

Earth First! Action Update

No.38 APRIL 1997

30p

"They thought they stamped us out, but they just got us all over their feet" - Charles Chisel.

MANCHESTER AIRPORT

In mid January this year the Secretary of State gave the go ahead for a second Runway at Manchester Airport despite years of opposition from local residents and environmental groups. Within a fortnight campaigners had moved in to occupy the Bollin Valley at one end of the route. The proposed second runway, the most environmentally damaging project in the North West of England for decades, will cause the ruination of more than twice as much land as was destroyed by the Newbury Bypass with an even higher price to be paid by the planet as a whole. Air travel has been estimated to contribute between 3-30% of global warming while a study conducted in 1996 estimated that a single transatlantic return flight emits almost half the CO2 emissions as from all other sources (lighting, heating, car use, etc) consumed by an average person yearly. This unsustainable industry also makes possible the ludicrous policy of transporting food thousands of miles, not only imposing the high environmental costs associated with the consumption of large quantities of non-renewable fossil fuels but also increasing dependence on cash crop monoculture in poor countries. The present road network around Manchester Airport will be unable to cope with the forecast increase in traffic - the M56 through Wythenshawe will have to handle 50,000 more vehicles per day - a third more than London's M25 already has to cope with. Taking action against the proposed second runway seems a logical extension of campaigning against the roads programme with many of the same issues raising their ugly heads - pollution for profit; the creation of a limited number of jobs whilst we destroy that on which we depend for life; the destruction of our communities in the name of 'progress'; the prioritisation of profits for a few over the interests of people and planet. With other airport developments proposed at Heathrow, in Newcastle and in Birmingham the action being taken by Coalition Against Runway 2 at Manchester Airport could herald a new focus in the Earth First! movement. Despite the Airport being slow moving in the first few weeks of the camps' existence they are now seeking a possession order in conjunction with the project contractors, Amec and Tarmac. Seven camps now occupy the land under the current possession order - Flywood, Sir Cliff Richard OBE, The Camp of Many Names, Zion Tree, Wild Garlic and Jellybaby - the latter being especially accessible to families who wish to take part in the protest. These occupy only a small part of the land to be taken up by

the runway; there are also historic buildings on route, due to be demolished soon. The next possession hearing for the existing camps takes place on the day of the Update going to print but is expected to be adjourned to allow time to hear the 50 or so affidavits which have been prepared by protestors. Despite the fact that threat of eviction is not entirely imminent tension at the site has been stepped up already with contractors constructing a razor wire fence around the protest site. This work comes complete with a heavy security presence, regular visits from riot police and generators and halogen lamps running all night to ensure that protestors are behaving.



Compound Fracture

Approximately 25 arrests, mainly under antiquated trade union legislation, have been made to date following actions during fence construction and three protestors are currently on remand. Resistance to the project is also continuing off site with an appearance at the unveiling in an Airport Terminal of a sculpture entitled 'Ethereal - The Silence of Flight' (these people have no sense of irony), the calm of which was shattered by the noise of a screaming plane issuing from a briefcase carried by one of the protestors. A number of events are in the pipeline for those interested in joining CAR 2 supporters in the green and pleasant Bollin Valley, the most important of these is the 'May The Fourth Be With Us' weekendender bender on May 3/4/5 featuring a Beltane party on the Friday night, workshops on the Saturday, Maypole fun on the Sunday and an action on the Monday. If you've visited the site already you will know how beautiful it is - if you haven't then what are you waiting for? For further info or for details on setting up a support group in your area contact Coalition Against Runway 2 on 0161 834 8221.

EVICTED ALERT! POSSESSION ORDER NOT ADJOURNED. GET THERE!

