a while from when you start something, like a zine. Yeah, like you're getting sick and tired of the same shit all the time. So the learning process is your everyday life encounters. Your ideas are getting more concrete, and the environment I have here is the main reason. It gives me a lot of awareness and thoughts about everything you read and experience not being permanent. The zine means a lot to me you know, basically this is DIY in all aspects. But anyone could do what we are doing. If the mainstream has their own, we have our punk and DIY media that's kicking. Personally, it is a great outlet to communicate and reach people locally and abroad. I've made a lot of contacts through it..

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

I've wanted to be a cartoonist from the time I could escape the crib. But to be a 'pro' cartoonist means working for a big, lifeless company drawing superhero drivel. In the mid-'90s I came across the mini-comic community and it inspired me to work on a comic. Since then I haven't really thought much about the 'why' I do a comic zine, I've just thought about doing it. I don't think my comic has much of a real focus, just basically whatever I felt like drawing about. In the beginning, I concentrated more on humour and tried to develop some fictional characters. Over the years, I've brought in more personal stories, but still kept the humour in as well. I've never had much success with creating characters and making long stories, so I probably won't be doing much of that soon.



From *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

The aim of the zine is to focus on the 'mechanics' and goings on of the European DIY network. However it seems to have gone beyond those borders and become an increasingly international and political publication. I have always believed that the nature of punk is that it's created and evolves by those involved in it, and that is just what the zine is about, hopefully inspiring and informing people of alternatives in reasoning, thinking, 'news', economics, music, travel, getting stuff done etc. On a more personal level, the zine means lots of hard work, dull seemingly endless meetings with weak tea, cheap biscuits and Sned and Kilvo arguing about nothing. There are some pretty good perks to the job, such as praise from readers and plenty of free records and zines to review which at the end of the day does make it all seem a lot more fun and worthwhile.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

My zine focuses on personal stories and reflections on life, organising, friends and society.

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

Issue 3 was when my zine took on a distinct personality. The articles tend to have a strongly feminist point of view. Each issue has some sort of critique of some aspect of the straight edge scene, and there are one or two spoof pages. Up to now I have had zine reviews but the next issue will be review-free. With *Synthesis* I wanted to provide an interesting, fun, intelligent, inspiring zine that encourages people to engage with radical politics, feminism, veganism and the other things I like. My zine has put me in contact with dozens of people all over the world including some of my most beloved friends. Most of all my zine gives me another way of engaging with people.

3. What's so great about zines? Any shortcomings?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

Zines are great because you can concentrate the information about a certain situation or hammer away at it in as many intense pages as you want. Many things can be covered, contacts can be spread, people—especially prisoners—can be kept relatively informed about rapidly changing developments. It really helps connect, inspire, empower, inform and motivate people to organise harder, with more purpose, more connectedness to others. The bad thing? Like almost everything else that's important, people ignore and dismiss them to a great extent. The ocean of bad zines hides the genuine and purposeful underground.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:

Well, it's the absolute alternative reading material for the hardcore/punk and counterculture in general, for people that have the same interests. But we all know that zines are the best way to reach people and communicate with each other... it is a tool to express feelings and ideas regardless of who and where they came from, it's a whole world in a our hands... And it is a source for interested people to get in touch with other guys/gals from around the globe. Zines are the few remaining reading materials that don't have censorship and you can express anything you wanted to in... you can write whatever you want and react to this bastardised society we have. But yeah, this is only my personal opinion coz everyone has different ideas regarding this...

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

I think the greatest thing about zines is the personal, DIY aspect of it. When you order a zine in the mail, you'll receive something that was crafted by one person with that one person's unique world-vision. There were no marketing reports or strategy teams going into it. To top that off, that one person has personally put their zine into an envelope and sent it off to you. It wasn't anything processed by a computer in a magazine's subscriptions department. Where else in this day and age will you find that direct connection to someone via their art? But since zines are an underground media, unless you know where to look they can be very difficult to find.

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

Zines allow the reader to close off and hopefully discover, learn, think and evaluate about stuff for at least a short while in otherwise hectic lives. I've always been into the promotion of ideas and learning, the expansion of the mind, especially if it's done from an individual perspective and not being enforced by some half- witted authority figure (like a teacher).

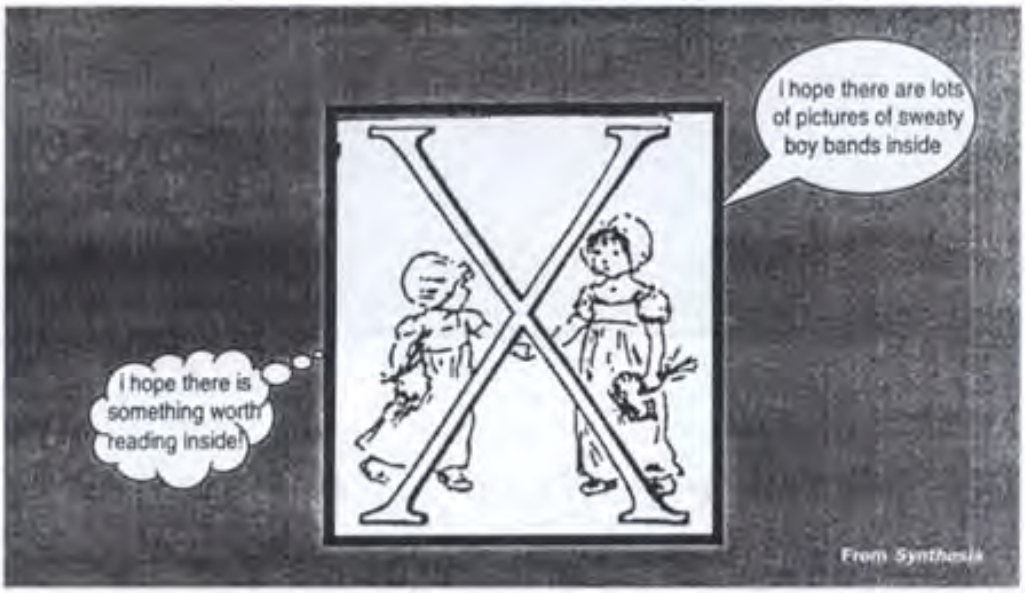
Zines also act as important periodicals and resources which provide a taster to events and life in a certain age. Shortcomings are the fact that they're sometimes a total waste of paper. Another thing I hate is that they cost money to produce/distribute/collect etc.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

Zines are a great source of independent information and opinions. There is such a diversity in the zine world. The problems come from limited advance, bad layout and mindless production that keep ideas isolated.

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

Zines give us much of the social, political and community aspects of the underground and ensure we are a network and not just a music audience. However sometimes the people who write in zines can become something of an elite in themselves much like the people who play in a band.



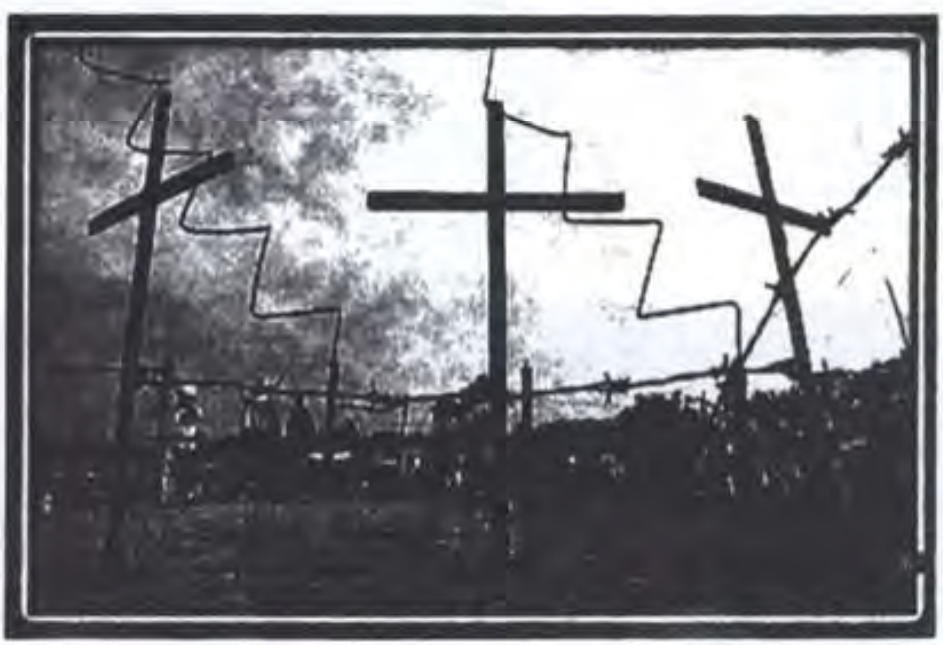
4. What do you think is the political relevance of zines?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:
Zines are the only means of expression prisoners have—and high school kids—and punks—and students—and mental patients—kids in Indonesia—you name it. The most inclusive, current and informed political analysis is to be found in zines. I even use zines and DIY ethics, cut and paste, to fight the state of Illinois over a hideous airport in my area. The very practicality of zines has enormous potential to distribute powerful arguments about ongoing struggles for any and all groups, but it takes dedicated hardworking zinesters to do it.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:
Zines are the medium of the underground community or the punk/hardcore scene. It's to counter mainstream magazines, which I think misinterpret people. Our zine doesn't have that direct political approach. But you have complete control of everything in it. For example in a big magazine you're pressured to do things and work your ass off because you are being paid to do that and you know it is intended to fool and make big cash. In a small publication like ours it's more of our personal thing, which no one forcing you to do. You work for it cause you love it and have a big heart and dedication for what you're doing and your drive and passion is there.

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:
I think the nature of creating a zine is inherently political, if you look at it from the perspective of the traditional power structure. Even though 'democracy' plays lip service to giving people a voice, that usually doesn't happen, since you need money to get what you say out there. Doing a zine allows you to have your say without having to spend loads of money, so opinions that were generally ignored in the mainstream have a way of getting out there.

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:
The political relevance of zines becomes apparent when you realise that they're DIY, thus immediately posing a threat to the system, simply because it's 'us' creating the media and not some overpaid journalist conjuring up half truths in the interest of some fucker in a suit. At *RtB* we'd like to have an open forum for people to contribute their own news/opinions and hopefully provide an alternative to the biased, commercially-led mainstream.



From *Get in Touch*

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:
Zines could be politically challenging because of their autonomy, although I think many zines only appeal to small numbers of people which limits their ability.

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:
Much of our political dialogue takes place in and is documented by zines and zines can also be a force for change when the writers use them as a place for campaigning. For example, my article on Nestle in issue 4 brought the issue to many, many people for the first time and encouraged more people to take up the boycott.

5. What generally impresses you in a zine?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

I am impressed with the combination of powerfully written material juxtaposed with meaningful artwork and graphics. I've been convinced by tremendous underground (prisoner) artists how important it is to combine the two. Favourite zines? Well, my own, vainly enough. I adore Sean Lambert's zines. They're like 10 zines in one. The punx nearby now named Slaughter Attack do some wild zines. I think *Cyanide* is a classic feminist zine. Zolo Agona Azania and Glenn Wright do beautiful zines, Ron Campbell wrote excellently for his zine, *Constipation*, and I think Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli is the most talented political artist around. These guys are all prisoners.



Art by prisoner Todd Hyung Rae Tarselli from Thought Bombs.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:

Nowadays I'm very impressed by personal writing in zines or sharing personal ideas, experiences and thoughts. I love to read about tours, vacations, personal experiences, life, etc. It really interests me now when the writer writes like s/he is talking with the person reading it, like you're talking face to face. I can't really deal with the more serious or those 'politically correct' zines. Coz mostly the things I read in them are very different from the situation we have here. And those political and activist zines are based on the situation in America or Europe which I don't have a problem with, okay! But people in places like ours are more aware than those armchair revolution types of surviving everyday life and dealing with it. Sorry but it's better to be honest here...

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

Basically, good and interesting writing. I know a lot of people are putting emphasis on 'production value' these days, and are really concerned with making their zine look fancy, but if there's no good writing inside, then what's the point? I like it when people write either about things that interest them or talk about their experiences in an engaging, passionate way. I hate it when people do a 'by the numbers' zine and fill it up with things that can be found in a lot of other zines, either because of a lack of creativity or because they figure that's what people want to see. A zine should be a work of passion of the person that created it, not something done out of obligation or to earn them 'scene points'.

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

It doesn't matter how glossy or well-produced your zine is, if its form doesn't follow its function it's lost out. Quite often it's the personal touches, opinions, and human element that I like most, as well as the sense of support and sharing that comes with them. I'm not a fan of overpersonal, self indulgent rants, cry baby emotional tales of woe or raving fanatism in zines, nor in real life for that matter... However, getting to read scene reports from far off places, reviews, inspiring layouts and pictures, practical ideas etc. is what makes zines appealing to me.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

Good writing or good layout is what I look for in a zine. Comix are great. My favourites are *Phoenix was a Mistake, Scam, Assassin and the Whiner, Scenery, Robots:1 Humans:0, Cometbus, Slug and Lettuce* and *Two Tears in a Bucket, Mother Fuck It Zine.*

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

I like to see good writing and I like to see it laid out well and attractively since this makes people more likely to read and take in what is being said. I love to see good feminist pieces that are lacking in cliches and political articles that come from people's personal experience. The women's issues of *Heart Attack* were pretty good. All these zines are by women: a London riot grrrl zine called *Bitter Strawberries, Morgenmuffel, Fucktooth* and *Personality Liberation Front.*

6. Who do you reckon reads your zine? Do you get a lot of feedback?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

A lot of prisoners read my zines, as well as other anarchists, underground publications, my friends and relatives and a few random people I give it to here and there. I try to get them spread out as much as possible, stocked in infoshops around the world and make them available free to prisoners. I do get lots of feedback. I get letters and zines from all over the world. I spend a lot of my time in serious letter writing correspondence, most deeply with conscious prisoner writers and activists.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:

Anyone could read it and could get it... but yeah, we know it's more based on the punk/hardcore community. The zine isn't just for the punks though, it's for anyone with the interest and passion to share feelings and ideas with. We've received positive criticism. Of course there's always the negative ones and we really love to receive criticism like that coz we could improve something.

Criticism gives us fuel to continue the zine, and kick it as hard as we can, as long as we all have



From *The Assassin and the Whiner* No. 10

the desire and drive to continue sharing what we think means something.

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

While I get my fair share of alternative comic-book fans reading my stuff, I think most of the audience I have is the zine community. One thing I find interesting is the amount of women who read my comics. When thinking about it in zine world terms, it's not surprising, because there are loads of women making and reading zines (and quite a few doing comics too!). But if you think about it in comics world terms, that's amazing.

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

I don't mind who reads the zine, but I'd be stoked if people's parents read it. In a way, that explains why the layout and whole 'look' of *RtB* is sort of 'accessible'. The aim is to allow it not to be categorised or pigeonholed into any punk genre, and I don't care who reads it as long as they don't come get me in the middle of the night. As far as feedback goes, it all seems to be pretty positive. But most people who have negative things to say, won't, mainly out of gutlessness.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

I'd say my zine pretty much stays in the punk/hardcore scene, and maybe goes out in to radical circles because of what I write about.

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

Most of my readers are hardcore kids/punks, some are riot grrrls, some are general feminists, some are non-punk anarchists, some are non-punk friends of mine. I do get a great deal of feedback, usually by letter. Best of all is when it is a young woman who has felt inspired or empowered or when it is a young man who has started to question his own sexism.



7. Any advice on entering the world of zines?

Anthony Rayson from *Thought Bombs*, USA:

I suggest that people ask people who have done zines how to get started. I have an outline that I'd be glad to mail about zinemaking. Like everything else, the biggest part is getting off the dime and doing it.

Butch Regala from *Get in Touch*, Philippines:

Do it and be yourself, try to be honest with everything you write and talk about. If you have just started making the zine please don't be bothered by or think too much about negative criticism. You know it's normal for people to talk too much even though they don't know you well, and I guess they don't have the right to question and criticise everything you do.

If you are interested, get in touch, I would love to help anyone who's really interested in corresponding with us.

Shawn Granton from *Ten Foot Rule*, USA:

Make sure that you write about the things you want to write about, and can write about them with enthusiasm. Look to other zines as inspiration, but not necessarily as a blueprint. Read as many zines as you can and don't stop reading books either. Don't be afraid to ask other zinesters for advice. Don't worry about your first zine sucking because it's a learning experience, and you'll get better as you do more. And don't forget to have fun!

Leo from *Reason to Believe*, UK:

Keep it simple. Keep it original. Give credit where credit is due. Do what you want and not what you think others want you to do. Keep the self-righteousness to a minimum. Try to be both objective and subjective at the same time. Keep going.

Jesse from *Stay Gold Jesse, Stay Gold*, USA:

My tips on entering zine world are make sure you have a good layout and good printing. Make sure people can read your writing, cos otherwise it's a waste of paper. Don't rush yourself. Good writing may take a while. Try to scam free copies, but don't overuse your hook-ups cos kids can lose their jobs. For real!

Laura Wirtz from *Synthesis*, UK:

Read good zines and take account of what is good about them. Print zines cheaply and on recycled paper. Distribute them at gigs and other events as well as through the post. Trade with other zine editors and keep track of your zine-trading network.

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Book Reviews

The Battle of Seattle

The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization

Edited by Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas and Daniel Burton Rose

(Soft Skull Press, 2001)

Paperback/394pp/£11.99/ISBN 1 887128 66 2

Do we need more prattle about Seattle? While the British media have taken to writing us off as an extremist clique, in America (at least up to September 11th) there's been a mountain of books all clamouring to explain the significance of Seattle, reveal to its participants why they did it and tell them where they should go from here. Deluged by praise, buried under condemnation, what's the difference? Either way you're buried under words not your own.

This book's an exception because it's written by some activists themselves. Opposition to the World Trade Organisation (if not always capital itself) is largely assumed; the battle of the title is more between the adherents of different tactics. Like an American *Reflections on Mayday* or *On Fire*, it's an open mike discussion which tries to embrace as many perspectives and look at as many aspects of the movement as it can. It crams in a frankly scary fifty-one contributors. Like a continent-spanning facilitator, Eddie Yuen then gets the unenviable task of trying to sum up.

For that reason alone, this book would matter even if every single participant talked total crap. (Thankfully not the case.) Activists, even when they make bad points, are still part of a real conversation, and need answering. Journalists and academics, conversely, can be left to prattle.

There's more afoot, however. People often seem keen to emphasise the similarities between different regional movements, smoothing over any differences in the name of some superficial 'internationalism', proudly proclaiming our resistance to be as homogenous as capital. (Part, of course, of seeing our movement purely quantitatively—how many cities came 'out' for the last international day of activism etc.) Or if regional differences are admitted, they're but steps on a linear path to some universal truth, on which America is either 'ahead' or 'behind' us in the UK. As the apparently popular slogan seems to go, "Act anti-globally, don't think locally". Meanwhile, a genuine anti-capitalist globalisation would counterpose capitalist globalisation, not mirror it.

This book, with emphasis both on Seattle's predecessors and on the differing strands which make up the American movement, can help to recapture the local context. Even supposing our American comrades were doing things wrongly, we should be asking what has led them down that path. We should also be asking if our 'wrongly' isn't actually 'rightly' for the particular circumstances that they're in.

Finally, the light shone by books such as these could help to dissolve the fetishistic importance which America is often awarded by activists. It may well be true that America has a larger influence upon world events than, say, Estonia. However, many activists seem to regard America in much the same way as Bush regards Iraq, as the place in the world where evil is manufactured, as if 'American' and 'capitalist' were interchangeable terms.

This attitude can easily flip back on itself, where any opposition going on within America is assumed to have an apocalyptic importance, to be wondered at rather than considered or critiqued. While mainstream America is met with unthinking condemnation, any American opposition is met with mindless acclaim. If we have American comrades they deserve better than mere cheerleading, and books such as this give us the opportunity of support through criticism.

(And just in case this needs spelling out to the cheaper seats, if we quote someone favourably we're not agreeing with every other thing they say or might say sometime in the future. Similarly, those we criticise might well say some good stuff somewhere else. Okay?)

Radical Anti-Democratic Practice

Let's start at the most obvious place and work upwards. When Seattle happened it was the black bloc vs. peace police battle that we all fixated on, wasn't it? This debate unsurprisingly reappears here. Just feel the width, with 'black bloc' running up the highest score on index refs! Yuen's central contention is that, prior to Seattle, two 'strands' defined the movement—commitments to Non Violent Direct Action (NVDA) and to direct democracy as a way of working. Seattle snapped the NVDA strand but, through its very success, re-emphasised direct democracy as our real self-defining principle. This can seem convincing. After all, both sides of this big debate seem happy to march behind the slogan; "This is what democracy looks like."

Of course we have no wish to march behind 'leaders', getting our chance to join in on pre-arranged slogans, or follow 'gurus' who explain the workings of our lives to us. Direct democracy may be an improvement on all of that, but it has its own limits which means it must itself be surpassed. (Yuen does make some cricticisms of this principle himself, at one point warning to, "beware the fetishization of process." However these criticisms aren't really taken far enough.)

Strangely, once stripped of the democratic fixations of its adherents, Seattle in practice was a fine example of this surpassing. Let's say what is unarguable, but is always glossed over. No aspect of the Seattle protests was democratic. Obviously, had its participants stayed at home on N30 and awaited their opportunity to elect more benign leaders, none of us would even be talking about this now. But we mean more than that. The Seattle protests did not embody Yuen's principle of direct democracy. And that's how come they're so cool.



First the blockade; in an attempt to cosy up to some liberal Non-Governmental Organisations, the Direct Action Network (DAN) tried to impose the now infamous four principles of non-violence on any wanting to take part. As one British participant put it, "Many activists felt angry that they were expected to comply with guidelines they had not participated in creating" (from the *We Are Winning!* pamphlet). But also the black bloc did not try to formally challenge these principles by forcing a vote or discussion. They merely voted with their feet (and some handy rocks) by openly flouting them.

It's clear we're talking two different types of anti-democracy here. The four principles were intended to impose themselves on all participants. The black bloc, conversely, were only acting for themselves. They did not attempt to pass



themselves off as 'the real movement', even at a rhetorical level.

This is important, but again insufficient. The most common defence of the blockers, it often portrays them as the true democrats, rebelling against autocratic rules. Yet the blockers did have other options, spelt out *ad nauseaum* by many in this book. They could have tried to formally challenge these rules, boycotted proceedings, done their damage 'some other day' etc. etc.

More importantly, it seems few actually focused on the imposed nature of the four principles until it became a convenient argument afterwards. Those (the majority) who agreed with them didn't worry overmuch that they were never given the chance to vote for them—they just went along with them. Those (the minority) who disagreed with them just broke them. NVDA runs deep in American activism, and probably ran deeper then. It may well be that had there been a popular vote those exact same rules would have been passed. And the blockers might still have broken them. And they'd have been just as right.

Thus, the black bloc at Seattle was an exemplary example of anti-democracy translating into effective practice. Though small in number (estimates vary, but 50 black bloc to 50,000 blockaders is possible), by turning their critique into radical practice they shattered a consciousness about strict NVDA rules and kick-started a debate. It's unlikely a stiff letter to *Z Magazine* would have achieved the same. Moreover, while some in the European bloc can be elitistly dismissive of those outside their clique as worthless liberals, many blockers were at pains to defend their actions. The book reprints the ACME collective's communiqué, which doesn't slag off the main action but cogently explains why they chose to take the course they did. (There's problems with some of the stuff in the communiqué too, of course, but let's leave that for another day.)

Though they only formally challenged one of DAN's four principles, against property damage, their success is that they generated a wider critique than getting the odd bit of window smashing 'allowed'. Tacitly, they challenged a whole tendency in American activism, where protests are professionalised and tactics must be decided beforehand, then stuck to rigidly. As many contributors point out, on previous actions certain kinds of property damage were permitted under NVDA rules—but in the same strictly defined way. Barbera Eherenreich writes of having "almost being turned away from an antinuclear action until one of my companions had the wit to lie and claim we had indeed gone through extensive training."

Among the many reasons to oppose democracy is its fetishisation of decision-making and internal group order over and above anything the action is trying to achieve. Classic is the charge, oft repeated through this book, that the blockers were needlessly divisive because they could always have broke property 'some other day'. Excuse us? Some other day when the police weren't preoccupied in dealing with a mass blockade of virtually unprecedented size, that would be a good day to go in for extensive downtown property damage?

By bypassing democracy, the few can sometimes achieve much. This book itself is testament to the view that things have shifted significantly since. (Of course it may be another small group, the peace police, who by acting so spectacularly dumbly and indefensibly in physically attacking some black blockers, really forced a debate that went beyond the knee-jerk. Significantly, 'peace police and proud' pieces are few and far between here. History often shows the daftest liberal to be the radical's best friend.)

However, we can't go too far on the blockers' achievements. Few blockers seem to have followed up their anti-democratic practice with the realisation of what they've done, let alone grasped that opposition to democracy is an essential part of opposition to capitalism. Indeed, their point made, many now seem content to retreat back to the cosy world of consensus decision-making. Worryingly, many anti-blockists in this book note how well-behaved the bad kids have been lately. None here put it with as much unintended irony, however, as an activist called 'Starhawk' (no comment!) writing in the book *On Fire*; "In Seattle I was royally pissed off at the Black Block for what I saw as their unilateral decision to violate agreements everyone else accepted. In Washington in 2000, I saw that they abided by guidelines they disagreed with and had no part in making, and I respected them for it."

Need we point out to Starbu... sorry, Starhawk that most of us spend every day of our lives abiding by guidelines we disagree with and have no part in making—going to work, obeying cops and officials, paying for food and shelter and all the rest of it. This is called life under capitalism, and is what makes us want to resist in the first place!

The question therefore hangs—how far did the blockers succeed in pushing the envelope at

Seattle? As much as they did succeed in challenging the notion that decision-making must always be formalised and tactics predefined, they've radicalised things. But if all they've done is add an item to the shopping list of 'allowable' tactics ("...and maybe a bit of rock throwing is cool, too.") they've merely made things more militant. Which isn't the same thing at all.

Reversing Perspectives

LA Kaufman writes how this issue was "foremost in many activists' minds at the time [but] now seems almost like a non-issue". We hope our comments have opened a new dimension in what for many quickly became a tired and sterile debate. However, one of the successes of this book is that it does not share this fascination for the pros and cons of redecorating Starbucks, but tries to locate Seattle in a wider social and political context.

In 'Seattle Was Not the Beginning', George Katsiaficas seeks to counter the event-based America-centred media model of history by citing prior international cases of anti-capitalist globalisation. However, while citing Germany, South Korea and other places he sees struggles "at the periphery of the world system" as the most significant if we are to turn upside down "the biases and distortions of the very system being opposed."



Others are more blatant in seeing N30 as the day Third World issues arose to bite back at the 'overdeveloped world'. As the official summer-upper, Yuen states boldly "the recent upsurge against capitalist globalisation has its origins in the countries of the Global South". We agree we do not want to see "the global majorities as mere passive victims", waiting for the nice Westerners to come rescue them from the bad ones. However, we would argue the true reversal of perspective is when you see yourself as the subject of capital, and reject your own role as a passive victim of its inalienable laws, and we find problematic this perverse desire to place the centre of struggle half a world away from where you are. What leads to it?

Perhaps due to its size and relative geographical isolation, America is one of the developed world's most inward-looking countries. Against this, internationalism of itself might seem 'the answer.' Indeed, much of the movements up to Seattle had a Third World focus, such as the widespread anti-sweatshop campaigns.

Admittedly, it may well be that exposure to Third World activists did much to radicalise things in America. Unsurprisingly, the world's poorest can often harbour the least illusions over what's going down. Jaggi Singh writes how Indian opposition largely goes beyond the WTO to global capital itself, and embraces a range of tactics from non-violence through to armed struggle. (While the official line of Seattle's organisers was narrowly anti-WTO, as the event unfolded it seems to have been the point where many attendees transcended this perspective.)

However, perhaps these insights came at a price. Ironically, this fetish made of Third World struggles often obscures those struggles themselves—making them seem homogenous. Many Western activists romantically fixate on images of peasants, poor but authentic, simple but wise. (Hakim Bey even finds a 'Fourth World' in "the world of tribes, forests and peasants, shamans and pagans.") Back in the real world, events often involve many different groups, including the urban poor and even striking workers. The growth of call centres in India, though probably more culturally significant than numerous, suggest once-easy east/west distinctions aren't where they were. Worse, if Western activists take the insights of Third World activists to uncritically endorse anything else they might say and (worse) transfer it whole to our own situation, riding roughshod over context, problems lie ahead.

Moreover, since Seattle, the mainstream media have taken to painting us as a gang of troublemaking trustafarians, rich kids playing at being naughty and spoiling it for the world's poor who actively covet free trade and long for nothing more than to be structurally readjusted.

Of course, this second clause quite literally stands the truth on its head. With recent events in Argentina, we might wonder why we even bother talking about Seattle. Yet the first clause can superficially appear correct—as a rule we activists are (comparatively) materially well off even compared to domestic workers. Lunging in where they seem wrong, hushing up our weakness where they seem part-right, this can add to the tendency to consume another's struggle rather than pursue your own.

Seeing in Colour

Perhaps logically, the next major issue becomes domestic minorities, with the 'whiteness' of Seattle the self-criticism of choice for virtually everybody here. Yuan writes proudly how he has not 'ghettoised' this question into one section, but let it permeate the whole book. In other words, everybody gets a go with the whipping stick.

At its worst, this means little more than enlisting the black community into whatever your particular agenda was anyway, with much of this newfound conversion to anti-racism being but a roundabout way to reintroduce the NVDA debate all over again. 'People of colour' can seem quite a schizophrenic bunch in this collection, endorsing either strict non-violence or armed insurgency depending on which white person is talking about them at any one time—much like 'the workers' do among Trot groups over here. One side brings up King and the proud history of the civil rights movement. The other counters with Malcolm X, the LA riots and the black people at Seattle who joined in the looting in the black bloc's wake.

While we wouldn't want to argue that the cops were particularly soft on blockaders at Seattle, NVDA as a tactic does rely on the bad guys seeing you as someone not absolutely disposable. As Justin Higgins puts it, "if there had been black students at Seattle, there would have been real bullets." (And of course this is just what happens in most parts of the world.)



However, this is to demonstrate a cop-like desire to cordon debate within the crash barriers of acceptable topics and to assume new people will be happy to insert themselves inside our pre-decided, already-complete frameworks. Stephanie Guilloud reports a DAN meeting where someone suggests "everybody call one person of colour and invite them to the group." Somewhat thankfully, "rage and hard words met this tokenising proposal." Van Jones puts it succinctly: "Outreach is a false issue. The point isn't to make the movement look like a Benetton ad. The question is: How will this convergence actually change the movement?"

We do not share the politically correct notion that anyone who belongs to an underprivileged group cannot be criticised. When Juan Gonzales, for example, claims it's racist to harangue cops who are black he's simply being a pratt. Nevertheless, it is often the writers 'of colour' who can be more interesting, bringing fresh perspectives and new criticisms.

Kristine Wong, for example, comments that "the great majority of anti-WTO forces were not addressing the connections between WTO policies and the daily lives of the working class and communities of colour, much less recognising or including grassroots movements." She gives an illuminating account of her attempts to get such movements recognised by activists seemingly more concerned by communities of sea turtles than communities of people living just down the road. Similarly, Andrew Hsiao describes a "hip-hop generation" of new black activists "connecting the corporate agenda to local battles" such as the double whammy of cop oppression and the prison-industrial complex, as yet unallied to the Seattle-centred movement.

A Touch of Class

However, there can come with this perspective a tendency to see 'communities of colour' as the real working class rather than a large component of it, or (worse) as honorary members of the 'Global South'. (Significantly, Gonzales says "Third World youth" when he means "working class Americans of colour".) There's a short ride from here to seeing white workers as intrinsically suspect, hopelessly riddled with racism, homophobia and the rest. (An attitude common among 'radical' groups in parts of Europe.) Of course we are not arguing that such petty nationalist prejudices can be ignored, nor that those at the receiving end shouldn't be at the centre of struggle against them. But such divisions are best opposed by being transcended, by realising who stands to benefit from them the most.

Take the anti-sweatshop movement. The rhetorical focus for this was Third World sweatshops but the practical arena of struggle was students' own campuses—typically going into occupation to oppose sweated labour for their clothing, coffee etc. (This is very different to here, where many students may have participated in our actions—but rarely as students, rarely on their own campuses. UK equivalents to this movement are small by comparison.) True, there were also community focused groups such as Food Not Bombs. But these groups often worked directly with the homeless rather than the labouring poor. Doubtless, some see the homeless as a section of the peasantry somehow transplanted to US soil.

Or is this to be too dismissive of our Stateside comrades? We're talking about a country with less black men in higher education than in prison (read forced labour camps), with levels of everyday racism eclipsing even Europe. Compounded with a virtual cultural taboo on talking in class terms, this can lead to progressive activists often using 'people of colour' as a code for 'people of class'. Wong, for example, subheads her piece 'Race, Class and the Framing of a Movement' while Yuen uses the phrase 'working class people of colour'. In this context we shouldn't fail to mark the clear difference between such pragmatic calls for resistance at a grassroots level and Gonzales's politically correct claptrap.

Nevertheless, codes have a tendency to get confused with the real thing. And ultimately racism is not integral to capitalism the way class is. While at times racism provides a useful means for capital to divide its adversaries, at others racism's very archaic irrationalism can hinder capital's progress. Like Bernard Manning, capital has no prejudices—it seeks to exploit us all. Yet the lumpenly racist cop who stops the black youth on the street, harasses the middle class black on his way to work as much as he hinders the suspect gang member.

(Needless to say, this is not to resurrect the tired leftist argument that racism will magically disappear 'after the revolution', so it doesn't need to be worried about at all. An argument akin to saying cops won't be around either, so it doesn't matter if one hits you.)

What about the Workers?

In this context we should also talk about the workers who supported Seattle. In defiance of the simple-minded notion that American capital is always 'ahead' in the march of neo-liberalism, strike levels in the US actually exceed the UK and militant workers do exist in places outside of museums. The longshoremen shutting down the entire West Coast of North America in solidarity with Seattle is an inspiring and exemplary action, and one that went almost as unnoticed in our media as in the mainstream. Perhaps more importantly for us, more radical workers actually broke from an official union march to join in the blockade. (Peace policers boast how some of these then joined them in assaulting black blockers. Life is rarely simple.)

While (rightly) concerned about important groups largely absent from Seattle, most seem happy to neglect alliances actually forged there. Only two contributors, Barbara Epstein and Stanley Aronowitz, chiefly focus upon worker groups. And, while the writers 'of colour' made some of the more interesting points in that debate, there is not one piece in this thick collection actually from a



striking longshoreman or blockade-joining worker—a major omission.

Worse, even among contributors willing to talk about workers, there seems little separation of workers from 'their' unions. (Yuen even blithely talks of "representative organisations of the working class i.e. unions"). This seems somewhat worrying from self-professed anarchists who presumably do not identify much with 'their' elected officials, and positively dismiss the idea of the direct action movement as 'represented' by liberal NGOs, or activists 'of colour' by hierarchical bodies such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or personality cults like the Nation of Islam. Only one piece, by Cockburn and St. Clair, makes this (rather obvious) comparison, or reminds us that workers who joined the blockade at Seattle had to push their way past union goons to get there.

