MONKEYWRENCH A FASCIST

On Saturday 27th April, Loyalists planned to march through the centre of London. The march had security provided by the Nazi group Combat 18. Anti Fascist Action put out a national call and about two hundred people turned up in London to try and stop them marching. Due to a massive police presence very little could be done to stop the actual march, but before; while fascists were drinking in a pub, they were attacked by anti-fascists until the riot police intervened to protect the fascists. Police surveillance of the anti-fascists was intense with most people being stopped and searched three or four times over the course of the afternoon as well as being photographed by the TSG photographer, the Forward Intelligence Team as well as a few dodgy assorted people. For more details of this event and upcoming actions to keep the streets clear of fascists contact Anti Fascist Action at: BM Box 1734, London WCIN 3XX. Tel: 0161 232 9013.

SHERWOOD FOREST ACTION

The merry friends of Robin Hood were back in Sherwood Forest for the week of Beltane! A group of around 60 people reclaimed the land as outlaws, in Thieves' Wood, just South of Nottingham. After long talks with both local police and The Forestry Commission, the occupation continued 'with their permission'! Tree houses, benders and pine huts were constructed and a forest village sprung up in under three days. Work then went into preparing for Beltane celebrations and a Robin Hood play with a special road protesting theme. Numbers rose during this time to over two hundred. The action raised a lot of local awareness about the proposal for a ten mile trunk road, connecting the M1 to the A1, as well as plans for adjoining industrial areas, a telecommunications centre and two leisure parks. This is only at the planning stages right now, but if it goes ahead it would mean part of the old Oak forest being trashed. Many of the participants, both local and others, have now pledged to come back and fight if planning permission is granted. The site was left as it was found, at the end of the week and all parties concerned were left happy. A quote from the police was published in the local newspaper commenting on the 'impeccable' behaviour of the protesters! Watch out for the play this summer as it is planned to take it around festivals and camps, or you can call 0885 620714 for more info.

URBAN OCCUPATION

Sunday May 5th saw over 300 people take over a derelict piece of land in the Tory borough of Wandsworth, London. The site is owned by Guinness who have been trying their best to receive planning permission for yet another supermarket and luxury housing on the land. But campaigners for land reform had a far better use in mind and as the Action Update goes to press the permaculture gardens are already blooming and various structures including, yurts, geodesic domes and a more permanent occasional meeting house are already in use. It should also be known that the village has the most luxurious compost toilets around! 'Pure Genius' seemed to be a very appropriate name for the new village. Lots of positive support has come from local people who have been attending the daily meetings, putting forward their ideas and generally getting stuck into the whole project. It is hoped that people will continue to head down and stay when the site is handed over to anyone who wants to live there on Sunday 12th May. No doubt that this will all have given Guinness something to talk about at their AGM which, happily enough, happened this week. For more info. contact The Land is Ours on: 01865 722016.

RIOTS IN WEST PAPUA

In West Papua a New Orleans based mining company, Freeport McMoRan, has been running a mine that exploits the people and is destroying the ecology of the area. There is a long history of resistance in West Papua as it is occupied by the brutal Indonesian government. In March, a Dani tribesman was knocked over by a car driven by a Freeport employee and he was taken to hospital. His family were denied access to see him and because of this, it was thought he was dead. Six thousand people took to the streets and attacked Freeport offices and facilities in three towns. Later on that month in the capital Jayapura there were riots when a tribal elder, who had been in prison, died. To show their respect for him, a procession was planned to go through the town. The police refused to allow this so people rioted in protest. The mines in West Papua are part owned by the British based Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) who are thinking of increasing their stake in the mines from 12 percent to 40 percent. RTZ have a long history of exploitative and ecologically unsound practises, more details of which can be obtained from: Survival International, 11-15 Emerald Street, London WC1 3QF. Telephone: 0171 242 1441.