STOP THE HAWKS

Four East Timorese refugees, a Catholic priest, Fr. Arthur Fitzgerald, and three parishioners decided to celebrate Easter this year by trespassing at British Aerospace's Watton plant in protest at the sale of Hawk ground-attack aircraft to Indonesia. Suharto and his cronies in the military are responsible for the genocide of the East Timorese people and the exploitation of their sandalwood forests and mineral reserves, and have used the Hawks to suppress resistance. The Australian and Indonesian Governments have signed an illegal treaty which legitimises

drilling for oil in the Timor Gap. There is also the question of West Papua, another island invaded by the Indonesians and which suffers from the attentions of one of the largest mining multinationals in the world, Rio Tinto Zinc. Resistance erupted when the expansion of the Freeport mine was announced. The Amungme tribe are demanding better compensation and an end to the pollution and destruction of their sacred lands: "They are digging in our mother's brain, that is why we are resisting." The eight people arrested were supported by a further hundred people outside the main gate, with 50 or so going on to surround the police station at Lytham St. Annes and sing songs until four people were released: It doesn't matter if you should jail us We are free and kept alive by hope Our struggle's

hard, but victory will Restore our lands to our hands. The four Timorese, meanwhile, veterans of Embassy occupations in Indonesia, refused to give their names and were held overnight - they were released, without conditions, at a special Magistrate's hearing in Blackpool.

Two of the Timorese, Costa and Lopez, are part of the Liverpool Catholic Worker community (whose politics are a heady mixture of radical catholicism, non-violence and respect for the earth), which came out of the trial and acquittal of the Seeds of Hope Ploughshares women. It is a very powerful statement for the victims of British arms exports to return to the scene of the crime and try to hold British Aerospace and the British government responsible for their part in aiding and abetting the death of East Timorese life, ecology and culture.

Look out for a steady flow of court cases and resistance to the new 16 Hawk deal signed recently, and also against the sale of Alvis tanks and Glover-Webb armoured vehicles.

Contacts: Liverpool Catholic Worker: 0151-264-8741. Stop the Hawks - No Arms to Indonesia: 0161-834-0295. Action: Court Support: April 16th-17th, Lytham Magistrates. BAe A.G.M. - 0171-281-0297. (C.A.A.T.)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Now available – "ROAD RAGING : Top Tips for Wrecking Road Building". This book shares experiences of NVDA against road building from Twyford Down to Newbury and Fairmile. This is not a coffee-table history book, but a practical, illustrated guide for action - including ideas on setting up non-hierarchical groups from scratch, an up-to-date legal section, publicity, camps, evictions, on-site actions, bureaucrat baiting, street parties and more. Ideas could be applied to other major developments. Contact Road Alert! (see contacts list).

Finland EF! Made a page explaining PGP (Pretty Good Privacy, some message encryption thing on computer) and data security. <http://WWW.sci.fi/~ransu/security.html>.

NatWest and the Times are jointly sponsoring a business ethics competition with the scenario: "You're the MD of a company who want to build a road and environmental protestors are, er, protesting - there are clear signs that your AGM will be disrupted ... what will your solution be." First prize £3000.

Ironstone mining in Wraxton and Balcote will destroy a large area of land. The two villages have joined together to fight quarrying/waste disposal company, Grundon. Help needed. Contact Trinity Barn, Balcote, Oxon, OX15 6JK.

RTS is running a genetics database. Send info to RTS London, (see contacts sheet).

Cardigan Bay EF! are planning actions against Chevron. Call Cardigan EF! (see contacts sheet)

Cympeithas Yr Iaith in Aberystwyth has stormed an estate agent selling houses to Londoners. Windows were flyposted and protesters tried to get in. Violent scenes occurred as the English mayoress scratched a protestor's cheek. Write to Penrock, Pier St. Aber.

At the beginning of this month R.G. Budge's house in Nottingham (owns most deep and opencast mines in the country) was visited and slogans were written saying "Who will you injunct for this?"

On May 7th another RTZ AGM will take place. If you want to go proxy shares are available from Bouganville Freedom Movement (U) PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9 7ZB. Tel 0171 978 8214. Campaigns pack also available.

Activists are planning to plant tennis balls in Harewood House, north of Leeds. The plan has emerged as Yorkshire TV is going to rebuild the set of Emerdale Farm in greenbelt land in the grounds H. House. The tennis balls will be filled with money (£5-20) to encourage visitors to dig up the land in protest. Leeds EF! has more info.

Yeovil land occupation - people equipment and visions are needed for this 400 acre site and Jacobean manor house, occupied to prevent developers from putting forward any of their dodgy schemes. The site was earmarked for a supermarket, but now everything is up for grabs! Contac : 01935 863349 for info.