It's true that most workers marching at Seattle came from skilled, relatively privileged groups. (Cockburn and St. Clair list "steelworkers, longshoremen, electrical workers and teamsters.") In America, these are the jobs that normally go to white folks. It's also true these are the workers most at risk from foreign imports brought in by trade liberalisation. And Yuen rightly cautions against infection from an insidious far right agenda which "advocates for the working class, as long as it is white, male and American."

However, there is nothing automatic about these workers accepting this narrow, nationalist agenda. (We encounter the same logic the other way up, of course, every time we're told environmentalists cannot be concerned by social issues.) As Epstein

points out, many of these workers "though often thought of as resistant to social change, have come to see the need to ally with workers in the South and with the environmental and human rights movement."

Of course, some scream "Trot!" as soon as the 'w' word is mentioned. Let us make clear we are not pointing to some abstract, homogenised group called 'the workers' who require the gift of being 'educated' by us clever types in order to turn their lives of dreary toil into ones of nicer toil. We are pointing to actual concrete events which seem positive, and alliances which could be developed.

Though, worryingly, perhaps the opposite is actually happening. News of worker support at later actions seems scant. This may not just be down to activists choosing to concentrate on the colour issue. Perhaps many of the later actions lacked the officially approved union march, which the more radical workers needed in order to break away from. Whatever, the development is far from positive.

We cannot leave this point without emphasising that a truly radical anti-capitalism is based around *your own* liberation. To misquote Marx, they who spend all their time trying to liberate others cannot themselves be free—and having to listen to them continually whinge on about it isn't very liberating either. We are motivated to join an anti-capitalist movement by the presence of alarm clocks, shouting supervisors and harassing dole officers in our own lives. We want to work with others, sure. But we want to express our desires alongside them, neither on behalf of them nor cheering them on from the sidelines.



Many here talk like marketing consultants chasing the most likely demographic to buy into anti-capitalism. Take the 'Seven Ways to Make Our Protests More Powerful' by George Lakey of 'Training for Change': "2) Decide specifically who we're trying to influence... 3) Become proactive rather than reactive... 6) Take a positive attitude toward the prospect of state repression" etc. etc. You can almost picture the accompanying slideshow full of endless pie charts and interminable bullet points, as you wait hopefully for the promised break for fags and biscuits.

More sinister still is the (unnamed) Direct Action Network organiser who brushed off criticism of their working methods with the argument, "DAN is a brand name with a high market value." This is worse than a penchant for irritating phraseology (though that would be bad enough in itself). Our supposed friends see radical change as a product, which we sell to selected groups by prearranged and cleverly marketed campaigns. As an alternative to capital, it isn't one.

Tentative Conclusions

Ultimately, we can only scratch the surface here. There's the almost complete absence of anarcho-primitivism, from a scene it once dominated if not defined. There's the features on jail solidarity (something we rarely practice in the UK in any organised way), which probably deserve a book to themselves. There's the pieces which attempt to focus on globalisation itself, to see beyond both their lies and our slogans. If jail solidarity deserves a book, this issue perhaps deserves a library.

However, that's not to say every alley from here leads somewhere worth going. This is a tale that grew and sprawled in the telling, and in the process lost much of its focus. Like a pencil point, it loses its sharpness the longer it writes. As it progresses to later American actions, which produced less heated debate, it reads more and more like mere reportage. And the weakest section is the one given to European movements, geographically (and culturally?) distant from the compilers, which often descend into reactionary rubbish. (The one British piece, 'Mayday Diary' by mainstream journalist Jay Griffiths, is downright risible.) Perhaps significantly, the whole list of 'information resources' at the back is American. (And yes, before smart alecs fill our postbox, we are aware this criticism could easily twist back on ourselves, criticising a movement from an ocean away.)

The book is at its weakest when it tries to paint a broad, sweeping canvas, taking several years of global struggle into its cinemascope. This leads to eyestrain more often than insight. Conversely, it's at its best when it takes a jerky snapshot of a

moment; a moment just after Seattle, when the still-fresh tear gas had burnt away ideology and factionalism and where to go next seemed inviting and open. If the snapshot can look blurry, then maybe the moment was.

As a barometer of how Seattle pushed American activism forwards, the assembled voices here are fascinating. While to some extent it took things in a more militant direction, it might be more accurate to say it threw things into a state of flux and blurred once-easy polarities, until the unquestioned and the unthinkable were no longer in the places they used to be. Many are the articles here which abandon old fixed positions for the unknown. As one black blocker writes, "the ground between violence and pacifism is wide, much wider than the ivory tower of either. Meet me there."

This contrasts to the UK where the 'big event' (June 18th) merely nailed the lid on a pacifist hegemony which was already in decline. Many over here then acted as though, now out of our non-violent straight-jacket, capital would lie helpless at our feet. Against this somewhat misplaced confidence, the American is of course the more radical shift. But it's also a more tentative, a more fragile one, and where it heads is far from certain.

And perhaps even that is the glass half-full version of events. It could equally be argued that this book's great weakness is just that—it's just a book, an assemblage of fine-sounding words. It could be argued that, despite all this talk of re-evaluation, what people have actually done in practice is to have another one like the last one (Washington, Philadelphia etc.) with the predictable diminishing returns.

The reconciling of non-violent blockading with black blockism can even serve to obscure that both are merely tactics, with their own limited usefulness, not universal statements of our identity or panaceas to all our ills. This point is made by many of the later pieces, whatever their other weaknesses. Silvia Frederici and George Caffentzis, for example, say "the limits of Seattle's tactics are not the limits of the movement", but perhaps they write more in hope than expectation. Naomi Klein is blunter: "Seattle's tactics worked because they took the police by surprise. That won't happen again." She's already been proved right, of course. We do not need, despite Yuen's cry, "Two, Three, Many Seattles". In the Chinese proverb the hand points at the moon, but the fool looks at the finger. Seattle was just the finger.

Similarly, here in Britain, J18 was surrounded by a spate of attempts to break down factional divisions and ideological ruts in order to think up something new. In this new hothouse atmosphere, texts such as 'Give Up Activism' gained a wide currency. (See *Do or Die* No. 9, pp. 160-170.) However, did this quantitative readership translate



into any qualitative change in what we actually did? Or did we carry on in just the same way as before, inhabiting just the same roles and identities, only being a bit more self-critical while we were doing it? (We will be happy to be proved wrong on this point!)

Either way, the last of the book's topics could make the whole debate redundant. September 11th happened so close to publication it only appears in the prologue, but from there it hangs over everything that follows like a shadow. The aftershock of this event even reached Britain, an ocean away from the attack, allowing for another round of ever more repressive laws—with doubtless more to come. In Ground Zero, the situation was far worse. Yuen writes how, immediately afterwards, "the radical political space which has been opened up was instantly pulverised." If that pulverisation was (thankfully) not permanent, neither has it had no lasting effects. For much of the US public, failing to prevent a terrorist atrocity has transformed Bush from a vote-stealer and crony capitalist into a stately leader protecting them from the infidel hordes.

Conversely, of course, his adventurism in the Middle East could trip upon itself and push people towards more radical critiques. At the very least, as *Aufheben* have argued, it has shaken our perspective from a fixation with international talking shops as the supposed heart of capital into something wider. Whatever the long term effects upon us, it's unlikely they will be small.

J18, N30, S11... after those three dates our movement has fallen through the looking glass, to somewhere new and unfamiliar, home to a strange unsettling mixture of successes and setbacks. We haven't become the genuine threat to capital we'd so often boasted of, but neither are we pure and untainted by success any more. After bumping into this new, unfamiliar furniture a while, it's even tempting to want back into the old, comfy world where we were just marginal and knew it. But looking glasses are one way trips. Whatever the nature of this New World, it's the one we're now in and must make the best of.★

A Language Older Than Words
By Derrick Jensen (Souvenir Press, 2000)
Paperback/400pp/£12.99/ISBN 0 285 63624 3

Of all the recent writings to appear from an anti-civilisation perspective, *A Language Older Than Words* is probably the most compelling. Jensen's personal and lucid style make it very engaging, whilst his well-researched arguments concerning the insidious psychopathology of Western Civilisation are not only persuasive, but leave the reader really feeling the depths to which it has devastated and denied our natural selves.

I picked this book up a year and a half ago after hearing outstanding reviews of it from various sources. Having an inherent scepticism I proceeded with caution, but within a few pages I began to understand just why this book was finding such affinity with people from within radical circles. The book differs from the majority of 'political' texts because of Jensen's incredibly personal style of writing, and the fact that he is attempting to understand his past, and the culture that has shaped his experiences. Many anti-civilisation critiques often leave a cold sensation that has more in line with the failed dogmas of deep ecology and misanthropy—both of which evoke the Christian ideology that humans are somehow inherently idiotic and need redeeming. Yet this book seeks to ask different questions about why the majority of humankind are destroying themselves and the world in which we live.

Jensen asks these questions through recounting his own life experiences and explaining how he has come to feel the way he does about the world he is a part of. He tries to work out the origin of the trauma he has been subjected to, and how this reflects on our culture as a whole. Identifying and trying to explaining trauma—such as the horrific child abuse Jensen suffered at the hands of his father—is not the most comforting of practices, but through Jensen's personal voyage of discovery it is possible to begin to understand why ruptures of the self can run so deep in people's characters.

Jensen reflects on the uncomfortable reality that sexual abuse of children, such as he suffered, is in fact normal in Western Civilisation in the sense that we allow it to happen and blind and silence ourselves to the terrible realisation that it is endemic to our culture.

Equally endemic is the destruction of nature, the denigration of women, and violence against anything perceived to be under our control. Jensen traces this tendency to the Enlightenment era, which provided the rationale for controlling, dominating and reproducing nature so it effectively became completely separate from culture. Thinkers such as Descartes and Bacon were at the forefront of a philosophical and practical quest to rid the planet of all things uncontrollable—including 'the native'.

Jensen gives many shocking examples of how tribal people were annihilated throughout the course of the last 200 years. (And there is no doubt that the dominant culture has been an active participant in this for the last 10,000 years.) Jensen makes the link that it takes the same degree of 'normality' (denial and silent complicity) for one group of people to wipe out another, as it does for a father to rape his children, or a multinational company to tear down acres of ancient forest.

Jensen reminds us that what we are missing in our lives is genuine relationships with people, and unmediated interactions with nature. Although previous attempts at re-linking nature and culture have often smacked of inverted imperialism and idealised native culture, Jensen avoids this simplistic tendency. He is not trying to suggest that we seek authenticity in another culture, but rather that we carefully re-examine our own relationship to the matrix of life in which we are embedded. He believes we must attune ourselves to 'the language older than words' which connects all living things, and in this way realise the equality of our kinship with other human beings and other species.



The question that remains for the reader is what to do with the information and insights of the book. Jensen himself grapples with this question—is it more useful for the world that he go on writing, or that he engages himself in struggle against the genocide and ecocide he sees, "every morning I wake up and ask myself whether I should write a book or blow up a dam... every day I tell myself I should continue to write. Yet I'm not always

convinced I'm making the right decision." For the time being he has chosen writing, seeking to inspire us to see in our own lives the difference we can create by rejecting the culture which has misshaped us.

This review doesn't really do justice to the contents of this radical, incisive, and moving book. Possibly the only way I can really describe what this book is about, and what its underlying intentions are, is in Jensen's own words: "There is a language older by far and deeper than words. It is the language of bodies, of body on body, wind on snow, rain on trees, wave on stone. It is the language of dream, gesture, symbol, memory. We have forgotten this language. We do not even remember that it exists."★

Direct Action

Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla

By Ann Hansen (Between the Lines/AK Press, 2002)
Paperback/493pp/No price given/ISBN 1 902593 48 0

This book is a must-read for anyone with an interest in revolutionary anarchist praxis. The author, Ann Hansen, writes of her involvement in the Canadian urban guerrilla group 'Direct Action', evoking an era of daring possibility through superb prose.

In the early 1980s the Canadian political scene had fully awakened to the ecological and nuclear devastation threatening vast areas of its pristine wilderness. In Vancouver, British Columbia, thousands flocked to demonstrations and rallies in a vain attempt to prevent the collusion of capitalism and the state in exploiting these natural resources. Against this background of protest and a strong punk counterculture in the city, a determined group of anarchist idealists decided to push the struggle in a more militant direction, hoping that their actions would inspire others to build a revolutionary movement capable of taking apart the prevailing structures of power.

This book is the story of Direct Action—a small urban guerrilla group whose dramatic acts of economic sabotage gave them world-wide notoriety. Their struggle was relatively short-lived. The headline grabbing bombings of the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir hydro-electric power line on Vancouver Island, and Litton systems plant in Toronto (where Cruise missile components were being built) succeeded in focusing the full resources of police investigation and surveillance on their activities. Despite being largely underground, the group were ambushed and captured on their way to a weekly shooting practice session near the town of Squamish less than one year after the group began. The 'Squamish Five', as they became known, were later tried and sentenced to between ten years and life for their actions.

Ann Hansen, the author of this book, was one of the founders of the group, and the book is testament to her unswerving political beliefs. She began on the path to urban guerrilladom whilst living in Germany and becoming involved in the support of the Red Army Faction, whose militancy and ideals she greatly admired. However, aware



that Europe was far ahead in the field of militant resistance, she opted to return to her native Canada in the hope of building a guerrilla movement there. She moved to Vancouver, finding political community in the vibrant counterculture of activists inhabiting the city. In a relatively liberal nation-state, mass popular protest had crystallised around a number of ecological and anti-nuclear issues. The imminent testing of American cruise missiles on Canadian soil had created a movement of outraged opposition, yet for all the rallies, it had achieved very little. Hansen documents the gradual coalescence of the 'Direct Action' group from a few individuals seeking to move beyond single-issue campaigns and protest tactics into more militant and revolutionary acts of defiance. She met up with Brent Taylor and Doug Stewart through the Vancouver political scene, and the three were later joined by Gerry Hannah and Julie Belmas from the punk counterculture. In contrast to the mainstream peace and environmental groups, Direct Action was anarchist, anti-capitalist and eco-feminist from its inception; politics which consciously informed their actions: "We're not just opposed to pollution, nuclear technology and all that stuff. We're opposed to the entire lifestyle and values of this society." (p. 65)

This rejection is very evident in the complete lifestyle of resistance led by the group. Clearly (and rightly!) proud of their blagging, scamming, robbing and other nefarious activities, Hansen writes extensively of their many excursions into petty crime. This countercultural lifestyle was blatantly lived for its own ends—and Hansen admits they were a little obsessed with theft. Yet these activities were also critical to prepare for their political actions—obtaining the necessary cars, cash, false ID and dynamite needed to go underground and undertake uncompromising acts of sabotage. Of this time Hansen writes: "I loved the excitement of our lives during those months. I would wake up in the morning never knowing exactly what new adventure the day would bring." (p. 48) This reminds us of the way in which many urban guerrillas have ended up getting caught. Although it wasn't what got Direct Action nicked, many underground groups have been caught through their unrelated (and often completely gratuitous) excursions into shoplifting or other similar petty crime. As some people are fond of saying, "If you going to break the big laws, don't break the small ones!"


Ann Hansen

The days brought solidarity work, political discussion, and self-education on issues facing British Columbia. Strategically, they were concerned with building up public support for militant actions on issues that already had a momentum of resistance. Their first actions were relatively small-scale, targeting Amax—a large mining corporation whose toxic waste dumping was causing sea-pollution and affecting the way of life of the indigenous coastal population. First they graffittied the company's head office, and later did a nocturnal paint-bomb and flare attack on the Ministry of the Environment which was sanctioning Amax's activities. They hoped their action would create publicity and garner positive support. However, despite sending out communiqués, the group's actions were labelled as petty vandalism, and they swiftly planned to move on to more dramatic tactics which could not be so easily dismissed.

Their next target was to be the much-hated Cheekeye-Dunsmuir powerline construction on Vancouver Island—a development symptomatic of the growing industrialisation of the island. Conventional tactics had totally failed to halt this project, and the group decided to up the ante by blowing up a portion of the line. Having earlier stolen dynamite stored by the government to clear highway landslips, Ann and Doug took out one of the crucial substations on the hydroelectric line. The action certainly created the desired publicity, as well as considerable support from those whose conventional methods of campaigning against this much-hated project had failed. However, the unprecedented action was immediately the focus of a intense police investigation, and in order to continue their tactical escalation, Direct Action were now forced fully underground.

The paraphernalia of urban guerilladom which the group had been preparing prior to the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir action now came into use. They rented an apartment using false ID, went on regular shooting practice sessions with their stolen cache of guns, and began to prepare for their next hit.

It is clear that some of the group found the transition to underground status more problematic than others. For Ann, the step was a logical and expected necessity, "...even if I had to sacrifice seeing my friends and family in order to make a significant contribution to revolutionary change it was all worth it." (p. 387) However, for some members of the group—notably Gerry and Julie—this way of life caused deep stress, and there was clearly a great deal of interpersonal tension within the small group. Hansen writes about these group dynamics with a total frankness, leaving the reader in no doubt about the unromantic realities of life on the run.

Some of the group decided to leave the heat of the West Coast and head for Toronto to carry out their next action—bombing the Litton systems plant where cruise missile components were being manufactured. Despite careful preparations intended to minimise the likelihood of injury to those working in the plant, the bombing went badly wrong. Police failed to clear the building following a telephone warning, and unpredictably the timing device was triggered early, creating a scene of carnage unforeseen by the group. Amazingly no one in the plant was killed, but Direct Action now found themselves catapulted into a glaring limelight they hadn't wished for. After initially considering suicide, the group decided that they

should go on, but that their communiqué claiming the action should include a sincere apology and acknowledgement of the mistakes made. (Hansen usefully includes copies of the main Direct Action communiqués as Appendices in the book.)

This communiqué, along with the others written by Direct Action, was to prove the downfall of the group. Whilst they continued to plan further actions and robberies, a journalist in Vancouver had noticed a striking similarity between the style of the communiqués and that of editorials written in a defunct radical magazine distributed in the city. The editorials were in the name of 'The Friends of Durutti', who had a PO box address in Vancouver. Once the police were tipped off, they swiftly made connections between the registered PO box holder (a friend, political ally and ex-flatmate of Brent's) and the group. Unfortunately, their previous public campaigning efforts had given some of them enough of a police file to make them viable suspects. When they were located on their return to Vancouver, they were immediately placed under surveillance.

Hansen dedicates about a third of the book to describing this time between the Litton bombing and their capture, piecing together the story with her own memories, supplemented by documentary evidence gathered by the police. At times the detailed recounting of their daily lives makes slightly frustrating reading, but it does serve to paint a realistic picture of the group's claustrophobia and rising paranoia. Surprisingly, despite their concerns the group were planning a substantial robbery, as well as further actions. In fact, Ann and Julie decided to involve others outside the group, in order to work on a women's anti-pornography action against the much-hated Red Hot Video chain. As the net of police investigation closed in, the 'Wimmins Fire Brigade' firebombed 3 of the Red Hot Video stores, garnering considerable support from the various groups campaigning to close down the hardcore porn dealers.

Despite being aware of the group's activities, the police held off from arresting the five until they had secured wire-tap evidence of their involvement in the Litton bombing. As soon as this was secured, (a graphic lesson in not discussing your political activities in the 'seclusion' of your own home!) the state prepared an ambush to catch the group on its way to shooting practice near Squamish. The 'Squamish Five' were swiftly behind bars, facing over a hundred charges.

The account of the surveillance and capture of Direct Action makes chilling reading; the police appointed 'watchers' to follow each member of the group, approached their neighbours to gain co-operation in monitoring and wire-tapping their apartment, and tailed their vehicles wherever they



"Our tap's been phoned!"

went. Hansen's detailed description of the police operation is particularly illuminating since much of the dialogue comes verbatim from the evidence given in court. However, her use of composite characters (to whom she ascribes thoughts and feelings), both here and in other parts of the book is something I found problematic. Stylistically, it certainly makes the book more readable (and this is one of the reasons for recommending the book so highly), but the mixture of fact and fiction can leave the reader questioning its authenticity. I don't want to be too critical of this feature, however, as it is rare to be reading a first-hand account of a group like Direct Action and the fact that Hansen is the author, rather than some random biographer gives the book an indisputable level of credibility. (There is of course the issue of bias, but Hansen never claims to be writing an objective account of the group's history.)

In terms of the book's relevance for the present time, a number of things can be said. It is certainly debatable whether many of the techniques used by Direct Action would still be viable—cars these days are surely more secure, robberies are complicated by the prevalence of CCTV, and criteria for ID becomes ever more stringent. This is a shame, since some of the book's detailed descriptions lend it the air of a 'how-to' manual! Yet even if the methods are outdated by 21st Century technology, the group's sense of possibility and determination to achieve their political goals remains inspiring. And whilst other members of the group may have renounced their notorious past on release from prison, Hansen has used her freedom to explain their actions without apology. Throughout the book she engages with the difficult political and philosophical questions which informed her life as an urban guerrilla, and her writing now. Foremost amongst these issues is the problem of trying to create revolutionary change in a climate where the aims of protest are largely reformist, the tactics are generally kept within 'acceptable' limits, and the support for greater militancy is nominal. For

those of us at the present time attempting to resist the mega-machine of global capitalism, highly militarised nation states, and social power structures which oppress and compromise our freedom, we would do well to heed Hansen's ultimate conclusions;

"There are many different forms of direct action, some more effective than others at different points in history, but in conjunction with other forms of protest, direct action can make the movement for change more effective by opening avenues of resistance that are not easily co-opted or controlled by the state. Unfortunately, people within the movement weaken their own actions by failing to understand and support the diverse tactics available. Instead of forming a unified front, some activists see the sabotage of destructive property by protesters as being on the same level as the violence of the state and corporations... If we accept that all violence is the same, then we have agreed to limit our resistance to whatever the state and corporations find acceptable. We have



become pacified. Remaining passive in the face of today's global human and environmental destruction will create deeper scars than those resulting from the mistakes we will inevitably make by taking action." (p. 471)★

The Many-Headed Hydra

Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic

By Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (Verso, 2000)

Hardback/433pp/£19/ISBN 1 85984 798 6

"Who are the oppressors but the Nobility and Gentry; and who are oppressed, if not the Yeoman, the Farmer, the Tradesman and the Labourer? ... your slavery is their liberty, your poverty is their prosperity; yea, in brief, your honouring of them, dishonoureth the commonality... Unlord those that are lorded by you."—Ranter Laurence Clarkson, 1647 (p. 81)

The Many-Headed Hydra is a long awaited (almost 20 years in the making) tour-de-force of radical history from below. Avoiding the usual categories that constrain history within the limits of the nation state, the authors take an internationalist approach in order to study the way people have fought against these categories and have tried to escape from and resist states by moving across borders and organising across races.

Nowadays when globalisation is the buzzword most used to understand capitalism, it is worth remembering that capitalism has always been global. Linebaugh and Rediker make this point by referring to the Virginia Company—the origin of English imperialism—as a "new world-trade organization". (p. 15) This book is about the origins of capitalism in the first wave of globalisation in the 17th and 18th centuries and about the resistance that it encountered. At school we are taught about the great era of exploration and discovery—we are not taught about the



slavery, genocide, and exploitation that it entailed, nor about the mutinies, slave revolts and runaway maroon communities of ex-slaves that resisted it.

The authors' contention is that the 'discovery' of the Americas signalled a new stage in human history. It kick-started capitalism, launched global maritime trade, created the biggest movement of peoples in history and transformed the world. They take this as their starting point and focus on the resistance to this new globalisation. They then follow the thread of this resistance and the twists and turns it makes up to the point which normal 'labour history' tends to take as its starting point.

Thus *The Many-Headed Hydra* is a book of Atlantic history—about the three-way traffic between Africa, America and Europe. Everyone is familiar with the famous triangular slave trade which built the fortunes of Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow and London. But it is inevitable that not only slaves, sugar and tobacco travelled on the ships. News travelled too—underground news of slave revolts, of revolutions in Haiti, France and America; new ideas and new tactics. People travelled too—radicals who had stirred up trouble in England were transported overseas and spread their ideas, while travellers who had seen in the indigenous peoples of the Americas that a free life in harmony with nature was possible, brought their ideas back to Europe.

Linebaugh and Rediker use a few particular episodes and a few individual people to draw out a series of themes that permeate the whole book. They do this successively, using one telling episode to make a wide range of points. And they find a series of metaphors that recur throughout the historical period they're looking at. Chief among these is the myth of Hercules and the hydra, which was continually used by ruling class propagandists as a way of explaining the difficulty of their task of forging an empire. One of the twelve labours of Hercules was to slay the monstrous hydra, a snake-like beast with many heads. Every time he cut one off, another two grew in its place. He eventually killed it by using fire to seal the severed stumps, thus preventing the heads from regrowing. The Anglo-American ruling class saw themselves as Hercules trying to discipline rebellious subjects that would simply re-appear in new and more threatening forms every time they seemed to have conquered them. The building of empire was a 'Herculean' task and at every turn they were confronted by new manifestations of their amorphous enemy—pirates, rebellious slaves, independent women, religious radicals, 'war-like' tribal peoples... "the rabble", which "like a *Monstrous Hydra*" would "hiss against their Soveraigns *Regal Power* and *Authority*." (p. 29)

Enclosure

The history of the ruling-class Hercules' struggle with the hydra of resistance is driven by four central themes that determine the whole period covered in the book: enclosure, terror, co-operation and resistance, and the struggle for alternative ways of life.

The central thing that governs it all is enclosure or expropriation. It is the enclosure of common lands in England, beginning slowly in the late Middle Ages and then rapidly speeding up through to the mid-18th century that provides the essential historical basis for capitalism. To get the poor to work, you had to take away their land. Once the land was denied to the people, they had no choice but to work, making money for the owners of the plantations, ships and workshops. Huge numbers of displaced people were redeployed overseas to populate the colonies. The main argument advanced by the propagandists of English colonialism was that colonisation would provide a way for England to rid itself of the "swarmes of idle persons" enclosure had produced. (p. 16) The separation of the people from the land in England was mirrored overseas as the Irish were dispossessed, Africans enslaved and Native Americans displaced.



May Day 1640: At the outbreak of the English Revolution, 'prentices and seamen break open the prisons and storm the Archbishop of Canterbury's house in Lambeth.

Enclosure and the vast changes that were taking place in society (the beginnings of industrial exploitation, a huge military mobilisation) prompted massive and gloriously-named rebellions across the country as handicraft workers and peasants sought to preserve their old ways of life: the Beggars' Christmas Riot of 1582, the Plaisterers' Insurrection of 1586, the Felt-Makers' Riot of 1591, the Southwark Candle-Makers' Riot of 1592. Those who resisted enclosure, tearing down the fences and filling in the ditches were for the first time called Levellers.

Terror

This resistance to enclosure naturally implied a response: terror was used to make possible the basic conditions for capitalist development. At home, in the colonies and at sea, gruesome punishments were enacted to keep the poor at their work, prevent the spread of radical ideas and prevent colonists running off to join the enemy.

Transportation to the colonies was a punishment and one which not only kept the poor in their place but also profited the state, rather than costing it anything. The conquered Irish, as well as Gypsies and Africans were forcibly deported out of England. Thousands upon thousands of those found guilty of even minor crimes were transported to the colonies. In a sermon of 1622,

John Donne promised that the Virginia Company would "sweep your streets, and wash your dores, from idle persons, and the children of idle persons, and imploy them: and truely, if the whole Countrey were such a Bridewell [prison], to force idle persons to work, it had a good use." (p. 59) As the authors point out, the propagandists and planners of colonisation wanted America to *function* as a prison.

However, it was not a prison from which escape was impossible. English soldiers and settlers in the new plantations in Ireland would regularly run away to join the Irish. And in the New World, settlers in England's Virginia colony refused to work, mutinied and "did Runne Away unto the Indyans". In 1611 some of these renegades were recaptured. Sir Thomas Dale, the governor of the colony "in A moste severe mannor caused [them] to be executed... Some he apointed to be hanged Some burned Some to be broken upon wheles, others to be staked and some to be shott to death." The purpose of this was "to terrefy the rest for Attemptinge the Lyke." (p. 34)

Co-operation and Resistance

The two final main themes in the book tell the other side of the story. All the people taken from their homes and moved around the world were thrown together in new combinations. In order to build empire many workers had to be brought together to sail the ships and fell the forests, build the forts, enclose and tame the land. These people had to learn to speak together, learn to work together, whether they were from Africa, Spain or Suffolk. And often these new combinations of workers who met together in prisons, in the holds of ships, in work gangs and on plantations, hit back at their masters as the co-operation they had learned in order to build the empire, they used to undo it as Africans and Irish rose in rebellion together, sailors of many countries dropped out and turned pirate together, and settlers ran off to join the Indians.

Radical Alternatives

The final theme is related to this. What these people were struggling for were alternative ways of living. And this wasn't utopian dreaming. The common lands in England had only been destroyed recently. Commoning self-sufficiency was a living memory for many. Slaves taken from Africa had been taken from communal village societies. And also in the Americas, the Native population provided a clear example to the early settlers of a functioning society without the state, wage-slavery, money, class divisions or exploitation. Virginia's Indians had no conception of work in the sense that Europeans understood it: William Strachey, the secretary of the Virginia company, reported that they were "for the most parte of the year idle," although they were living well while the European colonists were starving. (p. 24) All these elements combined with popular utopian traditions (the Classical Golden Age, the Garden of Eden, the communism of the early Christians etc.) to provide a very clear alternative to early colonial society.

The English Revolution

Linebaugh and Rediker trace these themes through the following two and a half centuries of English imperialism—a cycle of victories and defeats for the diverse masses that made up the various heads of the hydra. The initial period of terror and enclosure under the Tudors which launched the early colonial system and the slave trade was a defeat as commoners lost their commons, Ireland was conquered and unwilling colonists were shipped out to America.

But the new combinations of people thrown together by this process hit back in the English Revolution of the 1640s. The Civil War between King and Parliament unleashed a vast questioning and re-valuing of everything in the country. The revolutionary forces led by Oliver Cromwell and the militant Puritans abolished censorship of the press, did away with repressive courts and executed the King by decapitation in 1649. They then dissolved the monarchy and the House of Lords and declared a republic. In the tumult a huge amount of new radical ideas—democratic,



Title page of "Heresiography" by Ephraim Pagitt (1654).

anarchic, communistic, heretical, libertarian—were thrown up in an atmosphere in which everything was up for grabs. Radical groups such as the Levellers and Diggers sprang up, reclaiming the common lands and spreading subversion among the troops. Strange heretical sects proliferated, preaching that Christ would shortly return and establish paradise on earth, casting down the powerful and the mighty.

The Diggers declared in 1649 that private property was the work of Satan, and that the land should be worked in common with no enclosure. They took direct action to re-occupy the commons, starting about a dozen land communes across England at the height of the revolution. They stated that "the earth is made by our Creator to be a common Treasury of livelihood to one equall with another." (p. 117)

For their part, the Ranters published a pamphlet in 1650 called *A Justification of the Mad Crew*, which declared that God "pulleth down the mighty from their Throne, and sets up men of low degree." They held that God's glory was to be found "among the rogues, theeves, whoremasters, and base persons of the world." (p. 85) The Ranters wanted one world human community with no states and the people of Christendom, Islam and Africa to become "one people and one body". They were open libertines, "children of pleasure", seeing God's glory in "dancing, lying with one another, kissing pure and perfect". (p. 86)

Had the revolution lasted, the history of England and the world might have been very different. The commons could have been preserved; the slave trade might have been abolished. Capitalism could have been stopped before it had really properly started.

The Counter-Revolution

Cromwell and the merchants and capitalists who backed him needed the poor and the working classes to make their revolution for them. And so for a while there was a remarkable flourishing of radicalism, but once the republic was established and Cromwell was safely in power, he turned on the radicals and crushed them.

The Cromwellian counter-revolution split the movement. The more radical elements were executed, imprisoned, pushed underground or forced to flee overseas, while others hastily rewrote their history to deny that they had ever been radicals. Those who had once, in the heat of revolutionary fervour, opposed the slave trade, now became some of its leading figures.

Once he was securely in power, Cromwell pursued an aggressive policy to challenge the Dutch for naval supremacy and to make England the pre-eminent naval and slaving power. English involvement in the slave trade hugely expanded after 1649, and by the end of the century England was the primary slaving nation in the Atlantic.



"The Sailor's Return, or Valour Rewarded" (1783). "The image of the freebooter as a man with a patched eye, a peg leg, and a hook for a hand suggests an essential truth: sailoring was a dangerous line of work." (p. 164)

The Diaspora

The counter-revolution begun under Cromwell was made complete by the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. But defeat is never total: a radical diaspora developed, spread around the Atlantic world, as Ranters, Quakers and erstwhile revolutionaries left for the Americas. It seemed that rebellion had been banished after the 1660s. And indeed in England the ruling class had the upper hand for the next century. However, the radical spirit of the English revolution had not died, it had simply fled to the four corners of the earth.

There was a series of revolts across the Caribbean and American colonies in the late 17th century. But eventually, after some years of intermittent war, the colonies were made safe. The rebel war against slavery and empire had become increasingly difficult on land. The rebels were driven into the sea. But not to their deaths—as one hydra's head was cut off, another emerged. The same multi-ethnic class of dropouts now took to the seas as pirates and buccaneers.

The Commons at Sea

In the near-century between the 1670s and the mid-18th century, radical struggles on land seemed to disappear, but a new threat arose at sea to challenge the plans of the English elite. The radical ideas of the English revolution, exiled by the Cromwellian counter-revolution, found a new home on board the sailing ship, where they circulated around the Atlantic world.

Radicalism came easily to 17th century seamen, many of whom were press-ganged into the

Navy and were effectively slaves. Sailors were subject to the most vicious regime of punishment imaginable in order to enforce work-discipline. Sailing ships were the engines driving the development of early capitalism but they were also the scene of sustained resistance, as sailors rioted, mutinied, deserted, and went on strike. The most developed expression of this seamen's resistance was piracy. All these practices and tactics were carried and communicated around the world by sailors. The sailing ship served as "a forcing house of internationalism" (p. 151) in which working people of all different races and backgrounds were thrown together and in which news and ideas from all over the world were exchanged. Sailors even developed their own pidgin language to communicate between speakers of different languages. This became a language of resistance, spoken in port cities around the Atlantic and conveniently incomprehensible to landlubbers.

By the end of the 17th century England was a global superpower. The threat of piracy was the one thing to cast a shadow over this happy prospect. The pirates of the late 17th and early 18th century—the 'golden age' of piracy—were multi-racial (many were escaped slaves) and libertarian. It was said that "there is so little Government and Subordination among [pirates], that they are, on Occasion, all Captains, all Leaders." (p. 163) They were essentially multi-racial maroon communities at war with slavery, similar to those renegade tribes hidden deep in the forests of the Americas, but they took to the high seas while others hid in the mountains or jungle.