LYMINGE FOREST

Lyminge Forest has a high diversity of deciduous trees and the rare bird the Nightjar breeds there. Despite a long public battle to save the forest from development, the RANK organisation has been granted outline planning permission to build a £100 million Holiday Village in a thousand acres of the forest. This 'village' would accommodate up to five thousand people and three thousand five hundred vehicles at any one time. Locals have appealed for a high court hearing in an attempt to stop the plans. The planning is waiting for a date to be announced. In the meantime RANK are pushing on with their full plans to submit to the local Shewpy council and are hoping to start building later this year. The Flat Oak Society is a direct action movement based in East Kent who, along with others, intend to move into the forest and set up camps, when the bird nesting season draws to a close, probably around August. Until then people would be advised to visit the RANK Headquarters at Petersfield in Hampshire. RANK are also planning a holiday village in Cumbria and have plans for a third in Shropshire. For more details contact: The Flat Oak Society, c/o 3 St. Alphege Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2EB Tel: 01227 463368/0973 262259.

LEEDS RECLAIM THE STREETS

A massive street party will be held in Leeds on Saturday May 18th in a bid to raise awareness about the growing transport problems within cities. This will be the second RTS in Leeds. The first one was held last December and was very well received, and they aim to make this one bigger and better. Events will include street painters, samba, a bouncy castle, anachronistic afternoon tea, life size puppets and kid’s stuff as well! Meet at the City Square, Leeds at 12 noon on the Saturday. For more information contact: 0113 262956.
CHEVRON AND CARDIGAN BAY

Ecologically, Cardigan Bay is a very important area – it is home to one of two known semi-resident populations of Bottlenose Dolphins around the British coast, thousands of seals, half the worldwide population of Manx shearwaters, internationally important numbers of gannets, divers, ducks and grebes. A recent survey of the seabed in a small part of the bay found 20 species new to science – it is an incredibly rich and beautiful area, as yet undisturbed by industry. Despite official recognition of the importance of the area the Government has given permission to companies to drill there. Chevron are one of the companies that has been given a license. Chevron UK (based in London and Aberdeen) will be the first company to drill within the Bay, and they plan to start in Autumn 1996. Previously, they carried out seismic testing, ignoring the local dolphin population and refuse to carry out an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment). Chevron have an awful environmental record – they have been prosecuted many times for pollution and other misdemeanours in the US; and are involved in Ogionland, Nigeria (They are the second biggest operator there after Shell). Cardigan Bay Earth First! are going to intensify their campaign to keep the oil rigs out as much help as possible. For further information about Cardigan Bay contact: Cardigan Bay Earth First!, c/o Box E, Oakridge, Taliesin, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 3WJ

A30

After a very enjoyable Beltane celebration, the latest from Fairmile is that camps have just been classified as a ‘leisure tourism’ brigades. If this sticks it would mean that the camps could be evicted at a minutes notice and so the campaign is now looking into the legalities of it. As always people needed to help with the continuous building and finally the fighting place. For the latest info call 01404 815729

BANANA REPUBLIC DAY OF ACTION

This day coincided with a rally against water privatisation and as the rally came to an end, so the banner and the chaotic procession of erratic drumming, yellowness and what’s going onness as observers and participants alike headed for main road, (Buchanan Street) where we joined forces with “Break of the Peace” sound system. Repetitive beats commenced, the drums played on, bottles started to boogie and after a few minutes we moved to a more “in yer face” part of the street where we had room to spread across the road, and the activities continued! Parcels, containing car-crunching facts, banana chips and leaflets were distributed to the very perplexed onlookers (many of whom had difficulty grasping the idea of something for nothing) while some more receptive individuals reacted to the overpowering, radiating bannanery and helplessly joined the dance manoeuvres never performed before, let alone in broad daylight! Giant banana “ball roarsers” were swirled alongside some stunning jugglers and slightly daunted-entre-tingers. The now infamous and well-travelled “RESPECT banana” banner was erected over a street sign to much chanting and cheering – Yarrrrruggaaaa! The police presence was kept to a passive duo who did nothing to try and quell the activities and make any arrests, which was almost as shocking as the fact that no one slipped on absent-mindedly cast away banana peelings. For more info. please contact RAM 74 on 0141 424 1797.