SAVE THE TOWNSTAL

In the next few months South Hams District Council are planning to carve out the side of the Townstal Valley near Dartmouth, in South Devon, to create a new road. Once this is completed, South West Water plc will cut another road through the woodland to reach its new sewage treatment works. This will effectively destroy part of one of the largest badger colonies in Britain. Housing and light industrial development will be built, yet there is no local demand. The sewage treatment works and its access road were originally sited on the riverfront where they would cause no environmental damage. Pressure from a handful of anonymous and influential residents had this plan scuppered. There are plans to cash crop the woodland on a grand scale: the badgers' green canopy will probably end up as bog roll... Funding for the development of the valley is severely limited and any delay could play havoc with their plans.

Contact: Jane 01803 832410. Some fluffy trolls are going there: c/o 0370 878920

ALF ACTIVITIES

During the early hours of March 9th Animal Liberation Front activists broke into battery units belonging to 'Mr Welsh Egg' in Somerset where cages were opened and 111 hens were liberated from their battery cages to be taken to new homes. The same farm has been raided by the ALF on several occasions over the last few years, the last being in September 1996 when 108 hens were rescued.

ANIMAL EXPORTS VIGIL

To mark the 6-month anniversary of the CIWF vigil against live animal exports 100 activists staged a protest outside the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food at the end of February. On the steps of MAFF the Grim Reaper, swathed in black robes, mowed down several masked 'sheep' with his scythe. The highlight of the morning was an appearance by Douglas Hogg who was not impressed with the activists' antics, waving his hat at those concerned. The vigil will be continuing until all live exports from the UK come to an end. To take part in the vigil contact Liza on 01 1 43 6803.

GATHERING VISIONS

A long overdue get together for people fighting for a decent planet! It was all a bit worthy & rather earnest and no drumming late into the night - but then it was a university. There were activists who've been doing things for literally decades and that's a real lesson to us in Earth First!, when half of us seemed to be burnt out after 2 or 3 years or on one big campaign. Maybe we're living on the pace of the destruction more than previously - but then we can learn a lot from the time, energy, support and commitment a lot of peace activists give each other - and how that means they have the ability to keep going. Where is our support network? Where are our affinity groups to give real help when we need it? Meeting up for occasional actions or meetings just isn't enough. Big issues that emerged were how to deal with the media, the value of covert or very accountable actions, and the extent to which nonviolence is a tactic or a principle to live. Not many conclusions were reached - we only had a weekend - but it was brilliant to get those discussions under way across movements and across generations.

LEVER PARK

Lever Park is set in the rolling Lancashire countryside near Wigan and attracts hikers, bikers, climbers and families to its three reservoirs, pike and Chinese gardens for a non-commercialised day out breathing clean country air. It was set up in 1902 with local people's right to free access enshrined for all time. However new proposals backed by North West Water will remove the right of free access to the Park, give the go ahead for commercial developments and related car parks and allow the land to be leased off to third parties.

Local opposition is currently successful with original proposals now much watered down but pressure still has to be kept up; this is one that could be won.

Summer will see a spontaneous music event in the park for more information: Chris Malle on 01942-513792.

FAIRMILE COURT NEWS

Devon trolls send relatively good court news after an extremely brutal eviction where press were kept out and various incidents took place including two women being sexually assaulted and one man stretched by his waist on a steel cable and left for over 30 minutes. Of 18 arrests, 7 had charges brought to a caution, 1 had charges dropped, 9 were given a 6 month conditional discharge, and was given a 12 month conditional discharge and nobody had any court costs, eviction costs or fines imposed.

ACTION ALERT FOR ALL EU CAMPAIGNERS

May 9th is the official European Union Day. On May 9th 1950 the French Minister Schuman proposed an agreement between France and Germany for a union of cooperation for the production and consumption of coal and iron. This is an historic day for the European Commission as Schumann's proposal is seen as the commission's foundation.

May 9th has been set aside as an International Day of Action. If you want to be involved or are already involved in the EU related campaign contact:

Dianne at A SEED Europe, PO Box 92066, 1090 Applied Biology 3rd Year Amsterdam, Netherlands. Tel: 00 +31 20 668 2236

Fax: 00 +31 20 665 0166

e-mail: Dianne@ASEED.ANTENA.NL

More information on the web site: <http://www.antenna.nl/aseed>

A55 UPDATE

The public enquiry began on Tuesday 18th for the second stage of the scheme at Holyhead. This was well attended by a good sized gathering of protesters who made lots of noise, roof-top protests, plenty of banners, a dancing dragon(!?) and fire breathing. Several police were called in but no arrests were made. A particular highlight of the day was the provision of a free mini-bus by Mott MacDonald to take pro-road lobbyists from local villages along the route to the enquiry. This was noticeably unused. Further actions are definitely planned for the near future! More info, enquires, donations etc.