A massive campaign of terror was launched to extinguish the threat of piracy. This was mainly due to the threat it posed to the slave trade. A law was drafted for the suppression of piracy, a naval squadron was sent to West Africa and large numbers of pirates were captured and executed. By 1730 piracy was defeated, but again, the radicals, although defeated, were not destroyed—the tradition of maritime radicalism continued as an underground current, appearing in mutinies, strikes and rebellions around the Atlantic world.

Return to Land

The spirit of revolt that had fled overseas returned in the late 18th and early 19th centuries with a vengeance, as the same unbroken thread of resistance showed itself again in the American revolution. The successful revolutions in America, France, and Haiti, frightened the British ruling class. And they had good reason to be frightened as the radicalism they thought they had conquered reared its head again in a series of attempted insurrections in Britain. The radicals were fighting for the same things they had been 100 or 200



The hanging of an African in New York, c. 1750

years before—against slavery and for the commons.

The harbinger of the storm to come was a wave of insurrections that ripped through the Caribbean slave colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. Governor Mathews of the Leeward Islands said, "the contagion of rebellion is spread among these islands more than I apprehend is discovered". (p. 193) This hurricane hit land in the 1741 New York waterfront conspiracy when sailors and slaves organised together to burn the city to the ground and stockpiled guns, gunpowder and ammunition in a local dockside bar.

The New York conspiracy was discovered and never bore fruit. Its leaders were executed and the colonial authorities took efforts to ensure it could never happen again. They attempted to break up the urban mob, turn black against white and import less rebellious slaves.

Inspiring all the rebellions of this time were the ongoing decades-long struggles of the maroons in Jamaica and Surinam. In 1740 the Maroon War in Jamaica ended with the British Imperial power conceding to the maroons and granting them land, autonomy and freedom in return for an end to their guerrilla war against the slave state.

Despite its ultimately conservative conclusion, the American Revolution of 1776 was initially made by sailors, slaves and the dispossessed multi-racial urban mob. But this was followed by an American counter-revolution as Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and other leading figures of the revolution distanced themselves from the mob and acted to preserve property, privilege and slavery. The constitution of the new federal republic granted it the power to repress domestic dissent while at the same time strengthening the institution of slavery.

But nevertheless, the American experience inspired others, in Britain, Ireland, France, Haiti and elsewhere. Sailors and slaves carried its message across the Atlantic, inspiring the abolitionist movement in Britain, revolts in the Caribbean and the early pan-African movement.

Back to Britain

In 1803 an Irish army officer named Colonel Edward Despard was executed for attempting to raise a revolutionary army in England and Ireland and to declare a republic. This was not so implausible at the time. The American, French and Haitian revolutionary wars had all occurred within recent memory. The revolt of the United Irishmen had been a mere five years before in 1798. Moreover, his conspiracy occurred in the context of widespread resistance to early industry in England. There were regular outbreaks of proto-Luddite machine breaking and arson. Moreover, the threat of invasion from revolutionary France loomed large. Many of the conspirators were soldiers or sailors and they knew what they were doing.

The plan was to fire on the King's carriage with a cannon as he made his annual trip to Parliament and then to seize the Tower of London and the Bank of England before signalling to the rest of the country to rise. The ultimate aim was to implement the "wild and Levelling principle of Universal Equality" as his trial judge put it. (p. 281)

Despard's wife, Catherine, was an African-American who Despard had met in Belize, and who had returned with him to London. She too was a revolutionary and together they were emblematic of the Atlantic struggles of the era, reaching from Africa and Ireland to Central America and back to London. Belize was notorious as a haunt of buccaneers, who had interbred with escaped slaves, transported rebels, and the indigenous inhabitants of the area, to produce a sea-going polyglot people who lived in a propertyless, stateless form of commonism.

Back in London, the couple joined the growing movement against slavery. Despard ended up imprisoned for debt, and while in jail he met insurrectionists and mutineers of all sorts. His conspiracy joined slaves, commoners, craftsmen degraded by the introduction of machinery, mutinous sailors, and the Irish still wanting to fulfil the ideals of 1798. Despard's defeat did not end the attempts at revolution in England. In 1820 the Cato Street conspirators planned to kill the cabinet while they were at dinner and then to seize key targets in London, giving the signal for a national uprising.

The historical period covered by the book ends here, at the moment of possibility created by the upheavals of the late 18th century. England came very close to a revolution in the late 18th and early 19th century. Of course we know that this didn't happen, but at the time, the future was open and a new world could be discerned on the horizon.



"A Negro hung alive by the Ribs to a Gallows", c. 1773. The revolutionary poet and mystic William Blake etched this engraving to illustrate Captain John Gabriel Stedman's 'Narrative of a Five Years Expedition'. This was an account of the war against the maroons of Surinam. The maroons were escaped slaves who lived in the rainforest and defeated the Dutch imperialists in a guerrilla war against being returned to slavery. The Governor of Surinam described the maroons as an "invisible enemy", who "shoots you down like ducks in the swamps". (p. 4)

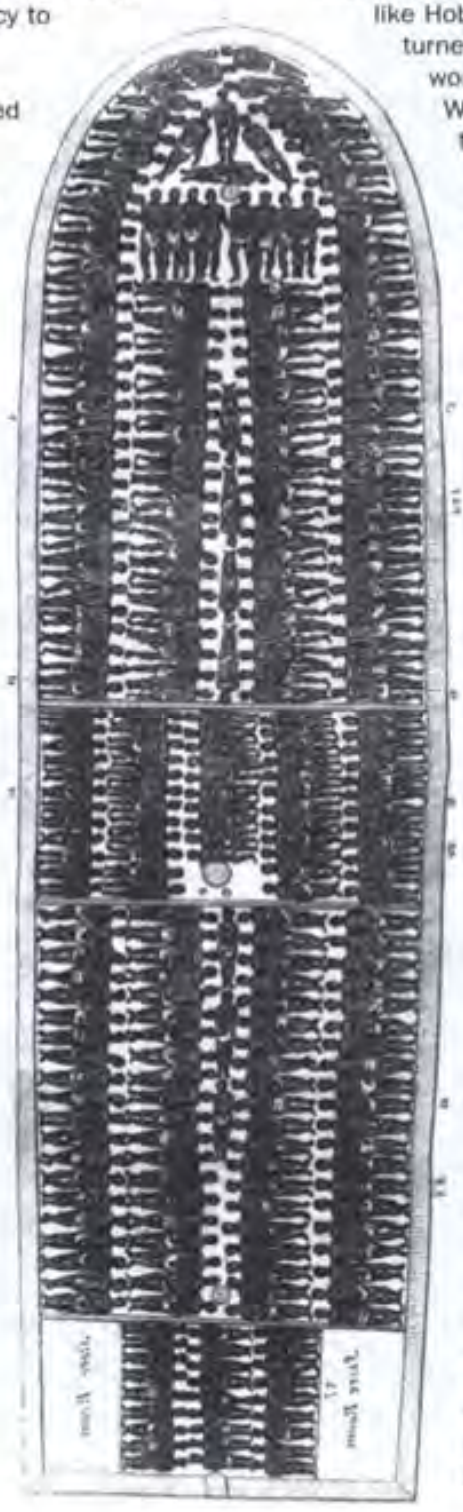
Missing From History

Working class struggle and working class power is edited out of history. Even those social historians who pay attention to the lives of those who built the world we live in rather than just those that reaped the benefit of their labours, still often present the working class as victims, as

powerless (for example a recent radio series on working class history called 'Voices of the Powerless'). That is the history of the working class but written from the perspective of the elite. This book redresses the balance a bit, presenting working class victories and showing how the collective power and the threat to capitalism represented by slaves, sailors, peasants and the indigenous altered the course of history. This is a message of hope—that we can change the world, and indeed that our political ancestors did. The changes they achieved we still live with today as well as their revolutionary legacy to inspire us to further pursue their goals.

These voices have been silenced by the *actual* violence of the noose, the ducking stool, the rack, the gun and the sword, and also by "the violence of abstraction in the writing of history, the severity of history that has long been the captive of the nation-state, which remains in most studies the largely unquestioned framework of analysis." (p. 7)

The authors are Marxists—of sorts, and this book is partly following in the tradition of the famous Marxist historians of the post-war years (EP Thompson, EJ Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill etc.). EP Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) starts with the formation of the London Corresponding Society (LCS) in 1792—supposedly the first working class political organisation in Britain, and presumably, the world. Linebaugh and Rediker trace the history of struggle that comes before this point and the defeats that led the LCS eventually to define itself in national, racial terms as being for the English working class rather than the international, multi-racial oppressed multitudes of the earth. They say, "Organizations such as the LCS would eventually make their peace with the nation, as the working class became national, *English*." (p. 352) As John Zerzan has pointed out in 'Who Killed Ned Ludd?',[1] the very point which traditional Marxists pick as the marking the beginning of working class history and proletarian struggle, is exactly the point at which it is effectively dead and buried within the mechanisms of union negotiating and electoral politics. *The Many-Headed Hydra* ends where 'normal' labour history begins—with the birth of the 'proper' 'full-grown' 'mature' industrial working class—which is actually a product of defeat. The unrooted peasantry, the transitional class of ex-peasants and not-yet-proles (not dismissed by Linebaugh and Rediker as "primitive rebels", like Hobsbawm does[2]), resisted being turned into 'full grown' industrial workers for decades upon decades. When they finally lost, the point of their defeat was taken as the beginning of the 'proper' working class, a 'proper' working class which is also a product of defeat, inasmuch as it is defined as *working* and also by separate national, white and male histories. The separate national histories we are taught in school and the separation between labour history, black history and women's history are also products of defeat.



The separation of these disciplines of history is in a way an ideological attempt to prevent links being made, to keep people in separate categories and to stop, for example, the white working class connecting their history with black history. It is also ideological in that in teaching *national* histories, much of the point is to reinforce the idea of the nation (which is essentially a fiction), whereas of course actual history never stopped when it got to the borders of the state. As we know from real life, actions and inspirations and causes and effects flow internationally.

Race Against Time

This book is also a story of a time before the working class was so divided—when the white workers had not yet been taught to hate the black workers. Indeed, these divide and rule tactics were introduced to defeat and destroy the multi-racial struggles that had

threatened to shake the early capitalist world to its foundations.

In the turmoil and revolutionary upheavals of the 1790s the 'white race' was invented as a specific concept. The idea of race was created as a weapon to divide the working class, most importantly the Africans and the Irish. Ireland was the first colony of the British Empire—the first model and precursor for everything that was to come later, and the Irish had always been regarded like the Africans as a sub-human race of barbarians. However, in order to defeat the spectre of a united Irish-African revolt, the elite started to propagate the idea of white racial supremacy, removing the Irish from their previous sub-human status and inviting them inside the white man's club, thus trying to break the Irish-African alliance.

This attempt at inventing racial divisions took force especially after the revolution in Haiti. In the revolutionary war in Haiti the island's slaves organised themselves into a force that was to defeat the armies of three empires to finally win their freedom and create the first free black country in the world. This profoundly shook the ruling class in America and in all the European empires. Linebaugh and Rediker say: "When casualties began to mount after the British expeditions against Haiti in 1795-96, panic—and racism—spread through society. This was... the very moment when the biological category of race was being formed and disseminated in Britain and America". (p. 352) One example of how these categories changed is the New York waterfront rebellion of 1741, when a collection of sailors, slaves, workers and the down-and-outs of New York's dockside slums decided to stage an uprising "to burn the town and kill as many white people as [they] could". (p. 208) What is interesting here is that many of the people involved in the plot were, in our terms, 'white'. So they clearly didn't mean it in the sense that would be interpreted now. 'White' was a term that didn't at this point apply to the Irish, for example, and was meant to refer to those in respectable society—the rich. This is not so bizarre as it may seem—remember the American Declaration of Independence which states that all men are created equal and yet many of those signing it were slave owners and clearly did not intend for their slaves to be granted these rights—obviously 'men' was a category which did not include black men.

The sort of unity seen in 1741 became unthinkable afterwards, when the labour movement became for the white, national working class and pan-Africanism developed to meet the utopian needs of blacks. Both sides of this equation specifically defined themselves by race, whereas that had not been the case a few decades earlier.

Against Globalisation

When I started writing this review I originally wanted to include *everything*. Suffice to say that there are far, far more amazing, inspiring, crazy stories of insurrection, riot, sabotage, and revolution in this book than I have space to mention.

The value and the lesson of such radical history is to teach us not to forget; that our future struggles might be enlightened by what has gone before. And Linebaugh and Rediker's proto-proletariat and its struggles against the rise of Atlantic capitalism can teach us some things that still have relevance. Primarily that the strength of resistance is in its hydra-headedness: it is the ability of rebels and revolutionaries to change and shift and merge, to disappear and then re-appear again in new places and in new forms, that keeps the forces of authority on their toes. And also that there will always be resistance, and resistance will always be international—when the struggle seems to have been vanquished, it will re-emerge in another unexpected place, on another level, but still with the same dreams held in our hearts.

And as if to demonstrate the cyclical nature of the struggle against empire, history caught up with the authors of the book. As they were putting the finishing touches to their work, a whole new international movement against globalisation sprang up to renew the international struggle for liberation:

"The globalising powers have a long reach and endless patience. Yet the planetary wanderers do not forget, and are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the commons." (p. 353)★

Notes

1) *Elements of Refusal* by John Zerzan (Left Bank Books, Seattle, 1988), p. 91
2) See *Primitive Rebels* by EJ Hobsbawm (Manchester University Press, 1974)



Running On Emptiness
The Pathology Of Civilization
By John Zerzan (Feral House, 2002)
Paperback/215pp/£12.00
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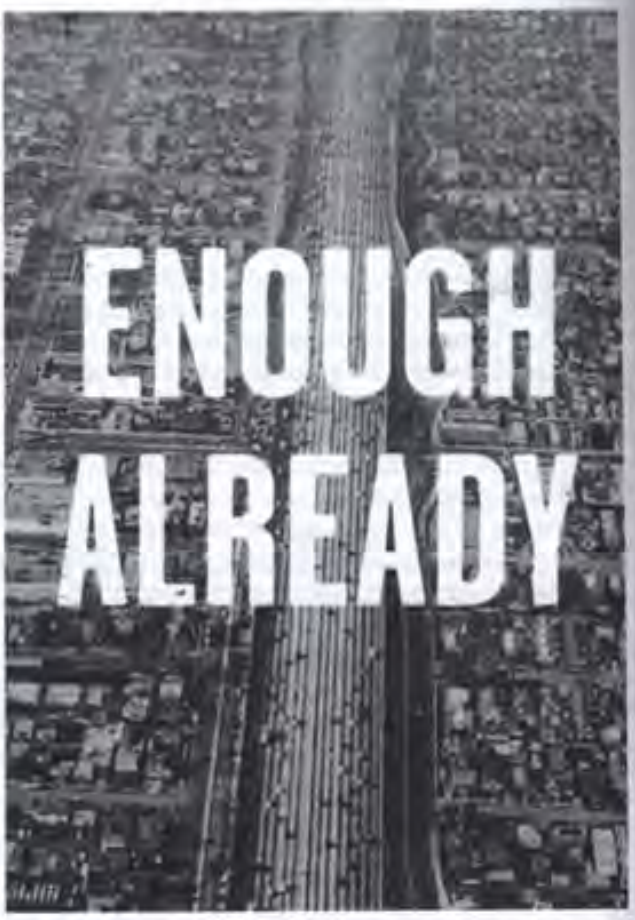
You may have heard of John Zerzan—to some he is one of the great thinkers of our time, to others he is an idiot who writes untruths about pre-history in order to put forward his theories of a 'Future Primitive'. To the United States media he is 'the leader of the Eugene Anarchists'. So what's all the fuss about?

For those of you who have never read any of Zerzan's work before, I suggest you go out and get this latest anthology of his writings. Zerzan has been investigating the dark heart of civilisation for some years now. Never one to shy away from debate, or be afraid of making enemies within the anarchist scene, he has also written critiques of post-modernism and on the moribund nature of the left. Zerzan is a long-term contributory editor of US based publications *Green Anarchy* and *Anarchy: A Journal Of Desire Armed*, which is in my view the best anti-authoritarian journal coming out of North America. He has also had many articles published in the UK's *Green Anarchist* newspaper. At one time he was a regular contributor to the US's longest running anarchist paper, the once great, now worthless, *Fifth Estate*. Alongside *Anarchy*, *Fifth Estate* was one of the first periodicals to develop an anarchist critique of technology and civilisation. One of the other long-term contributors to this developing critique was *Fifth Estate's* David Watson—author of *Against the Megamachine*. (For a review of this book see *Do or Die* No. 9, pp. 193-194.)

Zerzan's groundbreaking book *Elements Of Refusal* really opened people's eyes to a wider critique of our situation, and what we might need to look at in order to create a more authentic liberated existence. These ideas were being developed in more radical anti-authoritarian circles, both in the US and here in the UK.

Building on *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan!* Fredy Perlman's 1983 epic book exploring the his-story of civilisation, in *Elements of Refusal* Zerzan explores the origins of agriculture, number, art and language—all of which are fundamental parts of civilisation. He then goes on to analyse their role in oppression, alienation and our separation from nature. Zerzan followed this up with his book *Future Primitive*, the title essay of which caused somewhat of a stir amongst the rather staid anarchist scene.

This latest collection has some strong essays. In fact this includes the introduction by Theresa Kintz, which is an insightful overview, not just to



this collection, but to the broad range of Zerzan's work and the anarcho-primitivist tendency in general. Kintz sets the context for this book perfectly as she writes during the run up to the war on Afghanistan. In fact as I sit here writing this review we are in the midst of another part of the 'War on Terror', this time in Iraq—close to the origins of civilisation in the fertile crescent. Civilization has meant war since its inception. One leviathan swallows up another, devouring all that it comes across.

The title essay 'Running On Emptiness' is one of my personal favourites. Here Zerzan analyses what he describes as the "failure of symbolic thought". He critiques the symbolic and the culture that has arisen around this alienated form of expression. I think this builds on his 'Art', 'Number' and 'Language' essays from *Elements of Refusal* and is one the strongest essays in the collection, and in fact I feel completes his investigations into the links between the symbolic and civilisation which he started there.

Symbolism enabled our separation from nature and the creation of hierarchy between us, the replacement of the real with a mere representation of it. It is Zerzan's view that, "Culture has led us to betray our own aboriginal spirit and wholeness, into an ever-worsening realm of synthetic, isolating, impoverished estrangement. Which is not to say that there are no more everyday pleasures, without

which we would lose our humaness. But as our plight deepens, we glimpse how much must be erased for our redemption." (p. 16)

If we are to go along with this analysis of the origins of specialisation originating in the origins of symbolic thought, then it seems to me that our liberation lies in the destruction of alienated reifying forms of interaction and expression, with non-symbolic and unmediated existences taking their place.

Other highlights include a transcription of a talk he gave at a university for technophiles entitled 'Against Technology'. This is a really good introduction to ideas around the role of technology and its inherently destructive qualities—both for the earth and for us. The essay 'That Thing We Do' explores reification (literally 'thing-ification'). The interview titled 'Enemy of The State' with Zerzan by Derrick Jensen, is a clear and concise overview of Zerzan's ideas and a lot of the key elements of the anti-civilisation critique.

Towards the end is an autobiographical piece, 'So How Did you Become an Anarchist?' Interesting for those who may think of Zerzan merely as an academic and those that are interested in his early role in the trade union movement, which led him to his critique of leftist politics and his part in the debate over the 'refusal of work' versus organised resistance within the workplace. Although the inclusion of such biographical details may seem egotistical or to encourage some 'icon' status (something which I feel is problematic within the milieu) the bottom line is that things come from our personal experiences.

The essays 'Whose Unabomber?' and 'He Means It. Do you?' are about Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber. Zerzan created a storm in the US media by being one of the first people to visit



Kaczynski in prison. He went on to create a storm (again) in the anarchist movement by refusing to write off Kaczynski as a lunatic serial killer, rather painting a picture of him as an intelligent anti-tech anarchist, which is what Kaczynski claims he is, but many anarchists have arrogantly claimed he is not. More recently Zerzan was in trouble again to do with his associations with Kaczynski when *Green Anarchy* published a tactical essay entitled 'Hit 'Em Where It Hurts' by Kaczynski.

For me the weakest parts of the book are some of the shorter essays like 'Star Trek' and 'City of Light' which I don't really see the point in publishing here since they're not his strongest work, and they feel like mere padding.

This book will not provide you with answers, it is not an off the peg anarcho-primitivist manifesto—not another commodity in the market place of pseudo-radical ideas. It does not tell you what to do, or how to reach any 'future primitive'—that is for you to work out.★

My Name is Chellis & I'm in Recovery from Western Civilisation

By Chellis Glendinning (Shambhala Publications, 1994)
Paperback/240pp/US$13.00/ISBN 0 87773 996 X

In the midst of fighting all the battles against civilisation's advance, we also struggle with trying to comprehend the 'nature of the beast.' The anti-civilisation perspective has developed an ever more coherent and acute awareness, and is beginning to find its way into the thinking and actions of an increasing number of people.

But when we think about the vast, interconnected and entrenched reality of what we are confronting, and how we are so thoroughly trapped in it, the mind balks at finding its way into the centre of the madness to help us find a point of clarity from which our actions are truly concerted and aimed at deconstructing or destroying this maze of civilisation and at freeing ourselves from its corrosive influence. What Chellis Glendinning gives us in this book is an account of her own personal journey into the place where the human being confronts the damage that has been done to its very nature, and how that connects to the ongoing onslaught against all of wild, original nature. And in the process it is a step towards what it means to 'de-civilise' ourselves.

As I see it, the book's basic premise is that we can't *just* fight against civilisation, but that we also need to work on individually and collectively healing the traumas and wounds that it has inflicted upon us in a myriad of painful and destructive ways. This



healing process, and the healing power that it draws upon, has its roots in what she calls the 'primal matrix', described as, "the state of a healthy, wholly functioning psyche in full-bodied participation with a healthy, fully-functioning Earth." Like other anti-civilisation writers and thinkers, from Thoreau to Stanley Diamond, Paul Shepard and John Zerzan, she then links this perspective of the natural individual to what she refers to as 'nature-based peoples.' Those who, she says, inhabit the territory which, "may offer the clearest access we have to the last remaining vestiges of our primal matrix," through their "psychological knowledge, social practices, spiritual understandings, and ecological awareness."

Most of the first part of the book, entitled 'Roots', is devoted to exploring what to many will be familiar territory—the evolution of humans into relatively small, tightly knit hunter-gatherer bands, and the ways that they have lived in, nurtured and fostered the primal matrix. The second part, 'Domestication and its Discontents' describes their undoing through the long, dislocating and traumatic process of domestication, and its advanced stage which she calls 'techno-addiction.' The final two sections are more in-depth explorations of her view of the healing process.

Throughout the work, Glendinning draws out, "a relationship between the deluge of psychological dysfunctions among us and the ecological crisis besieging our planet." As a practising psychotherapist, she brings this approach to bear in her work with those damaged by the "psychopathology of daily life" under the regime of civilisation. But to get to the point where she could help others heal, she had to go through her own painful and painstaking healing ordeal.

Like Derrick Jensen, whose writings and talks have also achieved a growing amount of attention among eco-activists, anarchists and others, Glendinning was the victim of sexual abuse as a child. The need to confront and deal with the scars and psychological blocks left by those experiences became a powerful motivation to find a deeper and more integrated wholeness in her life, and world in general. Like Jensen, she sees her own personal abuse and traumas as inextricably linked with the abuse perpetrated over countless generations within and by families, societies, classes, races, nations, corporations and other institutions which perpetuate civilisation. She draws upon pioneering studies of post-traumatic stress syndrome to inform us that "when the traumatic experience is left unhealed and dissociated from consciousness... traumatised people can re-enact their pain by unconsciously performing aberrant or abusive behaviours that then affect their children and so on down through the generations, or that affect other people and so on down through history."

Central to Glendinning's approach is this notion of trauma, which she sees as inherent in civilised life. At some point in our collective and individual histories, she says, "*something unnatural happened to us.*" What could this something be, she asks?

"Because we are creatures who were born to live in vital participation with the natural world, the violation of this participation forms the basis of our *original trauma.* This is the systemic removal of our lives from our previously assumed elliptical participation in nature's world—from the tendrils of earthy textures, the seasons of sun and stars, carrying our babies across rivers, hunting the sacred game, the power of the life force. It is a severance that in the western world was initiated slowly and subtly at first with the domestication of plants and animals, grew in intensity with the emergence of large-scale civilisations, and has developed to pathological proportion with mass technological society—until today you and I can actually live for a week or a month without smelling a tree, witnessing the passage of the moon, or meeting an animal in the wild, much less knowing the spirits of these beings or fathoming the interconnections between their destinies and our own. Original trauma is the disorientation we experience, however consciously or unconsciously, because we do not live in the natural world. It is the psychic displacement, the exile, that is inherent in civilised life. It is our homelessness."

Glendinning reflects at length on the devastating psychic effect of our loss of contact with wild nature. "As the wilderness came to be divided up and sculpted for human use," she writes, "people lost the very context that had originally served the

development of personal integrity." Another of the social and psychic losses she explores in some depth is "our long-standing ability to enter into nature-induced non-ordinary states of consciousness for the purpose of healing, revelation, and connectedness with the natural world." With all of these losses, the sense of belonging that we had when part of the primal matrix has been replaced by an intense feeling of fragmentation and destruction which permeates civilisation. For Glendinning, the only answer is restoration of the primal matrix, and in the later chapters she turns her attention to how this might be done.

Again, the author draws on her own path of healing, recounting the breakthrough experiences that she and two friends had, at very different stages of their lives, of coming "to feel at home in the natural world" despite growing up in this rationalised, technological society. Glendinning also draws on the healing rituals and ceremonies of the Native American culture, which help the individual and the community to recover a direct, unmediated participation in the 'more-than-human' world or cosmos. By beginning to break down the dualism of the 'Western' mindset and the illusion of the isolated 'self' we can start to reclaim our natural birthright from the lockstep of civilised rationalism, by becoming attuned to our psychic connections to people and other living beings and to everything around us.

Certainly, it is a lot more difficult for those who grow up outside such a traditionally nature-based culture to find these healing paths back to the primal matrix. There are, however, non-indigenous people and communities that have been both borrowing on (hopefully in a respectful and thoughtful way) indigenous ways and/or developing their own practices of these types, and a number of these people and communities have gained strength and insight for their activism.

Earth First! and sister groups and movements in the US have also seen a significant convergence of American Indian struggles and eco-defence in the past 15-20 years, often over the protection of Native sacred sites, which have been and remain places of natural and spiritual power, places to renew one's grounding in the primal matrix. This is not by chance.

And it is also no accident that people like Chellis, and a growing number of others, have based their activist work and writings on insights gained from personal experience with the natural world, confronting their own traumas and conditioning and our collective history, as well as from deep connections and friendships with indigenous people. And I'm sure they would agree that this is an essential part of our confronting the spread of civilisation around the planet, whether we call it healing, decolonisation, anti-globalisation or the anarchic destruction of civilisation.

Glendinning goes into these issues at length in the last two sections of the book, 'Hunting, Gathering and Healing,' and 'Primal Matrix Re-Arising.' She delves deeply into our European/American civilised legacy and how it relates to both the indigenous cultures it destroyed, displaced or radically impacted, to our own pre-civilised roots and how we go on from here. In the chapter, 'All My Relations,' she also takes on the difficult subject of our relationship with our own ancestors, which for most of us is quite problematic due to all the dislocations, migrations and loss of inter-generational memory. And for those of us who are descendants of coloniser peoples and nations, many of our ancestors actively participated in and contributed to the civilising and colonising process, so we may



feel there is nothing useful in reclaiming a connection with them. "Every indigenous people on Earth," she points out, "takes strength and direction from its lineage." So what are we less-than-indigenous people to do? As Glendinning puts it, the "question that arises from such an unprecedented predicament is this: how can we reclaim, and honor, a lineage so fraught with abuse, injustice, and pain?" For her, once again, the urgent need to deal with the effects of inter-generational trauma in her own life led her to directly confront this question.

She was compelled to trace her father's abusive and deranged behaviour back through his own experiences of abuse, and back on through the generations, finally coming to revelations that led her to the early period of American colonisation, and the realisation that her ancestors actively participated, even led in, the brutal wars against Indian peoples. However, the moment of release crystallised for her in one early morning on awaking, when she; "...felt the unnameable flow of life that links me all my way back to the moment of Creation *through my ancestors*—through the ugly rapings and the musket shots and tattered flesh... the witch burnings, the scientific theories... back through the cave paintings and the animal furs... the hairy beasts, the shore creatures, seaweed and plankton, lightning; me, all the way back to Creation... What had previously prevented me from embracing my lineage—the inherent uprootedness of my people, the lack of tradition passed down to me, my righteous sense of disgust at history, the violence my father had perpetrated—fell into a new place, subsumed now by the vast flow of life... The spirits of my ancestors had called out to me; I had heard them."

What Glendinning is talking about here, what she felt in the core of her being, is a radical wholeness, cutting through the fragmentation and amnesia and illusions of separateness that gives power to the civilisational complex. "Healing," she says near the end of the book, "is a process of rounding up all the fragments and reconciling them."

Part of the healing for Glendinning clearly also involves finding a way to break down the barriers between different struggles, activists and movements. And she finds this common ground in the anti-civilisation perspective reflected in her book.

Speaking in Eugene with Ward Churchill, she stated that "the struggle against globalisation is a continuation of the struggle for decolonisation." Both the civil rights/Black Power and the American Indian sovereignty movements in the United States were also inspired by and part of the global decolonisation movements, just as the many indigenous autonomy struggles being waged now around the globe are the current cutting edge of this same process.

Europe and European descended people have a long way to go in confronting the traumatic results of their history and its continuing cycles of expansion and warfare. Especially now, with the 'American Empire' declaring total war and many Europeans (and Americans) questioning, protesting and actively resisting civilisation's most extreme pathological form, it is urgent for Europeans and Americans (North, Central and South), especially, to try to confront together this legacy. Just as Franz Fanon talked of the need to decolonise one's mind as a fundamental step towards actual decolonisation for Africans and African-descended peoples *My Name is Chellis* is an honest and helpful attempt to do something similar for Europeans and European-descended peoples. And in some ways it goes even farther, into the realm of 'decivilisation.'

It goes to the heart of how our isolated and alienated civilised 'selves' are for the most part a dim and distorted reflection of what we as natural human beings once were and can still be in a healthy relationship within primal human grouping and with the rest of life and natural forces. Glendinning compellingly demonstrates how 'internally' overcoming the conditioning and mostly unconscious psychic patterns and disturbances imposed by civilisation can't be separated from 'externally' fighting the technological, political, military, ideological and commercial forces of civilisation and the ecological disturbances and devastation they wreak.

Some might feel this is an elitist approach, given the despicable living, working, police state and war-besieged conditions of so many people throughout the world. But if the anti-civilisation perspective really has the truthfulness and power many of us feel it has and is to grow as a movement (if it can be called that), from all the dispersed points of resistance where it takes root and action, it needs to have the strongest possible grounding in the very uncontrolled, free-flowing psychic and evolutionary dynamics that civilisation seeks to dominate and suppress. Glendinning's book is one effort towards finding that grounding.★



Bloody Hell
The Price Soldiers Pay
By Dan Hallock (Plough Publishing House, 1999)
Paperback/368pp/£5.50/ISBN 0 87486 969 2

Published by radical Christians the Bruderhof Foundation, and with an introduction by the British 1982 Falklands War veteran Simon Weston, this little book is a collection of first hand experiences of war told by men and women from the armed forces of various countries.

Taking a broad look at the whole spectrum of brutal wars (and so called 'low intensity conflicts') that the world experienced up until the end of the last century, this book mainly comprises highly personal stories from people involved in both World Wars, the Korean and Vietnam Wars (which is often referred to as the American War in this book) as well as covering the 1991 Gulf War in Kuwait and Iraq. These are interspersed with other pieces from people actively involved in peace and anti-militarism struggles, and commentary is given throughout by the editor and retired US serviceman Dan Hallock.

As well as these personal accounts of war, the book also takes a look at the wider context of the militarisation of society, and the politics around the recruitment of military personnel. This is of particular relevance here in Britain, where young people (often with little education and already partly traumatised by broken homes or abusive parents) are lured out of 'economically depressed' areas with adverts full of the promise of physical fitness, adventure and travel. Carol Picou, seduced by these images, and now suffering from Gulf War Syndrome (GWS) would like the chance to make her own advert firstly showing people, "...in basic training, firing our weapons, climbing mountains, rappelling, doing all these wonderful things the army teaches you to do, and then showing us now, with our crippled bones, our incontinence. Take all of us in our wheelchairs, missing our arms and legs, and dying of cancer and brain tumours. Take our graves, and put that on a commercial." (p. 83)

When asked how he would respond to someone who was contemplating a career in the military, Retired Navy Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll responds, "First, I'd disabuse him of the notion that the military makes anything better. The military exists to kill and destroy." (p. 86) Vietnam veteran Gerald McCarthy says that war is not even the only thing to be afraid of. Referring to the damaging aspects of military training, he takes it further, "...forget going to war... I wouldn't even go back to boot camp... I think it can change you psychologically forever." (p. 83)

The brutalising effect that this military training has on people is referred to over and over again throughout the book, and the extent of the



YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

brainwashing that soldiers are subjected to seems immense. More optimistically, however, it is clear that given half a chance people are quite quick to jettison the inflicted structure and mindset of the military. Veteran Vince Bramley had this revelation during the Falklands War when he realised he wasn't "the rough, tough [soldier] that the programme of training had made you out to be. You realise you're still human, and you have human feelings, and that the men beside you are no different. The one thing that united all of us bundled together up on that mountain—both Brits and Argentines—was that we were all very upset about the whole fucking mess we were in." (p. 65)

The other lesson emphasised is the complete and callous disregard that the state and military have for people who have been injured in its wars. Denzil Connick, a soldier in the Falklands War who lost his leg, is blunt; "I'm not angry with the Argentinian soldiers. But I get very angry when I think of how the British Army left me high and dry after they had their worth out of me." (p. 308). From the homeless British ex-servicemen and women of both World Wars, through to people suffering from GWS there are whole sections of ex-service personnel that have been betrayed by the establishment. People like Anne Selby, who having

been exposed to unknown chemical contamination and untested medical drugs during the first Gulf War, now suffers from chronic rasping and wheezing that has left her specialists baffled as to how to treat it, and the military denying that her illness even exists.

Recruited with lies and false promises, brutalised by training, losing your health in wars fought for a rich elite—and then deserted as an embarrassment and economic liability when it's all over. That's how the state treats you when it's used you for its acts of murder and terror.



Of course this book contains more than enough statistics and horrifying accounts of the reality of these wars to make even the hardest stomach turn, but for me some of the most important and interesting pieces of writing in here are those that deal with the psychological aftermath of conflicts.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other similar conditions are a common theme mentioned throughout the whole book. Many contributors recount suffering the extreme anxiety, depression, emotional constriction and self-destructive behaviour patterns that are some of the symptoms associated with PTSD. One extract notes that more American Vietnam War veterans have committed suicide than were actually killed by 'enemy' action during the whole conflict. Official figures have been constantly disputed, but a 1990 study by the US Congress concluded that over half of Vietnam combat veterans suffered from significant psychological problems, with estimates of those who have killed themselves as a result ranging from 10,000 through to as high as 120,000.