RECLAIM THE VALLEYS

Reclaim the Valleys has been set up firstly in response to Celtic Energy’s proposed plans for 72 opencast mines in South Wales and secondly, to put low impact self-sufficient communities back on the Welsh agenda. There is a new campsite on Nant Helen, Ystragyllaen and help and people are needed. Celtic Energy have been working with AMGC on the opencast. Celtic Energy are in severe financial difficulties so will feel any protests even harder than usual. From May 27th to May 30th there will be a national Reclaim the Valleys action where we will occupy the land “owned” by Celtic Energy. Bring everything you will need to survive a week in Wales, especially waterproofs and wellies! For more details contact: 0385 711354 or the special info line 01792 649071 which will only be for the week leading up to the action.

MEXICO

On April 10th in the state of Morelos, Mexican peasants were ambushed by police resulting in one peasant being killed and 18 others injured. They were all residents of the small town of Tepotzlan and were on their way to protest in another town against plans to build a new power plant and a tourist complex around Tepotzlan. They had occupied the town itself since last September after the bulldozers had moved in to start building the golf course. Later, when news broke of the clash, police denied that they had been armed and insisted that the gunfire must have come from the peasants. However an amateur video cameraman filmed the true story, showing the police not only armed but opening fire on the convoy. The incident seems to have resulted in the cancellation of any plans to build the golf course, though Grupo KS investment company have said “The land is legally ours and we will not give it up, although we do not know what we will finally do with it”. The conflict may not be over but the peasants are vowing to fight on until the state government recognises. Local media have billed the story as the Gulf War.

SOLDSBURG HILL

Building of the ‘Batheaston Bypass’ has caused the destruction of a watermeadow, a 500 year old beech and three woodlands. It is now visible as a scar through the side of Soldsbury Hill near Bath. The dual carriageway is due to open in June or July of this year (the latest rumour being the 14th of June). Actions have disrupted work for the past two years so their is no excuse for the road to open without protest. Call and give us your tel no and we shall let you know when to be there. Please contact Avon Gorge EFL on 01225 448556.

MINING AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSULTATION

On Sunday 12th May there was a Public Forum of Mining and Indigenous Peoples Consultation in London. Mining is increasingly encroaching on the lands of indigenous peoples, as mining companies seek to extract minerals from ever more remote areas of the Earth. Indigenous peoples are challenging the threat that this poses to their land, environment and culture. Representatives from around the world met up in London to formulate action on this situation. The forum included delegates from areas including Latin America, South East Asia, Pacific and Europe. The next Action Update will cover the consultation in more depth. For more details contact MINENWATCH Tel: 0171 277 4852.
ETHICAL SHEEP STREAK

The AGM season kicked off in Edinburgh on 11th April with the first ever Lloyds/TSB meeting. Many shareholders were given their first taste of LAMB activities as concerned shareholders delayed the start with stink bombs and alarms. Having thrown these devious agitators out, the security guards were then faced with ethical streakers. Nine activists took their clothes off to reveal slogans painted on their bodies, exposing the naked truth about Lloyds/TSB’s policies. After Sir Robin Jenkins regained control of the meeting, the board was subjected to searching questions and intermittent rafts and streaks from LAMB. Outside the press were delighted with the attentions of mohicans with deb - death being the ‘bottom’ line for Lloyds/TSB. There were no arrests despite a concerted effort by the shareholder to ensure full media coverage. Three others were kept in police custody until their clothes arrived. Tip for the future - is - is more vascine. LAMB are now wondering how to surpass all this at the Midland - HSBC at the Barbican in London on May 31st. Come along and be part of the fun. Contact LAMB on 0161 274 4665.

AN OPEN LETTER TO GREENPEACE UK FROM SOUTH DOWNS EARTH FIRST! 8TH MAY 1996.