To Amgen c/o (Alternatives), Blwch Post 7, Llangefni LL77 7ZJ or Gwynedd and Mon EF!.

WESTERN CHIPPENHAM BYPASS

This planned development near Bath will go past

How to Contact the Earth First! Action Update

Post: Earth First! Action Update, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW. Telephone: 0161 224 4846. E-mail: actionupdate@gn.apc.org.

Enclose a SAE for replies. Send us your details if you want to subscribe to the free e-mail server.

Earth First! Website address: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/EF/earthfirst.html>

a nature reserve, housing; through hedgerows, trees, badger sets and an area of archaeological interest. The bulldozers are due to move in during May but local residents are getting active with a route walk and bluebell picnic along the proposed route on Sunday April 20th. As ever, all welcome.

For further info contact Bath EF !

EUROPEAN GENETICS ACTIONS

On 26th March German activists hung a giant banner from Cologne Cathedral, "Man is not god". Meanwhile for more than a week in March Swedish activists had an on-going action against the vegetable oil manufacturer Karlshamns AB. The MV was at anchor just outside the factory but activists had inflatables in the port and a container on the wharf, watching for possible oil shipments. They managed to put pressure on the company, until they gave in - the company will buy GMO (Genetically Manipulated Organisms) free oil. Elsewhere in Europe the beginning of March saw 200 activists visit 6 big supermarkets in towns across Italy whilst in Belgium activists built a 12m long concrete wall (containing GE Soya) at the Main Entrance on the side of Monsanto's name board and erected an 2m high and 26m long stone wall full of "X" blocking the Main Door to the building.

NUXALK TIMBER THEFT

After clear cutting Clayquot Sound (British Columbia, Canada), the tree butchers are moving up the coast onto Nuxalk Nation territory. The indigenous peoples' temperate rainforest land is being cut illegally by timber multinationals including Interfor and MacMillan Bloedel. The Nuxalk Nation have never sold their lands to the Canadian Government, nor signed lands away by treaty, nor lost lands in battle. Timber will be made into essentials such as garden furniture and quilted toilet paper. For the first time since the 1800's tribal people have left their territory to protest throughout Europe. Forty Manchester EFers and Forest Action Network activists joined Chief Qwatsinas and people from the Nuxalk Nation to protest at a timber yard in Trafford Park, Manchester. Demonstrators ethically shoplifted Red Cedar and Douglas Fir, logged from Nuxalk Nation lands. Whilst the roof was occupied for a banner drop the site owners over reacted, closing the gates and stopping all work for an hour. Despite a large police presence no-one was arrested and the action moved to the local police station. The police were asked to keep the shoplifted timber until a court has decided who is the rightful owner.

For information about the issues and future campaigns contact the Forest Action Network c/o 4 Kingsley House, Avonmore Place, London W14 8RY. Tel: 0171 602 5889

SUPERMARKET ACTIONS AGAINST GENETICALLY MANIPULATED FOOD

March 15th and March 22nd saw actions against genetically manipulated food in Sainsbury's stores in London. A group of people went shopping for food containing ingredients that could possibly have been genetically manipulated. At a pre-arranged time they joined different queues at checkouts and when asked for payment they asked the cashier to tell them if the products contained any genetically manipulated ingredients. Of course the cashier was unable to do so. Explaining that this was exactly the reason for the protest they refused to pay and requested to see

the manager. At this point others came in with banners and music, while the rest of the group joined in by either asking their cashiers the same questions or leafleting the people around the supermarket. Meanwhile someone else started a very loud rant to explain to anyone who could hear, the reason for the action and the issue in general. Shoppers did not seem annoyed at the delay, many in fact seemed disgusted by the way the protestors were forced out of the store for attempting to inform them about products that were on sale. The protest continued outside the supermarket with the drummers, banners and more leafleting as well as friendly warnings from policemen not to go back on the premises. For more info contact 0171 561 9146 or WEN (Womens Environmental Network) on 0171 247 3327.

