Cracks
in a
Grey Sky

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It's strange to put together a collection of articles from a publication that has been defunct for 13+ years and from nearly 9000 km away. *Do or Die, Voices from the Ecological Resistance* filled a void that US publications (*Live Wild or Die!*, *Green Anarchy*, and *Black Seed*) have attempted, in their ways, to fill but with nowhere near the quality or quantity of the original. *Do or Die* (*DoD*) was the expression of a singular moment by strong writers who agreed about how to approach and discuss a high point of ecological resistance. Here I want to contextualize the struggles discussed in *DoD*, to speak to the parallels between that time and our current moment, to take seriously the critique and proposals in the paper generally and in "Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring" and "The Four Tasks" specifically. Ultimately we want to introduce a new generation of warriors to the intelligent approach presented in *DoD* nearly 20 years ago and discuss how this approach is still relevant today.

The Project and Audience

DoD was produced by and largely aimed at a few hundred people in the UK eco scene. Although it had a wider circulation than this, it was largely produced with this audience in mind. But, DoD has also been really liked by all sorts of other people who often didn't like each other at all. For example lots of more traditional anarchist communists really liked DoD, as did lots of conservationists – the magazine was big enough that very few people read all of it – people just read the bits they liked and ignored the rest. We'd get comments from more traditional anarchists saying that they really liked it, but it was a shame about the articles about beaver restoration or Native American spirituality. And then we'd get almost exactly opposite comments from other people who liked the beavers but weren't so into class struggle.

- From the EF! postmortem interview circa 2006

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coherence. When they exist at all it tends to be for a small group of true believers, rather than a broad audience of fellow travelers, which is what *DoD* eventually pulled together. The idea of having something of value to share with your ideological opponents seems increasingly rare within radical politics. There is no more kumbaya as we clamor for smaller and smaller crumbs from a body politic that has a decreasing appetite for the big dreams and declarations about what is ahead, from radicals who are barely able to demonstrate ambulation and mastication (much less simultaneity).

DoD had dozens of contributors each issue. While that is also true for the Earth First! Journal here in the US, *DoD*, in addition to having commentary based on first-person observation and testimonial (especially as the journal grew in size in the last four issues —issue 10 was nearly 400 pages long), also had lengthy theoretical works. EF! barely has theoretical texts at all, and what there are tend to be short and ranty rather than the massive accomplishment of the pieces "Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring" (DwtE) and "The Four Tasks" (TFT), and even smaller but still engaging ones like the pieces on Critical Mass, Action Theater, and the impact of the dole on activism. That kind of effort has to nurtured and celebrated to find its pace.

It's also worth noting the decision to shut down the project rather than hand it to the next generation. As they make clear, it wasn't for lack of relevance or reader enthusiasm. Clearly the same problems and even some of the efforts and solutions offered by *DoD* make sense to a new generation (hence this collection). But each new generation has to find their own voice, to express even old problems in a way that makes sense to new ears, and dusty old projects (think Rolling Stone) really do tend to stink up the room.

Road Building

What *DoD* told us about the UK—and about how direct action against the mega-machine looks different when away from forests and wilderness—was wonderful. The imagery and storytelling of road resistance seems like something out of science

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fiction, not a British parallel to tree sitting and its accompanying culture. In the US the road-protest scene is arguably more needed than it is in the UK, but apart from a few, meager protests (I-69, Loop 202 in AZ, etc), the US innovation seems to be having protests ON freeways rather than efforts against their construction in the first place.

The struggle against the M11 link was inspiring on a number of levels. In particular the imagery of tunnels to burrow under and befuddle construction was amazing. The growth of road-building protests in the 90s seemed so much more salient to the everyday life of someone in civilization, rather than tree-spiking and -sitting in far-off locales. The protest against roads seemed like the right kind of action to come from a country that had so little official wildness left to fight for.

Clearly the fight for the Earth is complex and the war against roads was lost, or perhaps just the battle, although the protestors doubled the cost of the M11 link (which eventually became the ninth most congested road in the UK), and ended, in embryo, similar road-building attempts (the M12 was cancelled on first review). The fight against such an existential opponent—roads are the primary circulation system of capitalism—was a worthy one, but it's hard to believe that anyone involved ever believed that this fight was enough: necessary, but not sufficient. But the grind of an enormous campaign (the Newbury campaign was attempting to stop construction on a nine-mile piece of land, every day, for months) meant that bigger issues could not be debated—exhaustion, drinking, and politics would not allow for it.

The story of roads is inspirational and a great piece of UK EF! cultural currency but ultimately an open wound— the gap between building a movement of the disparate forces that engage in these forms of struggle and the motivation of those groups being ephemeral and contradictory.

Winning and Losing

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Wild or Die! did in the States – a radical anarchist fringe publication trying to ginger things up a bit. When we say that we won, in that the green anarchist perspective went from being the minority to the majority perspective within EF! in the UK over the course of the 1990s, that isn't quite as arrogant as it sounds... this may have been partly due to our efforts but is probably more due to people's own experiences of resistance over time. This resulted in lots of people dropping much of the non-violent pacifist ideology, moving more towards an anarchist position and supporting sabotage actions.

--From the EF! postmortem interview circa 2006

This quote is deep. It holds a lot of history in a few, easily-missed words and refers to a before that is hard so see from the position of one who has only been in the now. There was a time when EF! held at the same time very different ideas of what comprises direct action in defense of the earth. This is outside of debates about peaceful (or not) tactics or what shape a better world should take. This quote refers to a time when EF! (alongside many other social justice groups) wasn't homogenous. That is no longer true.

On the one hand political people (who describe themselves with terms like anarchist) want to have deep and engaged conversations about the implications of ideas to daily life. On the other this has created a cultural context where participation has entailed a type of conformity.

The example above doesn't refer to the split between rednecks and hippies but a time when summit protests were being challenged by anarchists as having a limited depth of strategic vision. These same people were developing a tighter connection between a green anarchist perspective and EF! activities. The unforseen consequence of this move has been a further whittling of the kind of opinions, actions, and ideas that EF! participates in. There hasn't been a rondy in a decade that doesn't have some sort of identity politics drama attached to it.

Down with the Empire

This essay iis a strong conclusion to the *DoD* project. It does it all: savors the victories, names the defeats, and tells the story of

a decade of attempts by human beings to defend the Earth against the rapacious industrial system. It is a thoughtful, considered, un-depressed summation of years and years of thinking and acting.

DwtE frames the history of UK EF! and, like any frame, is perhaps unfair to future ecological actions in the UK theater. It's a story of birth, land struggle, localism, and ultimately the globalization of the movement. This might be cold solace to those who are still fighting against roads and industrialism in the nooks and valleys of the greater UK. The article implies, "Keep trying but your story has already been told." That said, DwtE was a fantastic introduction to the section that followed it, the rare strategic document, or at the very least a solid set of proposals.

The Four Tasks

Somewhere between strategy and tactics is the conversation all of us in the change-the-world movement need to have. At this point I would say that strategy is easy, if silly. It's easy to declare that peace will be the result of peace, or killing tyrants will make leaders behave. In fact, the focus required to do either enough to test whether the hypotheses work, is in short supply. Grandiose statements—especially since the Internet is so frequently the way we communicate with each other—have become a principle form of non-communication. Tactics is also easy enough. It is simple to talk about the technics, specifics, and experiences of how to deal with meetings, windows, and equipment in the field. But the gap between what we can do and what we want is enormous, it's existential, and it touches on everything we love and hate about people.

TFT attempts to bridge this strategy-tactics gap and its effort is worth engaging with, even 20 years later, because of how prescient and accurate (if not precise) it was (with regard to the shape of ecological resistance). TFT is, from our perspective, the zenith of *DoD*.

Growing Counter-Cultures

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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.

In the US the perspective that counter culture is valuable has fallen entirely out of favor. This is mostly because of the Internet (also somewhat because of the surprising popularity and misreading—or at least highly attenuated reading—of "Introduction to Civil War" by Tiqqun). These days in the US there is a disdain for all things counter cultural. Of course the disdainers were also once the royalty of the same counter cultures they are oh-so-over, but that isn't the point. The Internet killed counter culture[1], especially what was most visually distinctive about it. For the spectacularized American, that was enough. These days no one is allowed their own special little treehouse in which to foment (r)evolution, not without a thousand blogs of light shining down upon them. And this will not do.

The tension for us, as people who were formed pre-Internet, is that to eschew the counter culture is to embrace mainstream culture: Mom & Dad, jobs and retirement, home ownership and life insurance, kids, dogs, and white picket fences. We claimed counter culture as the escape from that, but mainstream culture has already, mostly, consumed each individual component. You want Mom & Mom, a shared job, no home or insurance, and a cat? Go for it! To put this another way, the problem with American counter culture is that we had no culture in the first place. Since WWII we have had nothing but capitalism's throbbing successes at solving the problems of human storage and survival. Counter culture, especially as defined by *DoD* (and by us), is about something else entirely. For startesrs, it's about something that spans generation, which we absolutely do not have.

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To put this conundrum into slightly more positive language, we feel outside of and opposed to mainstream culture but strongly desire something-like-a-community to fulfill both the spiritual and material needs a culture could provide—so we endure counter culture. We have big dreams for counter culture—which has time and time again disappointed—and believe something connected to our daily life must also be the mechanism by which we participate in the change we'd like to see in the world (which I don't mind calling (r)evolution even though it sounds dorky to a North American ear).

I think the common criticism of this position is a communist one. We, by whatever broad definition you want to give counter culture, will never be large enough to be a force-to-be-reckoned-with on the stage where a revolution (or even a (r)evolution) would need to be waged. We, to put it gently, are not enough. We aren't even talking about a Russian Revolution-style change but about survival, fertilizer and safe houses, dance parties and hook-ups, and even putting thumbs in the dam. It seems hard to fathom a new type of counter culture—mostly comprised of the most educated from the current counter culture that is attempting to build (political) parties, study groups, and gestures towards effects—will have anywhere near the skeletal structure shown by even the shadow of the previous counter culture.

Forgive us our internal critiques. This first task of TFT still rings true. We need some place where our probable hostility for each other can look and feel much more like conviviality than a civil war. We need this because if there ever were the requirement for the kind of solidarity and unity of action a radical transformation of this world requires, we don't currently have it. It is possible that the fragmentation of counter culture (a fragmentation that is largely concurrent to the rise of the Internet) is irreversible. That would mean that the corollary to the First Task may be something like reconciling the irreconcilable of a unitary counter culture vs a diverse one that recognized itself and its boundaries, and had an honest self assessment of the accompanying strategic limitation and opportunities.

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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.

This argument is similar to the assertion by EF! types that there is something metaphysical about wildness, therefore justifying its defense at any cost. This kind of argumentation has fallen out of vogue (alongside, thankfully, the deep vs social ecology debate). There are still a thousand not-radical non-profits that are thumbing dams all over the place: saving rhinos, gorillas, rain forests, and other regions and species that will be eliminated as the violence of global capitalism completes its consumption of resources.

An aspect of the radical version of thumbing dams that wasn't discussed by *DoD* that is more likely to "open up time" is green capitalism. Shipping global-north tourists to locations and species in the wild is, perhaps, a more humane and sustainable option to zoos and safaris. The past 20 years has seemed to vindicate this approach more than the one of environmental extremism. Native struggles, which are largely struggles of cultural survival, have been most effective when there are resources under control of natives (whether byways for pipelines or casino revenues) that allow them to get a seat at the table for control of their own destinies. Thumbs in the dam indeed.

The other approach that has some appeal for some radicals (most notably a specific kind of communist) is accelerationism. This perspective is more-or-less the opposite of any kind of ecological concern unless you believe that gaian homeostasis is only possible in the absence of humans. In which case, turning up the heat on human activity, with the resulting crises and

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collapse, may be the only solution. This is the opposite of putting a thumb in the dam but is one of the interesting propositions since *DoD* ended.

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.

Task Three falls gently from Task One and Two. If we have a place that is something like True Community and we commit to emergency struggles, then we must necessarily prepare for upcoming events. Ecological crises has already been a more salient part of daily life in the past 15 years than in the 50 before it. The only quibble with this Task is that it is necessary but not sufficient to the scale of the crises ahead.

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.

Once you have a real fighting force, one committed to doing something meaningful in the world. then of course the list of what you have to do, what different pressure groups will try to get you to do, can get quite long. The main criticism we would make of the Four Tasks is that they bury thousands of tasks in the four. What is an engaging and critically important conversation about "What is to be Done?" is mostly a series of four principles with little to direct a reader. It is largely a list that details the dozens of complicated projects that could be embraced given infinite time and energy.

The challenge of Task Four (which is basically to help others) is the challenge of environmental activism (actiually, all activism): how do we help people who are outside of our experience in real material, cultural, and spiritual ways. The usual answer is that our actions should be directed by solidarity and not charity but this distinction is nearly impossible to define and,

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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.

Task Three falls gently from Task One and Two. If we have a place that is something like True Community and we commit to emergency struggles, then we must necessarily prepare for upcoming events. Ecological crises has already been a more salient part of daily life in the past 15 years than in the 50 before it. The only quibble with this Task is that it is necessary but not sufficient to the scale of the crises ahead.

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.

Once you have a real fighting force, one committed to doing something meaningful in the world. then of course the list of what you have to do, what different pressure groups will try to get you to do, can get quite long. The main criticism we would make of the Four Tasks is that they bury thousands of tasks in the four. What is an engaging and critically important conversation about "What is to be Done?" is mostly a series of four principles with little to direct a reader. It is largely a list that details the dozens of complicated projects that could be embraced given infinite time and energy.

The challenge of Task Four (which is basically to help others) is the challenge of environmental activism (actiually, all activism): how do we help people who are outside of our experience in real material, cultural, and spiritual ways. The usual answer is that our actions should be directed by solidarity and not charity but this distinction is nearly impossible to define and,

in practice, hard to find examples for. This is not to say that charity is de facto bad but hoping and wishing an action isn't charity evades an important principle, which is that the people who have money, resources, and power get to decide who they shower those things upon. not need, value, or the people who actually receive the largesse. This privilege is mostly discussed as a type of crime committed by those who have it which seems to have resulted in less and less generosity from rich people.[2]

At the heart of Task Four is an imperative. We must aid our brothers and sisters. This may be the case if we assume some brutal categorizations. "Brothers and sisters on other islands" seems synonymous with "the poor and huddled masses" of the world. Bringing their fights to the bourgeoisie is a type of restatement of the classic Marxist hagiography with, perhaps, a humanist twist. If we thought categorization of the Marxist variety were a solution to ecological devastation why wouldn't we be Marxists? Do we really think that bringing new data to the boardrooms and bedrooms would change them one iota? Perhaps what I was hoping for from this Fourth Task was a new model of revolution, a social change movement that was different, but it seemed there wasn't nearly the imagination about how to do things differently as there was about how many things there are to do.

