And the campaign goes on...

The national day of action called by the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign on 24th April saw the offices of Personnel Selection in Brighton, the employment agency that sent Simon to his death four years ago to the day, shut down. There were about a dozen other protests organised locally across the country.

About 100 people gathered at noon outside the Personnel Selection offices in Brighton with banners, music, balloons, mums with kids, students from Sussex University where Simon studied, a local councillor and a dragon. The road was blocked, cars honked in support and the public, who are aware of the campaign, showed their support. Simon’s parents, Chris and Anne, went into the offices to demand the office shut down for the day and this was agreed to. The door was shut at 2pm to the sound of the Velvet Underground’s “Close the doors”. The police targeted two individuals for arrest and this was agreed to. The door was blocked, cars honked in support and the public, who are aware of the campaign, showed their support. Simon’s parents, Chris and Anne, went into the offices to demand the office shut down for the day and this was agreed to. The door was shut at 2pm to the sound of the Velvet Underground’s “Close the doors”.

Police intimidate rural grannies!

Protesters closed down an A-road in Sussex for several hours on May 26th in a big protest against a threat to ancient woodland. Hundreds of residents – including parents and children – and supporters of Protect Our Woodland! defied warnings by police that their demonstration was illegal and took over Titnore Lane in Durrington, west of Worthing. Despite crap weather and police warnings of “militant Newbury veterans” both residents and ‘militants’ turned out to show their anger over a proposed housing development and road widening. However as residents made their way home police decided to remove a banner from the A259 roundabout and manhandled the banner bearers into the road, causing people to react angrily, with one man being set upon by several officers and throwing screaming into a police van. Another man and women were arrested but all were released without charge. An elderly man from the area, who joined the protest, said that: “because of speeding traffic it’s the first time in 30 years I’ve been able to walk along here, I’m so happy.” More info from www.worthing27.freeserve.co.uk

I’m a lumberjack and I’m...a bit confused!

British Colombia’s Forest Action Network volunteers have been putting forestry giant Interfor’s loggers in a bit of spin – by hiding their signposts. Activists paid a visit to the remote Takush Valley to remove flagging tape and paint over survey markings which indicate which trees are to be felled and where roads are to be cut into the forest. Much of the logging done by Interfor in the Takush has been clearcutting, which destroys the habitats of creatures such as the grizzly bear and several species of salmon.

Forest Action Network
Box 625, Bella Coola, BC, Canada V0T 1C0
ICO Tel: +1 250 799 5800, Fax: +1 250 799 5830

Are those the Northern Lights or do you have a radioactive glow in your portfolio?

For Mother Earth are asking for support in fighting the latest convert to the cause of nuclear power – the Finnish government. Finnish campaigners are afraid that, given the strength of the corporate nuclear lobby claiming that building radioactive timebombs capable of producing loads of fuel for atomic bombs is actually an intelligent way to address climate change, the adoption of nuclear power by Finland will also encourage other European countries down this road. It is hoped that a “European Anti-Nuclear Platform” will help to spread information about which countries might be planning to build more nuclear plants, and form an early warning system so that action can be taken.

Info from jussi@motherearth.org

Bollocks to the Jubilee

I trust everybody enjoyed their street parties then? Well, just in case you missed some of the opposition to the royally jingoistic glow, here’s a quick roundup of recent anti-Royal actions, jubilee related and otherwise:

30th May: Whilst having the check to make a little visit to patronise the proles in Hackney, Edward & Sophie were kept from a cakey fate only by the speed of their pet thugs after BBB Agent Royally Pissed Off launched her sugary attack. The potential pie-er was dragged off by police, shouting that Hackney needed nurseries, education and basic services, not royal visits, and was bailed not to attend any pro or anti golden jubilee events. I’m sure she was devastated.

- A group of anarchists who decided to visit a Jubilee appearance by the queenly head of the inbred Windsors ended up being nicked and driven around London in a van, then dumped at a bus stop. This despite having no placards or banners or indeed any other evidence that they were planning anything other than a patriotic day out...the Met can expect another lawsuit from that one.