SEA SHEPHERD ARREST

Paul Watson, president of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, has been arrested in the Netherlands under an order of the Norwegian Government.

In 1992, Norway announced its intention to return to the commercial slaughter of whales despite the 1986 International Whaling Commission's ban on whaling. Sea Shepherd said that it would enforce the ban on whaling as well as international treaties protecting endangered wildlife. 1994 saw Sea Shepherd's Paul Watson and Lisa Distefano convicted in absentia by a Norwegian court for sinking an illegal Norwegian whaling vessel. In July 1994, off the northern coast of Norway, their boat was rammed by the coastguard who then fired on them. Watson was accused of ramming the vessel but charges were dropped in 1996. On March 31st of this year, while supervising the transfer of a Sea Shepherd ship in preparation for a campaign against illegal driftnetting in the Mediterranean, Paul was arrested by harbour police in the German port of Bremerhaven acting on Norway's Interpol warrant. German authorities chose not to extradite him and he was released. Three days later, Paul was arrested again by Dutch police in Amsterdam. At a preliminary hearing held on the 3rd of April, he was ordered to be held for 20 days to allow Norway to make an extradition request. Paul Watson requests that we must not let this happen as he has received death threats and fears what might happen to him if extradited. The following details may be useful:

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Tel: +31 70 348 4196, Fax: +31 70 34 5559, Bezuidenhoutseweg 67, 2594AC The Hague. Write to Paul Watson, Penitentiare Inrichting Lelystad, Larserdreef 300, 8233HB Lelystad, The Netherlands. Contact your nearest Netherlands Consulate and ask for Paul's release and to relay your message to the Netherlands - time is crucial!

ANTI-NUCLEAR DIRECT ACTION CAMP

At Temelin Nuclear power plant, Czech Republic July 6th - July 14th 1997

Temelin NPP is a prime example of the western nuclear industry's expansion in the East, built and abandoned in the Czech Rep. by the Soviets. Now CEZ (Czech electricity utility) and Westinghouse (an American multinational) are completing this uneeded NPP. The mix of western and eastern technology is new and not tested on safety.

Hnutí DUHA has been running a campaign to stop the construction of Temelin for over 4 years now. Now they have come to the point that international support is crucial.

For the last three summers Hnutí DUHA has organised non-violent blockades of the construction site. Last year 500 activists blocked the whole site for over 3 days. This year they want to RECLAIM the Temelin construction site!!

EVENTS

April

- 15 Lloyds TSB AGM in Edinburgh. Contact Lloyds and Midland Boycott on 0161 274 4665
- 19 The Land Is Ours digging, permaculture, NVDA workshops), in Hull. Contact 0973 821 141. PO Box 43, Hull HU1 1AA.
- 19-20 Big Gene Gathering, herefordshire. 0171 865 8117
Mass action against Consort Beagle breeders in Ross-on-Wye. Meet at the main gate at 12 noon. Consort is situated just off the A49 (Ross to herford road) at Harewood Park, Harewood End, near to Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Contact: 0171 278 3068.
- 19 Colchester RTS. Meet 12.30pm at Tesco's, Greenstead Rd.
- 20 Earth Healing Day at Manchester Airport protest site, and Artists Against Runway 2. Contact 0161 834 8221
- 21-27 Global Action Week against Genetically Engineered food and crops. For details contact the Genetic Engineering Network (GEN): 0171 923 9511
- 24 World Day for Laboratory Animals. 0171 278 3068 for more info.
- 25-28 Chernobyl Day of Action. Faslane Peace Camp. Contact 01436 820 9 1
- 26 Animal Liberation Animal Freedom Tour' visiting several animal abuse establishments in and around Oxford. Meet 12 noon onwards at 11 Northmoor Road, Oxford.
- 30 British Aerospace AGM. "No More Busines As Usual" protest against the sale of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. QE2 Conference Centre, London. Contact CAAT 0171 281 0297. Also in Aberystwyth: Stop the Hawks Action. Meet at Aber. train station 11am.