We've drifted again towards having a critical analysis of The Four Tasks but that is only because this nearly 20-year old document is still entirely relevant to the form and function of radical activity today. Almost none of this document feels dated. Today there would be sections on Global Warming and Intersectionality but fundamentally this text is still a relevant starting point for any group attempting to answer the questions herein. This is an incredible feat and for that I'd place it at the head of the pack of articles that attempt a similar feat—but much more modestly—like *Desert*, "Earth First Means Social War," "The Issues are not the Issue," "You Make Plans - We Make History," and various pieces by the Green Anarchy Collective.

But What If It is Too Late?

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But What If It is Too Late?

If you will indulge us for a few minutes we'd feel remiss if we

didn't mention a topic that *DoD* didn't emphasize. What if we are too late? This question of "lateness" has a material, cultural, and metaphysical component that we will address. There were people in the eco-scene that were asserting something along the lines of this question but they made the mistake of confusing means and ends and as a result blamed the first victims of our lateness rather than keeping the conversation abstract. Abstraction has the benefit of not summoning emotions, of seeming to be removed from a particular interest group or daily life, which allows us, strangers, to discuss something big and profound. It is an abstraction to say that the world is going to end and there is no hope of redemption (just as saying the opposite is also an abstract ion). But of course endings will impact a great deal of people and are incredibly dramatic and even cataclysmic. For the sake of talking to strangers and talking about something impossibly difficult, for the rest of this section let us ride the line between abstraction and something real.

It is very much in the ecological tradition to abandon hope: in human agency, in our capacity to slow the gears of Empire's machinery, that we could make a difference on any stage we'd think worth our energy. This tradition tends to argue for a return to nature, for a withdrawal from the affairs of man (or civilization or society), or towards a spiritual life. Of course there is no escape but there is a principle that is at odds with the Four Tasks and doesn't require its fundamental hope. What if instead of building a counter culture that doesn't appear possible—in order to effect a holding action to the decay of this civilization, to prepare for crises, and to (poorly) support the actions of others around the world who are doing the same—what if instead of all that, we just live our lives. What if we accept that we are just a few human creatures among billions?

Instead of becoming activists, or politicians with no constituency, we do something else. We don't try to run and hide (as if that were possible), but instead live as a native to our habitats, do something horrific to bourgeoisie society, live quietly, outside of the organizational model of the Christian sects. Let people be and live on the land, perhaps wildly, perhaps in all the counter-

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cultural glory you possess.

If it is too late to save humanity from itself then it may be time to wrap up our affairs. In that cause, a more nihilistic ecological perspective has a few modern faces that make sense to mention as a way of concluding. Two of them are publishing projects, inheritors of the *DoD* legacy but perhaps, in addition to The Four Tasks, also participants in a Fifth Task. Dark Mountain, a publishing project from the UK, is comprised of dozens of authors, many of whom participated in the anti-road activities of the 90. They are best summed up by this, *The machine is stuttering and the engineers are in panic. They are wondering if perhaps they do not understand it as well as they imagined. They are wondering whether they are controlling it at all or whether, perhaps, it is controlling them* (Dark Mountain Manifesto).

The second project, in which the editors of this book have some involvement, is Black Seed. a newsprint project somewhere in the intersection of indigeneity, green anarchism, and direct action. And the third, non-publication project is the actions of eco-extremists, especially in Mexico, like Individuals Tending Towards the Wild, or Wild Reaction, tendencies that attempt to treat human life as if it is not. in fact. at the center of creation. The influence of The Four Tasks weighs heavily on all these projects.

Conclusion

While we have spent most of our energy here focusing on the impressive and influential conclusionary documents “Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring” and “The Four Tasks,” we intended only to highlight what was great about *DoD*. By maintaining some semblance of an editorial line, a set of high-quality production efforts, and a theoretical axis around a broad green anarchist perspective. it has maintained its position as one of the most important radical green publications ever. We found the lack of memory of this great publication to be offensive and put forward this book take to remedy that situation.

We hope in the following four hundred plus pages you will find agreement with us as well as your own uses for the great mate-

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Footnotes

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Environment

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The Day They Drove Twyford Down! *(from issue 1)*

The battle for Twyford Down

For those who don't already know, Twyford Down is an area of outstanding natural beauty just east of Winchester in Hampshire. With that designation, numerous S.S.S.I.s [Sites of Special Scientific Interest] including the water meadows lining the Itchen valley south of the Down, and two significant scheduled Ancient monuments—an Iron Age Village and a bunch of medieval tracks—the Dongas. Twyford is also one of the last known habitats of the Chalk Blue butterfly and six different species of orchid. It was supposed to be one of the most protected natural sites in England. Indeed, it was placed in the trust of Winchester College by two old boys that bought it in the 1920s to preserve it from the city's urban sprawl.

The year's actions to protect the Dongas have been well covered. Since February 2, many blockades and occupations of the work site have taken place, but still the Department of Transport [DoT] carried on regardless, determined to build their precious motorway. During the summer a camp was set up on the Dongas, where activists planned and based actions against the work site on the water meadows, which by then was being raped by the contractors. By the Autumn the contractors were looking towards the Dongas to begin their motorway monster. This is when the most oppressive and intimidating tactics against the campaign took place.

The Dongas Tribe declared the site an autonomous zone in September, and began building fortifications to defend their land. Tarmac [a British building materials company] had now got the contract to go forth with the cutting, and at this point a virtual siege began with paid security guards having their lookouts next to the Dongas.

The siege effectively ended on the 29th of October after sheer incompetence on the legal front. The previous Monday, (26th of October), the DoT successfully pressured the Estates Bursar of Winchester College into applying to the local court to evict the Dongas Tribe. The summons was so ill-made that that when presented to court that Thursday, the judge ordered the

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case adjourned until 9th of December, well-past the end of the Cooper Lyons contract. With the tribe securely in place and no police cover, all the contractors could do was finish work on the Water Meadow and cut their losses.

The main contract begins

Tarmac spent well after midnight on the 1st of November moving into their depot in Compton, two miles south of the Down. The next morning forty contractors started work on four different sites along the south side of the Itchen Valley, the Tribe were desperately outnumbered and somewhat intimidated. This was compounded by the fact that one of the security guards was suspected of an Arson attack against the Tipi watch post in the trench field a couple of nights after Tarmac arrived. It took until 4th of November for EF! to react nationally. Sixty EF!ers marched across the Itchen Valley and stopped the work on all four sites, freaking out Roger Jackson so much that that he lost control of his car and parked it half way up a bank for the rest of the day.

The Dongas tribe continued to obstruct work on the North End site until around the 30th of November. On this day, a Tarmac foreman frustrated by continuous disruption charged demonstrators with a JCB and one of the workers threatened a second arson attack on the camp. The cambers took this second threat seriously and demanded that no further action be taken against the contractors. The Tribe member that came closest to injury in the first attack was outraged at this decision and walked out of the camp, saying that by allowing themselves to be intimidated, the Tribe had made themselves hostages of the good behavior of others opposing the destruction of the down. The camp had vetoed ecotage around the area of the camp for months for fear of retaliation—by vetoing all action, the original reason for the establishment of the camp had been lost the day when Winchester college's summons was to be heard, the DoT felt that they were in a strong enough position to invade the Dongas. Due to the lack of co-operation from Hampshire Constabulary from the 27th of October, the home office recommended Tarmac hire Group Four for the invasion instead.

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At dawn, a bulldozer spearheaded the assault, followed up by one hundred Group Four thugs and all the workers at Twyford. Although the tribe had been supplied with a mobile phone to call for support, it had broken down and had not been repaired in the malaise preceding that day's events. Despite the paucity of communications, over fifty EF!ers had turned up by noon. The contractors put up a barbed wire compound around DoT land and started to remove turf within, but the tribe weren't taking this without a fight. Their attempts to invade the compound in the next two days were met by violence that hospitalised four of the demonstrators. To control the situation, a hundred cops were drafted in and they in turn made arrests when EF!ers attempted to stop the destruction of the woods at the bottom of the Dongas by occupying trees and the contractors vehicles bulldozing them down on Friday 11th of December, despite this unbelievably wanton destruction on the side of Tarmac, the tree-sitters saved a small stand of sycamores and this became their camp site as the tribe began clearing off Winchester College's land ready for the 14th December evictions.

On the Wednesday, Hampshire County Council objected to Tarmac's spurious claims that the two footpaths across the Dongas had been diverted. The 13th of December was an unlucky day for the contractors. Armed with cuttings from the local paper about the destruction of the paths, fifty members of the Ramblers Association turned up at the Down and insisted on the right to walk one of the original tracks. Joined by the tribe and their supporters, the ramblers laid siege to the compound. After ripping the compound gate off its hinges, they barged through fifty Group 4 guards that had linked arms across the breach, and proceeded to walk to the far side of the compound before the cops arrived to "restore order." Those biffed out of the compound are now taking the obstruction to court to rip it wide open.

A tribe member describes Yellow Wednesday!
At the battle of the Dongas we witnesses the lengths to which other human beings were prepared to go- to enable destruction of nature to continue.

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At the battle of the Dongas we witnesses the lengths to which other human beings were prepared to go- to enable destruction of nature to continue.

We saw outnumbered protesters being assaulted, then arrested for assault. Activists sustained injuries that the police surgeon described as evidence of systematic beatings. When several arrests failed to enable machinery onto the Dongas- arrests were forgotten as a tactic, and were replaced by brute force and scare tactics by 70 men in yellow jackets.

As the Earth defenders persistence in the face of arm-twisting, head-butting, pressure pointing…etc, became evident 50 black hats waded in.

Instead of making arrests they took over the administration of violence. Two courageous earth sisters were rendered unconscious by wind pipe constriction and suffered torn neck and shoulder ligaments—one being kept in hospital for observation. Many others visited casualty, with barbed-wire cuts, bruises, muscle strain, and abrasions, charges are being brought.

Despite these tactics and heavy outnumbering the tribe succeeded in keeping machinery out of the enclosed area of the Dongas—From dawn until dusk, throwing their all into the blockade, oblivious to personal injury, risking their lives in one final effort to protect that beautiful piece of land, as if the very planet depended on it!

Dawn the next day saw 19 people who were left fit for the protest and 100 black-hats joining the yellow jackets. After attempts at a gate blockade were repelled by a wall of black-hats, physically and mentally numbed protesters wandered around the perimeter fence, watching the surreal massacre that followed. It was like watching a strange dream, by midday all the trees and scrub had been bulldozed, and the unturfed part of the ancient track-ways had been reduced to a huge field of chalk.

The only obstruction left was three trees, in the middle of the site occupied by the “never say die” tree sitting club. Huge clouds of smoke billowed over the site from the burning pile of murdered trees, as the bulldozers continued their work. The battle was lost…there were a lot of sad moments but our spirit was not broken. We gained insight and an overwhelming sense of unity. We also saw that other human beings were willing to go to any lengths to achieve their destructive aims…we must be

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strong…we must stand together…the Tribe lives on!
The Dongas are dead! Long live the Dongas Tribe!

What now?

Many, particularly the media, who like a nice, neat story, will see the move on the Dongas Camp as the closing act of the Twyford drama. They do not understand how precarious Tarmac's current position is. Prior to starting the Twyford contract, Tarmac lost millions when a contract collapsed in Swindon. That on top the general damage the recession has done them, forced Tarmac to beg for a £30 million hand out from the government. They have put in a £24 million bid for the Twyford contract, a third below its proper value, meaning any delay will push them into penalty clauses. The intervention of activists aside, there will certainly be such delays. They will have to cut chalk through Winter and attempt road building across the bottom of the Itchen Valley, which used to be a complex of water meadows meaning they are prone to turn into quagmires. This contract is set to run for two years and the political rationale for it-building infrastructure for European economic union-is looking more tenuous by the day as the Major administration wastes away. The battle for Twyford has not ended—it's beginning. With proper organisation and determination we can win this crunch battle with the road lobby. The implications of this victory will carry far beyond a small corner of Hampshire.

The events of 4th November show that we can stop work across Twyford using traditional tactics, given the numbers. 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—learn from their example. They don't hesitate to document violence against them and bring prosecution.

Obstruction on site needs to be coordinated and supported. The number of days' work lost is what counts in defeating Tarmac. Consequently, it's better we have a sixty-strong demonstration two days a week than one demonstration twice that size—that's overkill. Those on site should make sure that they take down full details of works ongoing and subcontractors involved.

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Consideration should also be given to those groups too far from Twyford shouldn't be confined to the Home Counties. To broaden it out nationally, every Tarmac and associated subcontractors office, depots and sites in the country should be targeted, (A list can be obtained from South Downs EF!). As subcontractors addresses become known, they should join the hit list, not least because they are more vulnerable to persuasion than the larger companies raping the down. Those that can't make it to Twyford on their day of the week must hit their local target instead. Solidarity actions are already ongoing against the DoT in London and ARC (who supply stone to Tarmac for Twyford) at Whatley Quarry in Somerset. Additional action against the Dean of Bristol University who also happens to run Winchester College are already in the pipeline.

Its urgent that people explore whether Tarmac or any other subcontractors use freepost addresses or freephone numbers- armchair activists across the country can cost them thousands, legally and from the comfort of their own homes. The possibility of phone, fax and telex blockades should also be explored.

There is another string to our bow, too. Tarmac have shown by their behavior on the 9th December that they don't care for the law and only understand money. Well, we can beat them at their own game on that one, cant we! There is no point in fighting with one arm tied behind our back. After all, Earth First! only respects natural laws. Every leaflet you produce could contain the information needed for a cell to wreak £10,000s of havoc against the contractors and even put smaller subcontractors out of business. If you feel so inspired, study eco-defense and the A.L.F. publications doing the rounds so you know how to do it what it takes. As every channel for negotiation now seems closed, ultimately the only way Tarmac are going to be stopped is by being destroyed.