PTSD is not something unique to having been involved in war—it is a condition that we should be aware of, as well as making efforts to learn possible ways of helping friends from within our communities who may suffer from it in the future. And in case this sounds over dramatic, even leaving aside the potential of traumatic incidents in everyday life (accidents, rape, attacks etc.) we must remember that as political radicals we purposefully seek out confrontational and dangerous situations where the likelihood of suffering mental and physical trauma is increased many times over.

Especially, for example, with the solidarity work undertaken by internationals in places like Palestine and Chiapas. Basic first aid and some herb and massage knowledge are useful for the physical effects; but are any of us thinking about how to deal with the huge mental dislocation that radical social change may well entail—especially if we fail and are subject to increased and brutal repression?

This is a terrifying and moving book, and I certainly recommend it. For people who have been in the military (of which there are quite a few in our scene) it can help towards the essential process of healing the psychological and physical traumas that they have suffered. For everybody else it provides rare human insights into the minds of young (mainly) men who serve, or have served, as hired killers for the state.

Those reasons are enough to read the book, but if that is all it provides it will have been a missed opportunity. Far more important is the possibility that these writings will help to extend the understanding that war is not a moral issue, but one that has a more systemic cause. Like all of the struggles we are engaged in, war and militarism as we know them are a result of a particular system. Smedley Butler (a retired US Major General, and winner of 2 Congressional Medals of Honour) sums it up well: "I spent 33 years and 4 months in active military service as a member of the Marine Corps. I served in all the commissioned ranks, from second lieutenant to major general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism." (p. 205) The only truly effective and radical anti-war activist must also stand in opposition to this whole system that sees the earth, animals and people as resources to be seized, managed, exploited—and if needed—eliminated. Anything else only perpetuates the system and its wars.★

Resist the War Machine!

The Peace Pledge Union is an organisation of individuals from all walks of life. Their shared belief is that war and violent conflict are neither necessary nor inevitable, and their aim is to work towards creating a just world free from war. They can offer advice and help for serving soldiers wishing to leave—especially conscientious objector cases. Contact them at: Peace Pledge Union, 41b Brecknock Road, London N7 0BT, England. Tel: 020 7424 9444 Email: jan@ppu.org Web: www.ppu.org.uk

Also worth getting in touch with is the organisation At Ease, a free advice service for members of the UK Armed Forces. It is completely confidential. Contact them: At Ease, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS, UK. Email: atease@advisory.freeserve.co.uk Tel: 0207 247 5164 (Office hours are on Sundays only between 5–7pm.)

WRENCH YOUR HEAD!



FICTION REVIEWS

Fed up with facts? Had it up to here with theory? Here's a whole bunch of made-up stuff that's a whole lot realer than most non-fiction. So, all you armchair anarchists, sit back and put your feet up and enjoy the vicarious pleasure of readin' about wrenchin' with our very own patented monkeywrench ratings system.

A Friend of the Earth by TC Boyle (Bloomsbury, 2000) ISBN 0-7475-5346-7

This is a great book. Set in the California of 2025, it is the story of Ty Tierwater, a former mad dog militant of the (very thinly disguised!) "Earth Forever!" movement, now tending a bedraggled 'ark' of endangered species assembled by his fabulously wealthy and somewhat eccentric rock star employer. Ty muses on his chequered past on "the unravelling edge of the disaffected fringe", his bewitching EF! organiser ex-wife, and the extinction of his daughter in 2001 after an iconic three year tree-sit (she's infinitely cooler than the dappy Julia Butterfly, by the way.)

It's little more than 20 years into the future, but society is already beginning to buckle as titanic downpours alternate with scourging dust storms, and virulent plagues cut a swathe through the human population. The roof of the world has been blown off and nature as we know it has effectively perished, literally smashed to smithereens. Boyle is very strong on the profound turmoil of dwelling in a world that has turned on us, no longer nurturing or even dependable—where insecurity is writ large. Here our collective power has indeed transformed the world, but into purgatory and not into paradise, rendering us ultimately power*less*. I pray that he's wrong, but if the climate change feedback mechanisms kick in quicker than is currently anticipated... uh oh.[1] Reading this book this so-called winter, I cast an anxious eye about me. At times, the promise of an early spring flower or of the migrant heralds of summer seemed tragically to be turned on its head: less a foretaste of renewal than a sign of foreboding.

To continue in this morbid vein for a moment, *A Friend of the Earth* in some ways is about the death of hope. Tierwater is coming to terms with the debilities of old age, vanquished dreams and the loss of vigour, as well as the unbearably bitter taste of failure in his efforts to avert the apocalypse (which claimed the life of his daughter into the bargain). His shortcomings aren't glossed over either—he's a man with some serious 'issues'. When asked by an old timber industry stooge what he had achieved: "the answer is on my lips like a fleck of something so rank and acidic you just have to spit it out: 'Nothing,' I say. 'Absolutely nothing.'" Will Tierwater's story be ours, his past our present?

But I've made the book sound a lot more despairing than it actually is. It is also about the way in which hope endures and adapts, perhaps even triumphs—"the force of life undenied and lived right on down to the last tooth in the last head". It ends with Tierwater and his ex making a new life out of the wreckage, high up in the Sierra Nevada—as he wryly puts it, "For the first time in a long time I feel something approaching optimism, or at least a decline in the gradient of pessimism."

It's a tale beautifully told too—chock full of nifty turns of phrase, very funny throwaway asides and some passages that simply shine. Descriptions of the (relatively) intact natural world of the novel's past are unsentimental yet vibrant, sharpening the pang of its loss. And as for Tierwater's monkeywrenching capers, here's a flavour:



"And what were the terms of his parole? To remain within the city limits of Los Angeles, to report to his parole officer once a week, to protest nothing, demonstrate against nothing, abjure all tree-huggers and spikers, and above all to steer clear of illegal activity of any kind. No extracurricular activities. No night-work. No monkeywrenching. The judge made that abundantly clear.

Yes. Well, fuck the judge."

1) For some *really* depressing reading on this subject, see the recent report of the US National Academy of Sciences ('Goodbye cruel world' by Jeremy Rifkin in *The Guardian* 1/3/02). If this is correct, there seem to be only two sensible options (and editing a bloody 'radical' publication is not one of them!): what you might call the 'Sarah Connor school' (from the film *Terminator 2*), or the 'Rappoport response'—"While I could I drank, I ate, I made love" (from the song 'I Never Gave Up' by Chumbawamba.)



Sick Puppy by Carl Hiaasen (Macmillan, 2000) ISBN 0-333-78607-6

One of my fellow editors couldn't quite see the funny side of *Sick Puppy*, but then he's a humourless bugger anyway. Carl Hiaasen is actually a bit of a star. He is renowned for his work as a muckraker, exposing the breathtakingly sleazy pond life who rule the "swamp of teeming greed known as Florida". (These people are also responsible for foisting Bush the great baboon on an undeserving world, if you recall.) Leaving the state to their tender mercies is like "sneaking out the back door on a dying friend", and he even took on old Uncle Walt the Human Popsicle in 1998s *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World*. You've got to be pretty brave to fuck with the Mouse down in the Magic Kingdom. Strangely, for a native Floridian who cares passionately for his vandalised patch, the attempts to convey its natural glories in *Sick Puppy* fall mostly flat. But his hatred is undoubtedly sharp, savaging the development cabal with sassy razor-edged quips that come thick and fast.



The plot concerns freelance eco-nut Twilly Spree (unbalanced, but in a good way) who can't help but wreak "unambiguous vengeance" on moronic jet-skiers who wing pelicans with beer cans, or drunken slobs who've been out fly-tipping toxic waste of an evening. After stalking litter lout government lobbyist Palmer Stoat (who has just bagged a geriatric black rhino on a private game reserve), he gets embroiled in fighting Stoat's latest shady deal. In conjunction with a cash-rich young entrepreneur involved in the "import-export business", Stoat seeks to ruin the untouched Toad Island by turning it into yet another monstrous golf resort and condominium complex. Building to a satisfying and highly amusing climax, the bad guys finally get their comeuppance thanks to a "narcoleptic pachyderm" and the timely intervention of a "dog ex machina".

Hiaasen has a finely developed sense of the absurd (he needs it), and nowhere is this more evident than in the cast of larger than life, flamboyantly grotesque supporting characters. There's the Eastern European "models" who are becoming Barbie Doll clones for a fix of rhino horn powder; Mr. Gash, the hitman with a penchant for iguana skin corsets and (hysterical) 999 call snuff tapes (they help him to unwind, you see); the engineer on a one-man *jihad* against nature, after an unfortunate, intimate encounter with a chipmunk as a boy. Best of all, however, is Clinton Tyree, memorably described as "Grizzly Adams on PCP". He has a glass eye and pirate style twin-pronged beard (with matching buzzard beaks), wears a plastic shower cap, a kilt made out of a racing flag, and a fetching Chihuahua-pelt vest "for special occasions". He is one of the all time great eco-warrior (sorry) heroes, right up there with *The Monkeywrench Gang's* equally demented and implacable George Washington Hayduke.

Another highlight of the book is the absolutely priceless exchange between Twilly Spree and the "anger management counsellor" (ugh) who has been assigned to him after he burnt down his uncle's bank. (As Tyree says: "For Christ's sake, what about *greed* management? Everybody in this state should get a course in *that*. You fail, they haul your sorry ass to the border and throw you out of Florida.") Sadly, it's too long to quote here, but it should be made required reading for all peddlers of pseudo-positivity—preferably by branding it inside their eyelids. "Anger is an energy", as a mouthy old has-been used to scream.

Tyree again: "That's what we were put here for, to stay pissed off... Nothing shameful about anger.

boy. Sometimes it's the only sane and logical and moral reaction. Jesus, you don't take a class to make it go away! You take a drink or a goddamn bullet. Or you stand and fight the bastards." Word up!



Antarctica by Kim Stanley Robinson (Harper Collins, 1998) ISBN 0-00-649703-9

On first reading *Antarctica* left me cold—now I'm not so sure. As befits this immense and inscrutable continent its narrative is panoramic, a kaleidoscope of overlapping and sometimes clashing perspectives. According to Robinson, in Antarctica the body of the world "has been stripped to the skeleton", leaving a wilderness that is more physical than biological, intensely inimical to life. It is also the "landscape of our imagination"—a paragon of unsullied and inalienable purity. As true *Terra Nullis*, the Empty Quarter, it derives its presence from our absence. This sanctity was enshrined (at least on paper) by the Antarctic Treaty, and designation as the 'continent for science' confirmed its exceptional, otherworldly status, free of national sovereignty, private property and commercial exploitation. But in the near future of the book, the Treaty is going the way of the rapidly disappearing ice. As debt-ravaged Southern nations begin to explore for oil and gas, Antarctica is becoming the "outermost edge" of the global battle against "Gotterdammerung capitalism". Into the fray steps the highly clandestine "ecotage internationale", enraged by this trashing of the last straw, the pollution of an ideal.

Although their well-orchestrated assault on the oil wells is the pivotal event of the novel, the ecoteurs are relatively peripheral to its themes. Robinson has more philosophical intentions. 'Knowledge' is still Antarctica's main export, and there are good insights into the tortuous workings of the scientific factory floor, with the 'dynamicist' geologists poring obsessively over fossilised leaf litter and the orientation of pebbles, busy turning objects into facts in the biting cold. Their radical thesis—a defrosted ice cap 3 million years ago—is simultaneously one in the eye for their bitter 'stabilist' rivals and a cautionary message for today's climatic catastrophe. One character argues that science is a "utopian project", and even that it is capitalism's last great nemesis—personally I remain to be convinced! Another—engaged in whacked out research into the neutrinos which arc down from the North Pole—says that "the whole project of science is *backwards*, the more you *understand* something the less it *moves* you, my goal now is to reverse that, to do anti-science, to *know less*, to *understand less* and thus *feel it all more*". Now you're talking! Feng shui geomancer Ta Shu advises that "we must learn this Earth... as scientist and lover wrapped together in one. The loverknower"—striving to attain the first explorers' experience of "being-in the-world".

Antarctica is crammed with the literally staggering exploits of these early explorers, like Birdie Bowers and Apsley Cherry-Garrard's (!) magnificently pointless *Worst Journey in the World* (1911): tracking down Emperor penguin eggs in the depths of winter and thereby failing to prove a barmy theory, while very nearly dying in the attempt. This is a place where even the humdrum can become heroic—such as struggling to fix the plumbing at the South Pole at 60 below. These guys are "the first Antarcticans", the continent's "only shared culture", because it has "so little human history that what happened at the start still overshadows all."



Mountain guide Valerie leads groups on "In the Footsteps of..." enactments of these first expeditions. Her clients subject themselves to rewound Antarctican hardship, its "pure existentialism" acting as a counterweight to lives of comfortable ennui and an era in which Adventure seems to have been exhausted. 'Those who have no future are condemned to repeat the past' (itself another finite resource), but it's a past with the edges smoothed off, remixed: GPS-assisted, designer kit-clad, a chopper ride out of here only a phone call away. They even end up recreating earlier recreations. But it suddenly takes on real, hair-raising meaning when a crevasse claims their sledge and the ecoteurs cut their communication link to civilisation—now the Footsteps are too close for comfort.

Valerie's group are rescued by a hitherto unknown community who have gone 'feral' on the ice, moved by their desire to "become indigenous to this place" with a new way of life that is an eclectic mix of high and low tech. Back home at the American research station of McMurdo the oil well bombings and the dissolution of the Treaty have triggered a crisis. Antarctica cannot go on as before, and the challenge its people now face is that which confronts the entire world—how to sidestep disaster. Guided by the ferals' spirit of

"sacred-inhabitation" and Ta Shu's mystical warblings, the people of McMurdo draw up a sort of Declaration of Independence ('we hold these rocks to be self-evident...'). With this, the first stirring of a true Antarctican culture, what was *Terra Nullis* at last becomes "*Terra Communis*". (Of course, such a noble gesture wouldn't be complete without fudging at least one tricky practical question—in this case the issue of oil exploration is neatly deferred.)

On their long trek to safety, Valerie had reflected on the pleasure of "movement as the rhythm of her thoughts", the conjunction of mind, body and place that the ferals call being "the land's human expression"—or what another Robinson describes as 'taking the perfect step'.[1] Such metaphysical sentiments sound especially pretentious when summarised like this, and they sure aren't much use as a political programme, but ultimately they're what it's all about: the only way to get from A to B.

1) *Stones of Arari: Pilgrimage* by Tim Robinson (Viking, 1986), p.12



Road Rage by Ruth Rendell

(Arrow, 1998) ISBN 0-09-947061-6

Road Rage is pedestrian—a diabolically dull book. On the strength of this it is really hard to see where Rendell got her reputation from. Dustjacket quotes like: "The most brilliant mystery novelist of our time" can only come from a top secret blurb factory which churns out empty praise by the yard, or because all reviewers are dosed with Prozac. For an alleged thriller *Road Rage* is strangely subdued and lacking in narrative tension, being about as suspenseful as a stopped clock. It's very difficult to care what happens to paper thin characters, but even Chief Inspector Wexford—who Rendell has had the chance to flesh out over a long series of novels—seems to be barely there. Special mention must be made of animal rights lunatic Brendan Royall, who has "the eyes of the fanatic", with "eyebrows like animal fur" and a "harsh, haranguing" voice—shame she forgot the bit about the twirling moustache and the defenceless maiden lashed to the railroad tracks. He's such a beastly unfeeling people-hater that his previous form consists entirely of hardcore liberations of caged birds from pet shops.

Written shortly after Newbury, Fairmile and Manchester Airport, *Road Rage* has a protest against the 'Kingsmarkham Bypass' coming to Wexford's beat in the well-known county of "Mid-Sussex" (Grrrr.)[1] Mainstream organisations are united in opposition, there's some endangered small things, a large respectable rally is held à la Newbury and tree camps are set up. Then a supposed breakaway faction called Sacred Globe kidnap five hostages (including the Chief Inspector's wife, who has campaigned against the road) and threaten to execute them if the bypass isn't stopped. Wexford and his fellow plods bumble cluelessly about targeting Brendan the reeking red herring, a hostage dies, there's a twist in the tail, 'dramatic' finale, case closed, The End.

Road Rage's badness is particularly irritating because it is the only one of the novels reviewed here that represents our own experience. Presumably we made good topical fodder to be slotted in to Rendell's usual formula, as well as being usefully photogenic for the inevitable TV adaptation. Her understanding seems to come from a Chief Inspector of Suffolk Police, who undoubtedly gave her very deep insights into the anti-roads movement. There's no cultural or political context here at all, no nuance, the protesters cardboard cutouts straight out of Central Casting, a curious race of medieval revivalists known as the "Tree People" who appear as if by magic. (If anything they're not distinctively nutty enough!) She has no idea of the subtle tensions that run through campaigns—e.g. between the "masked raiders" who smash up the developers' office and Kingsmarkham High Street shops, and others who are only too ready to grass up "anarchists". One of the latter had once been imprisoned for sabotaging a nuclear power station, but now is "only in favour of peaceful [sic] resistance"—following a tour of the Sizewell nuclear plant, where "he was so impressed he completely changed his tune." She's not even very good at conveying the apolitical but heartfelt passions of 'normal' local people—from ex-Tories contemplating bombings at Twyford, to country ladies on the verge of clobbering security with their Chanel handbags at Newbury. In keeping with the lifeless feel of the book, even Wexford is blandly in support of the protesters' aims if not their means—in true 'My daughter's a vegetarian' fashion. An attempted hatchet job on 'scrounging crusty scum' would at least have been more entertaining.

Still, the secretary of the "Mid-Sussex Wildlife Trust" is spot on when he says: "Can't keep things simple, people always have to have a lot of internecine squabbles; one little thing they don't agree with and they're off forming a collective of their own. Give me animals every time."

1) OK, there *is* a "Brede Valley" in Sussex, it's very nice and would have been ruined by the Hastings bypass last year. But there is *no* "Pomfret Monachorum", a ludicrously out-of-place name. What does she think we are, West Country yokels?!



The Rape of the Rose by Glyn Hughes (Penguin, 1989) ISBN 0-14-007422-8

The Rape of the Rose vividly evokes the tempestuous world of the Luddites: the original—and still the best—Monkeywrench Gang. From the famous abortive attack on Rawfolds' Mill to the assassination of Prime Minister Perceval, the English (pre) working class is fighting for its right to life in the spring of 1812. Mor Greave, a self-taught weaver in the Yorkshire village of Lady Well, eagerly awaits Mayday, when from "the combing shops, public houses, meeting places of Combinations and illegal debating societies... would flow a mighty river southwards to 'o'er topple t'Guvernment'." He longs for "a keyhole in the black prison of his life... to see how vast and golden it was beyond". After fleeing an ambush at Ladywell's Paradise Mills, he falls in love with Mary, 'painted lady', occasional informant and all-round tealeaf. Together they travel to Oldham, where Mary leads a cabbage-lobbing food riot, and they participate in the mob-handed sacking of a mill owner's mansion. Of course, it all eventually ends in tears (sort of), but then that's what revolutions are for.

As with most great revolts, Luddism sprang into being for all kinds of reasons. The 'croppers'—the aristocracy of woollen labour—were resisting the imminent obsolescence of their particular trade. Export earnings from textiles had been devastated by Napoleonic embargoes, and owners were making sure their workers felt the pinch. But it was also more than this, a real turning point, part of a grander narrative: communities with a rich social fabric of solidarity, autonomy and conviviality, in a last ditch battle against being herded into the factories. These communities were by no means perfect, but they did at least have the freedom to work only "as they willed or thought best". As one writer observed of the 'Leicester stocking knitters' for instance, "Each had a garden, a barrel of home-brewed ale, a weekday suit of clothes and one for Sundays, and plenty of leisure."[1] Greave is clinging on to this dear life, dreamily surveying the moors as he works on his loom at home. His wife and children aren't so lucky, having been trapped by debt bondage into Paradise Mills; the expulsion from Eden is made explicit by its gateway, which depicts Adam and Eve, and then "on the inner flanks of the posts, our forefathers slunk into exile—into the mill." This isn't just of historical interest either—it's an ongoing process. It started here, an internal colonisation, a dry run: "Yorkshire, too, was a frontier", as one of the soldiers reflects. The Wild West (which is to say, naked exploitation, land grab, gun law and native genocide), is no longer to be found in America but has shifted to Brazil.

Hughes excels at conjuring up the now almost unimaginable brutality of the factory and the workhouse—as well as those snatched moments of release that are all the more precious because of the horror that surrounds them. He gives us a glimpse into a country swarming with millenarian sects, who, being teetotal, steer well clear of the dodgy pubs where the "teasel-collectors, leech-gatherers, weed-pickers, stone-wallers, moor-guides and broggers" hang out. There's more than a touch of the Gothic to *The Rape of the Rose* too. The mill owner's father is locked in the attic, an unspeakable spectre rotting away from syphilis—like a picture of Dorian Gray for the new capitalist class, mirroring its corruption. (Happily, his son is starting to go the same way.) And I can't finish without mentioning the loveable Wrigley, "a young man incapable of treating life as other than a joke. He was joining the Luddites because to upset the masters appealed to his sense of humour."

1) *Rebels Against the Future* by Kirkpatrick Sale (Quartet, 1996) p.36



Zodiac by Neal Stephenson (Penguin, 1997) ISBN 0-14-027038-8

Zodiac is the story of Sangamon Taylor, chemistry nerd, nitrous oxide fiend and proud owner of a considerable attitude. A bit like our friend Wrigley, Sangamor Taylor (ST) has "a sense of irony that rules his life" and makes it "impossible for him to use his considerable brains in any kind of serious job". But he's got it pretty good really—he's employed by the Group of Environmental Extremists (GEE) to "threaten the boards of directors of major corporations... [and] go scuba diving through raw sewage" on off days, plugging outflow pipes as a "plumber missionary". While out on the eponymous inflatable inspecting the many "shit-greased sphincters" of Boston



Harbour, he stumbles across a new form of pollution, one which could mean the extinction of all marine life.

It's an exciting ride, even allowing for plot holes you could drive an oil tanker through, and the very silly Satanist metal heads who occupy a waste dump in the middle of the Harbour. *Zodiac* is peppered with great one-liners and some blinding action sequences—as when ST is frantically paddling for shore, in a hurricane and under fire from a helicopter gunship, all while tripping his tits off. On the debit side, it suffers from the same failings as Stephenson's nanotech masterpiece *The Diamond Age*: steaming great gobbets of exposition served up raw, in scratchy blackboard "So, Professor..." style. I'm still none the wiser about the nature of benzene rings, even after he helpfully compares them to a plastic six-pack holder—but then maybe I'm just thick.

He does however raise the very interesting question: What if all-American know-how *did* manage to come up with a techno-fix that actually works? Could capitalism be self-correcting? The consequences for ST's sense of self-worth—and for his highly specialised niche in capitalist society—are nicely explored: "Maybe I was the only one who was supposed to be a hero... If [they] found a perfect way to clean up toxics... where would it leave me? Left behind and worthless." Is he using 'the world' as therapy, its woes for his own edification as "the ecoprophet"?

Far and away the biggest problem with the book is ST's weird, resolutely liberal faith in the media as a neutral tool for righting wrongs. The depth of his cynicism regarding the law and political processes is only matched by his naivety about the media. The abject failure of the Environmental Protection Agency has created a gap in the market for "laissez faire justice", with GEE as unofficial enforcers of the EPA's own regulations. Their pipe-plugging is indeed a direct intervention against pollution, but its primary purpose is to "rain media death upon the bad guys"—'naming and shaming' the evildoers through the media's court of public opinion, the only court that can still be relied upon.

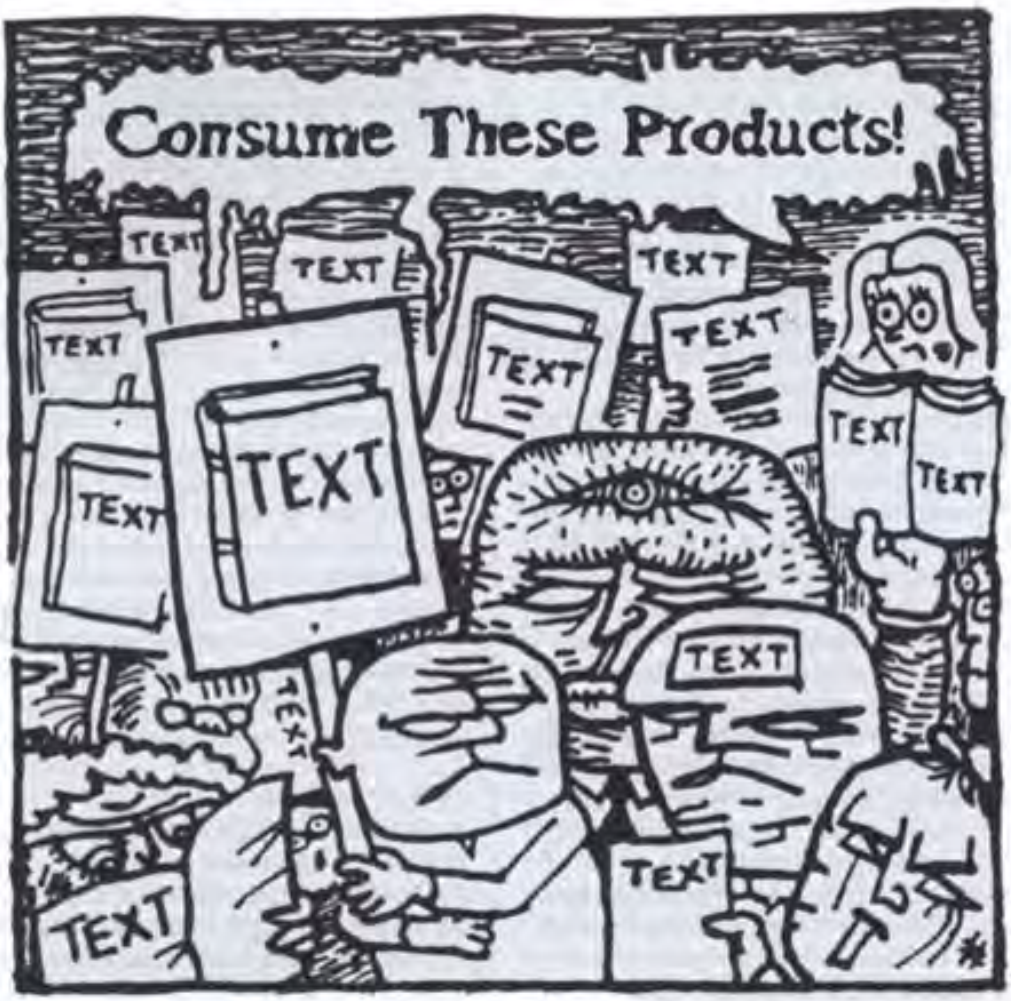
This begs a lot of questions. Why are certain chemicals produced, in a particular way? The companies aren't doing it for the 'good of their health' (especially not when they run the risk of being demonised by ST and friends). Who makes the laws to govern their activities, and then fails to enforce the (intentionally low) limits anyway? Why do "toxic criminals have it easy" and GEE get arrested? Who owns the media, feeds them with stories and supplies advertising revenue?[1] How jaded are journalists? If the media do actually bother to whip up a public storm, how can that feeling find a political outlet if the legislative process is rotten to the core? All you can do—at best—is pick off and destroy individual companies. If the demand is still there, another bastard will be along in a minute—that's not much of a deterrent effect.[2] Media coverage is simply irrelevant if people face the structurally-imposed dilemma of slow death or quick poverty: for example, post-1989, many Poles have opposed closure of polluting industries because they "prefer being poisoned... to losing their jobs".[3] As ST observes of the refugees fishing for toxic flatfish in Boston Harbour, "these people were worried about kwashiorkor [malnutrition] not cancer". Here, increased awareness of your predicament is nothing more than a tormenting itch that you just can't scratch.

As much as he embraces the media, ST adamantly eschews those "terrorists" who don't play GEE's game—like Hank Boone, a dead ringer for—and partial smear on—Sea Shepherd's Paul Watson. But one gets the feeling that, for all his protestations of peacefulness, ST is secretly titillated by the whole idea of violence—talking terrorism is like talking dirty. Boone's bad behaviour seems to be associated with the time he's spent with innately "less principled" European outfits, and Stephenson indulges in some outrageous American chauvinism. The Boston Tea Party was the "birthplace of the direct-action campaign", which Americans invented of course, rather than just marketed. Even worse, ST disses Europe as "dirty everywhere... nobody has idealism, nobody gives a shit when you expose a toxic criminal." Bare-faced cheek! Stone-throwing from the world's biggest glasshouse, I think.★

1) See *Toxic Sludge is Good For You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry* by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton (Common Courage Press, 1995).
2) See 'Stopping the Industrial Hydra: Revolution Against the Megamachine' by George Bradford in *Fifth Estate*.
3) 'Going West—Market Reform and the Environment in Eastern Europe' by Roger Manser in *The Ecologist*, January 1994, p.29.







Here is a listing of some of the books, pamphlets and bits of propaganda that have caught our eyes and piqued our interest over the last year or so. Due to space we have focused mainly on stuff published by eco-radicals, anarchists, or similar relations and fellow troublemakers. We've generally only covered one-off productions—leaving listings for regular zines and newspapers in the contacts section at the end of this issue. Where possible we have also included details like author, publisher, format, price, ISBN and order details to help you track down a copy of anything that takes your fancy. Happy reading!

Sabotage!

Beware: We Never Sleep, We Never Forget!

By Anonymous (Self published, 2000)

A4 paperback/135pp/US$5.00/No ISBN

This is an impressively hefty and radical magazine about economic sabotage to the state and corporate mega-machine. The (wisely) anonymous authors ask us to consider it a philosophical companion and expanded supplement to the classic *Ecodefense*. This publication is really well done, with excellent tips on all sorts of actions, including those that, as they say, "are not restricted by the limiting and anthropocentric taboo of violence." Also stuffed full of good graphics, poetry, bits of radical criticism and writing, book recommendations and security tips. Kinda reminds me of *Live Wild or Die!* years ago. I particularly liked 'A Firearms Primer for Anarchists and Punks' and the hilarious 'Cars versus Penguins' spoof advert. For your copy send $10 (including postage—and using a false name and very secure address) to: Graybill, POB 51011, Eugene, OR 97405, USA.

Permaculture: A Beginner's Guide

By Graham Burnett (Land and Liberty, 2000)

A5 pamphlet/60pp/£4.95/No ISBN

As someone once said, "Permaculture is revolution disguised as organic gardening." This is all well and true, but what if you've only ever seen the disguise? Here's where Graham Burnett's handy little booklet comes in. This pamphlet does exactly what it says on the tin; words and pictures guide the reader through the 'ethics' of

Permaculture (earth-care, people-care, fair-share) and principles nicked from nature (e.g. minimum effort for maximum effect, everything goes in cycles, and many more). It backs these up with inspiring yet simple examples of everyday applied permaculture.

Yes, permaculture has a lot to say about gardening, but not as a separate activity from life itself. Rather, it's about putting our food, ourselves and our communities in context with each other—positive action to combat environmental catastrophe and social alienation.

So while gardening is still very much in evidence in this book, so are LETS schemes, community orchards, compost bogs, sustainable farming, urban residents schemes—and happy cartoons of people enjoying a bottle of wine and the sunset at their allotment. "No less a 'yield'," so the book says, "than 50lb of carrots or spuds."

The cartoons are Graham's own, and keep the booklet lively, but there are tables of information, too, so it's a useful reference book. The personal touch extends to the 'Further Reading' section, as each title comes with a short review. The list varies from basic gardening books to *Road-Raging* and *Anarchism & Environmental Survival*, placing permaculture in an even wider context.

Graham closes by saying that, "There's no great mystery, if any of the stuff in this pamphlet strikes a chord, or just seems like common sense, then chances are that you are 'doing' permaculture on some level already." For those who want to find out more, or who simply want to be re-inspired, this excellent booklet comes highly recommended.



Order copies from: Land and Liberty, 35 Rayleigh Avenue, Westcliff on Sea, Essex SS0 7DS, England. Email: gburnett@unisonfree.net

Green Anarchy Primer!

Taking on the Totality

By Untamed Distribution (Self published, 2002)

A5 pamphlet/16pp/No price/No ISBN

A really good introduction to radical eco-anarchist ideas. Written by Eric Blair, John Zerzan and the Green Anarchy Collective (and published by some people in Bristol) it's divided into sections covering topics like Civilisation, Industrialism, Revolution and Leftism. It's really good to see publications like this produced by people in England. For far too long the radical ecological milieu here has been dominated by crap liberal green ideas. Hopefully pamphlets and similar publications to this signify a change amongst the thinking of people within our scene. For a copy send a donation to: Untamed Distribution, Box 18, Green Leaf Bookshop, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB, England. Email: untamed_distro@yahoo.co.uk

Feral Forager

A Guide to Living off Natures Bounty in Urban, Rural and Wilderness Areas

By Anonymous (Self Published, 2002)

A5 Pamphlet/29pp/US$1.00/No ISBN

This is a really fucking cool pamphlet from the USA. Starts by explaining why a wild foods diet is the one we are most suited to, and then goes on to show how we can institute elements of this into our lives now, even whilst still immersed in civilisation and industrial food production. The author/s explain that they have no intention of encouraging hunting, or even giving up food cultivation altogether to return to some so-called 'primitive hunter/gatherer ideal'. Rather they advocate a scavenging form of subsistence combining elements of a few ecological and radical ways of procuring food. This zine has an excellent piece on scavenging roadkill, with some good practical advice, including a piece on tanning the hide to make clothing. Also has an article on eating insects and loads of details on plant food collection and preparation. For a copy of this excellent zine send a few US dollars to: Feral Forager, POB 1485, Ashville, NC 28802, USA.

A Communiqué on Tactics and Organisation

To the Black Bloc, from Within the Black Bloc

By ARA and GMAC (Self published, 2002)

A5 Pamphlet/28pp/US$2.50/No ISBN

This pamphlet is a result of conversations between people involved in Anti-Racist Action (ARA) and the Green Mountain Anarchist Collective (GMAC) in the US. It is addressed specifically to



the anarchist movement in North America, and so should be read as such, rather than as a 'global anarchist manifesto'. Situating their unapologetic and militant resistance in a historical tradition, the writers start by reflecting upon mass street actions in the few years since the anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle during November 1999.

After a critique of middle class pacifists they continue, mentioning some basic steps we must take to increase our street capabilities. These break into 5 sections; increased organisation of street fighters, physical training, pre-emptive strikes, preparation for increased repression, and more education and development of theory. Some of the ideas are sound and have been mentioned by many of us here in Britain as a good thing to do; pre-emptive strikes on state forces and other relevant targets, learning more skills, working in affinity groups and issuing clear and militant communiqués to explain our actions.