At Gorleben in Germany today, over three thousand unarmed people faced fifteen thousand heavily armed riot police, tear gas and water cannon. They were trying to stop a radioactive waste ship being delivered. The nuclear industry dumped this radioactive waste in a rural area whose population almost unanimously condemns nuclear power. The nuclear industry’s acceptance of the resulting deaths and health effects in the local population amounts to moral and ecological warfare. In a country in which the German public is now voicing concern over the safety of nuclear energy, the state has chosen to act as a guileful enabler of a colossal fraud.

We saw on the TV (channel 4 news, 7pm) men and women savagely beaten and dragged around by the riot police. Then as the death convoy rolled past we saw one of the women leaning against a tree, her body marked with stabilization stickers. We have been in similar situations, we have a good idea of what was in her mind. It’s the emotional devastation caused by overwhelming mindless brute force immediately after this a spokeswomen for Greenpeace appeared and stated that you “condemn the violence of the protesters”.

What makes you think that you have the right to pass judgment on these people? People who have made an enormous personal sacrifice and undertaken a great personal risk, something you have consistently failed to do. The nearest the vast majority of your workers get to a real ecological struggle is their fax machine. They can have no comprehension of what it is to be in that woman’s situation. Even the minute proportion of your employees who are allowed to take direct action (i.e. your Direct Action Unit and your ships crews) have been subjected to near tyrannical control - we know this from personal experience. Unfortunately, many millions of people set great store by what you say. Stop abusing your position and start supporting the very few people who are making a genuine effort to stop the destruction of our planet.

South Downs EF!

EDITORIAL

In this months Action Update we have published an open letter from an Earth First! group to Greenpeace UK. While this is a departure from the Action Updates normal publication range we feel it is an important topical issue that needs addressing as soon as possible. The contents of the letter may, and hopefully will, provoke discussion and criticism. Not only do we think that this is lacking in some sectors of the Earth First! movement but we think that it is a vital part of the ongoing critique of ourselves and others that we need to have in order to evolve as a movement. - Ed.

The Earth First! Action Update is free to prisoners. Please send in the name and address of anybody that might like to receive it and we will send out a free copy of every issue to them.
BRITISH AEROSPACE AGM

The action began with a die-in outside the AGM with blood being splashed all over the forecourt. Inside CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade) organised questions to the board. George Galloway MP, accused Chief Executive Dick Evan of trying to murder Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Masari. An activist then tried to make a citizens arrest under the 1969 Genocide Act forbidding aid or conspiracy to commit genocide referring to the outrages occurring in East Timor. This was ignored and the activist was unceremoniously thrown out.

After this there was a rush at the stage as other activists attempted to mount the podium and meet the board. Some eggs were thrown and two people locked on. Security waded in and began to remove people. There were reports of heavy-handed treatment including activists being beaten up in the lift. Activists were also photographed by Security. Contact CAAT 0171 281 0297.

SEEDS OF HOPE

The three women who smashed up the Hawk back in January, along with one other woman who is charged with conspiracy, are still being held on remand. A video they produced has been used in court and included scenes from the Dili massacre and is rounded off with a plea from an East Timorese woman “please stop your commercial relations with Indonesia if you are really human” after which the courtroom remained in stunned silence. A ten minute adjournment was then announced by the magistrates. It was supposed to have been used as evidence for the prosecution but it seems as though it may have backfired. Please write letters of support to the women c/o Seeds of Hope-East Timor Ploughshares, Box 5, 55 Queen Margaret’s Grove, London N1 4PZ or call 0171 923 9151 for any info.

STOP THE HAWKS

Whenever it is publicly announced that the first Hawk war planes have left for Indonesia, there will be a protest and civil disobedience outside parliament on the following Thursday in solidarity with the people of East Timor. There is in place a Rapid Response Network for people that are willing and able to come into London for the protest, the contact no is 0171 281 0297 or for more general info please call 0176 714 036.