No Compromise in Defense of Planet Earth!

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Trees for Life: The Amazon on our Doorstep *(from issue 2)*

Earlier this year, some EF!ers went to see Alan Watson at Trees for Life [TfL] in Scotland. He says:

> *Deforestation and loss of biological diversity are now global phenomena, and I believe it is vital for the world to have positive examples showing how the return of natural forests can help heal degraded lands…Trees for Life has been working since 1987 to restore the Caledonian forest in the Highlands of Scotland, one of the most biologically impoverished parts of the world, where only one percent of the original forest remains.*

Scotland is in the position now that the Amazon will be in in less than 100 years time (unless EF! and others can make a difference). The industrial system that was born in the British Isles began by razing its own environment to the ground, then moved further afield, poisoning the Americas, Asia, Africa, and so on. This is one of the beauties of the TfL project—it sets a global precedent for wilderness restoration and the rejection of civilisation, in the very place where industrialism originated.

Alan Watson has a strong commitment to the idea of wilderness. As an article in the *Independent* newspaper stated: his scheme has *no room for 'sustainable' woodland, worked and marketed for timber. When he says he wants a natural wilderness he means exactly that. No exploitation, just woods.* This is just the kind of vision we need in the badly-degraded and tamed British landscape, and with the return of the wildwood, the malignant, oppressive influence of modern-day society will progressively ebb away.

EF! in the U.S. has a slogan: *As wolves die, so does freedom.* The last wolf on these islands was killed in 1743. We have forgotten the meaning of freedom. With projects such as TfL we have a chance to remember.

Watson's plan is truly vast in scale; he is targetting a 600-square mile area of largely bare, roadless hills in the North-Central highlands, which happens to contain three of the best surviving forest remnants. Using these remnants as a nucleus,

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his ultimate aim is to reafforest 150,000 hectares, and when possible, to reintroduce the large mammal species that previously inhabited the area. This means that we could be seeing brother beaver, sister bear, wolf, lynx, and bison, return to these shores before long, thanks to the efforts of TfL and others. There is already talk of establishing a wolf pack on the Isle of Rhum, off the Western Coast of Scotland.

This is another important symbolic move—experts reckon that most of the large mammals with whom we share the planet will have been rendered extinct shortly into the next century. To reintroduce species shows that this trend is not inevitable or irresistible.

TfL are keen on the idea of earth repair work. An apparently irreversibly-damaged piece of land can be brought back from the brink. This shows that humanity can co-operate with nature instead of trying to dominate it, and that "nature bats last." No matter how hard the power junkies and business-beasts try, nature (meaning ordinary humans as well as other species) will ultimately overwhelm them and their tarmac.

EF! needs to widen what is at present a very narrow definition of direct action. One member of the TfL work party describes his experiences as follows,

> *my week in Glen Affric was wonderful because it made me realise that I, as an individual, could do something constructive to help heal our Earth. Not only could I do something, but that it was only through the efforts of everyone that changes happen.*

He took these lessons and applied them to other areas of his life. As a graphic designer, when asked to design a report for a temperate forest-destroying pulpmill in BC, he at first refused, and later resigned his job. His experiences can be summed up in that buzzword, "empowerment," a feeling familiar to many EF!ers. What TfL are doing is as much direct action as blockading an ICI plant or a bulldozer at Twyford Down. We need to recognise that we can help to actively heal the earth, as well as carrying out the essential work of stopping business and governments from wounding it further.

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What Can I Do?

We were amazed at the scale of destruction in the areas we looked at. We are all used to the idea of far-away places being ravaged deserts, but here is something on our own doorsteps that needs to be done. No more buying newsletters about death and destruction, here's some people doing direct action right here, and they need help. There are a series of nine work weeks in Glen Affric between March and June this year. Glen Affric is still a beautiful place to be, and if you can leave it better than you found it, then this could be a *real* example of that much abused non-word, eco-tourism. The work involves planting native Scots pine and other related tasks. If you can't make the time for this, you could support them by becoming a member, finding out more (so you can tell other people), and perhaps doing some fundraising.

There are many similarities between EF!'s outlook and that of Trees for Life. We thus urge all EF!ers to support them. You, as well as the Caledonian forest, will be the richer for it.

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A Letter from Scotland *(from issue 3)*

For those who are aware of the real history of Scotland, the consequences of the actions taken by the colonial administrators on the Scots are self evident. Individuals took advantage of the shattering of customary law to accrue power and influence for themselves at the expense of their own communities collective ownership and security. Traditions stood in the way of profits, so traditions were disregarded. Culture stood in the way of market extension because culture usually involved community ties, solidarity and reciprocity. The wholesale eviction of the indigenous population was then carried out with a blind economic totality and is still a matter touching our inner-most feelings. In this rough and ready article emphasis has been placed on the redefining of land as private property and then its transfer to an elite leading to the mass removal of whole communities for financial gain in a process which is alive today.

The phasing out of Scotland's culture was top priority as it offered a real challenge in the form of a viable, self-reliant and alternative way of life which wasn't massively wealthy, but did tend to protect the poor and regulate injustice. The elimination of the native systems, justified by perpetrators and apologists as improvements has been ignored by the education departments, whose task it is to condition a labour force of ignorant and eager consumers.

Private property has been legitimised through the imposition of Anglo law via the Scottish office. The poll tax and more recently the water privatisation issue serve to reveal the imposed structure of colonialism clearly.

The Scottish office play a leading role in the undermining of real democracy in Scotland but they are not alone. The powerful corporate bureaucracy of Strathclyde regional council along with the rest of the regions have shown no resistance to the imposition of poll tax. Instead they took on board the unpopular tax in co-operation with the Tories and have used all the powers at their disposal to enforce it, showing that they have virtually transferred their allegiance to the colonial regime. Strathclyde

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region have already been caught out buying water shares south of the border and meeting with prospective developers.

The people of Scotland are landless as a result of historic coercion into the capitalist labour force. Glasgow, historically a slave camp of the industrial era, doubling as a reservation for the dispossessed natives has been assimilated into the British capitalist system. For this relatively new economic order to be adopted by people, firstly their communal systems of land tenure had to be broken up to substitute with private ownership. Assimilation is ongoing and capitalist ideals are enshrined within schools and institutions for that purpose. Accounts of real history are smothered as a calculated act of policy. Defunct economic theory replaces free thought and the mercenary ideology continues to usurp native intelligence and morality.

The cost of this deception is very high and only those who are prepared to *DoD*ge their social/cultural integrity find themselves wealthy enough to insulate themselves from the crisis they are helping to create, be they aware of it or not. While a self-destructive and sociopathic business elite remain in the cockpit of the planet, locked into a suicidal doctrine of economic growth at all costs, our future will remain in the balance. Degradation of people and the environment is the price that must be paid on this path.

Yesterday the Caledonian forests fell to the speculators from the south, today from Amazonia to the Siberian forests, the seemingly unstoppable encroachment of market forces continues to wreak environmental havoc. Beyond third world debt and economic destruction and the sharpening division between rich and poor, the market logic now threatens the fundamental biological diversity on which life itself depends.

We now live in a world where we are acted upon globally, where decisions affecting our lives are made at levels so far removed from ordinary democratic practices that no citizen has a hope of influencing them. The power of transnational corporations (TNCs) and multinationals cannot be ignored.

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- Shell Oil's 1990 gross income ($132 billion) was more than the total GNP of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Zaire, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan combined. 500 million people inhabit these countries—nearly a tenth of the worlds human population.
- Cargill, the Canadian grain giant, alone controls 60% of the world trade in cereals.
- Just 13 corporations supply 80% of all cars; five of them sell half of all vehicles manufactured each year.

US corporations spend more than one million dollars annually on advertising. The average US citizen views 21,000 TV commercials a year. Control of the collective consciousness plays a vitally important role for the success of big business.

These corporations are the dominant force in our world. Disembodied from any one culture and any one environment, they owe no loyalty to any community, any government, or any people anywhere on Earth. These institutions, from the military to government departments and international agencies are driven by a desire to promote their own interests, to perpetuate themselves and increase their power and influence. Decisions are made not because they benefit the community or on environmental grounds but because they serve the institutions' particular vested interest.

Employees are similarly disembodied from the real world. When acting for the organisation, company loyalty takes priority over moral and cultural restraints that mediate the rest of their lives. The power wielded by these organisations is greater than that of many, if not all, governments and makes a mockery of certain countries claim to democracy. On the far flung frontiers of the developing world, governments and multinationals are forcing resettlement schemes pushing indigenous peoples off traditional lands, often backed up by the military as part of their assimilation policy, which aims to civilise tribal peoples. This development process frequently begins with widespread brutality and extermination and ends with forest lands being systematically destroyed and plundered for their natural resources.

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make sense of the increasingly complex situation we are in. Many don't give a damn and the present government—apart from a catalog of major disasters—generally reflects the desires of an ever more materialist society. Most people are busy fighting for a fairer slice of the capitalist cake and don't have much objection to the system itself but only to the way the cake is sliced. The socialists are telling rights. A fragment of non-feudal land on which we have traditionally known and cherished liberty.

Both socialism and capitalism are concerned with exploiting this planet and so cannot be supported by anyone who wishes to preserve the various ecosystems that make up our home. Socialism is an understandable reaction to a brutally unfair distribution of wealth but it is not enough—we must help recreate a system based on needs not greed.

For Scotland to go forward into a genuinely enlightened future we must prepare the ground by illuminating the present in the light of the past, ending the cultural curfew. These sentiments are not racist but pro-culture, based upon the principle that we can't fully understand or appreciate other cultures if we don't understand or appreciate our own. Real possibilities for positive change will take place if we shrug off our colonial status, breaking the chains of a system that has fatally undermined our local institutions and cultural patterns, which previously prevented one set of private interests within our society from monopolizing power and imposing its will on the community. We must shut the back door that has been opened to personal gain at the expense of the community's security, both social and environmental.

The challenge remains for local people to reclaim the political process and to reroot it back in the local community. For people to have inadequate information about their past and little means of acquiring it is a tragedy. It's vital that we fill in the information gap with an account of real history from our own uniquely Scottish perspective as opposed to the imperial chauvinism which usually passes as such.

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Twyford Diary-Part 2

Twyford Down has become a symbol of resistance, a training ground, a life changer, and a kick up the arse to the British green movement! Below is a brief chronology of events at Twyford since 22 March. The reports of actions dating from mid-February to March 22nd can be found in The Twyford Diary Part One—*DoD* Issue 2. To avoid security fuck ups mentions of monkey-wrenching will be limited to quotes from DoT affidavits. Action at Twyford may seem hectic but what I cannot put to text was one of the greatest things to come out of Twyford. That is the camp, the community.

The last diary finished off on March 20th with the Arch Druid of Wessex cursing companies at Twyford. This is a transcript of the conversion he had with Mr. Chapman, the Mott MacDonald officer, it is taken from DoT evidence in the Twyford 76 High Court case.

Druid—I will give you my title. This is an official message from the Arch Druid of Wessex, also a Bard of St. Catherine. This site has been declared officially a sacred site… We would like to inform you….that we have issued a curse against your company. This curse is not a curse against your workers; none of your workers need fear anything personal against them. It is not a death curse but your company will find it will lose money, your workers will lose their jobs, your equipment up here will start breaking down, and you will find this enterprise up here is a white elephant and this thing will not finish until you leave the landscape alone.

Mr. Chapman- wait a minute, we understand—I just want to make it clear whose authority has put this.

Druid—This authority is from the Order of St. Catherine who are responsible for the site up there. St. Catherines Hill and the environment around.

Mr. Chapman—Responsible for—and who declared this on the site as well then?

Druid—This is declared by the Council of British Druid Orders

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> which contains all the Druid Orders of the country including Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Manx, Brittany, and suchlike….I promise, you will find every one of you will be out of a job.

Over the next few months these words were in many ways to become true, as protest activity increased and equipment started breaking down.

22nd March

17 protesters hightailed it around the site causing much havoc, no work is done due to the combined effect of protester intervention and Mother Earth pouring fourth buckets.

23rd March

Ten people as above.

24th March

According to a DoT affidavit, "There was fairly substantial vandalism to Hockley bridge overnight". 22 people including a number of Nicaraguan activists, split into three groups and ran all over the site, *DoD*ging flying tackles from group 4. It was a half day and we caused a total of seventy five minutes down time.

25th March

It rained, no site work done.

26th March

We arrived 26 strong at 7:45am. How we managed to get up this early, god only knows! We succeeded in occupying one of the large excavators. Two group 4 men pushed an activist off the top of the digger arm 25 foot up, this resulted in a number of chipped ribs. After three attempts six protesters succeeded in stopping a smaller mechanical monster. The Hockley road was then blocked by a sympathetic driver while demonstrators swarmed onto the stranded digger caught in the middle of the road. Up the hill comes an assortment of vans and landies containing over 50 of our local constabulary. Hopelessly outnumbered and standing in a sea of black hats, most demonstrators leave the digger with two people locked to the arm. Two people are arrested on the small digger and by midday the remaining locked-on activists have been cut off by hydraulic bolt croppers. We then went down to what was the Dongas site and

which contains all the Druid Orders of the country including Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Manx, Brittany, and suchlike….I promise, you will find every one of you will be out of a job.
Over the next few months these words were in many ways to become true, as protest activity increased and equipment started breaking down.
22nd March
17 protesters hightailed it around the site causing much havoc, no work is done due to the combined effect of protester intervention and Mother Earth pouring fourth buckets.
23rd March
Ten people as above.
24th March
According to a DoT affidavit, "There was fairly substantial vandalism to Hockley bridge overnight". 22 people including a number of Nicaraguan activists, split into three groups and ran all over the site, *DoD*ging flying tackles from group 4. It was a half day and we caused a total of seventy five minutes down time.
25th March
It rained, no site work done.
26th March
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blockaded the entrance causing a tail back of three dumper trucks. Group 4 eventually got their act together and pulled us off the road. *The actual loss of production was four hours* (DoT affidavit). Police later arrested two demonstrators for Criminal Damage to batter rails—charges were not pressed.