May

- Scottish CND Trident spotting tour coming to a Scottish town near you. For specific dates and further info contact Faslane on 01436 820901.
- 3 Hull RTS, Pearson Park, more details write to RTS, Hull on Earth, PO Box 43, Hull HU1 1AA
National Anarchist Bookfair, Bradford. Part of a week of events to reclaim May Day from decades of left-wing and trade union dogma. For more info: 1 in 12 Library, c/o 1 in 12 Club, Albion Street, Bradford BD1.
- 3/4/5 May The Fourth Be With Us: Weekend bender at Manchester Airport. Contact: 0161 834 8221
- 5 Pure Genius. The Land is Ours will be in Wandsworth letting Guinness know what they think of the bulldozers and bailiffs which ruined a wonderful community. Meet 10am South Park, Fulham. Contact 0171 249 3765 or 0171 326 0227 for info.
- 7 RTZ AGM Call BFM on 0171 978 8214
- 14 Shell AGM. A major action is to be planned. For more details and to get involved in organising it contact DELTA on: 0116 255 3223
- 14 - 19 Hope & Resistance Gathering, near Kiel, Northern Germany. Hope & Resistance is a European network of non-violent resisters which organises retreats about non-violent resistance, civil disobedience, ploughshares and creating community. This gathering offers the opportunity for environmental activists to meet up with ploughshares activists. Contact 01865 714036
- 16 Shut down Shoreham! A day of direct action to close Shoreham port down. Meet 10am at the Hove Lagoon.
- 17 Sheffield RTS, 12 noon, meet at Devonshire Green. Further details contact Sheffin on 0114 267 1200, 201

Crookes Valley road, Crookesmoor, Sheffield. 26 Maidstone Green Fair, 12-8pm. Free (music, stalls ...) Contact 31 York RTS 12pm Clifford's tower. For further details, York EF!: 01904 410 185
End of.. Oil Gathering Contact Corporate Watch on 01865 791 391

June

- 12-17 Aseed EU Alternative Summit in Amsterdam
- Tel: 00+31 20 668 22 36 Email
Dianne@aseed.antenna.nl
- 17 National Car Free Day
- 21 Bristol RTS.

July

- 6-14 Temelin Nuclear power plant, Czech republic. Holiday extravaganza at direct action camp. Contact Lune EF! On 01524 849313
- 6-11 National Earth First! Gathering - location and date to be confirmed - For more info send SAE to Earth First! Gathering c/o 16 Sholebrooke Ave, Chapelton, Leeds LS7 3HB or Tel: 0113 262 9365

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: The editors of the Earth First! Action Update do not intend to encourage people to carry out any illegal action. The Action Update is for information purposes only.

If you want to be more involved in organising these actions, or similar ones in the UK, or you want a copy of the Temelin Action Handbook, please contact the British contact or the PIANO (Prague International Anti Nuclear Office) office.

Temelin contact for Britain: c/o Lune EF! 78a Penny St Lancaster England

s.westphal@lancaster.ac.uk

International: PIANO Praha International Anti Nuclear Office Chvalova 3 13000 Praha 3 Czech Republic +42-2-90031895 piano@ecn.cz visit our website!!! <http://www.ecn.cz/private/piano>

A390 EVICTION

On the 4th of April, Cornwall's first road protest camp was set up on the route of the St. Austell North Eastern. However the camp was evicted after only four days. Cynical people have suggested that the reason for the road is to expand the boundaries of the town eastward and to add to the arguments for a southern bypass. A chainsaw crew felled all the trees while the police totally ignored prominent Section 6 notices and were quoting Section 61 of the Criminal Justice Act as their justification to arrest several protestors. Clearance work had not been due to start until the summer. The protest has drawn negative local press coverage, but even this has aroused some interest in the need for road traffic reduction. A demonstration on this is being planned. For info and directions: Dorienne Robinson: 01726 843586.

NANTGWYDDON TIP

At Nantgwyddon in mid Glamorgan villagers have been blockading a tip for the last month. They have set up deckchairs and a barbecue by the side of the road and have entertained themselves by playing cards. At the sight of lorries on the horizon they move onto the road to deny the lorries access. Flee C. West have now complained to the local authority for their lack of intervention after losing a whole month of business. On the top of a mountain, this tip has been used to illegally dump rockwool and salter cake. For the last five years the village has suffered from a polluted water supply and from plagues of flies, seagulls and bad smells. There is also a high level of cancer, high blood pressure, congestia, tuberculosis and child disability. This has led to the council agreeing to stop some dumping and to put a cap on top of the tip. Blockading is still going on as the company is planning to make the tip bigger; when asked to clean up to the surrounding areas they have used blowtorches. Two months ago the campaigners (with an average age of 60) did an action during a council dinner. No help is needed.