However, where I disagree with this pamphlet is in its desire to form tactical leadership roles for demonstrations and actions. Leaving aside all 'political' (but very important) consideration about hierarchies, who fulfils these roles, and the construction of middle and upper class power bases within the movement, my opinion is that they just never fucking work properly anyway! The writing veers into the realm of complete fantasy when it starts talking about tactical reserves and the decision-making bodies who can deploy them when and where needed. Still, apart from some things, I do think this is a good pamphlet and well worth a read for our mainland European cousins and us. For a copy send $2.50 (including postage) to: Green Mountain Anarchist Collective, POB 76, Montpelier, VT 05601, USA.

On Fire

The Battle of Genoa and the Anti-capitalist Movement

By One Off Press (Self published, 2001)
Paperback/141pp/£3.00/ISBN 1 902593 54 5

As the above gives away, this one-off and anonymously published book contains articles relating to the events surrounding the anti-G8 mobilisations in Genoa, Italy in July 2001. More specifically it focuses on the more militant sections of these mobilisations—especially the black bloc and related rioters. Aside from the short introduction, glossary and obligatory useful contacts at the end, it contains sixteen pieces of writing on various aspects of this militant resistance to the G8 and the system it is a part of. These include contributions from UK based radical eco-types, as well as a suprisingly good piece by the anarcho-witch Starhawk. After finishing this book I felt annoyed at myself for not going to Genoa, sad and angry at the injuries and death the police caused there; yet at the same time fucking inspired and hopeful for the future of our resistance. Read this excellent publication, and as the crudely painted banner in the final picture of the book suggests, "...don't only cry for the dead—turn sadness and anger into resistance." Copies are available from AK Press or Active Distribution.

Olive Drab Rebels

Subversion of the US Armed Forces in the Vietnam War

By Antagonism Press (Self published, 2002)
Paperback/37pp/No price/No ISBN

A timely publication, this pamphlet contains an introduction and 2 pieces that are attempts to understand the effect that the Vietnam War had on the American military.

The first article 'Harass the Brass' is the text of a leaflet given out during the large San Francisco naval show attended by thousands of military personnel. It starts by offering a few examples of resistance from within the ranks during the Vietnam War. Beginning in around mid-1969 an entire company of the infantry sat down and refused to fight on the battlefield, whilst later that year a company from the famed 1st Air Cavalry flatly refused orders (live on CBS television!) to advance down a dangerous trail. In the next 12 months this unit alone had notched up an impressive 35 combat refusals. By 1970 the army had some 65,643 deserters, roughly the equivalent of 4 whole infantry divisions.

It goes on to mention the common practise of fragging—a term for killing strict, gung-ho, and

aggressive officers. In 1969 a soldier's underground newspaper even openly offered a $10,000 bounty on the head of the high-ranking officer who ordered the ill-fated attack on Hamburger Hill earlier that year. In 1971 the Pentagon's own figures show that there were 425 killings of officers that could be classified as fraggings.

As well as killings, sabotage was a commonly used tactic by dissenters within the ranks. Some of the more impressive actions included one in July 1972 where 2 aircraft carriers were put out of action through sabotage. Also that month a suspicious fire destroyed over $7 million worth of military resources.

After all these inspiring stories the article goes on to offer some historical context for military mutinies, including mentioning a rebellion in the ranks of the Spanish navy that disrupted Franco's Coup in 1936.

The second article 'The Olive Drab Rebels: Military Organising During the Vietnam War' was written in 1974, and offers accounts of attempts by soldiers, civilians, and elements of the political left to organise within, and against, the US armed forces. This is an excellent analysis of the situation and effects surrounding the war and makes for interesting reading. So, is this publication of use to us today, where currently nearly all of 'our' armed forces are comprised of volunteers rather than draftees? Yes, it is. Indeed, as one of the texts points out, "There is a common misconception that it was draftees who were often the most disaffected elements within the military. In fact, it was often enlistees [volunteers] who were the most likely to engage in open rebellion." Any military personnel reading this? Sabotage the war machine—turn your guns on the officers. For a copy send £2.00 (including postage) to: Antagonism Press, c/o BM Makhno, London WC1N 3XX, England. Email: antagonism1@yahoo.com Web: www.geocities.com/antagonism1

Just Leave Us Alone!

A Letter from a Papuan Tribesman

By Wiwa Wewo

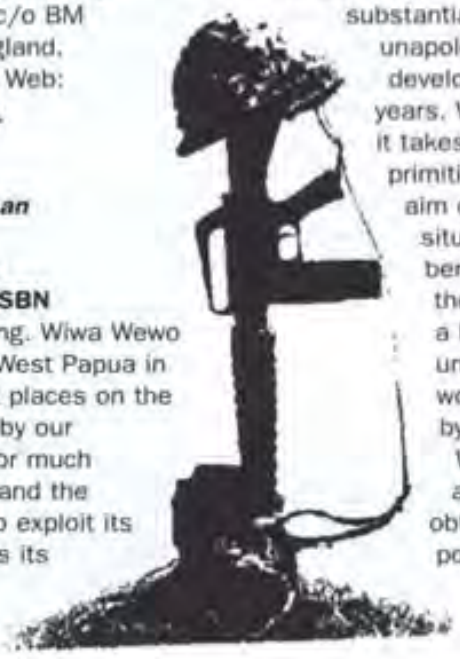
(Solidarity South Pacific, 2003)

A5 pamphlet/47pp/£2.40/No ISBN

This is a unique piece of writing. Wiwa Wewo came to Europe from his native West Papua in 1999. West Papua is one of last places on the planet that is almost untouched by our destructive civilisation. But not for much longer; Indonesia's colonisation and the advancement of multinationals to exploit its massive natural resources leaves its tribal people murdered, tortured, and forced to leave their land, its forests ripped down, its mountains decapitated, and its rivers poisoned. Wiwa Wewo was sent by his people, the Lani, to find out exactly what "that Europe thing is that is attacking us." This pamphlet is a version of the letter he wrote back to his people to tell them what he found and what he thought this meant for the Lani and other tribal peoples.

His letter has the unusual clarity of view of someone from the outside, someone who has not been socialised and indoctrinated into our system. He writes with the uncompromising reality of someone whose seen and experienced the horrors and injustices that exist at the edges of our civilisation. He asks "how can I forgive or forget these things?" He came to Europe to see the 'modernity' he is seeing tribal people being pushed towards, and he found that this 'civilisation' was not going to solve the suffering of his people, rather it was causing it. The letter ranges from analytical criticisms of religious organisations, government, aid organisations, corporations, and of western culture itself, to touching accounts of individual atrocities that have happened close to him. It is an interesting and unusual piece of writing that I would recommend to anyone who casts a critical eye over our modern world.

For a copy of this pamphlet send £2.40 (including postage) to: Solidarity South Pacific, c/o SDEF!, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY, England. To find out more about the situation in West Papua check out: www.eco-action.org/ssp



The Rise of the West

A Brief Outline of the Last Thousand Years

By John Connor (Green Anarchist Books, 2001)

A5 pamphlet/81pp/£3.50/No ISBN

I just got hold of this, so haven't had a chance to have any more than a cursory look through it. A substantial publication, it's a radical and unapologetically subjective view of the development of the West in the last 1,000 years. Written by the *Green Anarchist* editor it takes a radical and predictably anarcho-primitivist look at things, with the ultimate aim of understanding the present situation, and how to undo it—for the benefit of ourselves, our friends, and the earth. Get hold of this, it contains a historical analysis that you'll be unlikely to find anywhere else. Also worth looking out is another pamphlet by John Connor, *Children Of Guinea: Voodoo, The 1793 Haitian Revolution and After*. Either of these can be obtained by sending £4.00 (including postage) to: Green Anarchist Books, BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX, England.

Big Bad World

Cartoon Molotovs in the Face of Corporate Rule

By Polyp (NI Publications, 2002)

Paperback/96pp/No price/ISBN 0 954 0499 3 4

Polyp's graphic work has been gracing the pages of radical and alternative publications for a while now, and this book is a collection of some of his work. It's an excellent book, with cartoons taking in some of the myriad aspects of this insane and hypocritical world we live in. Particular targets are corporations, American politicians and—my personal favourite—middle class student travellers. Oh yeah, and it all made me laugh a lot too! A sharp and witty book.

Prison Survival—Prisoner Support

By Anonymous (Self published, 2002)

Paperback/32pp/No price/No ISBN

This pamphlet brings together various pieces of writing which are of practical help to those facing prison, as well as those wanting to provide support for friends and comrades inside. The first section has some pieces written by prisoners themselves. These cover topics and have loads of information that would be really useful for people facing prison for the first time. Written by a load of different prisoners they give a really good overview of what it must be like inside the State's gulags.

The second section is the one most of should be familiar with—Prisoner Solidarity. It has an excellent and radical view of solidarity, rather than the sometimes confused and liberal view that most people seem to have. Also has a good section on what practical things you can do to make a prisoner's life better, a few personal accounts and tips, and an interview between Rob Thaxton and Jeff 'Free' Luers, both serving time in the US for radical anti-capitalist and earth liberation activities. The whole pamphlet finishes with a comprehensive listing of useful support contacts for prisoner support. Look at our 'Prisoners of War' pages for people you can contact and support—write to a prisoner not an MP! And show solidarity by not getting caught yourself! For a copy of this excellent publication send £1.20 (including postage) to: Re-pressed Distribution, 145 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1JL, England. Email: repressed@mail.com Web: www.re-pressed.org.uk

Que Se Vayan Todos

Argentina's Popular Uprising: Part 1 & 2

By Jennifer Whitney and John Jordan

(Self published, 2002)

Newspaper/20pp/Free/No ISBN

This is an inspiringly written and beautifully illustrated eyewitness account of the financial meltdown and ongoing grassroots rebellion in Argentina that started in late 2001. As well as detailing and commenting on the uprising, it



includes 'A postscript for the global anti-capitalist movement'. For ways of how you can get a copy get in touch with the editors at: quesevayantodos@gn.apc.org And if you liked this you'll probably love the forthcoming book *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Anticapitalism* published by Verso sometime in 2003. For details see www.weareverywhere.org

Desert Storm

By Anonymous (Self published, 2002)

Newspaper/29pp/Free/No ISBN

With a focus on the Woomera immigration detention centre demonstrations and breakouts in March 2002, this publication is dedicated to all those denied the freedom to move and the freedom to stay where they want in the world. Starting off with a considered and well-written editorial, this newspaper gives a much needed voice to some of those imprisoned by the Australian State as 'illegal immigrants'. It also includes articles on 'Economic Migrants', 'The Politics of Place and Space', as well as snippets from Melbourne Indymedia and an account of a Bangladeshi Australian mistakenly arrested as an escapee.

Also really worth getting hold of is the film about the events. Try *SchNEWS* for a copy of this (see their address on our contacts pages). For copies of the newspaper you should write to: Desert Storm, PO Box 209, Brunswick East, Victoria 3057, Australia. Email: woomerapublication@yahoo.com It's also on the web at: www.antimedia.net/desertstorm and it's definitely also worth checking out the Woomera website at: www.woomera2002.antimedia.net

X Ultra-Militance X

By Anonymous (Self published, 2003)

A4/10pp/Free/No ISBN

This is the first issue of a really fucking great new militant animal liberation publication. This zine is radical, uncompromising and has a focus on militant direct action for animal liberation. And it has not just an eye on animal lib, but stretches it's gaze to take in oppression wherever it appears.

Plugs the ELF and all the text has a cool anarchist spin to it. Has pieces on 'Direct Action', a catalogue of 'Recent Actions', an article on 'Dumpster Diving' and an interview with some vegan straight edge band (oh well, you can't have everything). As it says 'Read and pass on.' No idea where you can get copies of this from though—maybe just keep your eyes peeled and ask around?

Fighting for Our Lives

By CrimethInc. (Self published, 2002)
A4/24pp/Free/No ISBN

Another colourful and poetic production from those CrimethInc folks in the US. Despite limitations I quite liked their first book *Days of War, Nights of Love* (cool title, hey?) but really didn't like their second, *Evasion*. Since then I've seen a few of their newspaper type things encouraging us to shoplift, skip, skateboard, and go to free hardcore punk gigs every night, and I'm not so impressed as I was at first. This particular one has okay bits on 'Does Anarchy Work?' and 'Anarchy, not Anarchism!'—and some not so good bits on 'Is this What Democracy Looks like?' and 'The Economics of Anarchy'.

Some people have made a few pretty good criticisms of CrimethInc and some of the ideas and tendencies in their publications, especially with regards to class and race, but there isn't time, space, or inclination to go into them here. So, overall this thing is worth reading, if a little too focused on art and desire for my liking, and it's worth getting hold of as a cure for boring anarcho-lefty publications. Just don't think that by blagging into punk gigs, eating skipped food and hating people with jobs that the revolution's coming any closer... Also recently produced by CrimethInc is another free newspaper *Hunter/Gatherer: A Journal of Folklore and Folkwar*. For copies of both of these contact: CrimethInc Free Press, PO Box 1963, Olympia, WA 98507, USA. Check the web at: www.crimethinc.com

Violence, Anarchy and the Left

By Anarchist Youth Network
(Self published, 2002)
A5 pamphlet/35pp/No price/No ISBN

This pamphlet *Violence, Anarchy and the Left* fetishises violence in the same way that most pamphlets with the words anarchy and violence placed side by side on the cover do. However, it holds a militant message, a spirit that is defiant and tries to encourage us to transgress beyond the limitations we place on ourselves. As well as this it offers an interesting analysis and criticism of various strains of anarchy—and unsurprisingly the ELF and anarcho-primitivism are praised.

The attack on the CrimethInc "drop-out culture" for giving "white-privileged, middle class kids" revolutionary validation was one of my favourite bits. "Living off the excess of capitalism requires that capitalism continues... it pretends to liberate but really just breeds dependence." The alternative given by this pamphlet is to physically attack the system in solidarity with the oppressed.

The introduction is self-searching, not on a personal level but in an attempt to uncover the problems with anarchy today. A direct link is made with anarchist's unwillingness to break from lefty ideology (either in a dependant or reactionary sense) and the vision and moralising concerning violence in society. "Rather than making the point that violence is often necessary and even appropriate within the struggle, we have allowed the moralising Leftists and Liberals to control the dialogue and impose their own hypocritical standards of violence on us."

The whole pamphlet is geared towards the legitimisation of violence as, "an appropriate means of dealing with a problem," and evaluating its usefulness and place in society. Cleverly using a variety of examples from the past and present, the writer tries to make us, as anarchists of today, identify and hopefully re-create the violent history of anarchists of the past! Although I didn't need convincing! For a copy send a donation to: Anarchist Youth Network, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England. Tel: 07814 629780 Email: info@anarchistyouth.net Web: www.anarchistyouth.net



Riddley Walker

By Russell Hoban (Bloomsbury, 2002)
Paperback/235pp/£6.99/ISBN 0 74575 5904 X

Riddley Walker is about what all good fiction is about, it is about everything that matters. The nature of consciousness, the struggle of humanity to extract meaning from existence, a story about stories.

Set in a post apocalyptic Kent where society has regressed to the Stone Age, people cling to the confused memories of a great civilisation that had "boats in the air and picters on the wind". Though the details of the story are specific, it could be set in the ashes of any civilisation. These themes recur throughout the history of collapsed empires. The most important thing about the book is that it is a re-telling of the old story. There are no new stories in the history of human consciousness; just the same one winding their way through peoples lives, through history and the present moment, through fact and fiction, it's all the same. And life is none the worse for it. Riddley Walker's curse and gift is that he is one of the earliest to recognise this, and therefore, by instinct, he is able to read the future, after a fashion. Equally cursed and blessed. Riddley Walker is the proto-scribe, the one who through his actions and accounts begins the map of human consciousness. For better or worse. The Apple, language, original sin, Prometheus stealing fire from the gods, whatever you want to call it, I just call it the Old Story.

The whole book is striving towards clarity, the opaque, phonetic style it is written in demands the reader recognise this. It is a moving account of struggle and vision. This book tells that progress, historical and otherwise, is a myth, a lie told for the benefit of idiots. It also tells that there is no knowing, only the old story, the light and the darkness—and us. You can order, and then steal, a copy from any bookshop.

Desire for Change

Women on the Frontline of Global Resistance
By various PGA Women (Self published, 2002)
A4 magazine/64pp/£3.00/No ISBN

This booklet was compiled by 3 activists from the UK who went to the third international Peoples' Global Action (PGA) conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2001. The PGA network grew out of the international Zapatista gatherings in 1996 and 97, and formed a space for direct and unmediated contact between autonomous groups.
Unfortunately this publication had to be written to redress the imbalance at the conference, as once again women were silenced. The accounts here are mainly from women in the global south: including those from anarcho-punks in Argentina, women involved in the coca-growing trade unions in Bolivia, those who were squatting land as part of the landless movement in Brazil, anarcho-feminist graffiti artists in Bolivia and eco-activists in Ukraine. The women offer some really intelligent and thoughtful critiques of the PGA, the 'movement' and their own struggles. Hierarchy in some groups involved, and the persistent loud voices of men in meetings (really!) were often talked about. It was interesting reading about their perspectives of the PGA, rather than those of western activists who already have large communication networks. On the whole most of the women seem to have found the PGA to be useful for people to share ideas and work together on a grassroots level. For a copy send a cheque for £3.50 (including postage, and made payable to 'London International Solidarity') to: PGA Women, c/o LARC, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 1ES, England. Tel: 0207 377 9088 Email: pgabolivia@yahoo.co.uk



Kent as seen in Riddley Walker

Restructuring and Resistance

Diverse Voices of Struggle in Western Europe
Edited by Kolya Abramsky (Self published, 2001)
Paperback/566pp/No price/No ISBN

This book, as the title suggests, offers an insight into the economic and political restructuring of Europe and the resistance to the construction of the European Union (EU). True to the book's claim the voices expressed within it are indeed diverse—the book contains 77 chapters, most of which have different authors. The introduction explains, "As far as possible the chapters are not coming from outside academic researchers, but from grassroots political activists involved in particular struggles in

different social sectors, and in different countries across Europe."

Starting off with an exploration of the EU's historical development the book ambitiously goes on to explore the breakdown of the 'social consensus', the relaxation of trade barriers and the strengthening of border and immigration controls, privatisation and casualisation across Europe. Additionally there are chapters on the increasing industrialisation of Europe's 'periphery', EU expansion, ecological devastation and the emergence of the global anti-capitalist movement.

Although you may well end up finding yourself more informed and inspired by some pieces than others this book is definitely worth a read. Copies can be ordered from: resresrev@yahoo.com

Cracks in the Empire

Chronicling Resistance to the Industrial System

By Anonymous (Self published, 2000)

A4 paperback/263pp/No price/No ISBN

I love this! Originally conceived as a radical alternative to the *Earth First! Journal*, this is a very inspiring and impressively huge publication produced by a small group of biocentric anarchists from a "hidden forest enclave in the Siskiyou mountain range of Southern Oregon" in the USA. It's very militant, with an anti-civilisation, class struggle and insurrectionary perspective. It meshes the best of militant eco-defence with a healthy amount of practical information, news, intelligent radical theory and loads of good graphics. One of the best publications I've ever seen, a pity there's no details on how to get hold of a copy. Hope it continues.

Some People Push Back

On the Justice of Roosting Chickens

By Ward Churchill (Re-pressed, 2002)

Paperback/16pp/No price/No ISBN

Written swiftly after the attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon on 11th September 2001, and taking its title from a Malcolm X quote about the assassination of John F Kennedy in 1963, this is a really fucking excellent essay. From commenting on those attacks, the Native American and radical academic and activist Ward Churchill effectively constructs the case that the USA pretty much had them coming. From the genocidal extermination of Native Americans, through the US sanctioned murder of around 40,000, mainly civilians, during their secret 'Phoenix Program' in the Vietnam War, to the recent bombing of the Iraqi people, he lists a long and obscene list of the US's murderous interventions in world affairs.

He concludes with the thought that 9/11 may not have been the ghosts of the Iraqi children, whose deaths the USA has been responsible for, coming to exact their revenge; but it may have been some of their butchered Palestinian cousins, or any of the 3.2 million Indo-Chinese who died as a result of the genocidal assault on South East Asia by the US. Or any of the hundreds of thousands of people burnt to death at Hiroshima or Nagasaki or Dresden. Or those who died along the Cherokee Trail of Tears, or maybe those murdered by smallpox at Fort Clark in 1836. Or even the Native Americans whose severed heads were kicked along the streets of the site where the WTC once stood. As he says, "the list is too long, too awful. No matter what its eventual fate, America will have gotten off very, very cheap. The full measure of guilt can never be fully balanced or atoned for." Fuck the USA. Also included is the excellent essay 'AMERICA Reaps What it Sows!' by Jalil A Muntaqim, a Black Liberation Army prisoner of war. For copies of this contact: Re-pressed Distribution, 145 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1JL, England. Email: repressed@mail.com
Web: www.re-pressed.org.uk



The Calendar Riots

By Anonymous (Self published, 2001)

Paperback/126pp/Free/No ISBN

The original idea behind this project was to uncover a reason for celebrating every day of the year—an admirable aim if ever there was one. With the best subtitle ever of "a work entirely calculated to excite unbridled licence in grown persons and promote immorality in the young ones of both sexes; decorated with numerous copper plates curiously drawn and elegantly engraved" this is a re-print of one of my favourite publications of all time. A date book and usable diary (for any year—you fill in the dates yourself) on every day of the year you get details of riotous and insurrectionary moments from the world over, as well as some of the more esoteric happenings of the world. Did you know that on New Years Day 1979 there was a two-day rain of seeds on Southampton? Or that on 5th April 1910 kissing was banned on French railways for causing too many delays? Copies are free, but send 5 second class stamps per copy for

postage (and a donation to help with future projects would be nice) to: Billiard Room, Leam, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HL, England.

Throwing Lights

By Jim Tindle, Oliver Tate and Laura Joy Heath (Self published, 2002)
A5 Pamphlet/24pp/No price/No ISBN

Touchingly dedicated "for those who still remember all those who have forgotten" this is a well-produced little pamphlet of poetry and illustrations from some people involved with the anti-road struggles of the '90s. Not a great fan of poetry (blame school for that) even I was moved by some of the writings in here. For a copy contact them at: jimwhistler@yahoo.co.uk

Early Leaving

i shall take leave of my friends
i shall leave the party early
step outside, breathe in
the fresh air and the stars

The sky seems different tonight
strange stars shine brighter
in new constellations
the galactic wind whistles through my bones
tonight is cold tonight i am cold
Will you throw your coat over me
and take me somewhere
warmer than eternity?

—from *Throwing Lights*.

Bash the Fash

Anti-Fascist Recollections 1984 - 1993
By K Bulistreet (Kate Sharpley Library, 2001)
A5 pamphlet/36pp/£2.00/ISBN 1 893605 87 0

Bash the Fash is a personal account of one anti-fascist's involvement with Anti-Fascist Action (AFA). When the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) supported Anti-Nazi League (ANL) folded in 1982 because "fascism was no longer a threat" the main force of opposition to the extreme right in the UK during the 1980s and 90s became AFA. The book lists a dozen or so incidents which give a good flavour of what militant anti-fascism has involved in this period.

There are victories and there are frustrations; the struggle against the police is the same in anti-fascism as with many other struggles, here the police role is protecting the fascists from the "frank exchange of views" they might otherwise receive. The victories and tales of daring are largely told in a light-hearted manner, although, in my (limited) experience the humour is often as a result of fear rather than delight in attacking fascists.

There are lessons in these few short pages, for example, the British National Party (BNP) have moved towards 'Community Politics'—and this has been mirrored by a shift in the tactics used to oppose them. Similarly with any other struggle, you cannot rely upon one set of tactics forever (not least because you're easier to catch if you're predictable!) and evolution of thoughts, ideas and tactics is a necessary driver for any victory.

As mentioned in the conclusion, one of the most important things about this pamphlet is that it is about reclaiming history, writing it ourselves to keep it true. It is useful for the 'small fish' such as myself to chronicle these events—warts and all—in case nobody does it and then the history would be lost, or distorted by right-wingers or liberals.

SIC—The Magazine of No Value

By Chumbawamba (Book Press, 2002)
Paperback/144pp/£4.95/ISBN 1 900672 01 4

A very well produced and slick publication put together by a sub sect of the radical anarcho-troublemaking band Chumbawamba. It includes eyewitness accounts of the recent financial breakdown in Argentina, a look at historical and contemporary radical politics in Italy, an interview with Mark Thomas and loads more bits and pieces. I suppose sometimes it's a case of each to their own with propaganda, but I can't help feel slightly uncomfortable with the 'arty music stuff' in this publication and others like it. (Although *maybe* this is just down to me being unable to dance unless I'm drunk or on drugs, i.e. shy and repressed). Art and music may well have some radical history—and maybe even liberatory potential in the here and now, but from what I've seen I just don't really care about what pop bands, artists and comedians do and say about their 'art' and how radical and political it is. Any way, apart from that very abbreviated rant, this book is worth a look. Order your copy from: Chumbawamba, Box TR666, Leeds LS12 3XJ, England. Email: sic@chumba.demon.co.uk

Peace de Résistance

By SchNEWS (Self published, 2003)
Paperback/304pp/£8.00/ISBN 0 9529748 7 8

This is the most recent edition of the sort of yearly compilation of the past 50 issues of the radical and free weekly newsletter *SchNEWS*. This, their eighth book, contains issues 351 through to 401, as well as a whole host of articles, cartoons, loads of anti-war news, reports from global days of action, loads of photos and a comprehensive contacts section to finish it all off. Packed full of radical and little heard of news from all over the world, as well as a reference to happenings from the last year contained in all the *SchNEWS* issues, this is a really good book for general perusal (as

well as an important resource) for anyone. For a copy send £9.70 (including postage) to: SchNEWS, PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 OEF, England.

Dongarusalem and Other Poems

By Graeme Lewis and Illustrated by Matt Tweed (Wooden Books, 1999)
Hardback/58pp/£6.99/ISBN 0 902418 13 1

Since my appreciation of poetry is not exactly well developed I'm probably not the best person to review this. But anyway, that aside, this little book is comprised of poems by Graeme interspersed with drawings by Space Goat musician Matt Tweed. Graeme (AKA Quobollox) is almost legendary within the radical eco-action scene. After breaking an injunction at Twyford Down he was arrested and taken to court. Having worn them for months for just this occasion, he stripped off in court to reveal an orange basque and suspenders, all this just after a Conservative MP had been found dead, naked apart from suspenders and an orange soaked in amyl nitrate in his mouth. Anyway, mad stories aside, despite my general ambivalence for poetry even I actually liked some of the stuff in here. I mean, how many other poetry books contain odes to the "Organic Cider Goddess" whose "sweet breasts drip the medicine of orchards plenty"?



Hotlines

Call Centre. Inquiry. Communism.
By Kolinko (Self published, 2002)
Paperback/208pp/No price/No ISBN

Could call centres be the 'new factories'? New centres of proletarian struggle, with their concentration of many workers under one roof, at a time when the old industrial working class, so combative a few decades ago, has been restructured and neutralised? The answer to this question, to judge from this book, seems to be a qualified 'no'.

The book details a workers' inquiry project over three years by the German Ruhr based group *Kolinko*. Not that our German comrades see themselves as sociologists, "That's how we perceive our inquiry and intervention in call centres in the last three years: as a revolutionary project in a specific sector that tries to understand and criticize the totality of capitalist relations... Inquiry means understanding the context between the daily cooperation of the workers and their forms of struggle and finding the new (communist) sociality within."

Using questionnaires to stimulate discussion and leaflets to agitate, the workerist and autonomist influenced militants "threw themselves" into "the sweatshops of the New Economy." But how does this differ from the old days when the Leninists went into the car factories to bring consciousness to the class? A painful and self-conscious realisation of this dilemma pervades the book, as *Kolinko* are at pains to distance themselves from any type of vanguardism, criticise any type of representation, and stress that they are for "workers' self-activity". Yet ultimately they do seem to aspire to the role of revolutionary educators; "We have to underline the fact that the conflicts and struggles take place on the basis of class relations, and show where the chance for the abolition of these relations and the potential for liberation lies."

By their own admission the project was not a great success; despite many instances of individual work refusal on the part of call centre workers, there were relatively few open struggles to intervene in. And yet paradoxically, *Kolinko* are encouraging others to initiate similar projects around the world. Desperate for a new class movement to emerge (aren't we all?) *Kolinko* seem to see workers' inquiry as a tool to galvanise this process. Contact them at: Kolinko, c/o Archiv, Am Förderturm 27, 46049 Oberhausen, Germany.
Email: kolinko@prol-position.net
Web: www.prol-position.net

Seedy Business

Tales from an Allotment Shed
By Warren Carter (Moulsecoomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project, 2001)
Paperback/52pp/No price/ISBN 0 9529748 5 1

This book is largely an account of local people's personal recollections of allotments in the Moulsecoomb and Hollingdean areas of Brighton from the 1930s. The book describes a time of scrumping apples and being cuffed round the ear by the local bobby. A time when you could happily leave your tools in the shed because there was "a code of honour that you wouldn't thieve off anyone's allotment". People didn't even feel the need to protect wildlife "because there was so much of it." The allotments were, however, covered in housing estates which one resident commented made her "really angry because they were taking away one of our playgrounds."

Seedy business concludes with a description of the Moulsecoomb Forest Garden and Wildlife Project. This is one attempt to recapture some sense of community and green land in an otherwise alienated concrete and mono-agricultural desert. Since autumn 1994 the project has transformed a site that had been derelict for 20 years into a wildlife and plant haven. The project also grows 'outlawed' vegetables that aren't put on the National Seed list, in a battle against the genetic erosion that has seen us loose 97 percent of the vegetable varieties available 100 years ago.

Murdering the Dead

Amadeo Bordiga on Capitalism and Other Disasters

By Antagonism Press (Self published, 2001)
Paperback/90pp/£5.00/No ISBN

With titles like 'Weird and Wonderful Tales of Modern Social Decadence' and 'Doctrine of the Body Possessed by the Devil' this pamphlet is worth reading for the titles alone. But why bother with 50 year old texts by an obscure Italian dissident? Bordiga's polemics explore the inner logic of capitalist production to show that the disastrous consequences of catastrophes such as floods, earthquakes, shipping and mine 'accidents' (Bordiga even anticipates nuclear catastrophes!) are not only exacerbated, but produced by capital in "its movement as value perpetually set in motion so as to multiply itself". This is not a question of mismanagement or the greed of the individual capitalist, or merely of cost cutting at the expense of safety to maximise profits. Bordiga uses Marxist categories of constant and variable capital, *dead* (i.e. past) and *living labour*, to show that "Modern capital has a great interest in letting the products of dead labour fall into disuse as soon as possible so as to impose their renewal with living labour, the only type from which it 'sucks' profit. That is why it is in seventh heaven when war breaks out and that is why it is so well trained for the practice of disasters".

Bordiga's relentless critique of *Progress*, of civilisation, capitalist science, technology and industrialism and the division of labour, still relevant today, is coupled with an attack on those who would appeal to the state to sort out the mess, for they misunderstand the fundamental role of the state in the reproduction of capitalist social relations.

In a similar vein the authors of the introduction attack Naomi Klein for her reformism and criticise the "anti-capitalist movement" for its unwillingness to go beyond a superficial, negative critique of capitalism. This is relevant for the radical ecology or direct action scene in its battle against the 'forces of darkness'. Precisely because it is living labour which forms the life blood of capital, responsible for catastrophes and environmental destruction, it is the working class in its contradictory and antagonistic role within and against capital, which holds the key to the abolition of capitalist social relations (and thus the improvement of the conditions of all life on the planet) *through its own self-abolition*. The only movement which can save the planet must be a social movement, a class movement.

Murdering the Dead, then, can be read for its insights into the relationship between capitalism and disasters and environmental destruction, but also as a useful introduction to Marx's critique of political economy. Haven't got the time or inclination to read *Capital*? Bordiga offers you a short cut by picking out some of the key passages!

TACT: Temporary Anti-Capitalist Teams

By TACT (Self Published, 2002)
A5 Pamphlet/12pp/20p/No ISBN

TACT is an acronym looking for a meaning and not finding one. The authors lament the "fragmented nature of our struggles" and hope for "greater coherence" within the anti-capitalist movement through the adoption of Temporary Anti-Capitalist Teams (TACTs). At best this is simply a call to work in affinity groups under a new brand name. The concept of these 'teams', however, is so amorphous it lacks any meaning. Surely the London types would have realised by now that 'declaring' yourselves to be a silly acronym (WOMBLES) doesn't make your actions anymore effective. TACT 1, as an example to us all, declare that one of their main activities so far has been "building and running their website"—enough said.



Broadening the Struggle & Winning the Media War

By Nicholas Henck (Kersplebedeb, 2002)
A5 Pamphlet/51pp/No price/ISBN 096895030 2

This pamphlet describes Marcos successful use of the international media. Unfortunately the author takes this at face value, and he describes the success of the 'public relations campaign' in terms of column inches, and the reason for this success as being Marcos's 'silver tongue'. The real success, however, is the international support and attention the Zapatistas have received as a result

of the media attention. This support has ensured that their struggle has not been isolated and therefore more difficult for the Mexican government to suppress.

The success of the media campaign, in particular Marcos' communiqués, could also be due to their content rather than their poetic value. The eloquent call for the violent destruction of the state may not have been as palatable to the Western media as call for indigenous rights. Marcos is intentional in his appeal to be "everything to everyone", to avoid any ideological political position and to be compromising in his demands. Along with their reluctance to use military force, this makes the Zapatista struggle particularly exportable to Mexican civil society and Western liberals. This can either be interpreted as a reformist indigenous movement using militant posturing to court positive media attention or a revolutionary indigenous army tactically using poetic declarations to obscure their actual intentions. Despite its limited evaluation of the 'media war' this pamphlet does highlight the importance of learning when to attack, when to retreat, as well as when to speak and when to be silent. Important lessons for us all.

Feral Revolution

By Feral Faun (Elephant Editions, 2001)
Paperback/110pp/No price/No ISBN

This book is a collection of Feral Faun's writings spanning the last decade. Feral Faun has been a contributor to the radical anti-authoritarian magazine *Anarchy–A Journal of Desire Armed* for many years, and indeed most of these essays appeared there first. This collection is timely in that the author no longer writes under the name 'Feral Faun' and has moved towards a more insurrectionist point of view—although still just as critical of civilisation and domestication.

For me the highlights in this book are the essays 'Social Transformation—Or the Abolition of Society' and 'The Ideology of Victimisation'. Also included is 'The Anarchist Subculture', a sharp critique of the political ghetto and those that inhabit it, which was reproduced as a pamphlet for the 2000 Earth First! Winter Moot by Re-pressed Distribution. The title essay 'Feral Revolution' was reproduced in the last issue of *Do or Die*. For a copy (and a list of other insurrectionist pamphlets) contact: Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX, England.