March 27

Thirty of us once again spent the morning from 7:15 onwards stopping this and blockading that. As well as group 4 we were once again confronted with thirty police officers. Our numbers were a third of the opposition and due to this we were not as effective as the day before. During the protests there were six arrests including the co-editor of *The Ecologist* magazine. Five out of the six in the nick went on hunger strike. This lasted until after the court case three days later.

March 29

Ten minutes after midnight two people are caught by group 4 amongst the machines in the cutting. When the police arrived they found another two others hiding. None were equipped to cause criminal damage so they were released with cautions. The court case of the six arrested on the 27th resulted in them all getting unconditional bail. However one defendant was done for contempt of court—e.g. he punctuated the Tarmac laccies sentences with bleats.

April 3

Twenty-three of us arrived on the site at 7am, after stopping the work for a short while and after various hair raising events including the tipping of a dumper trucks full load of chalk onto an activists head, group 4 managed to get us off the site. A number of people then started to *Dance through an area of wet concrete which had just been laid.* This happened several times until a contractor kicked down one dancer and while two held him down, tried to hit him over the head with a spade. Luckily the demonstrator came off with a fair amount of bumps and bruises and nothing worse. On this action as on others a number of female activists were groped and had some articles of their clothing pulled off. This led to group 4 being nicknamed grope 4 and a recommendation that considering the violence of contractors, security, and

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police towards specifically female activists, we should not go onto the site in women only groups, or in groups under twenty.

A number of group 4, we are unaware of the figure, had by this time been injured. Injuries ranged from sprained knees, from slipping while trying to rugby tackle us, to more serious fractures. Whenever we tried to occupy a digger the drivers spun the shovels like psychopaths, none of us were hit but group 4 were not so lucky. Tarmac and the police have often cited these incidents to back up the idea that Twyford Activists are a violent mob. This is not true, we are not in any way responsible for the accidental injuries and deaths of DoT employees. It simply shows the idiocy of some security guards and the danger of putting macho men in charge of very big hunks of moving metal.

We sauntered home, rather disempowered. As we left the site the police arrived in force, immediately arrested three people for breach of bail conditions. At this time the courts were often giving out outrageous bail restrictions saying we couldn't go within an exclusion zone three miles long. This included the railway, the A33, and large parts of Winchester itself. They even banned us from going to St. Catherine's Hill. Of course we were still observed on site and figures were often seen in the trees of St. Catherine's.

April 4—16

For much of this period the sky opened up and our feet got muddy. This made the contractors' work impossible and once again Mother Earth did our job for us. For various reasons our numbers lowered, however the situation soon changed…

April 17

An overwhelming day of action attended by over 250 people, led into the cutting by David Gee (Ex-director of FoE). Media reports concerning rampaging mobs and security guards receiving fractured skulls were very imaginative and came originally from surprise, surprise the police. However back on the real world the consultative engineers in court evidence said *Two group four men received minor injuries in the scuffle.* Another DoT affidavit goes on to say:

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> *protesters rushed the line of group 4 guards who fell back to the position of the nearest machine. Another machine was overrun by protesters almost straight away. Group 4 fell back to the second machine in an attempt to keep it working. The protesters actions were very vigorous and within a short time (three minutes) one protester got onto the machines boom and this stopped work.*

No work was done in the cutting all that day and: *There was considerable damage done to machinery all taking place during the protest.* Tarmac claim that about a dozen machines were "seriously" damaged, some written off while others remained inoperative till May. Needless to say no one or nothing was caught.

April 19

About 10 of us occupied the Mott MacDonald office in Winchester. This and the previous raid/occupation, (see "Twyford Diary, part 1," page 1) was not only useful in that it disrupted work, but also in that it brought to light just how *DoD*gy they are. From *obtained* documentation we found that not satisfied with being one of the most hated Consultative engineers in Britain, they are also involved in building a logging road through the Venezuelan Rainforest, urban redevelopment in Jakarta (knocking down slum dwellings!), the horrendous World Bank Bangladeshi Flood Action Plan and they are even building a bypass around Bagdad!. Well, I think we can truly say BASTARDS! One minor was arrested for breach of the peace, e.g. being locked onto a radiator and singing, but was released six hours later with no charge.

April 20

We attended the opening of the nearby controversial M36 Salisbury Bypass Inquiry. One activist being infuriated with the actions of the Inspector did a sit in with his coat over his head to the chorus of *I am being muffled*, much to the outrage of the inspector who closed the inquiry for the day.

April 21 Second day of the Salisbury inquiry

Outside the hall where the Inquiry was being held was a riot van and a police landie. Inside a collection of sturdy Security men were making their presence known. Three of us were removed by police while trying to ensure a democratic Inquiry. Our

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April 22—23

It rained and rained and rained, I love the rain!

April 24

Environment Day at Winchester Cathedral. The protest camp set up stall. A large banner was hung saying “Has the environment had its day?” on scaffolding outside the cathedral, and some happy Twyford campers were subsequently chased around the grounds by Cathedral vergers.

April 28

Meeting with Ecover to discuss boycott

April 29

The request by the Department of Tarmac for an order to Injunct the Twyford 76 was adjourned as the judge ruled that the governments “case evidence was inadequate”. Much jigging outside the high court.

April 30

Beltain gathering of the tribes. 2-300 came to stay for the week-end. The gathering lasted all weekend, and was the first, (and unfortunately one of the only) free festies of the year. The greenwood was once again awoken.

May 1

Work was stopped on three sites by 150 people. According to a DoT affidavit:

> *At 8.45 hrs a group of protesters raided one of the small earth-moving 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 machine. At the time much of the detailed setting out of the structure in the area of the site was destroyed.*

The graffiti on the digger indicated that it was one of the cat 245’s only just back in service after the April 17. The driver of this digger the next week jacked in his job and moved to the Skye Bridge contract in an effort to escape “eco maniacs.” Bad

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location for an escape!

> *At 10:20 another group of protesters were at the top of the down and they then started to invade the site as they usually do until…the Blackwells foreman decided to park up the machines to prevent damage…There were many scuffles with protesters in the intervening time where they succeeded in partially stopping several machines…At 10:25 another group of 40-50 protesters went to the Bar End Bridge and succeeded in stopping all works for an hour or so until they started to walk up to join the other group on the top of Twyford Down. There were two machines damaged adjacent to the Bridge: a bulldozer and a grader.*

On the way to meet action group 2 we spotted dumper trucks whizzing here and there, and after a few minutes we managed to stop them. Then without warning one of the drivers revved up his engine and drove straight into a group of protesters, most jumped out of the way but two held their ground. Alex from Aire Valley EF! (Leeds), was knocked over by 17 tons of dumper truck and for 10 minutes or so had one of its tires on his chest, for a while we thought he was a gonna. An ambulance came & took him to hospital, amazingly he only sustained a sprained shoulder! Guess who's got the goddess on his side! He is pressing charges so if you were there, contact Aire Valley EF! NOW.

May 2

The festival of Fire—Another great day of celebration. It was however marred slightly by a couple of hundred police evicting the techno rave in the adjacent field. A very violent situation was narrowly avoided. The ravers after two days of dancing didn't have the energy to resist, so many a riot shield wielding policeman didn't get the fight they were so obviously looking forward too.

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This day turned out to be another bizarre one. Overnight two people had been arrested for criminal damage, for allegedly cutting down the fencing around the cutting. One of the activists was badly roughed up by group 4 while waiting for the police. The sun came up and the action began. We didn't need to take

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action against the main site at Olivers Battery as the ravers were still using the site as a carpark. Eager not to be out-staged two groups hit the cutting while a third allegedly hit the Compton site. In the words of yet another DoT affidavit, (staked they now reach a foot and a half):

> *9.30 hrs the first group were now moving up plague pits valley…Blackwells decided to suspend operations and move all plant at the top of the site down to the Hockley traffic lights, where they felt Group 4 could contain the trouble more easily. Unfortunately the protesters were too quick and succeeded in stopping one of the excavators…and preventing another from coming across…A second group of forty came onto the site and started to create problems. 10.00 hrs. The three large motorscrapers were parked up and the protesters tried to rush the larger excavators and there was a serious incident, when one Group 4 man was hit hard in the back by one of the excavators…He collided with another Group 4 man who was also injured.*

Howie who the police are busy framing with an assault charge on a site he wasn't even at: on April 17, was seen on the demonstration (a breach of his bail conditions), and, *two constables gave chase but he eluded them.* A car chase around the South of Hampshire then commenced. We believe the Tarmac Site Supervisor broke speed restrictions on numerous occasions! Tut tut. Howie however once again eluded them, Hurrah!

> *At 10.40 hrs the machines were parked up and left. At 11.00 hrs there were reports of damage to machinery at Compton by a group of people in 8 cars who stormed the area of the site when no work was in progress. They did a severe amount of damage to a medium excavator and to another medium excavator, a large road roller, a track shovel, and compacting plate. A large amount of setting out detail was also destroyed.*

Shortly after the time these incidence are alleged to have happened those who just happened to have been there were confronted by a horrific site. A quarter of a mile away and running towards us were 60 group 4, and coming down the opposite end of the road were about the same number of police.

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Now knowing that the Group 4 would almost definitely beat us up and the police only probably, we decided to run towards the police. We could not get the road due to a 20-foot metal sound barrier skiting down the side of the road. Our cars were nowhere to be seen as a crash had happened causing a massive tailback with our vehicles about half a mile away. About thirty seconds before we would have met with the police the jam cleared and our cars appeared. Two carloads raced off, resulting in more car chases but the police then blocked the road and six cars were left stranded, some even pushed onto the hard shoulder by police cars. The cars, the site, and everyone present were searched by the police, no tools were found. After all this was a bank holiday excursion of The Roadside Botanical Society. We were interested in the rare Yellow Cradwort, not horrible greasy monkey-wrenches. Two people were arrested under suspicion of criminal damage but were later released and the charges dropped. The whole fracas caused great inconvenience to many Mayday holidaymakers, *These incidence happened on the North bound carriageways of the A33, causing a large traffic jam in both directions for 45 minutes.* Oh dear!

May 4—21

Many EF! actions in other places, injunction hearings and gatherings etc. resulted in a drop of activity. The camp was also evicted by Ideal Homes and moved to an abandoned army camp nearby.

Greenfly, Market Gardens and the Pernicious Tarmac Weed

On 22 May an amazing overnight action took place at Twyford Down. In order to stop Tarmac the planet wreckers from building a massive construction bridge over the bypass (codenamed Operation Market Garden by the Dept. of Roads), 300 activists gathered at the protest camp that day for the counter operation-Operation Greenfly. There was an overwhelming sense of pessimism and helplessness as reccys had shown that Tarmac were preparing for battle by erecting razor wire barricades all around the site. Group 4, we learnt, had taken the precaution of hiring hundreds more guards and giving them instructions to use *more than usual force.* The police were there in large numbers and the

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situation looked pretty fucking scary.

Well, we worried, we work-shopped, we briefed, we painted our faces, gathered ourselves, and set off to get to the site before the bypass closed down for the night.

The procession of 200 activists looked amazing. Our courage and determination grew as we walked through the watermeadows towards the ready built bridge which was about to be pushed across the road. The next sequence of events is amazing and shows what a group of determined people can do. It surprised even the most experienced and seasoned of activists. We formed into a tortoise formation, linked arms and marched onto the site. Rope was tied onto the razor wire, it was pulled away, the other fence was pulled onto it and we stormed in, united. There was nothing Group 4 or the police could do! As Paul said; *We almost seemed to fly over the wire. It was as if we were carried.* The greenfly buzzed all over the 30 foot high, 200 foot long bridge, WOW WHAT A FEELING!

For five hours we held that bridge, drumming into the night, until the police had to call in reinforcements from all over the south to get us down. By 2am, there were in total 550 police and 320 group. There were 52 arrests for obstruction of the police and the whole action had been carried out, from our side, with an amazing lack of aggression. It was so empowering. About another 150 people had gathered on the other side of the razor wire, fires burned, and a man breathed fire. On the bridge it was Party time. Night fell, the road closed down, the arc lights roared into action.

A horrific event unfolded as one activist, while under arrest, was run over by a Tarmac tractor and fuel tank. The driver, laughing, parked up on the site road obstructing an ambulance from entering. Darren received serious injuries and was critical for a while. Darren's injuries included: a flailed left chest, (i.e. six multiply-broken ribs), a punctured and collapsed left lung, five pelvic fractures, a ruptured urethra, and a broken ankle. He remained in hospital for about a month and a half and was on crutches for longer.

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A bank of TV cameras and press photographers lapped up this spectacular action, there was live footage on TV. It was splashed all over the national press the next day.

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No major action happened at Twyford in this period. The time was taken up with a concoction of smaller actions, court cases and even an invasion of Tarmac's AGM in London on the 16th of June. There was a large Twyford contingent at Glastonbury festival, (a consumer hype if ever I saw one), who gave talks and direct action training all through the festival.

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Tarmac's injunction against 76 protesters was finally given the nod in the High Court only two days before a planned mass trespass of the work site. This injunction, and others that have appeared since, are near direct copies of the American S.L.A.P.P.s, (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), and as a legal precedent it brings situations into the fray that EF!ers in this country have not encountered before. Firstly, a possible stay in prison, for contempt of court, for all named injunctees who break the injunction. Secondly, all the injunctees become "jointly and severally liable," for all legal costs and damages. The DoT is intending to claim damages of £2 million, and theoretically under this injunction one injunctee who was on the site once could be held entirely responsible for the two million pounds the DoT is claiming. An appeal against the injunction has now been set up and is contactable via, David Plumstead, 0303-265737. (For more details of SLAPPS read "SLAPPS come to Britain," Sept/Oct 93 issue of *The Ecologist*).

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July 23

In the High Court, “the lord” Just-us Alliot, who had passed the injunction a month earlier, ruled that seven injunctees who had taken part in the Reclaiming the Land demo, were in contempt of court. He said in his summing up that there was one more important thing than nature and that is…the rule of Law! Well he would say that I suppose, being the law.

He sentenced them to 28 days in prison, (more than many wife beaters get!), and hereby created the biggest PR disaster the DoT had ever seen. There was condemnation against his decision from all sides and the prisoners, serving in Holloway (women) and Pentonville (Men), were visited by many notables. These including Carlo Ripa da Meana, the EC minister who resigned in rather suspicious circumstances, after initiating legal action against the English government over Twyford and Oxlees. The prisoners received much media coverage and about 50 letters of support a day from all around the world.