SUPERMARKET FRENZY

On March 21st some Dongas moved onto the site of a proposed supermarket on the outskirts of Yeovil (border of Somerset and Dorset). A similar episode happened three years ago when a supermarket was planned to be built on a beautiful piece of green belt with bronze age remains. Meanwhile an empty supermarket which does not need an access road was sitting in the town centre. That previous battle was won and the plan dropped after a camp was set up ... so now they are back!

NIGERIAN RAINFOREST ACTION

The West African Equatorial Forest on the Akaibom/Cross River States borders in the south of Nigeria is being systematically destroyed. It is a site of endangered species and abundant wildlife yet up to 80% of the forest cover has been depleted. The Solidarity Movement of the southern minority of Nigeria is trying to stop these activities by Chinese-owned loggers Wemp Co. They are trying to start off a campaign in the UK and would like groups to help in this venture. Contact 0956 358865

ANTI-NUCLEAR NVDA CAMPAIGN TO BE LAUNCHED IN MADRID

European peace and environmental activists who met in Belgium this March decided on a new international campaign of civil disobedience to uphold international law to abolish nuclear weapons. July 8 is the first anniversary of the decision by the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ) on how international law applies to nuclear weapons. On this first anniversary of the ICJ-decision, NATO leaders, meeting in Madrid will be startled to receive a visit from a Spanish bailiff with a summons: unless they carry out radical legal surgery on NATO's nuclear weapons policy in accordance with international law, they will be confronted with a campaign of non-violent direct action to remind them of their obligations under international law. On Saturday August 9th, the anniversary of Nagasaki, non-violent direct actions will take place at different 'sites of crime' around the globe, i.e. nuclear weapon laboratories and depots.

Phone + 32-9-233 84 39 (Belgium) for info

DIRECT ACTION TOUR OF GERMANY (MAY)

The NVDA tour to Germany is happening this May. People from different groups involved in NVDA here in Britain will be sharing skills and experiences with activists in Germany. We're visiting groups involved in genetics, roads, anti-fascism, peace and absolutely everything. On the way back we're planning to stop off at a free(!) festival that's being put on in our honour. There we shall meet with people fighting the Schiphol airport expansion. There's still a few places available if you want to go on Tour (for the whole of May), however plans are afoot for another tour in Autumn. If you want to go on the May Tour or wish to help planning for the next tour contact Steffi or Max a.s.a.p on 01524 381844 or write c/o Lune EF!

BOUGAINVILLE UPDATE

While we were demonstrating against the murdering butchers SandLion International (London based), hide by Julius Chan, President of the Papua New Guinean government, little did we know that general Fingrok head of the Papua New Guinea armed forces would create a constitutional crisis which would not only bring about Chan's resignation but would give the Bougainvillians something to smile about. People power, thousand in the streets demonstrated in support of general Fing action in disarming the mercenaries putting them under house arrest and sending them packing. Colonel Tim Spicer, head of Sand Lion Int got arrested for gun offences. In the following enquiry they admitted offering their services if they were made part owner of the mine of Bougainville. Sinister exaltations and the fact that companies more and more start having corporate mercenaries, which wipe out as executive outcome, like in Sierra Leon and Angola, indigenous protest. This week the Australian government impounded a Russian plane which had on board three air attack helicopters, fuel air burst bombs missiles and 500 cases of ammunition due for delivery to Sand Lion International. Bougainvillians first voted to secede from P.N.G. in 1995 and six year ago declared independence. These people involved in probably the first environmental war with hundred thousand of them in concentration camps, need our help. They're against the vilest earth destroyers we have ever seen, RTZ/CRA executives helped by Sand Lion and the P.N.G. armed forces. See news in brief for contact and RTZ AGM. Hands on help and donations needed.