- Details from freethepeeps@hotmail.com

- Sixty people were nicked at the Execute the Queen street party in the Tower Hill area of London, in yet another session of the Met’s fave pastime, curbing the right to demonstrate or indeed express an opinion diverging from anything that might be found in a Telegraph editorial... An innocent cyclist was kicked from the police who assumed that she was about to launch an attack on of ‘Charlie-boy during a visit to Gravesend in 1999 is using them. The police attack included being sprayed with CS gas, strip-searched and punched in the face.

May Day Mayhem

Aaaaah...seems so far away now. Here’s a round-up of some of the events of Mayday 2002:

- over a million people hit the street of France for mass protests against right-wing threats in the presidential elections and further government efforts at liberalisation from the outgoing so-called socialists. Opposition to Le Pen’s Front Nationale counted the chain “N’est pas un Fasciste” – in Berlin and Zurich police used water cannon, teargas and rubber bullets against anti-globalisation protesters.

- There were also clashes with police in Turkey and Stockholm - in London the usual hysterical police warnings of violent protesters were again proved to be publicity-seeking bollocks. A group of Wombles were up in court that day too, with their appearance supported by a 150-strong picnic breakfast and the presence of Critical Mass cyclists (how terrifying). The cyclists then moved onto various points around London, including the US embassy. Meanwhile, by the end of the week, five of the Womble 7 had had their

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charges dropped or were found not guilty, while 2 were fined £100 each for charges which the police should be embarrassed by for their pathetic credibility. One of the defendants also managed to blurt out the fact that internal ‘intelligence’ (fnarrr) reports had branded the Wombles as ‘extremely violent’.

- In other cities, trade unionists marched in more traditional May Day parades, calling for better workers’ rights and against the prospect of an expanded ‘war zone’. On Tuesday 28th May, the ‘war zone’ was extended to the US by the first of several federal juries to award a total of $4.4 million last year, has been the target of corporate murder continues...

**The CPS** – surprise, surprise – has announced that it’s wussing out of prosecuting McClennigan’s employment agency, Balfour Beatty or Railtrack over the death in October 2000 of Michael Mungovan, a 22-year-old Irish student from Brunel Uni who was hit by a train at Vauxhall station. He had had just 9 hours of training before being sent onto the track. Balfour Beatty are, of course, famous for their suspicious demonstrations of their concern for human safety as the Ilios Dam, the Hatfield rail crash and the shooting death of pickets in Lesotho.

- It’s GM season again!

Members after it was found that 6 out of the 7 police and FBI officers named in the suit were indeed guilty of framing them for the bombing of their own car in 1990. Judge Mark H. Robinson of the federal court in Denver today said that David Dyck, a 42-year-old former agent in the FBI’s Denver office, was guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice.

- It’s a (in)Sin(erator)!

For more info or to book transport call Manchester at midday. Go to the field at 2pm. Coaches will leave from Lymm to Manchester 24-28 July 2002. For all you bleeding-heart liberal Guardian readers out there...

It may allegedly have a few lefty credentials but the Guardian Media group, which made a profit of £12.4 million last year, has been the target of potentially disastrous if completed. 9 villages and 3 national parks will be flooded if the reservoir is filled. The case is still under review in the European Court of Human Rights, and the campaign goes on. Despite some spectacular dufect action – including the cutting of construction cables which set work building back by a year and publicity stunts at the Brandenburg gate, the Millennium Wheel and St Peter’s Dome at the Vatican – the dam is pretty much built now, and the fight focuses on preventing it from being filled.

Companies involved in the Itoiz programme include our old mates Burson-Marsteller.

**Biting it!**

The Blitz Festival runs from 20th - 27th July in Manchester. It is described as ‘an international arts event devised by a Manchester collective, designed to provoke and inspire. A unique opportunity to meet people from all over the world doing grassroots activism and actions, www.biketour.net, tour002@yahoo.com or tel: 0870 467 231.