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up with them. Considering this and the likely spread of these injunctions we can expect many of us to be prisoners in the future. However, we must not let the government's intimidation tactics work.

The cutting at Twyford gets ever deeper and the down, the watermeadows and of course most of the Dongas are now destroyed, but its destruction has given birth to a movement and the fight goes on. The road is doomed. We invite all like minded folk to come to the M3 extensions opening ceremony next year with a pick axe, and we will dig this abomination up! But in the mean time.....Please show your anguish at the loss of this precious place, your solidarity with the injuncted protesters, and your commitment to fight earth rapists everywhere!

Lots of Love and no compromise, ever!!

Boudicca and Snufkin.

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News From the Autonomous Zones *(from issue 4)*

The Zone Protects its Own

So what has made the M11 Link Road such a cause celebre? Firstly, it has the advantage of being in London, close enough to embarrass Britain's politicians and catch the media's attention. Secondly it is a linchpin of the European Round Tables plans for economic euro-routes in Western Europe. By halting the road in London we can save woodlands, rivers & heathlands all the way to Newcastle, without endangering their ecology by having mud fights with hundreds of security guards and police in their midst.

The area threatened by the Link Road comprises two very different localities. At the Eastern end of the route is Wanstead, a reasonably affluent, conservative leafy-green London suburb. To the West are Leyton and Leytonstone, areas of high-density urban housing, built at the turn of the century, but badly neglected ever since the proposal for the Link Road first blighted the area forty years ago. To look at it now, you could be forgiven for thinking that the best thing for Leyton and Leytonstone would be to demolish them and grow a forest.

Overall management of the road-building project has been entrusted to WS Atkins Consulting Engineers. They have divided the road into four separate sections, each of which will be built by a different contractor. So far, only one of the four contracts has been awarded. Norwest Holst have now started work on "Contract 4" in Wanstead, since it is expected to take the longest time to complete. Our hope is that if Norwest Holst can be made to suffer both financially and in PR terms through their involvement in the Link Road, then it will become extremely difficult for the DoT to find three other construction companies who are daft enough to take the remaining contracts! "Contract 2" covers the crucial stretch through Leyton and Leytonstone; although advance preparation works (knocking down houses, or just damaging them enough to make them uninhabitable) are already underway there, the actual road-building contract will not now be awarded until August 1994. It was originally due to have *started* in January, so they are at least nine months behind

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The Start of the Action: 13th September: November 1, 1993

The first big event—a march along the route of the road—took place in mid-August 1993, with just one month to go before the start of the contract. The second event was on September 13, the day the bulldozers were due to arrive! Around 100 people were there to greet the contractors that day—needless to say, the contractors didn't dare to show up! So the protesters celebrated their first victory in the full glare of the national media, by reclaiming a vacant house which had been compulsory-purchased by the Department of Transport (DoT). By the end of the day, the house had its roof repaired, and was covered in banners. 1-0 to the campaigners!

Contractors Norwest Holst duly arrived the following morning, and immediately met with stiff opposition. Norwest Holst's first task was to clear a patch of woodland, which took them nearly three weeks, due to regular tree-sits, bulldozer lock-ons and other delaying tactics. On one day, forty men employed for a full day only managed to cut down four small trees!

Yet in other respects the campaign was not taking off as we might have hoped. The real challenge was (and still is) to find enough people willing to occupy the many houses which the DoT has already purchased and left vacant along the route. Generally the houses are structurally sound, although several have had their first-floor ceilings knocked out, with the aim of making them uninhabitable. The campaign has held a number of house-rebuilding days, in an effort to tempt more squatters to come and live in what can otherwise be fairly unpleasant conditions. Other houses have been barricaded, and we have already had some success in resisting evictions. But the DoT has now accelerated its efforts to destroy the houses.

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they assumed that their tree was safe. What they were not told was that the tunnel was only a shallow cut and cover tunnel, and that the tree would have to be cut down to allow it to be built. On Tuesday 2nd November, Norwest Holst started to put up wooden hoardings around the chestnut tree. Local people were horrified, especially the children who, for the rest of that week, came out from school as often as they could, and lay down in the way of the contractors to stop them putting up the fences. By Saturday 6th November they had finally completed the fencing, just in time to prevent us from holding a planned "Tree Dressing" ceremony. Several hundred local people, furious at this, came out that day and tore the fences down again! Suddenly, the campaign had found a focus and a symbol—local support, which had so far been dormant, now sprang into life!

The next day, a local nursery donated a number of plants, and the children created a Peace Garden in the shadow of the tree, bearing the words "Save the World." A tree-house was built in the branches of the chestnut tree. A bender was set up beside the tree, and for the following month, the camp fire became a focal point for the campaign. Local people, including grandmothers and children, came down to George Green each night, bringing food for the tree-dwellers. People from different backgrounds began to get to know one another; professional people, retired people, and Twyford Down veterans spent long evenings together, talking, forming new friendships, exchanging ideas about roads, the environment, consumerism, life, the universe and everything….Something new and beautiful had been created in the community. Many local people talk of their lives having been completely changed by the experience.

Word of the George Green Chestnut Tree spread via a small article in the Guardian newspaper. Two days later, the postman delivered a letter addressed to the Chestnut Tree itself! One of the campaign's solicitors immediately seized on this to argue in the law courts that the tree-house should be formally recognized as a dwelling! The strategy worked, the tree-house had made legal history, and hundreds more letters started to pour in from all around the country! The DoT now had to apply for a court

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Actions continued sporadically, but in practice Norwest Holst were hardly managing to do any work worth stopping! On Tuesday November 30, a crane arrived to start digging the entrance to the tunnel a few yards up the road from George Green. At midday, two protesters evaded the security guards, climbed to the top of the crane, and "locked on" with bike locks 30 metres above the road below! The contractors attempted to remove them with fire engines, high hoists, hydraulic bolt-cutters—but nothing could bring them down! They stayed up until after work had finished at 6pm that evening, before descending voluntarily.

A more sinister development occurred in the early hours of Friday morning, December 3. Protesters were subjected to two attacks within 20 minutes of one another, at different places on the route. The first took place in Claremont Road, a threatened street in Leyton which houses a number of protesters and other squatters. At 1:00am, two men passed down the street, one driving slowly in a car, the other walking beside him, smashing through the window of every parked vehicle in sight. Twenty minutes later, six men struck at Wanstead. They poured petrol over the tree and the bender, and threw a Molotov inside the bender for good measure. Protesters were asleep in both the bender and the tree itself. It is very fortunate that only one protester suffered slight burns—the attackers' intentions were clearly *murderous*. Police arrested two people caught escaping the area, and charged them with "arson with intent to endanger life." We always knew that roads were built, not for the good of the public, but to suit the interests of the roads lobby. This attack shows just how deeply entrenched those vested interests are, and the extent to which they are prepared to go to defend their interests, once threatened.

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Black And Blue Tuesday: December 7

By early December, rumors began to circulate of a major police operation to evict the tree-dwelling, and it soon became clear that the rumors were serious. Within 24 hours phone calls had gone out to people all around the country. On Monday evening, 6th December, about 150 people gathered for an all-night vigil around the base of the tree. Many more people arrived during the early hours of the following morning. One group locked themselves into a ring around the tree trunk, with their arms linked by steel tubing; others climbed up into the tree itself. As predicted, about 400 police officers arrived at 5am that morning, and immediately started to clear people out of the way from around the base of the tree. Pensioners were dragged away without warning, one had his face punched, smashing his glasses. Another protester had his foot broken when it was deliberately stamped on by a policeman. The police used pressure points extensively whilst removing them. After about an hour of scuffles, the police had the tree surrounded, and started to bring in reinforcements to cordon it off. At 11am a cherry picker (a high hoist hydraulic platform) arrived to remove protesters from the tree itself[1]. People lay in the road blocking its path, and were again dragged away by the police. At one point the cherry picker became stuck in the mud as it approached the tree; one security guard and one demonstrator were injured as it attempted to free itself. One tree occupant managed to climb onto the arm of the cherry picker, and locked himself to it with handcuffs.

Eventually they demolished the tree after nine hours and a police operation that cost £100,000. It had forced the DoT to humiliate itself in a very public manner. Virtually all the national newspapers carried reports and photographs of the incident—in many cases on the front page. The loss of the tree was a tragic day, and yet also a truly wonderful day. It had hammered another huge nail into the coffin of the DoT's roads programme.

Soon afterwards, local families gathered for a march through central London to the Department of Transport's offices in Westminster. A nine year old boy presented the DoT with a young sweet chestnut tree, and requested that Roads Minister

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Wanstonia

A long Christmas break in the construction industry gave the campaign some time to recover our energy. But it was soon clear that a new threat was looming. On December 30 the DoT served notices to quit on the tenants of a row of large Edwardian houses next to George Green itself. These houses included the homes of Patsy Braga and Mike Edwards, two local anti-road campaigners; another of the houses had been colonized by the campaign in October, for use as a direct action centre! So at the start of 1994, these houses officially became squats. The campaign needed to do something dramatic to make a big issue of these houses. On Sunday January 9, with the threat that the houses could be demolished immediately after a High Court hearing the following Thursday, a meeting of the inhabitants and other local people decided that they would make a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from the UK, and set up the "Independent Free Area of Wanstonia." The campaign's solicitors wrote to the Foreign Office to advise them of our intentions & a Declaration of Independence was drawn up. The outcome of the High Court case was unexpectedly favorable; one house was reprieved completely (forcing the DoT to go back to square one), and a stay of execution was granted on the others.

Actions, Actions and Yet More Actions

Meanwhile outside the Free Area on January 10. the contractors returned from a long Christmas and New year holiday. Activists tree-sat threatened trees and there was much chainsaw diving—including one activist head-butting a working chainsaw while wearing a crash helmet. This went on for a number of days. On the 20th, 20 Wanstonians blockaded a pile driver being driven onto the construction site at Wansted Green and were met with 50 Territorial Support Group with police dogs—one happily wielding his truncheon.

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turned up for a day of action on January 22, shifting gear into the offensive. Fort Norwest-Holst was held siege for an entire day, with the formidable defenses breached on several dramatic occasions, (even if the grappling hook proved over-ambitious!). The security excelled themselves again, old Andy "Chipped Tooth" got so excited he had to be revived with the old "paper bag over the head routine" (apparently it is a recognized first aid technique!). Many of the other guards smashed their own computers in the furore. By the end of the day, the main site on Cambridge Park Road was without security cameras, electricity, or an intact set of blueprints.

Leytonstonia established

On the same day, (January 25), as the government published four greenwash reports on sustainable eco-rape, tree surgeons arrived to chainsaw down a copse of Yew, Oak, and Holly trees in Leytonstone. Opening the gates they were surprised to find their work site turned into a camp site of assorted benders and tree hammocks. Police arrived to evict trespassers but realized that the protesters had legal possession of the land. *If you want to remove my clients you will have to go through the court!* smirked a campaign solicitor to a disgruntled police officer. Nearly the whole of the street was by now under the control of the campaigners and Fillebrooke Road is declared independent. Long live the Autonomous Free Area of Leytonstonia!

Bash Wednesday

Direct action slowed down in preparation for the upcoming eviction of Wanstonia and we concentrated on digging ditches and erecting barricades. We didn't have to wait long, the big day came on Ash Wednesday, now renamed Bash Wednesday, and what a surreal day it turned out to be. Far too surreal, in fact, for this scribe so I will leave it to of all people- The Daily Telegraph.

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The battle of Wansted began at dawn yesterday when police

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officers taking part in Operation Barnard converged on what protesters had dubbed, "The Independent Free Area of Wanstonia." In their attempt to stop the M11 link road, the protesters had called on the foreign office and the United Nations to recognize the row of Edwardian houses they had occupied as an independent country. Both appeals were rebuffed and they found themselves in breach of court orders requiring them to leave. They refused and the court officials prepared to move in, backed by uniformed officers and units of the Territorial Support Group,[2] who are specialists in public order confrontations, detectives from the area major investigation team, and a small number of horseman. Police detailed to enter the occupied properties had protective clothing and riot helmets... By 6am, the houses had been filled with protesters who were waiting with a mix of apprehension and good humor. Some sang folksy protest songs and one even rang the police station complaining that he was cold and asking them to hurry up. The police arrived in a procession of coaches an hour later.... officers stopped traffic, sealed off the area, and made way for the court officials to attack the barricaded front doors with sledgehammers. Once inside the properties, officers worked their way up, systematically clearing each room and ejecting the occupants to behind a cordon of 200 yards away. Protesters used a variety of tactics. Two were chained together through a hole in the chimney breast. Another two were handcuffed to an old spin dryer with cement. When the upper and lower floors of the houses had been sealed, the police turned their attention to the roofs. Initial attempts to lift protesters off using one cherry picker crane were unsuccessful; but officers had more success using two cranes. As each house and roof was cleared, the properties were demolished by mechanical diggers, filling the air with choking dust. A handful of demonstrators who had occupied a tree in front of one of the properties was cleared last. By then, the officials were working under lights. Demonstrators appeared demoralized, but said they were planning new occupations on another part of the route in nearby Leytonstone. "It has taken them

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Wanstonia Rising

Just when they thought they'd smashed Wanstonia up it pops again, only 500 yards down from where the Chestnut grew. An empty tobacconist due for eviction was squatted and turned into a drop in centre for the campaign. On the following Monday Squibb & Davies the demolition men illegally entered hitting protesters with sledge hammers. After re-enforcement's of protesters arrived they left, the same rigmarole happens a couple of days later, but the protest regained occupancy. After a few weeks of occupation the contractors smashed apart Wanstonia Rising, but within days a new house was squatted, Wantonia Rising 2. At the time of writing Wanstonia is still Rising, Leytonstonia is still awaiting attack with a 24-hour watch on guard and more houses are coming under our control daily.