FRESH AIR NOW

FAN brings together EF!ers and Pedestrian groups. We tackle pollution in a holistic manner, campaigning on traffic, incinerators, air travel and green spaces. We place the blame of Manchester’s pollution firmly on the city council, we also believe local communities should be empowered to ignore the council. Fresh Air Fortnight (FAF) was two weeks of direct action to place pressure on the Town Hall before local elections, making pollution the political issue.

The Green Party and independents stood in all the wards demanding Fresh Air Now and we used NVDA as an election tool. FAF was launched from the back of a double decker bus, an attempt was made to get on the floor of the local council leaders’ house, our own cycle lanes were laid over parked cars, and a piece of derelict land was reclaimed in Mossside and with the help of over 200 local residents a football pitch and permaculture plot were put together, despite legal action by the council. There was also a critical mass, a new pedestrian crossing appeared, an alternative careers fair was held and we helped our badger friends find a new home in the Town Hall (hide and seek for several hours), as well as a conference on the environmental impact of Air Travel out at the airport. We went to the camps on the route of the M66 and on the last day we climbed on the roof of the Town Hall.

Daily for two weeks the council felt the force of public concern where it hurts – in the press at election time. The leader of the council has now resigned (of course we cannot take the credit) and it looks like we are getting a new ‘Boss’, one that takes the environment and our health seriously. Please contact us on 0161 274 4665.

AVON RING ROAD

Still no need for direct action against the Avon Ring Road Stage II, part of the largest local authority road scheme in the country. The roads have so far been delayed by over one year due to campaigning by a few individuals but construction could start at any time. Activists and funds needed as always. You can contact SCRAPPIT on 01225 481448.

NEWBURY UPDATE

Work on route is limited to erection of cattle fencing and archeological ‘watching briefs’. The cutting winds of Newbury ensure that fencing is falling as fast as it is erected. The route has been reduced to less than three hundred and further lay-offs are expected. The recent find of a medieval site was hailed by the Highways Agency as a major success. ‘We wouldn’t have found it without the bypass’ they said! The site just south of Reddings Copse was only ‘discovered’ 3 years ago. Too bad the inspector at the 1988 public enquiry couldn’t take it into account in arriving at a decision. A 100 acre gravel pit, solely for bypass aggregates has been given the go ahead by Berkshire County Council. The pit is just north of Ricketty Bridge, home of the endangered Desmoulin’s whorl snail, strange no Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out watch out for a judicial review.

There is still the possibility of (Belated) European intervention. The European Ombudsman is duty bound to report back by the end of this month, and politicians of the European Commission, who refused to refer Newbury’s case to the European Court should be quaking in their boots remembering what happened to the Tarmac offices. There are now nine camps just off route including a ‘diggers’ community that has been set up at Gotan, be prepared to camp and come self sufficient. There’s no Glastonbury this year so why not come down.

A phone, fax and junk mail blockade of the Highways Agency and Costain continues. Costain are suspected to ‘win’ the Newbury contract and an announcement is expected in the next two weeks. When leafing through your Sunday paper, why not complete applications for book club membership, higher education courses, pills etc. for the Highways Agency’s Newbury Team: Steve Rowse, Adrian Slack, Alan Odey and Graham Rainbow at Broad Street, Birmingham, B15 1BL or Rodger Jones (Contracts Director) and Steve Hall at Costain, Castle House, Nidcote’s Walk, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6. As well as this the elves have been out in force trashing fences and tunnelling away through the night.

Around the country groups are being asked to start considering actions on Costain’s offices, construction sites, etc. Tuesday 21st May is set for a day of action. This summer promises to be a busy one in Newbury. Call 01635 550552 for the 24 hr information hotline or 01635 45544 for general inquiries.

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Please send me the next twelve copies of the EF! Action Update, here is my minimum contribution of £5 (£6 for International). Don’t send cash, make cheques payable to Earth First! Donations above £5, for those who can afford it, enable us to reply to enquiries and give free subscriptions to prisoners, libraries, grassroots and community groups etc.

Please send more if you can. Fake names are better for security, and also postal orders are more secure than cheques.

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