- 16-18 Groundswell Gathering, Sheffield, 20 Community Renewables Initiative Launch, Norwich.
- 19-20 No Borders action camp, Strasbourg, France. www.no-borders.co.uk or www.noborder.org
- 20 GM Free Cheshire crop rally, Lymm, Cheshire 07759 031931 gmfreecheshire@yahoo.co.uk
- 20 The Blitz Festival An international arts event devised by a Manchester collective, designed to provoke and inspire. tacitular@yahoo.co.uk www.nato.uk.net
- 24-28 Big Green Gathering August 10-

- 21-22 NATO summit in Washington, D.C. www.nato.org
- 22-26 Green Gathering, Pontefract. www.orgg.co.uk 0113 231 9090
- 29-31 Eastern Green Gathering, Bury St Edmunds, www.easterngreenathering.com or 01284 728559
- 3-16 Crossover summer camp, Coburg, Germany. Will cover issues including: orientationism, racism and sexism, queer, transgender and intersex issues, gender, work and migration, eastern and western europe, the environment, anticapitalism, globalisation, reproductive technologies and population politics. Contact: summercamp@bast.de www.summercamp.squat.net
- 3-17 Vegan Camp, Park Foot Caravan and Camping, Ellerthwaite, www.vegangathering.org 0845 3303918
- 20 Bulgarian Action Camp, www.aseed.net
- 20 The Blitz Festival A unique opportunity to meet people from all over the world doing grassroots activism and actions, www.biketour.net, tour002@yahoo.com or tel: 0870 467 231.
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Strike action because that’s apparently not enough for it to pay its decent wage. The strike included pickets at Manchester Guardian Weekly Newspapers, Salford Guardian, Manchester Office Observers. The strike finally gained a victory when pay rises, especially for trainees, were promised, and meal allowances increased.

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Prisoner Support

Part of a biography by Jeff Luers (‘Free’), a US political prisoner. On 28th June 2000 he was arrested on 3 SUV’s. I took extra care and used specific fuels to ensure no one would be injured. I was arrested on Criminal mischief One, a charge that carries about one year. In the course of one week that charge would multiply into 10 felony counts, including 3 counts of Arson One.

Jeff was arrested on protest of a course of year. By trial I had accumulated 13 felony counts, now including 7 counts of Arson One. I was looking at about 10 years. I refused to take a plea. A trial was a joke, it was farce. We proved evidence had been tampered with, officers had lied and that the prosecutor had manipulated evidence to get a legal search. In I was convicted to 27 felony charges. I was sentenced to 2 years. I have no possibility of parole. For 21 of these years to contact me directly at Jeff Luers #13797671, OSP, 2655 State Street, Salem, OR 97301 or my defense network at: Free’s Defense Network, PO Box 5206, Eugene, OR 97405 or contact hoz@freedoms@yahoo.com

The Legal Defence & Monitoring Group
The Legal Defence & Monitoring Group provides information and demonstrations – we cannot cover every one. I was sentenced to 27 felony charges. I have no possibility of parole. For 21 of these years to contact me directly at Jeff Luers #13797671, OSP, 2655 State Street, Salem, OR 97301 or my defense network at: Free’s Defense Network, PO Box 5206, Eugene, OR 97405 or contact hoz@freedoms@yahoo.com

International
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Other International

- International

for Free’s Defense Network, PO Box 5206, Eugene, OR 97405 or contact hoz@freedoms@yahoo.com

Black Panther and anti-jail protesters, involving for about 30 years: Albert Woodfox #77248, CCA-Baton Rouge, LA 70816, Pententiary, Angola, LA 70712 USA and Herman Wallace #82868, CCA-Mentorville, LA 70622, #13, Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, LA 70712 USA. For 40 years for revealing the true extent of nuclear radiation levels around Chernobyl.

Keun Okko #5070562, PO Box 2000, P/C Genetix Snowball, 76 Mina Road, Bristol BS5 0LT, UK.