Beware the Ides of March

And that is where Operation Roadblock came in. With the new Criminal Justice Bill imminent, and lets face it, minor amendments aside, imminent is the word, and with the roads programme virtually on its knees, (which it is), we have no choice but to go big time with the current campaigns. Operation Roadblock was planned to form a national rota of activists and get 100 people per day to the M11 for at least a month, starting from March 15, which is of course the Ides of March when Julias Caesar got stabbed—the beginning of the end of the last great road building empire. Operation Roadblock switched the campaign once again on to the offensive. No longer would the state decide the agenda, 1,200 people over one month took part in direct action, digger diving, and all that jazz. Using a rota system

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turned out to be a very effective means of mobilizing people—a model for other protests maybe? Operation Roadblock 2 is on the horizon as well as the ambiguous sounding Operation Liquidate. So come down to the Autonomous Zones and experience some peaceful urban warfare.

-Written by a *DoD*gy group of shady characters including Roger Geffin, Secret Squirrel, and Yellow Pinky.

On closer examination we find that trees perform many more offices in relation to the soil than that of merely pegging it down. By virtue of cooling the air and spraying the sky and multiplying the clouds they exert considerate influence upon the fall and distribution of rain; by virtue of sponging the earth around their feet they enormously influence the behavior of floods, the discipline of rivers, the supply of springs, the health of fish;...and by the virtue of their power to suck up moisture by the ton they dry the swamps and control the malarial mosquitoes. Forests are much more than meets the eye. They arc fountains. They are oceans. They are pipes. They are dams. Their work ramifies through the whole economy of nature.

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Footnotes

1) It may seem strange that it took the contractors so long to get a cherry picker to the tree, however this can be explained quite simply. The contractors fearing that monkey-wrenchers would be in the area, put their cherry picker under 24 hour guard, and being completely paranoid hired another and hid it down the road in a school car park. According to sources in Norwest Holst there fears were realized and despite the guards the Hydraulic Platform started to fall apart when they attempted to move it. Without hesitation they drove down to their 'secret* backup platform only to find it WRENCHED! Cherry pickers are rather sparse in East London, especially for companies who have a reputation for "not looking after hired machinery". Do or Die, of course condemns all acts of illegality!
2) The Territorial Support Group are highly trained police units only used in times of public 'disorder'. Originally named the SPG (Special Patrol Groups), they changed name a couple of years back after a number of embarrassing instances. One involved a baker who was driving his mini to work, unfortunately for him he passed a SPG unit who mistook him for an escaped kidnapper and immediately shot him dead leaving his car careering into others at a roundabout. Numerous occasions of black lads finding themselves bleeding in the gutter after encountering the SPG also surfaced. The SPG now with a very dirty public record disbanded and a day later the TSG was formed- with nearly exactly the same employees. All in all not a nice bunch.

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Biodiversity and the British Isles *(from issue 4)*

Species loss like many ecological issues has entered this island's mass psychology while remaining fundamentally misunderstood. Obscured by a haze of large numbers and strange sights, species loss is seen as something solely in relation to rainforest, pandas, and David Attenburgh talking of brightly colored fungi. Biodiversity is seen as something distant, something separate from day to day life. Something foreign, which has no relation to our "green & pleasant land."

Biodiversity is the expression of healthy ecology. It may seem distant to these Isles because these Isles are *sick*. It has been said that civilised man walks the earth leaving deserts in his footprints. As the frontiers of this civilization opened up, so the cedars of Lebanon and the Broadleaf forests of this island were trampled underfoot. With the great forests all but destroyed the soils of Lebanon eroded, and washed and blew away. Thanks to this island's mild temperate climate, its fate was to remain a different kind of desert. A desert of ploughed fields, of a thousand swaying barley stalks. Soon the last sizable remnants of the great forests were slashed, to provide timber for the growing naval machine, to undermine the free who still lived in the forest and to build the new cities and bring more money into the government coffers. All that was left was a spiderweb-like network of hedges and tree lines, draped over an otherwise barren landscape; acting as corridors between, with little exception, small managed woodland. The very symbol of the concept that destroyed the land, *property*, became the final refuge of diversity. With the advent of agri-business, even the hedges are now being destroyed and the diversity of crop species is decreasing. In short this island's eco-system has been devastated.

> *Since 1945 the UK has lost 30% of its rough grazing land, 65% of song thrushes, 90% of meadows, 50% of lowland woodlands, heaths and fens and 140,000 miles of hedgerow. 80 commons have been deregulated.*
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You would think then that biodiversity would be the environmental movement's main priority, but no. Most local groups involved in stopping new developments, (roads, supermarkets etc.), are more likely to talk about damage to landscape than damage to ecology. To oppose a cutting soley because it destroys a hill fort or the view, rather than because it trashes an ancient woodland or destroys 2,000 year old badger sets is yet more anthropocentric rubbish.

We live in what is mostly an ecological catastrophe. An anatomy diagram is beautiful, but is nevertheless a dead body. The summer lushness of pasture land is deceptive, after all, the lawns at Wimbledon are green but not particularly healthy. We must start to talk of life, of biodiversity. We must change the way we think about the country. You cannot escape urbanism in the countryside, today's countryside is, on the whole, an extension of urbanism. The dominant interaction in the country is, as in cities, the oppression and degradation of eco-sytems by civilised man. We must understand the land's ecology and take further action against those who destroy its remaining diversity, for if we don't, soon there will be nothing but man and his creations.

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An Open Letter to the Minister for Transport
(from issue 5)

I do not want to encourage day-dreaming, we are in a world of practical realities... —Brian Mawinney, Minister for Transport[1]

My people shall never work. Those who work can not dream, and wisdom comes to us in dreams.

— Smohalla, Native American, 1887

Be Realistic—Demand the Impossible!

graffiti, Paris May '68

Mr. Mawinney- Welcome to the Nightmare.
After three years of sustained direct action against road building you wish us to sit down at the negotiation table, to be civil and polite to the very same people who have sent riot police, security guards, spies and infiltrators to destroy us. You called for a *ceasefire in the sterile feuding over transport issues*, a *fresh start... [a] move back to properly informed, rational argument, with respect for opposing views, in a manner more fitting to the democratic traditions of our country.*[1] You issued this call on the 7th of December, exactly one year after the eviction and destruction of the Chestnut Tree at the M11. It took the DoT over 400 cops and 200 security to take the land and that wasn't the end of it, things for the govt only got worse. Daily site invasions, numerous acts of sabotage; no wonder you want us to sit and talk- when we're talking we're not fighting.

Let's pretend for a moment that we could suppress our feelings of nausea and rage and sit down to negotiate; what in fact could you offer us? The end of the industrial system—can you offer us that? An end to the assault against the life support systems of the earth, a society within nature, a life where only our passions and desires rule, an earth alive; can you offer us that? Of course not!

What *can* you offer us-A "rational reasoned debate on

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What *can* you offer us-A "rational reasoned debate on

transport"? Why should we debate, we know what you are going to say, you've said it countless times before, we are bored of listening. The modern ecology movement is over 30 years old; in the bowels of your office there is a whole forest of reports on the ecological stupidity of what you are doing, you know the situation. Capitalism—and its petrochemical/car making economy—must keep moving. The need for transport infrastructural development is the need of the multinational corporations. The economy, (both nationally and internationally), must expand or die. We have consistently argued that to build more infrastructure simply creates more traffic, that as greater capacity is produced it is filled. More roads = more cars = more roads = more cars, a disastrous spiral down into ecological collapse. You must maintain the demand for cars and petrochemical byproducts as an end in itself. You must preside over the ever increasing centralization of production and consumption—with the lorry on the motorway as the rolling warehouse—making it progressively more difficult to get by in this society without a car. None of this worries you of course, what we call a disastrous spiral you call economic growth. What worries you is the short term survival of the economy. Congestion is what worries you.

What is congestion? On the whole simply the process of earth destruction slowed down by its own mass. Every morning hundreds of commuters arrive late for work, contracts are broken and goods delivered late- all because of the jam. The CBI estimated it costs the economy around £15 Billion a year. Are we meant to feel distressed about this? Do you really expect us to sit down and work out solutions for *your* problems? We want no more roads but we also know that the need for most journeys is the need of those we oppose. We are not about to start doing your research for you, we are not going to let *your* needs monopolise *our* imaginations. We have better things to do, defending the earth, building communities, growing our carrots and dancing!

You illustrate your ignorance of natural processes very well with your request for a ceasefire and debate. This nation state owes a massive carbon debt to nature, and apparently is committed to adding to this crisis through its pathetic "reduction of emissions to

transport"? Why should we debate, we know what you are going to say, you've said it countless times before, we are bored of listening. The modern ecology movement is over 30 years old; in the bowels of your office there is a whole forest of reports on the ecological stupidity of what you are doing, you know the situation. Capitalism—and its petrochemical/car making economy—must keep moving. The need for transport infrastructural development is the need of the multinational corporations. The economy, (both nationally and internationally), must expand or die. We have consistently argued that to build more infrastructure simply creates more traffic, that as greater capacity is produced it is filled. More roads = more cars = more roads = more cars, a disastrous spiral down into ecological collapse. You must maintain the demand for cars and petrochemical byproducts as an end in itself. You must preside over the ever increasing centralization of production and consumption—with the lorry on the motorway as the rolling warehouse—making it progressively more difficult to get by in this society without a car. None of this worries you of course, what we call a disastrous spiral you call economic growth. What worries you is the short term survival of the economy. Congestion is what worries you.

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1990 levels by the year 2000" programme. On the basis of your efforts so far it appears you will not even meet this dismal target! You can try to negotiate with us but how do you plan to "negotiate" with nature—with the nature that is going to flood your petty parliament and destroy your fragile economy as global warming—or any number of impending environmental catastrophes—come home to roost. You have nothing to offer nature—as an ecological cretin you don't even know what to say. The earth's carbon cycle now demands the elimination of fossil fuel use and the massive reafforestation of the British Isles and the earth—in other words, the extinction of your civilisation and the resurgence of our culture. That is the ecological reality—your "political realities," your "reasoned debate'" is an *absolute* irrelevance.

In short in return for us climbing off our barricades, destroying our emerging communities and halting *real* resistance, you are willing to hold a debate we have already had and make a decision that we are already forcing you into making. If that were not bad enough we would resign ourselves forever to be in effect a capitalist think tank whose aim would be the smooth running of this genocidal, ecocidal system. Well thanks, but no thanks! We will never join you. To negotiate is to already accept the death of nature. The society which you represent is a constant war against the earth. A ceasefire is the putting down of weapons on both sides. You are not about to put down the weapons with which you fight, not the truncheons, not the factories. There will only be a ceasefire, there will only be *real* peace when the earth is purged of institutions like that of which you are presently a part.

Brian, why not dance the forbidden dance, rediscover your humanity, rediscover your wildness, throw all your files out of the window, burn down your office, smash up your TV, break free, and join us, for we will never join you!

Yours with love,

—Some @nonymous digger diving agitators

We received a copy of this letter anonymously- it was, we are told, sent to Brian Mawinney's private fax number. Just as we were going to print, he was elevated (maybe the wrong word to

use) to the post of Chairman of the Tory party. During his stay as Minister for Transport some activists took his “great transport debate” to mean that it was time for us to stop saying no all the time and put forward practical solutions to his society’s problems- this was often called ironically, “setting our own agenda.” In the last couple of hours of his post at the DoT nice Mr. Mawinney announced that the Newbury by-pass would go ahead. He may think that he had the last laugh but Brian, we know where you live! It matters little who the minister is, an individual in these cases is merely the role he plays out, therefore this letter equally applies to the new minister. --Eds (allegedly)

1 DoT Press Notice #471, 7.12.94

Dear Nora,
Motorway flyover, superstores, shitty yuppie development- we don't need them and here's how
to stop them.
Fast: Sneak onto building site and dump icing sugar into cement mixers, bags of sand etc. This stops the cement setting.
Slow: Do the same as above, except using rock salt (available in bulk from road gritting bins). Rain will wash the crystals out of the set cement eventually, so weakening it. When the construction is finished, anonymously contact the local planning office and tell them that Elves have been at work. The development will have to be pulled down again as structurally unsound.
Often the threat of salting is enough to make developers back off. Sweetening cement is usually a good final warning if you are inclined to give one.

Flo and flying Listards
from *DoD* #2

use) to the post of Chairman of the Tory party. During his stay as Minister for Transport some activists took his “great transport debate” to mean that it was time for us to stop saying no all the time and put forward practical solutions to his society’s problems- this was often called ironically, “setting our own agenda.” In the last couple of hours of his post at the DoT nice Mr. Mawinney announced that the Newbury by-pass would go ahead. He may think that he had the last laugh but Brian, we know where you live! It matters little who the minister is, an individual in these cases is merely the role he plays out, therefore this letter equally applies to the new minister. --Eds (allegedly)

1 DoT Press Notice #471, 7.12.94

Dear Nora,
Motorway flyover, superstores, shitty yuppie development- we don't need them and here's how
to stop them.
Fast: Sneak onto building site and dump icing sugar into cement mixers, bags of sand etc. This stops the cement setting.
Slow: Do the same as above, except using rock salt (available in bulk from road gritting bins). Rain will wash the crystals out of the set cement eventually, so weakening it. When the construction is finished, anonymously contact the local planning office and tell them that Elves have been at work. The development will have to be pulled down again as structurally unsound.
Often the threat of salting is enough to make developers back off. Sweetening cement is usually a good final warning if you are inclined to give one.

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...One day's exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books.
—John Muir, (1838-1914)

A Review *(from issue 5)*
by John C. Stauber

Going Green: How To Communicate
Your Company's Environmental Commitment
by E. Bruce Harrison

More than any other author Rachel Carson is credited with giving birth to popular ecological awareness. *Silent Spring*, her bombshell 1962 bestseller, gave a dramatic, prophetic, and factual account of massive agrichemical poisoning. Written with the goal of shocking the public, government and industry into action, it sowed seeds of consciousness that burst forth eight years later when millions of people demonstrated in the streets on the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

Now PR executive E. Bruce Harrison, who led the fight to silence *Silent Spring*, has written his own book, a how-to guide entitled *Going Green: How to Communicate Your Company's Environmental Commitment.*

Harrison's commitment began when, at age 30, he was appointed Manager of Environmental Information for the manufacturers of agricultural pesticides and other poisons, and assigned to coordinate and conduct the industry's attack against *Silent Spring*. They hit back with the PR equivalent of a prolonged carpet bombing campaign. No expense was spared in defending the fledgeling agrochemical industry and its 300 million dollars per year in sales of DDT and other toxins. The national Agricultural Chemical Association doubled its PR budget and distributed thousands of book reviews trashing *Silent Spring*.