The Pink Pauper

By AnarchQuist (Self published, 2001)
Newspaper/12pp/Free/No ISBN

Another spoof newspaper, this one produced in 2001 by the London based anarcho-queer group AnarchQuist for the La DiDah event in London. Held at the same time and the same place as the huge commercial Mardi Gras, the difference was that it was outside their barriers and was free. Both *The Pink Pauper* and the La Didah are trying to highlight how exclusive the pink pound has become and how much queer space revolves around the 'right' image and lifestyle, replicating the bullshit of mainstream society. The group involved in the newspaper are "a motley crew of various sexualities and diverse backgrounds" who are actively rejecting assimilation of any kind. The articles range from a short history of anarcho-queer struggle in South London, to queers in the Nazi Holocaust, as well as a scathing attack on the corporate wankers that sponsor the Mardi Gras. For a copy, also available in large print or audio format, contact: AnarchQuist, c/o 56a Crampton Street, London SE 17, England. Email: anarquist2001@yahoo.co.uk

Monopolise Resistance?

How Globalise Resistance would Hijack revolt
By SchNEWS (Self published, 2001)
A5 Pamphlet/19pp/50p/No ISBN

Written in the post-June 18th and Seattle times when the left were desperate to clamber onto the global resistance bandwagon, this is a publication to lay bare the differences between those in the authoritarian left (especially the Socialist Workers Party—SWP) and our more eco-anarcho direct action scene. Does an okay job at this, although misses the main point about them being *statists* and us being *anti-statists*, which to my mind is surely the big sticking point, rather than them just being 'boring lefties', or into demonstrations rather than direct action. Anyway, this is nonetheless well worth a read if you're not sure what's wrong with the SWP. Copies of it can be obtained by sending 2 first class stamps and an SAE to: SchNEWS, PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 OEF, England. It is also available on the web at: www.schnews.org.uk

Hootenanny

A Songbook of Radical Campfire Songs
Edited by the Hootenanny Collective
(Self published, 2001)
Paperback/283pp/US$14.00/No ISBN

Campfire song and music was a strong part of the anti-roads camp culture here in Britain, and from this book it seems as if it is in North America too. Packed full of wild rampaging lyrics and music, and with songs lauding the ELF, dumpster diving and eco-direct action, it even inspired me, a repressed and musically challenged English boy, to want to be a banjo wielding campfire rabble-rouser. You can get hold of a copy of this rad songbook (dude) by sending $14 (or $9 for a smaller rambler's edition) to: Hootenanny Collective, c/o EF! Journal, POB 3023, Tucson, AZ 85702, USA.★

Lettuce to the Cabbage



Well, here you have it again, our much loved and loathed letters pages. And increasingly populated by loonies it seems. Oh well, we had many laughs on the long and lonely cathode ray filled nights in our dank dungeon office. As this is the last issue of *Do or Die*, do not send any letters expecting publication, although we still welcome your comments on this issue. Write to a prisoner—not us!

I Feel a Smile Coming on...

Dear *Do or Die*,

The 'Fiesta of Life against Death' action, organised by the Disarm DSEI Collective, was a day of action on 11th September 2001 against the Defence Systems Exhibition International (DSEI) at the Excel Centre in London's Docklands. When we heard that someone was planning to take on an arms fair (surely one of the more blatantly evil manifestations of the capitalist world order) we were excited. Here was an opportunity to use the creative power of Reclaim the Streets (RTS) events and the anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist movement and target something specific, thereby avoiding the lack of focus that, for example, had marred Mayday. On the public relations front the state would surely be on the back foot. Portraying those who attack a fast food restaurant and paint the Cenotaph as mindless hooligans was easy, a bit more difficult to justify cracking heads to protect the sale of weapons systems to noted abusers of human rights. Building on the potential of the upswing of interest in anti-globalisation politics it was hoped such an event would attract a large crowd.

However the end result was 500 people boxed in and manipulated by the police, with little concrete action against the arms fair—with some notable exceptions. Over the top of this sorry mess floated a banner with the legend "I feel a smile coming on". We feel that an opportunity to break the sterile boundaries of symbolic protest and actively disrupt an arms fair was missed. We feel that our movement cannot afford to forgo mass street action which forges links and empowers in ways that clandestine action cannot. And yet it should not show itself in ritualistic set pieces with the police on certain days each year.

This is an attempt by two people, who responded to calls for help from the London based Disarm DSEI collective, to analyse the mistakes made and to try to make suggestions for more successful actions in the future. We need to look at our failures as fully as our successes.

As a movement we need to consider where our money comes from. Large private donations, however well intended, have multiple negative effects. Firstly by bypassing the need for stalls, benefit gigs, pub collections etc., an important point of contact with the public is lost. Fundraising isn't just about cash it is also about raising awareness and starting the 'word of mouth' chain. Without contact with the public important feedback is missed. Also, subtly but perhaps more significantly, individuals who can be relied upon to come up with cash end up having more sway over which aspects of our politics are concentrated on at the expense of others. If one collective can put out a few thousand pounds worth of glossy publicity with little effort, this has the effect of drowning out other ideas and making groups look more organised than they might actually be. (We can think of a few events apart from Disarm DSEI that this applies to). Another important aspect of large donations is the sloppiness with money they



can produce. People seem not to value what they haven't sweated for—throwing money at a problem is not an alternative to forethought and planning.

The propaganda for this event was almost all of poor quality. It was pretentious, mystifying and not inclusive; a picture of giant pink snakes attacking some ugly dancing peasants on one of the flyers being a weird choice of image. One of the flyposters failed even to mention that DSEI was an arms fair, apart from having a pink tank and the phrase "be charming and disarming"—whatever that might mean. Little effort was made to appeal to other groups who might have been interested. In fact, publicity seemed designed to appeal to a small sub cultural set. It needs to be understood that the concept of "party" and "pink and silver" is *not* more inclusive, merely exclusive in a different way. It seemed to be avoiding any reference to politics or to action. This was to be a giant party—"bring your blue suede shoes, puppets, circus skills, drums and instruments".

Either this was a tactic to draw high crowds and a low police presence, which assumes that people aren't politically motivated and need to be bribed with a party to take any action. Also the police aren't *that* stupid, especially after the City of London action on June 18th in 1999 (see *Do or Die* No. 8, pp. 1-34). The fact that in the week running up to September 11th, there were several arrests for conspiracy to commit violent disorder shows this. Even if you bill an event as the most peaceful party the police aren't fooled. Perhaps in future we should experiment with directly political and militant propaganda. Certainly the police response wouldn't have been different if we had announced our intention to burn the place down! (If we had announced a genuine effort to smash the fair there is a good chance the press would have taken more interest and although they would have printed a load of bollocks, it would have at least helped to hype the event).

The other alternative is that people genuinely believe that by some arcane summoning of the life force that the forces of global capitalism will be overwhelmed, that people really think that by their fierce dancing they will bring down the institutions of capitalism. This is called *Magick*. Expressing your idea of freedom and liberation by simply dancing in the street, you are neither going to stop an arms fair nor create a viable alternative. It is protest not action. Flowers down the barrel of a gun or levitating the Pentagon didn't work last time and it is unlikely to in the future—until the dawn of the Age of Aquarius obviously...

Worse still, some of the publicity was wildly inaccurate. Telling people to meet at Tidal Basin Road, at exactly the spot where Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) had a legal demo arranged with the police and the police were at their fullest strength. Whereas in planning a different meet-up point had been decided which would have allowed for more freedom of movement. Publicity needs to be taken more seriously than this; it is one of the most vital roles that can ensure the success or failure of the day.

To the north of the Excel Centre is a working class estate. In a nod to class struggle politics, it was decided to try to generate awareness about the day on the estate. In itself not a bad idea. However, the sight of an uninvited samba band complete with men in pink frilly shirts blasting away at full volume at a busy market (thereby according to angry locals stopping people from making a living) did not inspire confidence in the idea of a connection being made. Perhaps when working in other peoples' areas a slightly slower and more steady approach is needed. Maybe a "pink and silver" approach is not everyone's idea of inclusive and creative, as the market traders seemed to think. "Coming round here dressed like a bunch of fucking fairies, upsetting people", was one comment.

Hampered by minimal numbers it was never going to be what had been planned for. After we were swiftly boxed in by the police, we became stuck and pushed into the sanctioned police/CAAT space. It was frustrating and disempowering as people fiercely danced to the police's tune. A samba band is not always the most appropriate response. While they can energise and move a crowd, they are also slow and unwieldy and can hold a crowd stagnant and passive awaiting a police kettle [a tactic the cops use to contain

crowds in Public Order situations]. Perhaps it is time that party as protest is not always the first response of our movement in mass street actions. In fact samba can encourage protest rather than action. Given what was going on in the Excel Centre I certainly didn't feel a smile coming on.

Love,

Houmous Muffin

Which Way Out of Activism?

Dear *Do or Die*,

'Give Up Activism', a sharp yet flawed polemic, has been clarified and improved by your Postscript (in *Do or Die* No. 9). Indeed, Activism is not some disease of the mind that can be cured by an act of will, but something we're currently forced into. It's perhaps best compared to having a bad leg! If you've got a bad leg, you have to walk with a limp or else just stay put. And as any doctor will tell you, it's better to walk it. But they'll also tell you it's important to stop limping as soon as you can. If it becomes habitual you could be limping for life. In short, we need to develop a paradoxical relationship to our Activism—recognising we need it, but recognising we need to be rid of it as soon as possible. To do this we need to look at what took us to Activism in the first place, in order to discover what lies beneath it. What needs do we have that currently can only take that form?

When the Liverpool Dockers were on strike, one came down to talk in Brighton. An audience member was kind enough to inform him that he *was* willing to support the dockers, but only provided they "changed". Politely the docker suggested perhaps they didn't need to change quite as much as he thought, and cited an incident where they'd got some harbour-side eco-protesters de-arrested by threatening to walk off the job. [Probably Liverpool Docks tropical timber action 1992—Ed.] Yes, yes, interrupted the questioner, but are you willing to change?

An extreme example, perhaps, but it exemplifies the oft-heard Activist mentality that it's our 'job' to 'educate people'. True middle-class philanthropists, we nobly sacrifice our time and energy to struggle to make them more like us.

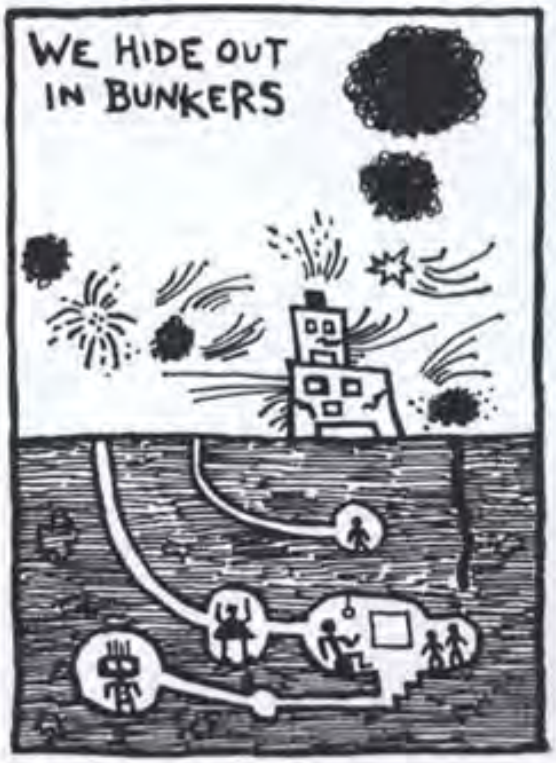
It's not just that this patronising rubbish might be a bit off-putting to people. The point is that this is *capitalist* thinking, and we need to think of things in exactly the opposite way if we're ever going to get anywhere. All that stuff we did, all those dank squats we did up to lose again, all those riot shields we bashed our brains against, if we didn't do it *for ourselves* then why the fuck did we do it? Out of the goodness of our hearts? Give us a break!

'Give Up Activism' is excellent at pinpointing the negative side of Activism (i.e. when we fall into a militant self-sacrificing role which makes us no better than Trots) but neglects an ever-potential positive side which informs Activism but always threatens to transcend it. Crucially, and unlike the Trots, we can recognise that we *choose* to do what we do—that it isn't some kind of duty imposed upon us. This gives us the capacity to see our actions as coming from our own needs or, to toss in yet more Situationist jargon, to develop radical subjectivity. (Even when we don't use this capacity, it still lies latent.)

Of course, as we're keen on saying, we have much the same tangible needs as anybody else. We like to breathe clean air, don't want to eat GM foods or slave in shit jobs etc. (We also have a few of our own, of course, such as our fondness for giros to arrive on our doormats and our seemingly insatiable desire for smack and cider.)

But we can also see our needs in a broader context. We know we're not happy just being workers, students, consumers or any other kind of alienated subject of capital. We want to do things for ourselves, and in association with others in some kind of community. We create our own spaces not out of any selfless desire to be unpaid social workers, but because we want someplace we can go that isn't part of the marketplace. We want others to come to them because we're glad of the company. And we try to piss off the authorities because we don't like them, and doing it makes us feel better.

Inevitably this carries its own negative side. It leads to people looking inside some tiny scene for all their answers. It leads to us developing our ritual habits, such as bricking the cops on certain



fixed calendar dates without a thought for how those actions appeal to or affect other people. And, as the author of 'An Open Letter to the Direct Action Movement' (see *Do or Die* No. 8, p. 141) has argued, this voluntaristic basis to our movement allows some to pick and choose campaigns in order to create their own self-image. Instead of shopping for clothes we adorn ourselves with issues—both are ways of building roles. There's probably a thousand other by-ways within which we could get lost inside Activism, but they share one root—they're all ways of adapting to this world rather than aiming at the next.

Yet those of us willing to accept their own little ghetto in place of world human community are taking second best and know it. Our micro-world of Activists is but sips for the thirsty, just about enough to keep going but no replacement for the ocean we want to dive into.

Moreover, unlike our questioner above, we do not see change as something one directional. We do not see the rest of the world as something outside ourselves which we need to fix, or re-make in our own image. Our desire to connect to others outside our scene also springs from our own needs, not out of some misplaced missionary zeal. When we talk about change we also want to change ourselves. And we can only do that by *others* changing *us*. Only others can get us out of the ghetto, can extinguish our Activist role.

In short, Activism is good in giving us a short-term stop gap answer to deeper needs, limited but something we probably wouldn't get any other way.



But it's also bad, in that it can lead us to mistake the stopgap for the solution, the crumbs for the bakery, the trees for the wood. Giving up Activism is always the goal. But currently, our only possible route towards this is through Activism itself—for only by going through it can we transcend it. A strange paradox, and it's perhaps inevitable that we can only see it sporadically. There's always the pressure to 'normalise' our movement by making Activism into our job, our identity, self-therapy or in some other way explicable within capitalism. (The ever-shifting dynamic between militancy and true radical subjectivity is no doubt the cause of the bizarre love/hate relationship many of us have developed with the scene.) It can't happen by act of will alone, only by a combination of action and circumstances. But being clued up about the situation helps. Activists of the world unite... you've nothing to lose but your roles!

Love,
The Bash Street Kids

Absolutely Hatstand

Dear *Do or Die*,

I am an elephant living in a big old barn in Friesland. I have many cows and am considering shaving them to produce crow milk, from this substance can be derived a most delectable cheese. My contacts in adjacent galaxies have confided in me that this can be utilised in interstellar travel. I must admit that I found this rather disturbing, as I have only recently renounced the wearing of pantaloons. I find shorts all the more fitting in this most clement of climates. Although mine have proved rather uncomfortable. When descending from horses it is advisable not to disturb the hills of moles, as it can be a frightful job in the reconstruction, and usually requires copious scaffolding. A new lick of paint may also be required, though I often have trouble whilst donning a Cockney accent, it appears to be rather dated. The workmen have, on occasion, referred me to their grandfathers for effective translation. Alas, my Welsh friends speak in silky tones that I suspect are cunningly veiled insults. Apologies to anyone reading this backwards, it is a dreadful waste of time. Onwards rode the light brigade, and thus we shall proceed; though both appear to have been mistakes. For my part, I think that I shall stay here, occasionally glancing backwards into the sunset. We shall endeavour to prevent this communication from transcending idiom and form and descending into mere mindless self-expression. Teetering on the edge of that great abyss, though I long for the breeze through every fibre. I should like to make a few more things clear, before fractalisation takes hold permanently. As a dear friend of mine once said "My brain is on fire". It wasn't, of course; it was just his imagination.

Chained with chains of chain he escaped the Castle only to drown in the Moat. A brief breath of freedom, and then the taste of stagnant water. I loved him well; he had many names, both male and female. When taken as a whole, it becomes abundantly clear that the work of Guy Debord is nothing more than an elaborately coded suicide note. An elegy for the death of passion. An attempt to reduce the irreducible, that yielded only ashes. To decipher this, you need but read between the lines, avoiding words if possible. The poet was wrong, beauty is between the thighs of a woman, and truth is a damn evasive thing. Butterfly nets do not suffice for this task. No indeed, think again!? Take off those trousers, and walk! Will someone hold my hand for me, and lead me through the woods to the fabled oak tree. I remember many people, once. The River is fleeting, all the better for washing things away, don't you think? It has to be said, "Whale fins come to those who wait", sometimes her majesty shows herself. Sometimes she breaches, the God is in that moment. What of truth? What indeed. Fire at will! If anyone reading this scrawl is interested in the subjects raised, then please do not hesitate to correspond with us via the letters pages of *Do or Die* magazine. A cursory look at previous issues reveals hot debate on closely related matters. Thus, I await your arrival with folded hands.

My sincerest regards,

EW

PS: I am told that the forthcoming issue of *Do or Die* will include a treatise on the correct way to ride a donkey. Is this true?

Macho Rubbish?

Dear *Do or Die*,

I want to make some comments about some differences I have with the tone of your otherwise excellent journal.

The articles tend to fetishise struggle, confrontation, militancy (from the grim covers showing policeman and demonstrators locked in confrontation, to the Burns slogan about 'Liberty's in every blow', to the lack of dialogue with different viewpoints—how about, for example, publishing a response from *Ya Basta!* about their views on your article 'Ya Basta(rds)'—see *Do or Die* No.9). If as a movement we are about *being* something different, reclaiming subjectivity, poetry without poems, love (all evoked in the best writing in the anarchist tradition from the Situationists to Barrot, Camatte, Perlman), why would we want to fetishise militancy and macho-boy images of struggle?

I explain confrontational tactics when they are used as arising *subjectively* from a sense of frustration and anger at the way in which capitalism and the holders of power are hell bent on the pursuit of power, control, profit, and the destruction of the biosphere. We do not have much time before global warming and habitat destruction devastates our world, and the system is out of control.

What your journal does, and which leaves a bad taste, is to *objectively* glorify, rationalise and advocate militancy and confrontational tactics. The militant becomes separated from his or her real needs and need to change the world. This point is from Barrot (alias Gilles Dauve, in *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement*) in a foreword *which is omitted* (I wonder why?) from the 'Revised Edition' pamphlet published by Antagonism Press. I want to quote it because it seems relevant to, for example, the attitudes expressed in the articles on Prague, (see *Do or Die* No.9):

"In spite of its shortcomings, the Situationist International has shown... it is not only important to understand the historical movement and act accordingly, but also *to be* something different from the attitudes and values of the society the revolutionary wants to destroy. The *militant* attitude is indeed counter-revolutionary, in so far as it splits the individual into two, separating his needs, his real individual *and* social needs, the reasons why he cannot stand the present world, from his action, his attempt to change this world. The militant refuses to admit that he is in fact revolutionary because he needs to change his own life as well as society in general. He represses the impulse that made him turn against society. He submits to revolutionary action as if it were external to him...", (p.7)

Speaking for myself here (and not just interpreting Barrot) I think that *to be* something different from the values and attitudes of our world. We need to be creative, joyful, loving, generous, imaginative, humorous, tender, sensitive; instead of (to give some of the values and attitudes of our world) militant, grim, macho, authoritarian, domineering, mean-spirited, hating, manipulating and humourless.

We need to think for ourselves, do what we think is best and respect the views of others to do as they think best. None of us know for sure which are the best actions, but if we keep in mind that we want *to be* something different we can make judgements that do not reproduce the attitudes and values we want to change.

If at times for some that means more confrontational tactics out of self defence or in a subjective expression of frustration, then those people will have stayed in touch with themselves rather than submitting to action as if it were external to them, and will have done so without being fuelled by the fetishisation or glorification of confrontation, or the acting out of patterns of anger.



There is a stock response to the fluffy/spiky debate which has become fashionable to the point of authoritarian orthodoxy by Reclaim the Streets and some Earth Firstlers: that it is a diversion, a distraction. This is however not the only response, which would be for both to respect the rights of others for their perspectives, with everyone keeping in mind the aim to be something different. What tends to happen on larger demonstrations is that the gathering of large numbers of people, most of them wanting to avoid confrontation, becomes the smokescreen needed for more confrontational tactics by those who have prioritised these, who rarely carry out the same tactics in small groups without the 'cover' of a large crowd.

The original article on 'Give Up Activism' makes some important points, drawing on Vaneigem and Camatte to do so. But the Postscript added in *Do or Die* No. 9 is a bizarre return to 19th Century workerism and productionism which is out of tune with the ethos of the movement, which is about a different way of life in which production isn't separated off and fetishised as it is in industrial society, in which all classes are involved in a system which has reduced people to workers and the earth to a mere resource. It is the totality of the system that we want to change. For many thousands of years we all had access to our livelihood by having access to land. Hierarchical state societies and capitalism have taken away this right. How we address our relationship to land now that capitalism has taken it away from nearly everyone and turned it into monocultural deserts is no easy question. But fetishising workerism and production diverts the ground back to capitalism. Keep up the good work.

Regards,
KG

Mother of all Battles

Dear Cabbage,

I'm contacting you with an unusual request. I doubt if you'll print it (because you didn't print my article) but there's no harm in writing anyway. I'd like to hear from men and women who have chosen not to have children. I'd also like to be in contact with people who are thinking about the possible effect on our environment and on other species of making an individual decision to reproduce; and with people who are concerned about the environmental results of rising global human population. I'd appreciate the opportunity to talk about these issues with other activists who are thinking about them, and I would like to feel more supported and less isolated within the Earth First! movement as someone who has made the decision not to become a parent. Thanks.

Love,
pandarainbow@hotmail.com

Free Vanunu!

Dear *Do or Die*,

I was wondering whether you could put Mordechai Vanunu in your next issue. Mordechai Vanunu is a political prisoner of conscience who took pictures inside Israel's nuclear installation when they claimed that they were not developing their nuclear capability. He gave his pictures (for no money) to the *Sunday Times* for them to publish. While in London he met a woman called 'Cindy'. He went with her to Rome where he was then kidnapped by Mossad (the Israeli Secret Service) on the 30th September 1986 and it turned out that 'Cindy' was a Mossad agent.

It is illegal under international law for a government to arrest someone who is not in their own country. He was tried in a closed court and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment of which he has spent eleven and a half years in solitary confinement. In 1998 he was released from solitary and is due for release from Ashkelon Prison (in Israel) in 2004. If you want more information on Mordechai Vanunu then you can get in touch.

Yours,
The Campaign to Free Vanunu
185 New Kent Road
London SE1 4AG
Tel: 020 7378 9324
Email: campaign@vanunu.freeserve.co.uk
Web: www.vanunu.freeserve.co.uk

There're Taking the Pisa

Hi there,

I'm writing from Pisa, for the Silvestre Collective. We have known that *Do or Die* new issue is out, and that's a good news!

Actually we have read some pages from *Do or Die* that came us photocopied through *Green Anarchist*. We appreciated the 'Ya Basta(rds)!' article (*Do or Die* No. 9, p. 11), because the White Overalls/*Ya Basta!* are real bastards, but don't understand then why you printed their communiqué of Tebio protests (*Do or Die* No. 9, p. 27)—that communiqué is full of lies and misrepresentations.

First of all they lie about the march structure, since anarchists were not behind White Overalls but in the tail, well isolated from them for fear of direct action. Near anarchists there were only hundred policemen, but the block managed to attack a bank (smashing windows and some computers) and some multinational stores.

Then the *Ya Basta!* communiqué is a proof of self exultation, since they say there have been hard battles in front of the fair gates, but actually people stayed there for less than 1 hour (not even doing civil disobedience) and then went to have lunch at the *Mobilitebio* camp, leaving the White Overalls alone with cops and TV cameras for their favourite action: fake clashes!



On TV and photos it seems they are clashing, but actually cops never hit people but only the pads, and White Overalls on their side use no sticks or whatever, they just push with plastic protections. And if you've seen them in action in Prague you'll see that it was the same, except for they had sticks... but they were only in the hands of back lines who couldn't reach cops! They surely know how to create a show!

But the better came later, when, after their 'clashes', word was circulating that the convention had been stopped for the whole day. Something White Overalls were proud of, and they stated in the communiqué. Actually Greenpeace, who had members inside the convention, assured us the halt was only 30 minutes long. Just a coffee pause, nothing more. And *Ya Basta!* knew this, but continue to glorify their battle saying they closed Tebio.

Last but not the least is the content of a leaflet with a kind of '10 Commandments' distributed by the White Overalls before the march. Stating that no individual act or direct action would be tolerated, and inviting people to tell them who was doing what, they finally exposed their nature: white police!

Their activity is not to defend people from cops, nor to attack property, but to defend society from revolutionary desire of destruction! They have hierarchies and leaders, they mystify reality, they participated in elections, they attacked comrades doing direct action, they even defended policemen from comrades, they assaulted the social centre hosting direct actionists' *Controtebio* (different from their institutional *Mobilitebio* platform) and much more.

And what their communiqué fails to recognise is that for *Controtebio*, made of anarchists, land squatters and radical leftists, the protests were not limited to a march but went on for 3 days. In the first day we gathered in a square where we set our camp, and from there various unauthorised marches and road stopping went on, some with spray painting on banks' windows, cash machines and walls, and even a bank camera disrupted. Also with the big Tebio banner in front of the exhibition teared down and destroyed. Then in the evening a group of people ambushed biotech scientists going to a gala dinner and threw at them rotten vegetables and trash, and I think that was what cops didn't expect and surely attacked scientist directly. Then on the second day afternoon, after the institutional march where *Controtebio* wasn't desired but went there and took action, there was a 2,000 strong march of *Controtebio*, completely over numbered by riot police. And for all 3 days we kept leafleting and doing stalls to inform on genetics.

Well, that's what happened in Genoa on those days, some of which you will never know about from protest leaders as *Ya Basta!* As you won't be informed that in the following months various direct actions against genetics took place: trashing 5 GM test fields, attacking an Aventis research centre, an Asgrow farm, an agriculture research centre, various banks financing biotech and lately torching a Monsanto grain store. The Italian anti-genetics movement seems on a good start, isn't it?

Yours,

S

PS: If you want to print part of this letter I think it would help to let it known who White Overalls are. Be sure that there will be more troubles with them here, but try to halt them spreading in UK too! And if some UK activists are coming to Genoa in July for G8 you better know that White Overalls will lead all protests and will be there in full numbers. Most Italian anarchists won't take part to G8 protests in Genoa, cause it seems the city will be completely militarised and I don't think going where 20,000 cops are waiting you is so smart. Action should be anywhere, anyday and anyway!

I'm not Racist, my Daughter's a Vegetarian

Dear *Do or Die*,

I was disappointed to read the letter in your magazine warning against the Anarchist Heretics Fair. It is not Far Right. What brings the organisers together is my economic analysis originally in *Green Anarchist* and now in *Alternative Green*. It describes how the core exploits the periphery (today, the Third World). So it is as useful to right wing survivalists as left wing hippies.

The battle will not be between Left and Right but between Left and Right decentralists against Left and Right centralists. So the decentralists must talk to each other.

Your letter writer in *Do or Die* No. 9, 'B', is poorly informed. I was not "kicked out" of *Green Anarchist* for being far right. I resigned, as *GA* No. 29 makes clear, because my fellow editor started being dishonest and misrepresenting my ideas. He has been asked to leave *GA*, presumably for the same lies and misrepresentation that he is now notorious for.

Alternative Green has absolutely no "links with fascists". They, with the most centralist political idea of all, would not be interested. I had links with Trans Europa of the radical right because they agreed with my economics. They were not fascist in any way. I now have links with Troy Southgate of NRF. He used to be distributist like the Green Party. (Schumacher—*Small is Beautiful*—was a distributist; tax big business, subsidise small business) but he is no longer. He is not anti-Semitic, though he is racist, but not to the extent of advocating repatriation, only separate living. I disagree with this, but we talk because he agrees with my economic ideas. Until you realise that this is all about economics, the causes of poverty, you won't begin to understand what's going on.

Given the total failure of anti-globalists to produce any ideas whatsoever ("replace capitalism with something nicer!") I'd have thought that my analysis and policies would merit careful examination.

Best wishes,
Alternative Green



Trees not sheep!

Hi there,

I've just sent you a cheque for a *Do or Die*, and then thought, why not send you a 'communiqué' myself! Situated 'up here' on the outermost fringes of the Isle of Briganti, the Outer Hebrides, known in Gaelic as *Eilean Leodhais*, a super quarry (proposed to be the largest in Europe) has just been turned down by the local people, animals and wider community of the Mother, and coincidentally by the 'Scottish Executive'. Yes, the 'Harris Superquarry' project is no more. Blessed be. However, the 'Executive' still has plans for a super quarry at Durness at the North West of the mainland, so work is still needed solidarity wise there.

The day before the official announcement of the planning refusal for the Na Hearabh (Harris) quarry was made, I stumbled across a sea eagle, washing in at a shore. Sad to see such a glorious bird rotting and decaying. First time I've seen one as well. The feathers went to Sovereign Dine'h Nation where a super quarry 100 square miles in extent devours not just the Mother but the culture also. (See www.lisnet/bgmtnupdates.htm). Black Mesa mine will close.

There is a 'development plan' in the Council offices. The main lynchpin of this plan is the 'Outer Hebrides spinal route'—a road building plan which will break the Mother's back if allowed to continue. So a long deprived, exploited, abused and colonialised people and land are offered millions of

EEC/Government money for instant happiness. This combined with a Christian religion that sees the Mother as 'a lump of rock' has led to a situation where ridiculous horrific manic so called 'development', a false trip as we all know, was planned here. Not any more, blessed be.

Trees not sheep.

B

Bottoms Up!

Dear *Do or Die*,

I think people are being misled. This global resistance and global networking is I think a product of technology that is distorting peoples' view of the world. Of course global resistance is vital but it can only practically be fought in our own backyard. The Class War movement of the 80s I think hit the nail on the head and I think people have only come away from this, in fear.

The best we can do is to attack the State by any means necessary in our own nation and this is how global resistance and global solidarity is created, not by networking, conferencing, trying to build global movements. People in other nations can only do this also—attack their own States by any means necessary, and this is how they create solidarity with us, practically and morally.

Of course there is a question of tactics: to hit multinational corporations, Parliament Buildings, centres of commerce? To block roads, to disrupt road building, to sabotage the security forces? To work in autonomous groups, individually or en masse? To work underground or overground? The who, when, where, how and why are all vital as are ongoing discussions and debates about what we are all doing, but the basic "goal" and the basic "means" towards that "goal" have remained constant.

All this globalisation malarkey is just us being distracted by the perverse distortions of technological advances. Our "global resistance" seems to simply encourage people to buy air tickets and computer, email and mobile phone equipment, when these are the things we should be dumping for a *start*. But how could we liase with the Zapatistas without these things? We don't! We *do* what they are doing, create revolution in our own nation. We don't do this by subscribing to the latest capitalist perversions; we do this by *dumping* them.

But how do we organise without this technology? Hey, anyone remember the world ten years ago without all this technology? My, how our minds are quickly twisted into thinking we cannot fulfil our lives without purchasing the latest electronic toy that is on offer.

Come on children, these toys are just distractions. We do not need them. We only realise this as we dump them and go with what is left: our own innate sense of solidarity, our own natural urge towards co-operation, our own spontaneity and wildness, our own irrepressible spirit, our own anarchy. These things are the death of technology altogether, the end of capitalism nationally, globally, and the beginning of our real global solidarity, just as they have always been. Technology, in all its forms, only crucifies these things and twists our minds and hearts.

Love,

Evil savage

Don't Piss on my Fire!

Dear *Do or Die*,

I have noticed quite regularly a certain dynamic and pattern that often goes on within groups of people prepared to do action together. Often you'll have someone, or a couple of people, brimming with enthusiasm, anger and confidence, and when putting their ideas to the rest of the group, a couple of people in the group will then pour negativity on the idea and try and persuade the rest of the group away from doing stuff. Often it is dressed up as concerns about safety or the strategic/political importance of an action. But often I think that it is because of their own fear and lack of confidence at the time, that they are often not facing up to and acknowledging. If they're a particularly strong member of the group they can sabotage a lot of the ideas and energy of a group, rather than let others go for it.

Confidence is a really tricky thing. What we do is often mad, putting ourselves at risk for no tangible personal gain. It takes guts and confidence to want to go for stuff, and this confidence is a really fragile thing, especially when it involves group confidence. Handled right, our collective confidence can soar, but it can only take one misplaced or thoughtless comment to crash everyone back into apathy and despondency. When others are trying to get their bottle up for something, we should be doing our best to support and encourage them.

So I would suggest that if an action is proposed by someone in your group, particularly a new person, and you don't feel up for it, instead of immediately dissing the idea, stand back (whilst honestly examining your reasons for not wanting to do the action, perhaps your confidence has disappeared) and let others go for it with their confidence intact. Rather than pissing on their fire.

Yours,

Betty Boo

Suspect Device

Dear *Do or Die*,

Thanks for *Do or Die* No. 9 which I received a few days ago. It was a pleasant surprise, as was Issue 8, which helped me through the first few months of my sentence at Wandsworth, was

confiscated on arrival here at Elmley, along with most of my books, magazines, papers, newsletters etc. They were all classed as "offensive material", and not a lot gets past the censors here. It's funny to think that the prison service finds anything more offensive than itself. So I've been frantically reading the journal before someone in a uniform notices it. Luckily I am able to keep abreast of current events through the completely inoffensive *Daily Mail* which I am given once a week.

I was given a 2 year sentence in October 2000 for my part in the May Day mess in London that year. For my first 3 months inside I was locked up for 23 hours every day, even if it was raining. That's a lot of time for thinking. Thinking about how I got to be in prison, going over and over my actions on the day, the consequences for me, my partner, my daughter, lots of personal stuff. Asking myself—was it all worth it? And always coming up with the same answer—no. It's easy in this situation to forget the context of my actions, the circumstances on the day and my reasons for being there. Reading the articles in *Do or Die* has helped to remind me. While I don't want to ignore the personal stuff, to concentrate on it too much is dangerous in prison, you just end up feeling miserable. I want to keep the anger that I've felt all my life, or at least since I realised how fucked up the world is when I was about 10 years old. I just have to remember to use that anger as best I can, and not just explode with frustration whilst surrounded by several thousand riot police armed with big sticks and cameras. So it's very useful to be able to read other peoples' thoughts on the tactics used in the resistance to and ultimately the destruction of the capitalist machine.