While William Philpott (AM4974) and Delbert Orr (AM4975) were both at SCI Garretford, PO Box 244, Garretford, PA 19426-0244, USA. Delbert Orr (AM4974)

Edward Goodman (AM4974), SCI Camp Hill, PA 17011-0020, USA.

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The International Solidarity Movement

The ISM, along with GIP (Grassroots International Protection for Palestinian People) have for the last year or so concentrated on bringing internationals to the West Bank and to a lesser extent Gaza. Both as grassroots movement, combining the efforts of local Palestinian organisations and international activists living both in Palestine and in Europe and the USA. The ethos behind both is that internationals, working at the request of and in co-operation with local people, can often do things that for Palestinians would by definition result in death, injury or imprisonment. A typical ISM programme, like that in which December 2001, might include opening up checkpoints, acting as human shields for Palestinian marches, digging out roadblocks, accompanying farmers onto land where they are threatened by settlers… and flyposting Israeli Army tanks. Of course, in a situation like that in the Occupied Territories the best-laid plans often go awry, and those of who went for the ISM fortnight of action (the plans for which looked very much like those described above) quickly realised that much of what we were intending to do would be impossible. But as internationals, again, we were able to do much that Palestinians couldn’t, such as go out into the curfews to deliver food and medicine or access the international media to counteract the lies and propaganda being perpetrated by the Israeli government and army. And the very presence of internationals in refugee camps, riding with ambulances or accompanying released Palestinian prisoners may, in many cases, have made the difference between deaths or attacks and a relative degree of safety. Certainly those refugee camps in Bethlehem where the presence of internationals was well publicised suffered nothing like the harassment they’ve experienced before or the slaughter seen in Jenin and Nablus.

The ISM is always prepared to find ways for internationals coming to the West Bank to help. There will also be an ongoing campaign of actions called Freedom Summer from the 24th June until 17th August; all are welcome.

UK Actions

- In Leicester, an office occupation highlighted Caterpillar’s sale of bulldozers, like those used to demolish houses in Jenin, to the Israeli military. Many of the staff leafleted were sympathetic to and some even took fliers to pass on to colleagues! Two of the eight activists involved were held for questioning by the police for 15 hours – one was interrogated about ‘terrorist links’ and the other learned that her parents’ house had been raided at 4am.
- In June, apparent customers at Selfridges’ food hall suddenly got disruptive when their Israeli settler goods had been rung through the till… after being ejected by security, they continued to leaflet outside.
- In Manchester, a banner drop detailing Land Rover’s sale of vehicles to the IDF was met with irritation by the garage manager, who complained that the protest was damaging his business. Good to know that you’re having an effect! An Israeli passer-by stopped to tell the demonstrators about how he wasn’t racist, but ‘you simply can’t trust these Arabs…’
- In London, 15 activists were violently repelled by security guards with metal batons whilst trying to hang banners on the Israeli Embassy on Kensington High Street. Undeterred, they proceeded to take their message to the local M&S, and then to London E1 Ally offices, to protest the airline’s involvement in the deportation of humanitarian protesters from Palestine.
- A picket met Ariel Sharon’s visit to Downing Street. Nice to see Tony Blair hob-nobbing with the man responsible for the massacre of thousands of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatila in 1982 and hundred in Jenin in 2002.
- In Manchester, there was a die-in involving 150 people at St Ann’s Square in the centre of the city, attracting media attention and providing a high-profile leafleting opportunity.
- There have also been large marches in London and a smaller one in Manchester.

Further afield:

- In Pretoria, South African women chained themselves to the gates of the UN offices to protest UN inactivity at the human rights abuses being perpetrated by the Israeli state. Their statement particularly focused on the effects of Israeli occupation on Palestinian women and children.
- In New Mexico, a number of people were arrested for chaining themselves to petrol pumps at a Tnxcarto garage, during a demonstration emphasising the connections between the occupation, geopolitics interests, and the oil politics of the Middle East.
- Mayday marches in Bogota and elsewhere in the world incorporated the situation in Palestine and the international community’s apparent willingness to let Sharon get away with murder – literally – into their protests and demands.
- In Warsaw, demonstrators linked the genocide of the Jews in Poland during WWII with Israel’s present racist policies. Banners at the protest read ‘You can’t drown freedom in blood.’