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The Fool in the Tunnel

by Jay Griffith

Them pesky protesters are at it again. Emerging from a tunnel entrance and abseiling down a cliff face with a grubby, tatty bit of paper comes Swampy, announcing his intention to stand as the dinkiest MP in the coming election. His banner read: 'Dig for victory' and comes with T-shirt tie-in.; so between the crumples in his (suspiciously clean) T-shirt appear the words "Dig for Victory..." In a less Churchillian vein, his manifesto (to contest Blackley, near Manchester, against Graham Stringer, Chairman of Manchester Airport plc) shows the said Stringer giving a two-finger salute.

The Times and The Independent gave it a big front-page splash yesterday morning [1st April]. The Guardian and the Mail gave it a little drizzle. The Express and Telegraph went big, but were safely indoors on pages 25 and 13 respectively. Tony Blair was dutifully asked for his reaction; Swampy added 'colour', said Mr B, colourlessly. There was a flat-footed response from the Labour Party spokespersons.

But protesters scorn parties of all colours: Conservatives conserve nothing; Labour has no broadly perceived commitment to the environment; Lib Dem promises sounded very hollow when the Lib Dem MP for Newbury supported the bypass. Further, protestors find the whole Westminster politics antipathetic, for theirs is a movement in structure so unlike an organisation, in style so unlike a suit. Protestors - and Swampy more than any - dislike personality politics; and yesterday's stunt was a send-up of politics which too often ignores "the issues" to concentrate on "the face".

It may seem amazing that anyone could take Swampy's manifesto seriously, for this is a movement which is patently against Westminster style politics. But never underestimate the capacity of the press to misunderstand this movement; by mistake in the case of most, and by malice in the case of the Times and the Sunday Times. The idea of Swampy really wanting to stand for Parliament would have been a joke whichever day of the year. The Independent, to its credit, shyly noted that the date was April Fools Day.

What is the point of fools? Historically all "fools days" are intended to reverse the usual order, undermining those who govern, cocking a snook or three at pomp and power. Such days have a cartoon-quality; The Simpsons have done more to damage America's nuclear industry than thousands of petitions. The fools, then, are critics from the margins, tunnelling - appropriately underneath the straight face world of "realpolitik".

The figure of protestor-as-fool is powerful precisely because protestors stay underneath, outside society, out-laws in practice since the Criminal Justice Act, and outlaws in a figurative sense. Outlaws by tradition have to voice their criticisms from outdoors. In the case of the anti-road, anti-airport protestors, they are voicing their criticisms from the outdoors and for the sake of the outdoors.

The protest movement is intrinsically out of tune with Westminster because protestors speak for nature. Government is increasingly an urban affair; London dominates the provinces, city councils dominate rural parishes. To speak "political sense", politicians seem required to speak a very urban language; of economics, taxation, budgets, investment, infrastructure, buildings. To speak of concerns for something as intangible as Nature is to seem to speak like a fool - like a fool of nature.

But protestors are actually speaking for a huge number of people. Membership of environment groups in Britain totals five million, over twice the number who belong to all parties put together. Yet the democratic system we use doesn't seem to reflect those five million concerns.

Protestors are accused of not being democratic, of side stepping the ballot box. But many of them are passionately pro-democracy - but for one thing. They want more of it, not less, more participation from voters, more accountability from politicians, more accurate representation of concerns. What they see in parliament is an increasing coalescence of political philosophy, into a puddle of "middle of centre" parties. Middle England's middle of the road. Further, a nation which has effectively disenfranchised thousands of voters - via the poll tax and ineluctable voter-cynicism - is not democratic. That the emergence now of a de facto one-party government is not democratic. That a nation ruled for 18 years by a government which the majority did not vote for is not democratic.

Swampy (Mister Hooper, according to the Daily Telegraph) intended to stand for the "Never Mind Ballots" Party. For those who remember the Sex Pistols, it is a skittish and printable way of saying Bollox to Voting. "Democracy", said Swampy, "is more than a vote once every five years. It's about active participation. One act is worth 10,000 words. Let's vote with our feet." Democracy. It isn't. Are you?

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WHAT IS EARTH FIRST!?

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or a campaign but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop, and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and it's inhabitants. The above contacts are autonomous groups that consider themselves to share these principles. International contacts are entry points into that country's own network of groups. Other contacts are ones whose aims and principles are ones that we agree with fully or in part, or groups that we think may be of use or interest to people.

New additions or alterations are shown in bold.