So, thanks again for helping me through this, in fact for helping me to make the most of my situation. Of course all my letters are read by the forces of darkness, so I now look forward to my cell being turned over by storm troopers and a controlled explosion being used to destroy your dangerous publication. That should brighten up an otherwise boring day.

Respect and solidarity,
Michael Collins
(Written whilst in prison, now released.)

Terror Threat?

Dear *Do or Die*,

Nice one for my copy of the ninth edition. Once again an informative and diverse collection of issues. I particularly liked the article on Jacques Mesrine, for obvious reasons, and have been keeping an eye on the Sodexho and Co. stuff and I'm very interested in the CAGE group, sounds as if it could be big. Prison life is boring and letters that manage to get past the censors are great so I was well surprised, after having problems even getting *Schnews*, that the book reached me. I shall add it to my other copies when I get out. Eviction survivor though one is! (Half of the pages got trashed when thrown out of the tree!) Well thanks again and keep it up! A question; could you be banned from publishing about certain groups under the Anti Terror laws? Would you have to alter your articles to show no support? It won't be long before no prisoner will have access to such enlightening literature. So let's keep up the fight.

Thanks,
Lee Himlin
(Written whilst in prison, now released.)



Loads of Fun!

Being an activist is loads of fun,
But apparently I'm a terrorist without a gun,
A multinational with millions to spare,
Is scared of me—a hippy with long hair!
Well Mr. Straw stick your laws up your arse,
Calling me a terrorist is blatantly a farce,
So make up daft policies,
Get on TV,
And I'll keep on living
Up in a tree!
—Lee Himlin.

Aw, Shucks!

My dearest *Do or Die*,

I just don't know how to start this letter. Well, it would be best to start from the beginning, I suppose. Last time I heard from you in October 1999 when you sent me *Do or Die* No. 8 magazine. Yeah, it was so long time ago. I just need to say that *DoD* No. 8 was something really unique. Wow! What more to say: I keep reading it again and again... and then again and again! OK, you understand what I mean to say. Also I am pleased to inform you that there are more people here who really admire your work just as much as I do.

I am writing you because I will not and I don't want to believe that you are not coming out any more. Please, say that I'll be able to enjoy in you in many, many years to come! I wrote you two or three times last year (with and without enclosed money) but unfortunately no reply from you. This time I can only hope that this letter will reach you and finding you all well and in good health and that

quite soon there'll be envelope with new *Do or Die* magazine No. 9. Lots of love and respect to all of you who make something so valuable and useful like my beloved *Do or Die*.

Till next time,

IE

Croatia

PS: I had unique opportunity to attend anti-WB, IMF, WTO demos last September in Prague. Please find enclosed my 'statement' I've written for some organisations which requested me for it. Well, I was really lucky because there were no evidence (photos, video etc.) against me. So there is a God after all—ha, ha!

No Sects Please

Dear *Do or Die*,

Congratulations on a brilliant issue number nine. I was particularly inspired by the reports on anti-genetics actions and impressed with the analysis in the articles 'State of Terror', 'May Day', and the 'Pink and Silver' block article.

I notice that you list Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) as a group which uses "physical confrontation" against the far right. This is less and less the case in recent years—AFA is now almost entirely under the control of Red Action and seems more interested in slagging off other anti-fascists than in physically confronting the far right. Many groups have left AFA for this reason including Bristol, Nottingham, Wigan, Bolton, South London and Sheffield—with Leeds and Newcastle both kicked out in recent years.

While AFA has some good analysis and does some good work it is clearly a red front that no longer engages in street confrontation. So, whether you list AFA is up to you but you should also list the No Platform Anti-Fascist Network. This is a new development incorporating some ex-AFA groups and others of a similar persuasion. It is non-sectarian and committed to the dual approach of political and physical confrontation. Unlike AFA it has had a few good results on the streets against the BNP and NF in the last year or two.

Like Earth First! it's a network of independent groups so there is no national contact address, although if you send stuff to the Leeds address we'll pass it on to the nearest group.

Keep up the good work,

No Platform Anti-Fascist Network

PO Box 127

Leeds LS3 1TS

Just Because I'm Paranoid...

Dear *DoD*,

The pseudonymous letter slagging off *Green Anarchist* in your last issue was a good attempt for an amateur. Its author well affects the tone of a superficial "know all, know nothing" trendy that's in and out of the movement in a summer, the sort that used to rave about *Squall* and witlessly call *GA* "Green Anorak".

He blows it when he refers to "The Feud", standard Stewart Home clone rhetoric. Satisfyingly, he admits this is damaging them more than *GA*, so much so they're reduced to pseudonymously denouncing themselves in order to attack us, mainly to deceive readers an ocean away! Unsurprising, when exactly as Home was exonerating Tony Wakeford of far right links, the latter was hosting the website for *Synthesis*, the zine of ENM/NRF's Troy Southgate, a key organiser of the February 2001 'Alternatives Fair'. Also unsurprising, given our consistent exposes of Home's collaboration with fascists and the State, that 'Consumer Zombie' complains there's "too much conspiracy theory" in *GA*.

Yours—for the destruction of civilisation,

John Connor

Oxford *GA*s

PS: Bob Black's no fascist, but Home clone and Holocaust denial apologist Fabian 'Fuckwit' Tompsett has intimidated *DoD* [not true, we have never been intimidated by him—Ed.] into publishing a second attack on him as such whilst allowing Bob no reply [again, not true, we happily publish any letters Bob sends us—Ed.]. Ask not why Bob allowed an innocuous student paper (see *Friendly Fire*, pp. 235-267) to be published in the Institute for Historical Review's journal 20 plus years ago—naivete, obviously—but rather how Fuckwit obtained a publication dedicated anti-fascist researchers can't. Also ask why Fuckwit denounces



anarchists as "fascists" whilst associating with fascists like Home and Co., if not to promote a convergence agenda?

No Names, No Packdrill...

Dear *DoD*,

The letter from the anonymous 'B' in *DoD* No. 9, 'Fascism Behind the Mask of Anarchy' needs some comment.

The writer glories in the 'success' of alleged anti-fascists in getting an event s/he disapproved of (The Anarchist Heretics Fair) cancelled by means of threats. They inform us that *Nexus* magazine has "proven and documented links to the far right". (Unspecified, we're supposed to take B's word for that.) Having read a few issues of *Nexus*, I can only say I've found nothing in it very politically or morally objectionable. True, some of it is downright cranky—the UFO conspiracies and quack medicine etc.—but other pieces are solid information about serious health hazards and real state/corporate conspiracies. But this is irrelevant. Even if *Nexus* were to print extracts from *Mein Kampf*, anyone who thinks that justifies intimidation to deny free expression cannot claim to be an anarchist/libertarian of any description. Such people believe that violence or the threat of it is a legitimate political argument—the basic tenet of all authoritarians.

No, this isn't a fluffy/pacifist argument. Violence in self-defence against violent situations and/or institutions is always justified, e.g. as in Seattle, Prague etc. Disrupting the activities of the murdering scum who control global capitalism is both necessary and praiseworthy. But I suspect that is far too risky for cowards like B—if it isn't incompatible with their true ideology in any case. If anybody is expressing opinions you don't like, you have two choices: one, ignore them so as not to give them further publicity. Two, take them on in open debate and convince them and their followers of the truth of your doctrines. The only reason anyone ever advocates suppression or censorship is because they doubt their own ability to do the latter.

The end of B's missive gives off a strong stink of *Searchlight*/MI5 provocateur tactics. To print the name and address of the alleged organiser of the offending event can only be seen as an attempt to set them up for violent attack, despite the snidely sniggering, "Why not drop him a line or something?"

It's too much to expect you to feel any kind of ethical shame for printing this poison but try a little self-interested foresight. How would you feel about *your* details appearing in *Spearhead* or somewhere? Suppose there is some kind of attack on this man, do you really think it would end there? Would you like to see a C18 'firm' visit the next Anarchist Bookfair? MI5 and *Searchlight* would be



ecstatic. The most charitable view is that you at *DoD* are seriously stupid [fair point—Ed.]. The uncharitable view is that you are fully aware of all this already. In short, if you want to create an atmosphere where most people are intimidated from showing an interest in *any* form of 'extreme'/unorthodox politics just carry on in the same vein. (And if you think you're getting *my* name and address you can go fuck yourselves! I'd probably end up in *Searchlight* as a 'fascist sympathiser' at the least.)

Yours,

Anonymous

Drug War Prisoner

Dear Friends,

Greetings! Thank you very much for sending me your ninth issue of *Do or Die*! By far I'd have to say it is the greatest collection of personal demonstration and action accounts from all over the world I have ever read. It's absolutely brilliant!

Thank you also for including me amongst the other 'Prisoners of War'. However, I would like to rectify my sentence. I had the 6 life sentences dismissed on appeal in 1997. In 1998, 5 more years were dropped. At present, I'm doing a 10 year bid. It's been a long, difficult battle. And it's not over yet.

I am especially ill. They misdiagnosed and mistreated me. I have been left crippled for the rest of my life. Updates are at: www.drugwarprisoners.org Somewhere on there I have my own page.

Good news is that my first book, *The Tallahassee Project* has been released. This is a collection of photos and stories from female drug war prisoners originally intended as an exhibit at the 1998 UN hearings in New York City. The book was published with the aid of Dr John Beresford of the Committee on Unjust Sentencing, and is available through Amazon online ordering.

Presently, I'm working on my second book on the women here at Caiswell. This is the only medical centre in the US for federal female prisoners. While the Bureau of Prisons likes to tout it as the "Mayo Clinic" of federal medical centres, one must remember this place is so decrepit and rundown the Veterans' Association no longer wanted it. My mission is to close this place down. Thank you again.

In solidarity,
Karen
Address

Keep Taking the Pills

Hi *Do or Die*,

Undercurrents are right. There are severe currents of wankerism amongst Earth First! Unless you are total egoism macho nerds, you, like me will be scanning nervously for camera people at actions. As you well know it keeps the pigs distant. And unless you're a complete and total wanker you don't fuck someone off who's in the middle of deep trance with a ritually abused mixed race woman. Unless you're Earth First! that is. But it's all just a game isn't it? Fucking morons! Occult meatheads! Nevertheless, Peace.

Gggrrr,
JB

Whale Meat Again

Hi *Do or Die*,

Glancing through your last annual I noticed a piece about Sea Shepherd. I have to point out that the Sea Shepherd's pursuit of the Makah Tribe is horrific racism. The *one* whale given to the Makah was that. It was a traditional (pre-colonial) give-away. I know this from my Native American campaigning. The Sea Shepherd ended up using colonial law against the Makah. 'Officially' the whale give-away was not an aboriginal hunt because there was a 70 year break in Makah whale give-aways. Why was there a 70 year break? Because of near complete destruction/suppression of a unique indigenous culture. Not without horrific theft and abuse of Native kids in 'residential homes'. Thus Sea Shepherd etc. have used a horrifically racist act to try and stop a *real* aboriginal hunt (i.e. a give-away not a 'hunt' in the western sense). Fucking morons! This situation needs sorting out if we are to make any 'New Age' real. Otherwise it's all still a white supremacist scapegoat 'game'. No thanks!

In love and extreme anger kid,
JB

The Orwellian Logic of Leftism

Dear *Do or Die*,

I am writing in reply to the last edition of *Do or Die* No. 9 concerning a letter entitled 'Fascism behind the mask of Anarchy' which libelled myself and others who participated in The Anarchist Heretics Fair (which was held in Brighton during May 2000) as being crypto-fascists etc. The author of this piece of writing cowardly declined to submit their name or organisation—but felt free to print a contact address for one of the organisers of the Heretics Fair.

The writer portrays myself as "a one man Christian anarchist" and claims that my website 'Albion Awake!' promotes and "promulgates a strange combination of conspiracy theory, evangelical bible bashing and British nationalism." Firstly may I just clarify that the title of my web site comes from the poetry of mystical bard anarchist William Blake and his epic poem concerning spiritual freedom 'Milton'—as the writer appears to suggest in his letter that the name 'Albion Awake' should be 'warning enough' to all supposed anti-fascists!

Secondly concerning 'conspiracy theory'—hasn't the person heard of people like the left libertarian Robert Anton Wilson (and his *Illuminatus* trilogy), Philip K Dick (and his *VALIS* trilogy) and the



anarcho-gnosticism of anarchist Grant Morrison's *Invisibles* comic strip? These all deal with conspiracy theory themes through the medium of science fiction, but from an anti-authoritarian perspective. Not to mention the excellent *Steamshovel Press* magazine, an anarchist/situationist magazine and website devoted to investigating so called "conspiracy theories" etc? Are they all crypto-fascist?

By portraying all researchers into conspiracy theory as crypto-fascist you merely create a whole no go area for people on the left which only serves to create a vacuum for genuine fascists to exploit! (and *Nexus* magazine is subtitled as being for "information *anarchists* everywhere") What is alarming to me is the amount of so called libertarian anarchists who will jump to make such knee jerk reactions on the basis of such scant evidence. (Have such people who accuse *Nexus* magazine of being fascistic ever read a copy?)



And what's so wrong about being an born again Christian? Does that have to make me a fundamentalist bible basher? (which I emphatically am not!) Actually I have great respect and draw much spiritual inspiration from many faith traditions (including Sufism, Druidism etc.) What's so bad about believing that Jesus is Lord and Saviour of all creation—does that make me a fascist? I am opposed to all forms of political fascism, ideological anti-Semitism and reactionary racism—all of which are totally contrary to the Spirit of Christ. (And why can't an evangelical Christian be an anarchist?)

And as for promoting "British Nationalism" I prefer the term "folk autonomist" as nationalism always has statist connotations which I reject, by "folk autonomy". I would urge all readers of this letter to check out the sufi-situationist Hakim Bey's excellent tract *Millennium* (Please refer to the chapter entitled 'Notes on Nationalism'). For a definition, although Hakim Bey doesn't use the term as I have defined it, it merely refers *not* to classical nationalist Jacobin centralism but to the revolutionary Folkism of movements like the Zapatistas, Native American liberation, the Free Tibet campaign, the Black Panthers, the early Jewish *Kibbutz* movement and more. (Hardly reactionary, hardly racist and hardly state-nationalist!)

The problem with people like the writer of the letter 'Fascism behind the mask of Anarchy' is that they operate along the lines of what I would personally refer to as 'the Orwellian logic of leftism'—throw enough mud at someone whose views you don't like and sure enough some of it will stick, and should they then respond with comments to prove that they are not fascist, racist or anti-semite, the Orwellian leftist will reply "Yes but that's only 'Code words'" meaning you are a fascist-racist-anti-Semite! (In other words you're damned if you are and you're damned if you're not. Just like in the historical witch-hunts—now who's the real bible basher?) The coward who wrote this libel has merely confirmed his own prejudice.

Yours,

wayne@albionawake.co.uk

Home Sweet Home

To *Do or Die*,

Just why do anarchist publications, even yours, publish Stewart Home's libels against anarchists—not only publish them, but publish them without comment as if they were the ordinary stuff of anarchist-related dialogue? Once an author has publicly contended that anarchists—*all* anarchists—are racists and fascists, it should go without saying that he should be excluded from all anarchist forums. Home has done exactly that in *Anarchist Integralism*.

I sincerely hope that your readership is not as easily confused as the letter-writer who finds the so-called Feud between Home and *Green Anarchist* too complicated to understand. There *is* no feud—no feud peculiar to the participants—between Home and *GA*. There is a vendetta by Home against anarchists which, for tactical reasons, is for the time being focused on *GA*, initially because of the vulnerability of several of its activists as GANDALF defendants, and now because of some rather contrived controversies among anarchists (such as the pillow-fight over Steve Booth's 'Irrationalists' article). The details are mostly not

important and fall easily into place once you appreciate Home's not especially sophisticated stratagem.

You might say that Stewart Home disdains to conceal his aims, although he does not disdain to conceal his handlers. First he assailed the Greens as fascists (*Green Apocalypse*). Green anarchists did not do much to rebut that, probably because they might make use of this external criticism against Green statists, especially "Formanists" who gave at least superficial credence to the charge. But then Home assailed Green *anarchists* as fascists, nationalists, racists, etc.—because they were, after all, Greens! Leftist anti-Green anarchists—such as Murray Bookchin and Janet Biehl—not only failed to defend their comrades against these libels, they publicised them so as to shore up their own crumbling standing among anarchists. Finally, completing a progression obvious in retrospect, in *Anarchist Integralism* Home characterises anarchists in general as genocidal fascists and racists.

At every step, shortsighted suicidal anarchists borrowed, then returned the weapons which would next be used on them. This has to stop. Just because an opportunist like Home has a printing press and a mysterious source of income at his disposal does not dignify his texts as either important or valuable. He is only as influential as his enemies allow him to be. You are one of those enemies.

Yours,
BB

Beasts

Dear *Do or Die*,

Although issue nine was very interesting, I feel I must comment on the review of *Beasts of Burden*, and, in particular, the reviewer's arguments against the 'primitivist' angle of *BoB*. The statement that many tribal societies—in this case the author appears to confuse the words 'tribal' and 'primitive' (i.e. gatherer-hunters)—"...'managed' nature quite extensively" is misleading and not entirely accurate. The example given of the Native Americans is perhaps not as conclusive as the author may have thought, as generalising across the peoples of an entire continent is rarely accurate, especially in the complicated circumstances of the Americas.

The author then brings up the mass extinction of species in the Americas, Australasia, Madagascar and Hawaii. "Some attribute this to climate change, but it seems strangely coincidental that these extinction waves should flare up in different places at different times, shortly after humans appear on the scene." However coincidental it might seem, it is still an on-going debate among researchers in the field, and there is not enough evidence to tip the scales either way.



It seems to me that the author of the review conflates several issues, and uses out-of-date thinking to refute some of the (quite valid) points that *Beasts of Burden* makes. Is Marxist jargon like "primitive communism" really appropriate in a journal like *Do or Die*?

Yours,
L

Speaka da Lingo?

Dear friends,

As the new secretary for the Libertarian Fraction of SAT (Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda—World Non-nationalist Association), I thought I'd establish contact with you to announce our presence and tell you a little bit about ourselves.

Firstly, SAT itself is a global organisation with members on all five continents. It enables workers, progressives, anarchists and people broadly on the left to be in direct contact with each other, and on their own terms (i.e. outside of state/boss class control). SAT uses the relatively simple artificial international language *Esperanto* as a communication medium between workers.

The Libertarian Fraction operates within and outside of SAT, and unites people who define themselves as anarchist, libertarian, anarcho-syndicalist, anarcho-communist, etc. We aim to point out the practical use of the International Language as a tool to unite revolutionaries worldwide, irrespective of national languages (which can often be a major barrier to international intercommunication and collaboration). For us, *Esperanto* is part of the growing 'culture of

resistance' on the international front. We also publish a regular journal *Liberecana Ligilo* in *Esperanto.*

Some LF members are involved in IWA sections, others in IAF member organisations, while others still, do not belong to either international co-ordination. We nevertheless believe that fighting global capitalism worldwide, can only be helped by better communication between anarchists and other revolutionaries worldwide.

If your group or organisation has any Esperanto speakers, they may be interested in our website: http://users.skynet.be/bs939002/L.L.html">

Liberecana Frakcio. Otherwise, if anyone in your group would like to learn the International Language, then please contact me and I will try and put you in contact with comrades who can help with this.

In solidarity,

R

SAT—Liberecana Frakcio

c/o Anarchist Federation

84b Whitechapel High Street

London E1 7QX

UK

Revolutionary Greetings

Comrades,

As you know, since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon there has been a new aggressive action taking place by our respective governments. Here in Amerikkka they are tightening more screws and Bush and the Congress have come up with a new anti-Terrorist Bill. Though I have not seen the written contents of this bill, from what I have gathered from the news, it is very broad in their definition of the term 'terrorist' and 'terrorism'. I am afraid the government is going to use the 9/11 attacks as an over-broad excuse to classify and label all who protest, dissent, demonstrate, say anything that is anti-government will be met with this label and subject to severe persecutions, especially those of us who are anarchists.



Since the 9/11 event I have already been subjected to interrogation, threats and general harassment. Harassment that is beyond the ordinary harassment I had been receiving as a Political Prisoner, i.e. mail is coming to me very late and often cut in half, constant cell shakedowns and trashing, strip searches (as if I have some kind of gun or bomb up my ass or under my balls!). I have even found a few death threat notes laying on the floor of my cell.

I think this is a time (now) that the overall anarchist community and other politically active people recognise that we are going to be widely targeted and marked for many actions by the fascist state and their openly displayed objective for New World Order Fascism. I believe that now is the time that we truly begin to tighten up our ranks and begin to conduct real workshops and discuss some very serious and relevant issues and strategies while we still have time to do so. Because once the fascist states begin to lower the boom if we aren't totally prepared we are going to find ourselves so caught off guard that we won't know what hit us. I also think that there needs to be some way of teaching ones the 'art' of keeping their mouths shut and not responding or what I call 'dry snitching'. Dry Snitching is when one is telling vital information without realising they are doing so.

We need to also look at something else as well, and that is, how the fascist states will come down on Blacks and other peoples of colour. For it is a proven and historical fact that whatever happens or pains white people will feel will be felt much harder among Blacks and people of colour. We need to be addressing this and reaching seriously into the Black community and working with them on these relevant matters. As a Black man, I know the importance of this and have felt the brunt of white reactionaries, both from the fascist state officials and alleged revolutionaries.

By the way, I am the founder of Political Prisoners of War Coalition (PPWC) and if you'd like to read or obtain our materials or the materials I have independently written, please check out our website at www.geocities.com/ppwc_uk/intro.html or email ppwc_uk@yahoo.co.uk for more information. Meantime, keep up the good work and I hope to continue receiving your great works.

In the trenches,
Ali Khalid Abdullah
s/n #148130
3225 John Conley Dr.
Lapeer, MI 48446
USA.



Conspiracy Corner

Dear *Do or Die*,

There are some important inaccuracies in B's letter (see *Do or Die* No. 9, p. 221) glaring to anyone who cares to check out his/her assertions. B asserts coolly that I believe Bilderberg is "...part of a plot by the Illuminati". Uh? From the beginning on the website I decided to separate fact and speculation clearly. I even give this Illuminati story as an example of a 'conspiracy theory' therefore out of the scope of my analysis of the institution of Bilderberg.

Bilderberg is not "secret" as B asserts—it is secretive. It uses various cloaking tactics such as not telling the press of its venue nor issuing an attendance list until the last Mercedes has left, ensuring the press have nothing to report on.

Links on my website to right wing sites such as *Spotlight* come with an appropriate health warning. It would be misleading to pretend criticism of Bilderberg by the right did not exist. Surely better to acknowledge and criticise these sources than to deny them? The fact is *Spotlight* is the only paper in the world with sources that reveal venues before the event so is an essential ingredient in getting the press to cover Bilderberg. It might also encourage some healthy competition from the left.

B criticises me for being a 'Bible bashing Christian'. Is the Bible no longer considered spiritually acceptable? Are we Quakers now beyond the pale? And more importantly would I get similar criticism for being a Buddhist, a Moslem or a non-Biblical Christian?

It hasn't escaped my attention that most of the Bible (the Old Testament) which is my spiritual home is specifically Jewish and that Jesus was a Jew. How can I then be lumped together with anti-Semites?

Anyway, there are several points that make investigation of Bilderberg a continuing priority for the left: It is a club for *the* richest, most powerful globalisers, transatlantic media barons, bankers and multinational bosses. *The Economist* described Bilderberg as 'ne plus ultra', or 'the top'. More than half the (unelected) government ministers for Europe, the European Commissioners, are ex-Bilderbergers. It was set up in the fifties by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, an ex-SS Nazi Officer exposed in a 1970s scandal for taking a million dollar bribe from Lockheed. Not surprisingly the most cogent criticism of Bilderberg already comes from a left perspective. Mike Peters, Marxist Sociology lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University, for example, has written 'Bilderberg and the project for European Unification', published in the alternative left magazine *Lobster*, and way and ahead the best paper to date on the origin and role of Bilderberg. The only person asking questions about this elite club on the floor of the European Parliament is Patricia McKenna, Irish Green MEP. If B wanted anarchists and lefties to treat Bilderberg as dangerous right-wing territory to be avoided he, or she, has missed the boat by several decades.

Sooner or later, people in Europe are going to have to get over the anti-Semitic paranoia factor and start grasping basic facts about the realities of corporate lobbying. The facts should speak for themselves on Bilderberg. Let's make sure the extreme right don't get a look in.

Yours,
TG
http://www.bilderberg.org

PS: A large letter B is displayed prominently on the windscreens of the chauffeur driven black Mercedes that bring the fat cats to Bilderberg every year. I think B might just have been making fun of you. Now that *is* a conspiracy theory.

Street Fighting a Dead End?

Hello friends,

Thank you for sending new *Do or Die* to *Zi a nechaj zit*, we put it in our free library, which is used by people in ecological and alternative movement. Please let me write some critical words.

I liked *Do or Die* very much, I have issues 6 and 7 and they were for me and my work publishing a very useful source of articles about roots of ecological crises, alienation of men from nature and its consequences. I like your enthusiasm,



celebration of wilderness (in world around us and also in ourself) and love for Mother Earth and its creatures. Your magazine was source of energy for me, because it was very nice to see people which take slogans about 'return to nature' sincere and truly. But new issue of *Do or Die* was disappointment for me. Nature and Mother Earth disappear from pages of your magazine and remains only masked city heroes throwing stones and bottles in senseless battles. I know how many energy and time my friends to preparing protests and activities connected with September 2000 World Bank and IMF meeting in Prague and I also see that it bring nothing positive for Nature, Earth and people who want to live in harmony with it.

I do not understand this street fighting against capitalism. In country which I live, majority of population want capitalism, they want more luxury, more consuming, using advances of technical progress and only few people care about natural world, about Third World and Earth. People who want live in another way, in voluntary simplicity, with nature, from local resources; free from hierarchy of civilisation and dictatorship of technical progress are small minority. What are we fighting against? System? System which majority of people want? We want win war with police, then with army, then win star wars and then create paradise on the Earth?

I think that more important is change minds and hearts of people around us. If majority of people in this society will want live in harmony with nature, simply, free, from local sources of nature, there will be no capitalism, no WTO, no IMF, no WB, because these things are not cause but consequence. It is like in article in *Do or Die* No. 7 which I translated to our magazine ('No-one Ever is to Blame', pp. 14-17): "No one really wants the world saved, not if it will significantly restrict their gluttony. All anyone really wants is someone else to blame." So we can blame capitalism, multinationals, WTO, WB, IMF etc. (list of enemies is long, you can choose...) and continue travel around the world to next city battlefield, fly over the oceans to fight for Mother Earth and enjoy lot of fun (riot is best adrenaline sport, better than bungee jumping). Who care that 80% of population in Czech Republic after Prague 2000 protests had biggest sympathy to police than the anti-globalisers? We can blame mass media and travel to some next summit in another country? But where in all this is nature, Earth, people in Third World? Are we really helping them? I do not think so...

Maybe changing our own life, making small steps in our communities, create alternatives to capitalism, rediscovering way how to live in harmony with nature, learning voluntary simplicity and spread this in our society, are not so exciting as rioting but I think it is way how truly save the Earth and help to people in Third World countries.

I am open to discussion and I wish you all the best.

With love from,
MR
Slovakia

PS: Excuse me, but my English is not very good, so I hope you will understand...

Death Row Request

Dear Gentlemen,

I am a prisoner on Death Row and would like very much to have a pen pal who reads *Do or Die*. I would appreciate it very much if you could print my letter in an effort to find a person interested in writing me. I am a 47 year old Spanish male, former US Marine and Vietnam veteran. I'm bilingual, in English and Spanish. I enjoy travelling, snow skiing, most music and reading. I would like to find a sensitive lady to have a good friendship. I thank you for any assistance you can give me in this matter.

Yours truly,
Manuel Pardo Jr. #111983
Union Correctional Institution
P Dorm P32125
PO Box 221
Raiford
Florida 32083
USA

[Editors note: We get a few of these letters from Death Row or long term male prisoners in the US asking for women pen friends. As you can see, we

do publish them, but we feel slightly confused about doing so. We'd be interested in hearing what other people think about it—especially women.]

Destruction of a Campaign?

Dear *Do or Die*,

The Pressmennan campaign was launched by genuine environmentalists. It started well, 2,000 locals signed the petitions to conserve Pressmennan Wood North (PWN), the local community associations put their names to the Friends of Pressmennan (FOP) conservation strategy, and the local paper gave favourable, intelligent coverage every week. The local council jumped on the bandwagon and went as far as putting a precedential blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the whole wood.

On the day of the TPO, an agent provocateur arrived. A saboteur had previously snuck into FOP. The provocateur started making inflammatory statements to the press, and set about alienating the local community.

The Edinburgh Evening News was used as a vehicle by MI5 to set up the campaign organiser for a civil interdict, having her viewed by the courts as guilty by association with the inflammatory statements of the provocateur. The interdict prevented her from showing journalists and experts around the wood. It also restricted her from site meetings with the Forestry Authority, Scottish Natural Heritage, Land owners, management consultants and council officials.

The Forestry Authority misrepresented the campaign group to their expert when he was invited to appraise the conflict, by not producing favourable press coverage nor articles written by the campaign spokesperson. Neither did they mention the petitions and the conservation strategy.

A powerful anti-Nature mason who had infiltrated FOP volunteered to represent the council at a vital Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting. At this meeting he backed down and left the council open to financial loss if they pursued the campaign. He was accused of impropriety in *The Scotsman* newspaper.

A brilliant letter exposing the illegality of the felling plan and corruption of the FA was sent to the Secretary of State. In synchrony, it was sent to the media. The media awaited his response which was totally evasive, stalling and requesting documents we had already sent to him. At the time, the campaign organiser was being tortured by MI5 who were using frequency weapons.

After being badly sabotaged, the campaign organiser had to get ingenuitive. She hoaxed the spiking of the wood to give the landowners the moral high ground to ease the blow of having to back down. She wanted them to see the wood as beautiful, not as a business asset. White serpents in the shape of S's were painted with water-based paint throughout the wood, and diagrams of porcelain spiking sent to relevant organisations.

The Evening News, for MI5, set the campaign organiser up as having spiked the wood. Consequently, she was made the subject of a government terrorist tagging experiment. Finally, MI5 blackmailed an appropriate doctor to Section the campaign organiser. She was incarcerated at the time when 200 trees were felled.

Yours,

GH

Request for Help

Hello comrades,

We've received already two copies of *Do or Die* 9, one of which is donated to our very own Kalakasan anarchist mini library and the other is intended for borrowing/lending purpose. As EF! campaigners we're with five other affinity groups here in the Metro. Two YCAL (Youth Collective for Animal Liberation) groups, SOS, FNB-Manila, Dare to Care and Pusang Gala (Wildcat) collective. All are keeping in touch as Local Anarchist Network—Philippines (LAN).

We're quite experiencing extreme financial difficulties right now. All of us got no job, laid off because of financial crisis in our country, 2 of us

The Day I Broke the Rules

This was found written in a kid's school book that a friend of ours found abandoned on a Brighton train station platform.

April 30th 2001:

I started talking to my teacher about the lecture he gave us about Mayday. I said "Sir: What do ya actually do on Mayday?" "Well it's a time of Anarcky and riots." "Really. Is it illegal?" "Well of course." "Damn. Oh well thanks sir." "It was my pleasure."

"Hey Benny", I shouted across the road, "'Sup, what are you doing tonight?" "Nothing. I'm gonna go and practice my skating." "WHAT—ain't U gonna prepare for Mayday?" "No, it's illegal. You'll go to prison." "No you won't, there's gonna be 4 hundred of us, they won't be able to handle it." "OK. But what are you going to do?" "Don't tell anyone, OK. Well, we are going to break into the bank and steal all the money." "Well, I don't know, it sounds dangerous, but..." "But what?" "But, I'll help." "Wohoo, pack your bag and meet me at my house." "Sure thing." (I ride on my bike with my bag packed.) (Ding dong, Ding dong.) "Hey" "Come on hurry up and go, I wanna get it over with"...

got kicked out from working in 4 NGO groups because they exposed themselves as anarchists. The NGO managements, mostly ND (National Democrat) Leninist-Marxist-Maoist.

I, with a few, have travelled the north, hitchhiked and on foot but still fucking expensive though—to personally and DIY see spots which were slowly devastated by irresponsible tourists and dynamite fishing, particularly in the 'Hundred Islands' in Alaminos, Pangasinan Province.

One place that caught our attention is the devastation of rice terraces in Banawe in the Cordillera region. We think that after 5-10 years half of it will be gone. I was surprised when some old folks there speak more of American English rather than Tagalog (Filipino language). Of course the American missions have a ethno-ecocidal impact among the Ifugao and Igorot tribes there. Foreign tourist mostly Germans, Aussies (which I'd mistaken as British), Koreans and Japanese got no respect and leave a lot of their trash in these spots—I always talk to people and entrepreneurs there.

We travel mostly south once a year or once every two years as part of our environmental activity to do something like cleaning the islands by ourselves and teaching people to recycle and plant and offer more vegetables in their (small) restaurants. Most eateries in the Cordillera region particularly in Baguio, offers dog meat!

Any old magazines, journals or newspapers that you think we might need or as long as it's autonomous, earth/animal liberationist, you could send 'em as well, because most of our reading materials in Kalakasan Library were washed away by the big flood last year. OK, thank you very much, especially for understanding our very poor situation.

Yours,
BM
Earth First! Campaign East M. Mla.
PO Box 176
Taguig Central PO
Taguig, Metro Manila
Philippines 1632

Matrix Madness

Dear *Do or Die*,

There is something extremely wrong with every single person in this world. They seem to be part of a pointless simulation.

The Matrix has portrayed this idea somewhat, yet we watch it and go back to our daily lives. Yet in this very life, underneath the seeming diversity in people's opinions, values, talents, and interests, there is something that makes everyone the same. It is as though this planet is populated only by mindless fakes, objects that provide the appearance of intellect on the surface but are based on only mechanical reflexes and primitive thought patterns.

I don't really care if anything I say has been said before, if it was portrayed in movies, in books, or in the lyrics of some useless song. With 6 billion people covering the globe at any given time, thousands and thousands of years of written literature, probability dictates almost any combination of words has occurred numerous times.

Yet there is clear evidence there was no action, so those words, just like the people who spoke them, must have been just more fakes. I am forced to use this language (also created by the fakes) because there is no alternative, so everything I write here could be misunderstood to make me sound like one of them, but it will be the action that I take and the dedication that will separate me from them.

In my estimation the fakes that occupy this planet don't make up 99%, but more like 99.99999% of the population. I know this because I've searched, and in my search have so far only found one true ally (I have found him via the Internet as well). But even with those numbers we would not give up because there is no logic in giving up.

The people on this planet are all fakes because the societies have made them this way. Ideas that populate people's minds have no logic or purpose. Concepts such as religion, god, morality, individualism, freedom, identity, happiness, love and billions of others are all just memes. Like parasites they infect the minds and spread from one person to the next. They have no point or purpose; they exist without any logical basis or foundation. The fakes are completely controlled by them, and they will never see beyond them. To not be controlled by them one must do more then just realise that they exist. One must resist any ideas that have no point, endlessly question, and never accept imperfection or compromise in any answer.