Along the way, they pioneered environmental PR crisis

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syndicated from the *Earth First! Journal Mabon* 1994
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Rachel Carson succumbed to cancer on April 14,1964, never seeing herself vindicated. Due in part to Harrison's PR work, the warnings of *Silent Spring* have never been adequately understood or heeded. Today agrochemical contamination of soil, air, water, animals, and people is one of the most ubiquitous and difficult environmental health disasters we face.

Harrison, however, is alive and thriving. In 1973, he and his wife established their own PR company, drawing in clients such as Monsanto and Dow Chemical, who were among the sponsors of the campaign against *Silent Spring*. The PR trade publication Inside PR named him as its 1993 PR All Star, stating that by writing Going Green he had *confirmed his status as the leading [PR] thinker on environmental issues* and as a continuing *pioneer in the field.*

The E.Bruce Harrison Company has offices in Washington DC, Dallas, Austin, New York, and San Francisco, and recently opened a new office in Brussels that will, in the words of *Inside PR, help its transnational clients work through the complexity* of Europe's new environmental regulations. The company employs more than 50 staff and does 6 million dollars' worth of business annually for about 80 of the world's largest corporations and associations, including Coors [notoriously right-wing US brewing giant], Clorox, RJ Reynolds, the American Medical Association, and Vista Chemical.

Harrison's clients include the "wise use" [American term for groups campaigning for GREATER environmental destruction—often funded by industry] Global Climate Coalition (which opposes environmental action to prevent global warming), and the Coalition for Vehicle Choice (which opposes emission-control regulations for automobile manufacturers). He even receives taxpayer funding from one of his clients, the US government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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In *Going Green*, Harrison shares some of his perspective and methods. The book includes self-promotional chapters in which he discretely brags of the PR greenwashing successes that he has arranged for clients such as Uniroyal, General Motors, Cosmair, and Zoecon. Of course, he doesn't use the word greenwashing. The text is filled with environmentally-correct sounding jargon that makes for clumsy reading. The phrase he uses to describe his PR work, for example is "sustainable communications."

In *Going Green*, Harrison declares that environmental activism has died and that its death presents corporations with a tremendous opportunity to define and dominate the future of environmentalism in the name of "sustainable development" by which he means corporate business-as-usual, made palatable for the public through "sustainable communications."

Who or what killed environmental activism? According to Harrison, the *activist movement that began in the early 1960s, roughly when the use of pesticides was attacked in the book* Silent Sprint *succumbed to success over a period roughly covering the last 15 years.* Since the first Earth Day in 1970, he argues, ecological activism has been transforming itself from a grassroots movement into dozens of professionally-run, competitive, non-profit businesses, epitomized by groups like the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

Going Green says that today's environmental groups are first and foremost business ventures run by managers. Groups like EDF are tax-exempt, customer-based firms primarily concerned with fund-raising and maintaining a respectable public image. This preoccupation with funding and respectability makes them willing to sit down with industry and cut deals in which their main concern is their own financial bottom line. In Harrisons's words, to *stay in the greening business*, the goal of environmental groups *is not to green, but to ensure the werewithal that enable it to look green.*

Everywhere he looks, Harrison sees the rise of pro-corporate environmentalism and the demise of grassroots eco-activism. Especially since the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil, *corporate environmentalism is now more lively than external activist environ-*

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mentalism, and this trend will continue to grow. [On the subject of the Earth Summit, the larger green groups were cleverly coopted by according them some sort of insider status—access to the hallowed portals of power at last!—designating them as "NGOs" and allotting them a place at the conference table with the big boys. They were even allowed to stay up late! This sort of thing is the illusion of influence. A joke now doing the rounds amongst the more cynical activists in the US states that corporate boardrooms now feature nine white men, a woman (suitably power dressed, no doubt), a black person, and an environmentalist.]

This opens the door to tremendous opportunities for Harrison's corporate and government clients, whom he assists in building issue coalitions and alliances with carefully chosen environmentalists ready to reap mutual business benefits.

As an example, Harrison points to the partnership between McDonald's and the Environmental Defense Fund. *In the late 1980s, the company slipped into its worst sales slump ever—and the anti-McDonald's drive of the green movement was at least partly blamed. [EDF's Executive Directer] Krupp saw the golden arches of McDonald's, the nation's fast food marketing king, as a sign of opportunity…Krupp was ready to deal, and so was McDonald's.*"

Harrison is quite happy that the professional environmental establishment is rejecting the tactics of community organizing, street demonstrations, and noisy conflicts with industry. Ironically the unseemly confrontational tactics that the eco-professionals scorn are acknowledged by Harrison to be the main impetus for any real ecological reform.

In *Going Green*, Harrison observes that *Greening and the public policy impact of greenism are being propelled by what I refer to as the 'AMP syndrome'—a synergy of Activists + Media + Politicians. Activists stir up conflict, naming 'victims' (various people or public sectors) and 'villains' (very often, business interests). The news media respond to conflict and publicize it. Politicians respond to media and issues, moving to protect 'victims' and punish 'villains' with legislative and regulatory actions.*

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businesses *what to do when you're attacked by an activist group.* He first suggests hiring a private detective to investigate the activists [Bray's, McLibel, anyone?]—making sure, of course, not to get caught. But strategic co-optation remains his primary strategy for achieving "sustainable communications." [What are the new Department of Transport 'conflict resolution' roundtables if not a device for "strategic co-optation"?]

> *Remember that your organization and the green action group are quite similar when it comes to management goals," Harrison advises. "You're both trying to create customers... The [activist] group must be publicly observed in action, on behalf of a cause that has appeal to potential customer-publics Offer to meet with them...Your task is to try and deflate their balloon and to get direct information about what's motivating them, how serious they are, who they are, what they will consider 'success'...Be friendly. Politely put off giving more direct information. Offer to meet with them again. As long as you are talking, you may not be fighting. [And as has been said, it is the 'fighting' they really dislike—e.g. Brian Mawhinney's plaintive requests for a 'ceasefire'.] Maybe you can come up with multiple options for mutual benefit that will satisfy their needs.*

Going Green is a book that activists should read to identify and counter the sophisticated tactics of the greenwashers, and to understand industry's co-optation of the environmental movement. As for E. Bruce Harrison, the godfather of greenwashing is "going green" all the way to the bank.

The syndrome so cynically described by E. Bruce Harrison is nothing new. A strong historical parallel to it appears in John Nicholson's book on the Gordon Riots ("The Great Liberty Riot of 1780", Bozo Press 1985.) The following excerpt shows that the attitude of the green groups described by Harrison is but the latest manifestation of an age old process—presenting us with the cosy illusion of dissent:

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not fools. They were not in the habit of offering bribes for nothing. On the contrary, the offer was merely half the bargain. These administrators were accomplices in the creation of such corruption but they were only recognizing what had become standard practice. Someone had to be open to the bribery to make such a practice into a system. Not only was it acceptable to make oneself a nuisance to provoke an offer to be bought off, but some persons rivaled the administration in cynicism. A few actually made careers out of manipulating popular causes in order to sell out to the highest bidder. The most famous example in recent times had been John Wilkes, yet he was far from alone. As late as 1802 Burdett would cause a stir by arousing popular hopes and then never raising the cause in Parliament.

These standard bearers, these power brokers, dash our hopes time and time again, as they use pressing popular concerns as a passport to membership of the elite. They are our enemies as much—perhaps more so, since they are contemptible traitors—as the authority figures that they appeal to. In the horsetrading game of politics, they have a pivotal role to play—it is their connivance that keeps the whole sorry show on the road, lending it a spurious air of credibility. Those who agree to some, without demanding it all, fritter away the possibility of real, substantive change. Or have they lost sight of the true magnitude of the ecological crisis that we face in the reams of (recycled) press releases that they put out?

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Shoreham: Live Exports and Community Defence
(from issue 5)

Author's note: For reasons of time, space, etc this short article cannot be a full analysis of live-exports in general or Shoreham in particular. Nor can it adequately deal with the thorny issue of 'animal rights'. The focus of this article is on the reaction of the local community to live-exports and the attitude of politicos in Brighton to the growing movement.

Intro

Intense lobbying from animal welfare groups designed to discourage passengers from using ports which exported livestock, caused major ports like Dover to pull out of the live-export trade. The major ports realised that if they continued live-exports (a relatively small part of their business) they would face losing passengers to other ferry companies who were not involved in the trade and to the newly-opened channel tunnel. By seizing the opportunity presented by an increasingly competitive passenger trade, animal welfare groups were able to bounce one port after the other into banning live-exports. The result of this was that the exporters were forced to find new ports, ones that had no significant passenger trade to speak of. These new ports tended to be much smaller and were often located in the heart of closely-knit local community, particularly in the case of Brightlingsea. Spurred on by emotive videos of calves in veal crates and witnessing their suffering at first hand, many locals became determined to stop the trade.

Going down to Shoreham at the start of January was like going to a picket-line, people were sitting in the road trying to block the trucks coming in, the police were dragging people away, in short all the usual push and shove of any major public order situation. At this point it's important to note the bitter irony that whilst residents of both Brightlingsea and Shoreham were prepared to go to huge lengths to stop the live-export trade, few lifted a finger to stop scab coal being brought in through these same ports to break the miners strike. For the first two nights Sussex police were totally humiliated, as the sheer weight of

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numbers of the crowd relative to the lack of police meant that they had to back the trucks up to prevent a major public order incident. On the second night the crowd ran wild with people rushing up and down ripping air lines out of the trucks and smashing headlights. One person climbed atop a truck and smashed its windscreen. Sussex police were totally powerless and were unable to control, let alone arrest, most of the crowd.

Realising they could not deal with the protests alone, on the third night they called in police from five other forces, including public order units from the Met. Over 1,500 police turned up. Everywhere you looked there were riot vans, parked nose to tail as far as the eye could see. Whole areas of Brighton were sealed off to allow the passage of riot vans, and huge convoys of green armoured TSG buses could be seen driving down from London on a daily basis. Not only were the Met being paid ridiculous amounts of overtime to come down and beat up the local community, but they were being put up at top-notch hotels, with five-star catering. And it wasn't long before Shoreham protesters invaded these hotels, resulting in yet more scuffles and arrests.

Back at Shoreham protesters were outnumbered five to one and could only watch as the trucks went in, anyone who tried to do anything more was immediately arrested. On the third night and several others there was widespread scuffling, with people throwing bottles and repeated baton charges by riot cops. Many of the people scuffling with the cops were local residents, some of them local youths who had simply come for a ruck. Most people were masked up, including pensioners, and this was not just because it was bitterly cold. The third night set the tone for the next six months of resistance to live-exports, although after a month or so the Met were replaced and their role was taken on by a revitalised and reorganised Sussex police. Many people had thought that the nature of the policing would change when the Met left, particularly as some people in the alternative community think Brighton police are somehow progressive simply because they tolerate raves. But less naive people, particularly those who live on the estates and have seen Brighton police in action, were well aware of their public order reputation. For the

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next six months protests continued with crowds fluctuating from a few dozen to a thousand, but usually averaging a couple of hundred, in all weathers and at all times of the day and night. And with the continuing protests came continuing arrests, mostly under the public order act, which by the end of the trade amounted to almost 400.

After the initial shock of the police invasion local residents began to organise themselves, throwing up a number of separate and often competing groups, all of them eager to represent the mass of protesters down at the dockside. Meetings were held, leaflets distributed, surveillance of the lairages and the convoys were carried out, and demonstrations and sea actions continued. Those politicos who choose to look saw the emerge of a real community of struggle, with all its attendant contradictions. The struggle against live-exports brought people in Shoreham together with the result that many residents feel ambiguous about stopping the trade, on the one hand they oppose it and want it to end, but on the other they want to continue protesting and have no desire to return to their previously atomised existence. Local residents, many of whom have never been part of any campaign, are enjoying the thrill of direct action, the satisfaction of sticking a finger up to the authorities and refusing to compromise. It is this spirit of sheer awkwardness, a refusal to give in, and a determination to continue until they get what they want that is inspiring. Also it is the way they go about getting what they want that is important. Shoreham protesters are not interested in politicians and interminable lying and stitch-ups, you only have to witness the total contempt with which Waldegrave's announcement on journey times was greeted.

But on the other hand there is far too much tolerance for media celebrities like Carla Lane, local MPs like Andrew Bowden (an anti-hunting, pro-animal welfare Tory), and organisations like Compassion In World Farming (who withdrew from the demos after the clashes with the police and then threatened to grass on the protesters who fought back). However such contradictions within a campaign are part of the nature of a community struggle, in the sense that as a 'community issue' it includes anyone who

next six months protests continued with crowds fluctuating from a few dozen to a thousand, but usually averaging a couple of hundred, in all weathers and at all times of the day and night. And with the continuing protests came continuing arrests, mostly under the public order act, which by the end of the trade amounted to almost 400.

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But on the other hand there is far too much tolerance for media celebrities like Carla Lane, local MPs like Andrew Bowden (an anti-hunting, pro-animal welfare Tory), and organisations like Compassion In World Farming (who withdrew from the demos after the clashes with the police and then threatened to grass on the protesters who fought back). However such contradictions within a campaign are part of the nature of a community struggle, in the sense that as a 'community issue' it includes anyone who

claims to be against live-exports. The kind of community we want is not one that is defined geographically, like the Shoreham area, and thus by its nature includes local politicians, businessmen, and celebrities, but a community of struggle. The problem with the anti-live export campaign is that such a large number of people are in favour of ending live exports, they include local politicians, businessmen, and right-wing local newspapers. Even sections of the Shoreham harbour board were opposed to the trade because it was giving the port a bad name and deterring other custom. Sussex police opposed the trade because the protests were rapidly draining their budget, tying up their personnel, and losing them the support of many of their traditional supporters.

However instead of getting involved and trying to explode the contradictions between the mass of protesters, who wanted to end live exports through the threat of public disorder, and their would-be representatives, who wanted to win media attention and parliamentary support through respectable lobbying, Brighton politicos have remained aloof. Why? The answer seems to be because the campaign concerns the dreaded issue of 'animal fights'. If it was any other issue you wouldn't be able to move for people trying to flog you turgid papers, stuff your hands with crappy leaflets, and demand you attended their meetings to create yet new fronts for their pathetic organisations. Whilst avoiding these things has its compensations, it is more than outweighed by the fact that the campaign lacks experienced activists.