Environmental impacts

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank does not only impact on the daily lives of the people living there, but on the long-term sustainability of the area’s habitats and agricultural land. Massive water extraction for Israel’s ‘greening the desert’ programme (the source of many fruit and vegetable imports into the UK, especially for organic market. Watch out for those avocados and peppers!) has resulted in the dramatic shrinking of the Jordan River in the East of the West Bank, destroying wildlife habitats and drying out farmland for miles around. This is also exacerbated by the fact that the average Israeli uses 16 times more water than the average Palestinian – you can see the contrast between the two if you visit affluent Israeli neighbourhoods, which often have swimming pools and sprinkler systems, despite the essentially desert nature of the countryside. More direct environmental damage is also occurring. The Barkan industrial zone, near Salfit, is one of the largest industrial zones in the Middle East. Local activists say that the Israelis site factories there if they are deemed too polluting or dangerous to be built within Israel itself. Products made in the Barkan zone include: Barkan Cellars wines, Barkan sweets, Alba halva & candy, Beigel & Beigel pretzels, and of these products are sold in Selfridges. The industrial effluent from Barkan is run straight into the valley below, untreated, creating a brightly-coloured, foul-smelling slick beside which Palestinian farmers are still trying to raise crops for want of anywhere else to go.

Barkan is also an settlement, illegal under international law, as is Ariel, its neighbour over the hill. This is one of the West Bank’s largest settlements, with a resident population of 20,000 which doubles during working hours. The sewage outlet from Ariel is a series of cracked pipes running down to an overflowing tank which is polluting the former nature reserve it is sited in the middle of. It stinks, and used sanitary products and household waste litter the stream it runs into. Again, local farmers are still trying to make a living here.

And finally, the environmental damage which seems to hurt many Palestinians most deeply is the destruction of the olive groves. These stately trees, many of which are said to have been planted by the Romans, are the mainstay of the Palestinian rural economy, providing fruit, oil and wood. But they also occupy a significant spiritual place in Palestinian hearts and culture, and the bulldozing or chainsawing of entire groves by settlers, with the protection of the Israeli army, is the cause of much anger and pain.

Vital Statistics

The State of Israel was founded in 1948 on land previously occupied by Palestinians, around 10% of whom were ethnically Jewish at that time. After the 1967 war the Israeli army also occupied the West Bank. Many of the refugees forced out of their homes in 1948 fled from the West Bank to join others already in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

There are currently around 5 million Palestinian refugees, the largest and oldest refugee population in the world.

The UN World Food Programme recently announced that it will be helping to feed 500,000 Palestinians who are increasingly suffering from malnutrition due to Israeli army controls on food coming in and out of the area. More than just the mass of the majority of Palestinians to reach their places of work. This includes some 360,000 rated as ‘extremely poor,’ including many one-parent families who have lost breadwinners to the Israeli occupying forces.

Between the beginning of the First Intifada in 1987 and 31st January this year, 433 Israeli minors have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers in the Occupied Territories, of which 115 were under 13.

According to B’Tselem’s research, since the beginning of the intifada (9 December 1987) and until the end of 1997, Israel has completely demolished in the Occupied Territories at least 449 houses as punishment, partially demolished 62 houses, completely sealed at least 296 houses, and partially sealed 118 houses. This punitive house demolition policy has been resumed since early 2001.

Contacts


B’Tselem, Israeli human rights research organisation www.btselem.org

Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK www.palestinesolidaritycampaign.org or Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Box BM PSI, London WC1N 3XX

Indymedia Palestine http://jerusalem.indymedia.org