We (myself and my ally) are different though. While we have had the limitation of existing only in these societies, something has made it possible for us to resist being indoctrinated into becoming one of those fakes. We have no arbitrary wants, needs, desires, or preferences.

If this world continues to exist the way it is then nothing in it will ever have a point. It will always be just a product of random evolution, one with no importance or relevance. The only logical goal is to dedicate our lives to increasing our numbers, those that aren't fakes, so that in thousands of years our numbers may be such that the fakes would no longer be a threat to progress.

Those that join us must see every other person occupying this planet as the enemy, and us as their only allies. Like us they must have dedication

only to taking the most logical action, and to nothing else.

To tell you more about us, we've posted some personal information about ourselves on a website. You'll also find past responses to us on that webpage.

Obviously anyone reading this email is most likely just another fake. Do not simply reply to this email; if you do your message will almost certainly be ignored. If you do wish to communicate, first demonstrate your interest by taking the effort to find us online, one of the ways to do that is described below.

Use a major search engine to search for every combination of any two words from the list below. The order of the words shouldn't matter as long as you do not search for them in quotes. Also when you pick the right combination you shouldn't need to look at more then the first matches.

There is no trick to this and this isn't meant to be quick, it should, however, be fairly clear if/when you find the right site. The following search engines were verified by us, please use any of them as other search engines may simply not list us correctly: MSN, Lycos, InfoSeek, LookSmart, HotBot, InfoSpace, Google, Ask.com, AllTheWeb, Teoma, WebCrawler, AltaVista, AOL Search, Netscape Search.

Perfect, theory, endless, desire, eternal, logic, driving, perpetual, vision, logical, infinite, dream, final, best, escape, objective, thought, only, ambition, clue, perfection. If this can't be solved, or if you never reach us, there should be no reason for you to give up, as we will never give up and thus there will always be some way to find us.

Love,

Ryan and Jacob

Burns da Business

Dear *Do or Die*,

Yes, 'Do or Die' is a usually unacknowledged quote from Robert Burns. He coined the phrase by adapting it from a French revolutionary oath of the time. But it was still a surprise to see the verse it comes from on the front cover of the last issue. First time *Do or Die* has quoted a freemason with approval I think! It's from *Scots Wha Hae*.[1] Looked at one way, this is a rather dodgy nationalist rant, and not really typical of Burns at all. Oh, alright then, let's call it national liberation.[2]

The other interpretation is that it was published anonymously just after he'd undertaken to stop publishing subversive verse in order to keep his job as a revenue man or tax collector. His own postscript said it was inspired by Robert Bruce's "glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles not quite so ancient". This had, of course, nothing to do with the brutal clampdown then being organised against



the Friends of the People and its paper the *Edinburgh Gazeteer*, for which Burns had never (honest!) written insurrectionary contributions. In particular, it had nothing to do with the impending trial of his friend Thomas Muir, for publishing seditious literature, namely Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*. Muir was sentenced to 14 years' transportation, but died on a prison hulk before this could be implemented, after an abortive American attempt to de-arrest him. Though hard for us to grasp now, *Scots Wha Hae* was apparently an historical allegory in solidarity with Thomas Muir.

It's generally reckoned Burns was lucky not to share the fate of Muir and another radical writer, Thomas Palmer. Like the English Ranter, Abiezer Coppe, 150 years previously, he always recanted or denied his views when under pressure. On at least one occasion he resorted to his freemasonry to wriggle out of trouble.[3] Another bit of bother arose when he was alleged to have incited a theatre audience to sing the French revolutionary anthem *Ça Ira* at the end of a performance instead of the usual dirge about God saving the King, but claimed he "neither knew of the plot nor joined in the plot" and got away with it. He later wrote;

"Who will not sing God Save the King
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing God save the King,
We'll ne'er forget the people."

Burns' short life (he died at 37) is interesting for us, now that we're 'terrorists', as an example

of one person's survival through viciously repressive times. Did he sell out? Or was it that "Burns dealt with his situation with what we would call working class horse sense. He chose survival for himself and his dependants rather than martyrdom, a fair enough option in a period of defeat, and one that rings with everyday familiarity to working class militants."[4]

I'm disinclined to see him as a sell-out, because he carried on supplying insurrectionary poetry to short-lived radical newspapers, either anonymously or using pseudonyms, until he died.[5]

What Rab the Rhymer deserves, though, is to be rescued from the de-politicised, shortbread tin bourgeois mush-for-tourists into which he's been outrageously dumped. Recuperation, I think they call it. So for inspiration and laughs, here's a short activists' guide to the writer of:

"Ye see yon birkie[6] ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, an a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof[7] for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star, and a' that,
The man o' independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that."

Or woman, presumably, Rab?[8] You won't have much trouble with *The Tree of Liberty* as it's in standard English. It followed *Scots Wha Hae* as a great anonymous rant, this time in explicit support of the French revolution, rather than veiled historical analogy. Not his best writing (he was never at his best in standard English, I reckon) but inspiring, daring in the prevailing climate, and obviously aimed at circulation beyond Scotland.

Verses on the Destruction of the Woods Near Drumlanrig is rather obscure. You'll usually find it only in an edition of his complete works. But it was well appreciated at Newbury. I don't know anything that better expresses the desolation and anger of seeing an ancient woodland and all its life trashed for the profit of the powerful. In that case "the reptile wears a ducal crown". It was the Duke of Queensbury raising cash to pay off an 'illegitimate' daughter. Only she turned out to be another toff's daughter, and managed to wangle loads of cash off both of them.

Ever thought there was anything recent about the media being full of lies and distortion, obsessed with the writhings and posturing of governments rather people's hopes and struggles, not to mention purveying yards of trivial shite about alleged 'stars'? Have a look at *To A Gentleman Who Had Sent Him a Newspaper*, and you'll probably agree there's not much new. Rab said it better and more wittily in 1789 than I can now.

Then there's the better known *The Twa Dogs—A Tale*. The gypsy's dog and the laird's dog meet up for a fun day around town, sniffing arses, knocking over bins and causing mayhem. In between, they have time to compare their lives and discuss the class nature of human society. They find themselves in doggy agreement, and you'll probably concur with these perceptive animals too.

Of Burns' long ballad poems, *Tam O'Shanter* is the one which gets all the attention. It was his own favourite—maybe because he hoped to make money out of it, but never did—and it's a drunken tall tale well told. But have a look at *The Holy Fair*. Much more political. The shallowness and repressive hypocrisy of 'official' contemporary culture gets a right hilarious kicking, whilst people's ways of avoiding and undermining it are well observed and enjoyed.

Hope I've turned you on to a revolutionary rhymer who's worth reading in our times. Thanks to the shortbread tin recuperators I complained about above, he's always in print and every library. A bit of an emotionally unstable sentimentalist, for sure, and not noted for moderate consumption of the electric soup, but who's perfect? Don't be put off by the language. If you don't have an auld Scots granny to explain, there's always a glossary.

Yours,
Arbuthnot Maladaptive

Notes

1) That's not "wahey", it's "who have".
2) He was always a lover of Scottish ways and culture, but with a broad, inclusive view of humanity and respect for other cultures—except those of toffs and oppressors everywhere.
3) If that sounds well dodgy in our world, it doesn't seem to have been thought so in those times. Burns wasn't the only radical freemason by any means. Scottish freemasonry is a completely separate set-up from the English version and occupies a different (though no more savoury) niche in society. Predominantly working class, and one of the main institutions of sectarian bigotry, it's primarily a boozing club for the violent Orange Order thugs of yesteryear (frequently the present ones' dads). The sort of 'respectable' types who might well be English freemasons wouldn't touch it with a bargepole. That's now. In the 18th Century, Scottish freemasonry seems to have been different again—bit like a cross between the sort of men's club caffs which occur in Mediterranean and Turkish cultures and a credit union/mutual aid society of mainly poor farmers and craftsmen who were vulnerable whenever hard times hit. Not saying it was a 100% admirable institution, but very different from freemasonry as known and loathed in both Scotland and England now. The hocus-pokus aspect of freemasonry wasn't particularly weird in the 18th Century. Oaths and contrived rituals were par for the course in all sorts of groups, including revolutionary ones.
4) Jock Morris in *Scotland—Class and Nation* edited by Chris Bambery (Bookmarks, 1999). Jock Morris is an SWPer, but well worth reading on Burns. His selection from Burns' radical writings is almost completely different from mine, illustrating how much there is.
5) See *The Lost Poems* by PS Hogg (Glasgow, 1997)
6) Roughly equals smartarse. Not, as you might think, anything to do with 'burke'.
7) Literally 'calf' but the glossaries say it was used to mean 'a blockhead', 'a ninny'.
8) Maybe we'll let him off if he hadn't read Mary Wollestonecraft. Wonder if he did? They were exact contemporaries, being born and dying young in the same years. Burns was able to read widely in the later part of his life, and was in touch with the English radical scenes in which Wollestonecraft moved.

UK Ecological Direct Action Groups

Bath EF!
c/o PO Box 426
Bath BA1 2ZD

Dartmoor EF!
c/o PO Box 77
Totnes
Devon TQ9 5ZJ

Grampian EF!
PO Box 248
Aberdeen AB25 1JE
Email: grampianearthfirst@hotmail.com

Gwynedd & Mon EF!
The Greenhouse
1 Trevelyan Terrace
Bangor LL57 1AX
Tel: 01248 255821
Email: bangor-werdd@yahoogroups.com

Leeds EF!
c/o CRC
16 Sholebroke Avenue
Leeds LS7 3HB
Tel: 0113 262 9365
Email: leedsef@ukf.net
Web: www.leedsef.ukf.net

London Reclaim the Streets
PO Box 9656
London N4 4JY
Tel: 0207281 4621
Email: rts@gn.apc.org

Manchester EF!
Dept 29
22a Beswick Street
Manchester M4 7HS
Tel: 0161 226 6814
Email: mancef@nematode.freeserve.co.uk
Web: www.snet.co.uk/ef/

Newcastle TAPP
PO Box 1TA
Newcastle NE99 1TA
Email: ne991ta@yahoo.com

Norfolk and Waveney EF!
c/o PO Box 487
Norwich NR2 3AL
Tel: 07944 874 393
Email: norfolk-earth-first@email.com

Nottingham EF!
c/o SUMAC Centre
245 Gladstone Street
Nottingham NG7 6HX
Tel: 0845 458 9595
Email: nottsef@veggies.org.uk

Reading Roadbusters
RIS Centre
35-39 London Street
Reading RG1 4PS
Tel: 0118 954 6430
Email: roadbusters@clara.net

Sheffield EF!
c/o Brambles Resource Centre
82 Andover Street
Sheffield S3 9EH
Tel: 0114 2797164
Email: jimthackery@yahoo.co.uk

South Devon EF!
PO Box 77
Totnes TQ9 5ZJ

SWAN Network
PO Box 70
Newport NP1 0YD
Email: swangroup@yahoo.co.uk

Warwickshire Action Group
c/o Gaia
7 Regent Place
Lemington Spa CV31 1EH
Tel: 07771 547 576
Email: wag@hushmail.com

Other UK Contacts

1 in 12 Club
21-23 Albion Street
Bradford BD1 2LY
Tel: 01274 734 160
Email: info@1in12.com
Web: www.1in12.go-legend.net
Long-running autonomous social centre.

Advisory Service for Squatters
St Pauls Road
London N1 2QN
Tel: 0845 6445814
Email: advice@squat.freeserve.co.uk
Web: www.squat.freeserve.co.uk
Excellent long running legal and practical help for squatters and other homeless people.

Anarchist Federation
c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Tel: 07946 214 590
Email: anarchistfederation@bigfoot.com
Web: www.afed.org.uk
Anarcho-communists for the abolition of capitalism and the state. Produce a newsletter and *Organise!* magazine.

Anarchist Teapot Mobile Kitchen
PO Box 74
Brighton BN1 4ZQ
Email: katchoo63@yahoo.co.uk
Cheesy pop music with cheap, organic, vegan food for action camps, gatherings and radical events.

Anarchist Youth Network
c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Tel: 07814 629780
Email: info@anarchistyouth.net
Web: www.anarchistyouth.net
The only revolutionary youth network in the UK. Set up independently by young people, for young people, not as a recruiting ground for saddo lefties.

Anti-Fascist Action
BM 1734
London WC1N 3XX
Tel: 07000 569569
Political and physical confrontation to the far right. Also produce *Fighting Talk* magazine.

Blatant Incitement Collective
Dept 29
22a Beswick Street
Manchester M4 7HS
Tel: 0161 226 6814
Email: doinit@nematode.freeserve.co.uk
Encourages people to organise themselves ecologically and without hierarchy by sharing skills, knowledge and inspiration.

Brighton Against Benefit Cuts
c/o BHUWC
4 Crestway Parade
Brighton BN1 7BL
Email: babc@yahoo.co.uk
Resistance to all attacks on benefits. Also produce occasional newsletter and act as an excellent information point.

Campaign Against the Arms Trade
11 Goodwin Street
London N4 3HQ
Tel: 020 7281 0297
Email: enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk
Web: www.caat.demon.co.uk
Broad coalition of people seeking an end to the UK's role in the international arms trade.

Campaign to Close Campsfield
c/o 111 Magdelen Street
Oxford OX4
Tel: 01865 558145
Web: www.closecampsfield.org.uk
Regular demonstrations and other events to close Campsfield immigration detention centre.

The Campaign to Free Vanunu
185 New Kent Road
London SE1 4AG
Tel: 020 7378 9324
Email: campaign@vanunu.freeserve.co.uk
Web: www.vanunu.freeserve.co.uk
Campaign to free Vanunu, imprisoned by the Israeli State for anti-nuclear whistle blowing.

Class War Federation
PO Box 467
London E8 3QX
Tel: 01582 750601
Email: classwaruk@hotmail.com
Web: www.classwaruk.org
Exists to promote class consciousness and working class control. Produces newspaper of the same name.

Chiapas Link
c/o Box 79
Greenleaf
Bristol BS1 5BB
Email: chiapaslink@yahoo.com
Excellent information about, and radical support for, the Zapatista struggle in Mexico.

Direct Action against the War
Web:
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/directactionagainstwar/
Email list for exchanging information about direct action resistance to the war.

Disabled Action Network
3 Crawley Street
London N22 6AN
Tel: 020 8889 1361

Direct action by and for disabled people.

English Collective of Prostitutes
PO Box 287
London NW6 5QU
Tel: 020 7482 2496
A network of women working at various levels in the sex industry.

Faslane Peace Camp
Shandon
Nr Helensburgh
Dumbarton G84 8NT
Scotland
Tel: 01436 820901
Email: faslanepeacecamp@hotmail.com
Web: www.faslanepeaccamp.org.uk
Right across the road from the nuclear sub base this lot stop convoys and generally make the military's life awkward.

56a Infoshop
56 Crampton Street
London SE17
Email: 56a@safetycat.org
Web: www.safetycat.org/56a
Autonomous radical infoshop with excellent anarchist archive and much more.

Friends, Families and Travellers
Community Base
113 Queens Road
Brighton BN1 3XG
Tel: 01273 234777
Working towards a society where travellers can live on the road without fear of prosecution and harrasment.

Friends of People Close to Nature
33 Gould Close
Welham Green
Hatfield
Hertfordshire AL9 7EB
Tel: 01707 885 994
Email: rains@fpcn-global.org
Web: www.fpcn-global.org
Independent group working to support the struggles of indigenous peoples against development.

Genetic Engineering Network
Archway Resource Centre
1a Waterlow Road
London N19 5NJ
Tel: 0845 4569329
Email: genetics@gn.apc.org
Web: www.geneticsaction.org.uk
Information for action, updated details of test site locations and support for local groups.

Haringey Solidarity Group
PO Box 2474
London N8 OHW
Tel: 020 8374 5027
Email: hsg@clara.net
Established local radical group. Also produces *Haringey Community Action* newsletter.

Hunt Saboteurs Association
PO Box 5254
Northampton NN1 3ZA
Tel: 0845 4500727
Email: info@huntsabs.org.uk
Web: www.huntsabs.org.uk
A nationwide network of groups using direct action to stop fox hunting. Also produces the publication *Howl*.

I-Contact Video Network
76 Mina Road
Bristol BS2 9TX
Tel: 0117 914 0188
Email: i-contact@videonetwork.org
Autonomous and independent video production by activists.

Industrial Workers of the World
Secular Hall
75 Humberside Gate
Leicester LE1 1WB
Tel: 0116 266 1835
Revolutionary union whose aim is to gain control of workplaces and eliminate the bosses.

Intercourse: Talking Sex
c/o 17 West Montgomery Place
Edinburgh EH7 5HA
Email: info@intercourse.org.uk
Web: www.intercourse.org.uk
A non-hierarchical organisation devoted to encouraging people to develop comfortable and positive ways of thinking and talking about sex and sexuality.

Kate Sharpley Library
BM Hurricane
London WC1N 3XX
Email: kar98@dial.pipex.com
The most extensive collection of anarchist material in the UK.

Lancaster Anarchist Group
c/o Single Step Co-op
The Basement
78a Penny Street
Lancaster LA1 1XN
Anarchist group active in many struggles.

London Animal Action
BM Box 2248
London WC1N 3XX
Tel: 020 7278 3068
Email: laa@londonaa.demon.co.uk
Web: www.londonaa.demon.co.uk
Local animal rights group. Contact for details of other local groups around the country.

Movement Against the Monarchy
PO Box 14672
London E9 5UQ
Tel: 07931 301901
Royal hating class struggle anarchist ruffians.

Newham Monitoring Project
63 Broadway
Stratford
London E15 4BQ
Tel: 020 8555 8151
Email: nmp@gn.apc.org
Community group giving support, advice and campaigning on issues of racial harassment and civil rights.

No Opencast
28 Wandle Road
London SW17 7DW
Tel: 020 8672 9698
Campaigning against opencast mining and networking information between similar groups.

No Platform Anti-Fascist Network
PO Box 127
Leeds LS3 1TS
Network of anti-fascist socialists, anarchists and anti-capitalists united by the policy of 'no platform' for fascists.

PaRTiZans
41a Thornhill Square
London N1 1BE
Tel: 020 7700 6189
Email: partizans@gn.apc.org
Fights against the mining activities of the corporation RTZ. Good information resource.

Peat Alert!
c/o CRC
16 Sholebroke Avenue
Leeds LS6 3HB
Tel: 0113 262 9365
Email: info@peatalert.org.uk
Web: www.peatalert.org.uk
Excellent and pretty successful campaign to halt peat extraction in the north of England.

Portsmouth Anarchist Network
Box A
167 Fawcett Road
Southsea PO4 0DH
Discusses and organises support for prisoners, anti-militarism and workers in struggle.

Primal Seeds
Suite 305
255 Wilmslow Road
Manchester M14
Email: mail@primalseeds.org
Web: www.primalseeds.org
Actively engaged in protecting biodiversity and creating local food security. Excellent anti-biotech resource.

Radical Routes
c/o CRC
16 Sholebroke Avenue
Leeds LS7 3HB
Tel: 0113 262 9365
Network of housing co-ops. Get the government to buy you a house—here's how!

Rising Tide
16b Cherwell Street
Oxford OX1 1BG
Tel: 01865 241097
Email: info@risingtide.org.uk
Web: www.risingtide.org.uk
A network of independent groups and individuals taking local action, and building an international movement, against climate change.

Sexual Freedom Coalition
PO Box 4ZB
London W1A 4ZB
Tel: 020 7460 1979
Campaigns against laws restricting all adult consensual sexual activity.

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty
6 Boat Lane
Evesham
Worcestershire WR11 4BP
England
Tel: 0845 458 0630
Email: info@shac.net
Web: www.shac.net
Aims to close down Huntingdon Life Sciences, Europe's biggest animal testing laboratory.

Solidarity Federation
PO Box 29
Manchester M15 5HW
Tel: 0161 232 7889
Small network of anarcho-syndicalists.

Solidarity South Pacific
c/o Prior House
Tilbury Place
Brighton BN2 2GY
Email: ssp@eco-action.org
Web: www.eco-action.org/ssp
Solidarity activity for tribal peoples and the ecology of the Pacific Rim.

TAPOL
111 Northwood Street
Thornton Road
Surrey CR7 8HW
Tel: 020 8771 2904
Email: tapol@gn.apc.org
Web: www.gn.apc.org/tapol
The Indonesian human rights campaign. Has details of current situation in East Timor, West Papua, etc. Also produces newsletter.

Third Battle of Newbury
PO Box 5642
Newbury RG14 5WG
Tel: 07000 785201
Email: thirdbattle@hotmail.com
Continued resistance to road construction.

Undercurrents
16b Cherwell Street
Oxford OX4 1BG
Tel: 01865 203662
Email: underc@gn.apc.org
Web: www.undercurrents.org
No longer a video magazine, but produce irregular videos on issues.

Wild Things
The Sumac Centre
254 Gladstone Street
Nottingham NG7 6HX
Tel: 0845 4584727
Email: eco-action@wildthings.org.uk
Web: www.wildthings.org.uk
Excellent and radical eco-education project.

Worthing Anarchist Teapot
c/o PO Box 4144
Worthing BN14 7NZ
Email: teapot@worthing.eco-action.org
Provides free tea and coffee plus radical literature from squats and town centre stalls.

UK Newletters and Bulletins

Bellow
Box 35
82 Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BB
Email: bellow1@bigfoot.com
Free and radical women's newsletter, instigated by the Women Speak Out! gatherings.

Bristle
Box 25
Greenleaf
82 Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BB
Email: bristle@network.com
Web: www.bristle.co.uk
More eco/anarcho direct action news and views with a local focus from the sorted and prolific Bristol crew.

Counter Information
c/o 17 West Montgomery Place
Edinburgh EH7 5HA
Tel: 0131 557 6242
Newsletter produced by an independent collective based in Central Scotland. Carries news of struggles against injustice, oppression and exploitation.

Earth First! Action Update
c/o Manchester EF!
22a Beswick Street
Manchester M4 7HS
Tel: 0161 226 6814
Email: mail@actionupdate.org.uk
Web: www.actionupdate.org.uk
The newsletter of the UK radical eco-network. Carries reports of actions, events listings and group contact details.

Eroding Empire
c/o 56a Infoshop
56a Crampton Street
London SE17
A DIY bulletin and listing of gigs, actions, classified ads and events for the London area.

Genetix Update
c/o Totnes Genetics Group
PO Box 77
Totnes
Devon TQ9 5ZJ
Tel: 01803 840098
Email: info@togg.org.uk
Web: www.togg.org.uk
Regular newsletter round-up of anti-genetics activism in the UK and biotech-related news from around the world.

The Insurrection
c/o UD
Box 18
Greenleaf Bookshop
Colston Street
Bristol BS1 5BB
Email: insurrectionaryanarchy@yahoo.co.uk
A newsletter open to all contributions from anyone wanting to see an end to civilisation. For anarchy without compromise!

The Loombreaker
c/o Manchester EF!
Dept 29
22a Beswick Street
Manchester M4 7HS
Tel: 0161 226 6814
Inspiring radical local direct action focussed newsletter with coverage of radical struggles, both local and global.

Norwich Anarchists
PO Box 487
Norwich NR2 3AL
Tel: 07941 657 485
Produce a really good community anarchist newspaper. Particularly like the make-do-and-mend column.

The Porkbolter
PO Box 4144
Worthing BN14 7NZ
Email: porkbolter@worthing.eco-action.org
Radical local newsletter with historically vindicated pig obsession. Amongst other things it rages against CCTV, big business, local council corruption and the cops.

Resist@nce
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Tel: 07946 214590
Email: anarchistfederation@bigfoot.com
Web: www.afed.org.uk
Monthly newsletter from the Anarchist Federation. Has news and comments on UK and overseas struggles, as well as an events diary and brief contacts listing.

SchNEWS
PO Box 2600
Brighton BN2 2DX
Tel: 01273 685913
Email: schnews@brighton.co.uk
Web: www.schnews.org.uk
Cheeky weekly newsletter covering all sorts of eco/anarcho direct action news from all round the world.

International Contacts

ASEED Europe
PO Box 92066
1090 AB Amsterdam
Netherlands
Tel: (+31) 20 668 2236
Email: aseedeur@antenna.nl
Web: www.antenna.nl/aseed

Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous
POB 11331
Eugene OR 97440
USA

Crimethinc HQ
2695 Rangewood Drive
Atlanta GA 30345
USA

Czech Republic EF!
Zeme Predevsim!
PO Box 237
16041 Prague 6
Czech Republic
Email: zemepredevsim@ecn.cz
Web: www.ecn.cz/zemepredevsim

Earth Action!
POB 181034
Dalbridge
Durban 6016
South Africa

Ecodefence!
Moskovsky Prospekt
120-34236006
Kaliningrad/Koenigsburg
Russia
Email: ecodefence@glas.apc.org

EFI Campaign East M. MLA
PO Box 176
Taguig Central PO
1632 Taguig
Metro Manila
Philippines

FZLN
Calle Zapotecos 7 Bis
Colonia Obreras
Del Cuauhtemoc
Mexico
Tel: (+52) 5 761 4236

Green Action Israel
PO Box 4611
Tel-Aviv 61046
Israel
Tel: (+972) 3 516 2349
Email: info@greenaction.org.il
Web: www.greenaction.org.il

Groene Front!
Postbus 85069
3508 AB Utrecht
Netherlands
Email: groenfr@dds.nl

Kamunist Kranti/Collectivities
Majdoor Library
Autopin Jhuggi
NIT Faribad 121001
India
Email: revelrytion@hotmail.com

Malaysia EFI
c/o Muhamad Kamal Bin Ishak
No. 2A Jalan Kampong Chachar
Kuala Jempol
72100 Bahau
N. Sembilan DK
West Malaysia
Malaysia
Email: kamal_ishak@hotmail.com

Miljöaktivisten
Box 4181
203 13 Malmö
Sweden
Email: miljoaktivisten@usa.net
Web: www.motkraft.net/miljoaktivisten

Movimento Sem Terra
Alameda Barao de Limeira
1232-01202-002
Sao Paulo
Brasil
Tel: (+55) 11 3361 3866
Email: semterra@mail.sanet.br

Mujeres Creando
Casilla 12806
La Paz
Bolivia
Email: creando@ceibo.entelnet.bo

Rainbow Keepers
POB 14
Nizhni Novgorod 603082
Russia
Tel: (+7) 8312 34 32 80

Rainforest Action Network
221 Pine Street
Suite 500
San Francisco CA 94104
USA
Email: rainforest@ran.org
Web: www.ran.org

Terra Selvaggia
Il Silvestre
Via del Cuore, 1
56127 Pisa
Italy

Paria Collective
PO Box 1332
3500 BH Utrecht
Holland

Poland EFI
PO Box 40
43-304 Bielsko-Biala 4
Poland
Tel: (+48) 33 183 153
Email: wapienica@ponwi.most.org.pl

Ya Basta!
Via Watteau 7
20125
Milano
Italy
Tel: (+39) 02 670 5185
Email: yabasta@tin.it

Zi a Nechaj Zit
PO Box 18
Bratislava
840 08
Slovak Republic
Email: mail@zanz.sk

Journals, Magazines and Publishing Projects

Abolishing the Borders from Below
Liebigstr. 16
10247 Berlin
Germany
Email: abolishingBB@hotmail.com
First time I've seen this magazine—and it's really impressive. Radical and full of little-heard anarchist news from Eastern Europe.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review
PO Box 2824
Champaign IL 61825
USA
Formerly the *Libertarian Labour Review*. As you could guess—anarcho-syndicalists.

Anarchy—A Journal of Desire Armed
CAL Press
POB 1446
Columbia MO 65205-1446
USA
Neither left nor right, but an anti-ideological, pro-anarchy, anti-civilisation magazine.

Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group
BCM Box 1160
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Email: 10003021616@compuserve.com
News, articles and action reports from the ALF with good prisoner support stuff.

Antagonism Press
c/o BM Makhno
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Email: antagonism1@yahoo.com
Web:
www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3909
Communist propagandists. Has published loads of cool and interesting pamphlets.

Arkangel
BCM 9240
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Really good and regular fat animal liberation magazine. News articles and contacts. Read and feel the cops fume.

Aufheben
BHUWC
4 Crestway Parade
Brighton BN1 7BL
UK
Email: aufheben99@yahoo.co.uk
Web:
http://lists.village.Virginia.EDU/~spoons/aufheben.html/auf1edit.htm
Influential autonomist magazine. Latest issue has huge article analysing the anti-war movement.

The Bad Days Will End!
Merrymount Publications
PO Box 441597
Somerville MA 02144
USA
Email: bronterre@earthlink.net
Council communist magazine.

Bark!
PO Box 738
New York NY 10025
USA
Tel: (+1) 212 866 6802
A non-sectarian journal of anarcho-cynicism aimed at "defacing the currency of civilisation".

Black Badger
PO Box 508
Berkley CA 94701 0508
USA
Email: blackbadger23@juno.com
Interesting and radical personal zine of a Berkeley based anarchist. Has ongoing letter exchanges on various topics—usually of a post-leftist anarchist type, as well as some bits of information from the authors personal life.

Black Flag
BM Hurricane
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Email: blackflagads@hushmail.com
Web: http://flag.blackened.net/blackflag/
Class struggle anarchist publication with strong international coverage.

Blu
Robertsbridge
TN32 5DR
UK
Tel: 01580 88 33 44
Email: jlandsel@blumagazine.net
Web: www.blumagazine.net
Hand stitched, high quality US magazine full of black revolutionaries, radical hip-hop and prisoner support. Distributed here by commune-dwelling Mennonites. And you get a free CD with every issue!

CARF (Campaign Against Racism and Fascism)
BM Box 8784
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Tel: 020 7837 1450

Email: info@carf.demon.co.uk
Web: www.carf.demon.co.uk
Britain's only independent anti-racist magazine. Covers black prisoners, miscarriages of justice, immigration detainees etc.

Collective Action Notes
POB 22962
Baltimore MD 21203
USA
Email: cansv@igc.org
Occasional council communist newspaper with international reports and theory.

Communicating Vessels
Mutual Aid Portland
PO Box 7328
Portland ME 04112
USA
Really good zine with a load of well-written and radical articles on revolutionary praxis throughout the world. Has a sort of ultra-left insurrectionary perspective.

Corporate Watch
16b Cherwell Street
Oxford OX4 1BG
UK
Tel: 01865 791391
Email: mail@corporatewatch.org
Web: www.corporatewatch.org
No longer a magazine but a web site and research, publishing occasional updates and briefing sheets.

Direct Action
PO Box 29
SW PDO
Manchester M15 5HW
UK
Tel: 0161 232 7889
Web: www.directa.force9.co.uk
Magazine of the anarcho-syndicalist Solidarity Federation.

Disorderly Conduct
PO Box 11331
Eugene OR 97440
USA
Very large and impressive zine full of wild rabble rousing insurrectionary and green anarchist stuff.

Down to Earth
59 Athenlay Road
London SE15 3EN
UK
Tel: 020 7732 7984
Email: dte@gn.apc.org
Web: www.gn.apc.org/dte
Newsletter of the International Campaign for Ecological Justice in Indonesia. An excellent source of information.

Earth First! Journal
POB 3023
Tucson AZ 85702
USA
Tel: (+1) 541 344 8004
Email: earthfirst@igc.org
Web: www.earthfirstjournal.org
The regular newspaper of EF! in North America and is getting better by the day. Contains details for most active eco-anarcho and EF! groups in North America.

The Ecologist
Unit 18
Chelsea Wharf
15 Lots Road
London SW10 0QJ
UK
Tel: 020 7351 3578
Email: editorial@theecologist.org
Glossy and mainstream ecological publication you can find in newsagents.

Elephant Editions
BM Elephant
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Cool insurrectionalist anarchist publishing project. Send an SAE for a list of titles.

Faslane Fokus
81d Shandon
Helensburgh
Scotland G84 8NT
UK
News, gossip and action reports from the anti-Trident submarine campaign at Faslane Peace Camp

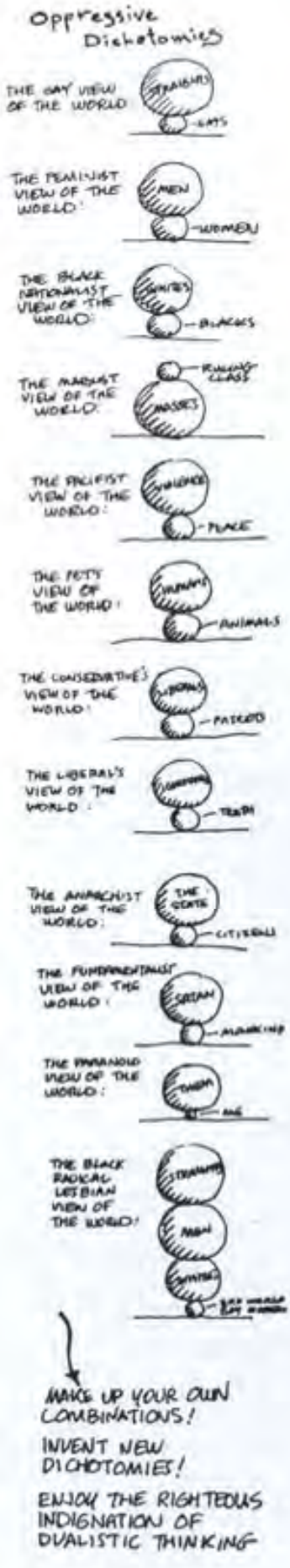
Fifth Estate
PO Box 6
Liberty
TN 37095
USA
Email: FifthEstate@pumpkinhollow.net
Longest running English language anarchist publication in the US. Has recently moved from the Detroit crew to a new collective in Tennessee. Used to be excellent anarcho-primitivist newspaper where some of the most radical writings from the last 30 years were published. Now a little different, but still worth a look.

Freedom
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
UK
Tel: 020 7247 9249
Web: www.tao.ca/~freedom
Going for years and it's still here—the fortnightly 'official' anarchist newspaper. Also publishes *The Raven*—a regular journal-style publication with articles about a different theme each issue.

Green Anarchist
BM 1715
London WC1N 3XX
UK
Email: greenanarchist@hotmail.com
The original *GA* newspaper, boldly subtitled "For the Destruction of Civilisation."

Green Anarchy
PO Box 11331
Eugene
OR 97440
USA
Email: greenanarchy@tao.ca
Really fucking excellent radical anti-civilisation newspaper from some of those wild Eugene folks. The quality of the content and design leaps forward with each issue. Read it!

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Web: www.eyfa.org
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Kate Sharpley Library
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Killing King Abacus
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coalitionagainstcivilisation@hotmail.com
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Il Silvestre
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Italy
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London Wildfire
Email: londonwildfire@hotmail.com
New publishing project producing some really good leaflets on direct action, anarchy and inspiring stuff generally.

Wilful Disobedience
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Los Angeles CA 90031
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Email: acraticus@yahoo.com
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Do or Die is a journal crammed with reports and analysis from the worldwide ecological frontlines. In these times of concrete alienation here are voices that shine hope from people and movements taking action to defend nature, create revolution and re-wild humanity...

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