Given the reputation, often undeserved, that Brighton has for being a centre of radicalism we have to consider why its political groups proved incapable and unwilling to get involved in a struggle on their doorstep. And we have to examine whether this lack of involvement was merely peculiar to Brighton or whether it marks a more general inability to connect with struggles outside of our own particular community, whether that is the workplace (in the case of the Socialist Workers Party [SWP] and to a lesser extent Militant) or the unemployed/alternative community (in the case of Justice? and Brighton Autonomists).

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been to go down to try and shift a few papers, on a more useful note they have used their union contacts to raise a modest amount of money to assist Shoreham defendants. The struggle at Shoreham like the anti-Criminal Justic Act [CJA] movement has exposed just how deeply entrapped in workerism the SWP are. By workerism I mean the idea that the workplace is the site of our power, and it is here that we should be concentrating on organising. The consequence of such an attitude is that struggles outside of the workplace are seen at best as secondary and subordinate to workplace struggles, and at worst are denounced as irrelevant and a distraction to the real struggle. So for example the SWP tried to connect to the anti-CJA struggle by saying the act was really all about trying to prevent picketing, presumably all the arrests of sabs and eco-warriors etc are just a smoke screen to divert us. Such workerist attitudes basically end in the demand that we get a job, join a union and go on strike.

However for many young people who might have previously joined the SWP there is now a choice between getting involved in the anti-CJA/direct action movement which means hanging out with people of your own age, going to parties, taking drugs, living in trees, d-locking yourself to bulldozers, squatting, fighting with the cops etc or you can go to meetings about Trotsky and stand outside supermarkets trying to sell papers. Consequently it appears the SWP has suffered a drop in its youth membership, and given that students and ex-students are its life-blood it appears to be in crisis. The only thing that is keeping it going appears to be the ANL. Given that the SWP had nothing to say about Shoreham beyond stating how 'under socialism' factory farming would be more efficient and animal research would be even better, and that we should all get a job and join in the 'real struggle', they resorted to claiming that the BNP had been down at Shoreham leafleting against live-exports. To my knowledge this is completely untrue and I have heard no mention of it. It is possible fascists have been to Shoreham, but they have not done so openly and have made no attempt to distribute their filth. And given the number of sabs and the attitude of the local residents any fascists who tried to openly organise at the demos

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One timber importer gets it in the neck to the tune of £800, 000 when one of its warehouses is arsoned. The protests didn' t just hit the livestock exporters. The constant blockades meant that the other firms at Shoreham "went through the most financially damaging two months many of them have experienced" (Evening Argus, 15.3.95). Companies at Shoreham include BP, Texeco, dredging firms and timber firms. Shoreham is the second biggest importer of dead trees in the country; importing from the wildernesses of Brazil, Canada, the US, Scandinavia, and eastern Europe. It is Britain's biggest importer of Russian woods. ARC, one of Britain's largest quarry companies (and responsible for Whatley Quarry in Somerset), have lost so much trade they are considering moving. Shipping agent Jim Glover said: "Frequently you can be stranded on the port side of the police cordon in a queue of 60 vehicles waiting to get out." HA HA HA!

It is right to claim that there was a little-Englander mentality among some of the protesters, particularly at the beginning, which saw live-exports bound for veal crates as yet another example of the decadent and wicked nature of "Johnny foreigner" and as a reason why the British state should immediately withdraw from the European Union. Some Tory blue-rinse types at Shoreham did hold this view, one articulated by a *Daily Express* article that was photocopied and distributed by some of the more naive protesters. This article expressing outrage at French Muslims importing sheep for a religious festival simply allowed the *Daily Mail* to give vent to its prejudices, allowing them to attack not only French people in general but French Muslims in particular. However such attitudes among the Shoreham protesters are more than outweighed by people's new found realisation of the nature of factory farming in Britain, and their opposition to a British veal industry.

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got involved on their own initiative, initially in the face of hostility from other members of their party, who have failed to adjust to the new realities of life outside of Labour Party sub-committees. Given their experience of canvassing and community organising, particularly in places like Pollok, Militant seem to be gearing up to take a major role in the campaign against live-exports at Dover, through their anti-CJA front the Kent Defiance Alliance.

Whilst the trots have been unable to connect to Shoreham, because it isn't a workplace struggle, other groups like Brighton's anti-CJA organisation Justice? have failed to get involved in any meaningful sense. Justice? did go to Shoreham en-masse on a couple of occasions, but the novelty soon wore off. Even though ten percent or more of its active members have been arrested at Shoreham, there has been little collective involvement beyond some office support for the defendants and regular Schnews coverage of protests. Given that Justice? was and probably still is the largest and most active of the anti-CJA organisations, its failure to break out of the alternative ghetto and connect with a real community struggle is disturbing. Justice's lack of collective involvement is attributable to all the usual reasons, e.g. the fact that most of the organisational work is done by a few very over-worked people, that it was busy organising squats in Brighton, and that many people were off doing direct action at places as far apart as Pollok, Solsbury Hill, and even Berlin!

But its lack of involvement can't simply be reduced to this, it's more the case that the anti-live-export campaign was never seen as a priority for Justice?. This was partly because the police have not used the CJA on a large scale at Shoreham. Only two people have been charged with aggravated trespass and both charges were thrown out of court. Also Justice?'s disconnection from Shoreham reflects the fact that most of the sabs in the Brighton area have chosen not to get involved in Justice?, and most members of Justice? are not interested in sabbing. In the absence of a large sab presence within Justice?, pushing the organisation to get actively involved in the anti-live-export

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campaign, Shoreham was always going to remain a side-issue. More importantly, Justice's failure to connect with a real community struggle was mainly due to the fact that most of its members see themselves as part of an alternative community of young unemployed, one which is ill at ease with a community struggle made up of so called ordinary people, many of whom are middle aged and have jobs.

Most disturbing was the predictable failure of Brighton Autonomists to get involved in the struggle at Shoreham, beyond supporting individual defendants. As the most together political group in the Brighton area, comprising an assortment of anarchists and communists, it has been able to avoid both the pitfalls of workerism and the isolation of the alternative ghetto. And significantly it is well aware of the importance of community organisation given its involvement in the anti poll-tax campaign. The reason it has refused to get involved at Shoreham is simply because it sees it as merely an animal rights issue. As a group it is opposed to both the ideology and practice of the animal rights movement. The leading members of Brighton Autonomists are representative of the mid 80's split in the anarcho movement between class struggle anarchists and animal rights activists. Indeed they were actively involved in this acrimonious rupture and its personal recriminations still haven't been forgotten by either side. If the struggle at Shoreham was about any other issue all the members of Brighton Autonomists would be actively involved.

For Brighton Autonomists animal rights is seen as a liberal side issue with no potential for connecting to anything else. Some of their criticisms are valid. Unlike our fellow humans they can't organise themselves or make their own demands. We can't have relations of solidarity with animals, because they can't struggle. We can only have relations of sympathy with them, projecting our own feelings of alienation and powerlessness onto dewy eyed calves as symbols of purity and innocence in a world out of our control. But it has to be said that the fact that people are moved to confront the state by the suffering of animals at least gives us hope that people are not completely alienated.

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Also Brighton Autonomists' criticism of the obsessive insularity of many people in the animal rights ghetto strikes a cord with anyone who has spent time in Brighton. But at the very moment when the anti live-export campaign is involving local communities in daily confrontation with the state, groups like Brighton Autonomists can only sit on the sidelines and worry about the expansion of the animal rights movement.

Conclusion

Over the last six months we've seen a local community coming together and using direct action to oppose live-exports. Residents have quickly learnt that direct action means confronting the police, which means risking arrest and should mean supporting those who have been arrested. Local people have faced down and humiliated Sussex police, who were forced to call in the Met and other forces to put down the protests. Despite having their area invaded by over a thousand police and almost four hundred people arrested, local residents have refused to be intimidated. Most importantly Shoreham residents have won, the exporters have pulled out because Sussex police could only afford to escort convoys two days a week, and this didn't allow the traders to make a profit. Not only has the public order operation almost bankrupted Sussex police, but it has earned them the undying hatred of the most active protesters. People who previously supported the police now treat them with contempt.

Some protesters are now making connections between their struggles and those of other working class communities. I've heard middle aged protesters taunt the police about the Bradford riots. I've seen previously respectable Shoreham ladies holding a police doll, voodoo style, engaged in a heated argument about which coppers need pins sticking in them. And at a meeting, after the end of shipments from Shoreham, 700 local residents cheered when one of the speakers tentatively pointed out that the police were agents of the state whose role was to protect politicians and the rich. This was followed by proposals for Waldegrave to do a sponsored parachute jump with only an empty rucksack.

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get involved in other struggles either at Dover or against the local Shamrock monkey farm. Many people are enjoying the feeling of solidarity that comes from standing together against the state and have no wish to return to their previous existence. For many the campaign against live-exports is the best thing that ever happened to them. It is up to local activists, who have been involved at Shoreham, to show these people that they can use the same tactics in other situations. As eco-activists when we talk about 'community support' we normally mean a few people bringing us cups of tea. Imagine what effect three hundred local residents who were prepared to disrupt road-construction on a daily basis would have.

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

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No Opencast! *(from issue 7)*

No Opencast is a campaign run by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and supported by Women Against Pit Closures and members of the Miners Support Groups. Since early 1995 there has been an informal co-operation between the No Opencast campaign and Earth First!ers. This has culminated, so far, in the action in Derbyshire on Friday 31st October 1997. On this action an opencast site, owned by HJ Banks mining company, was visited early in the morning by around 250 activists. Within two hours the mine was put out of operation, with estimates of the damage caused ranging from £375,000 to £4 million. This article attempts to give some background information to this campaign and action but also raises some questions and possible contradictions about its history and aims.

Opencast mining (or strip mining as it is also known) is one of the most ecologically destructive mining methods in use today. To gain access to the raw material wanted it involves the excavation, removal and irreparable destruction of huge quantities of the surface eco-system and the earth below it. Local people have to endure noise, vibration and severe dust pollution. Villages are torn apart by heavy trucks and evidence is growing to show the link between the pollution caused by opencast mining and the incidence of respiratory diseases in children. When the mine is exhausted and the operators have made off with their profits, the problems for the people that live near the site persist. Although the process is the same for whatever is being mined, this article is specifically referring to the issues surrounding opencasting mining for coal here in the UK.

Recent History

Opencast mining has undergone a massive expansion in recent years, yet this has nothing to do with any particular energy policy pushed by the government. It has far more to do with a political vendetta by the State to smash the militant resistance to exploitation shown by mining communities over the years.

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pay. In 1972 the State was unprepared; coal stocks were low and this caused an energy crisis resulting in extensive power cuts. In 1974 the then Prime Minister decided to call a snap general election under the slogan: 'Who rules the country—the miners or the government?' He lost and was bundled out of power.

Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, nursing a desire for revenge against the miners. She bided her time and by 1984 was ready. Coal stocks were high and she set out to provoke the miners' unions into strike action in the spring when energy demand was lower. A programme of deep shaft mine closures was announced. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) predicted that if it went ahead more would follow and the industry would be decimated. They went on strike—not just to protect their jobs, but also their communities and their way of life. What transpired was a year long strike, one of the hardest fought and bitterest in this country's history.[1] It eventually ended in defeat for the miners and a further round of pit closures ensued.

By 1992 the coal industry in this country was down to a fraction of its former size and only the most modern and productive pits had survived. Michael Heseltine, the then President of the Board of Trade, announced the closure of a further 31 pits. The pretext for this was that there was no longer a market for British coal—yet the real reason was to pave the way for the casualisation of labour and the privatisation of the coal industry by destroying any last vestiges of resistance from the miners. Hand in hand with this closing of the deep shaft mines came the expansion of the opencast coal mining industry with its smaller casual workforce that is easier to exploit without organised resistance.

It is these very towns and villages that bore the brunt of the 1984/5 strike which, having had their communities and future weakened—and in some cases destroyed, are now under attack from destructive opencast sites.

Opposition to Opencast Grows

Opencast mining, as mentioned earlier, is notorious for its air, noise and water pollution and increasingly is being linked with respiratory problems. The main focus, so far, for local opposition groups fighting opencast mining have been these health issues

pay. In 1972 the State was unprepared; coal stocks were low and this caused an energy crisis resulting in extensive power cuts. In 1974 the then Prime Minister decided to call a snap general election under the slogan: 'Who rules the country—the miners or the government?' He lost and was bundled out of power.

Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, nursing a desire for revenge against the miners. She bided her time and by 1984 was ready. Coal stocks were high and she set out to provoke the miners' unions into strike action in the spring when energy demand was lower. A programme of deep shaft mine closures was announced. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) predicted that if it went ahead more would follow and the industry would be decimated. They went on strike—not just to protect their jobs, but also their communities and their way of life. What transpired was a year long strike, one of the hardest fought and bitterest in this country's history.[1] It eventually ended in defeat for the miners and a further round of pit closures ensued.

By 1992 the coal industry in this country was down to a fraction of its former size and only the most modern and productive pits had survived. Michael Heseltine, the then President of the Board of Trade, announced the closure of a further 31 pits. The pretext for this was that there was no longer a market for British coal—yet the real reason was to pave the way for the casualisation of labour and the privatisation of the coal industry by destroying any last vestiges of resistance from the miners. Hand in hand with this closing of the deep shaft mines came the expansion of the opencast coal mining industry with its smaller casual workforce that is easier to exploit without organised resistance.

It is these very towns and villages that bore the brunt of the 1984/5 strike which, having had their communities and future weakened—and in some cases destroyed, are now under attack from destructive opencast sites.

Opposition to Opencast Grows

Opencast mining, as mentioned earlier, is notorious for its air, noise and water pollution and increasingly is being linked with respiratory problems. The main focus, so far, for local opposition groups fighting opencast mining have been these health issues

and most planning applications have been fought on this aspect of opencast alone.

Since 1995, however, EF!ers have been addressing the wider ecological effects of opencasting. One of the first groups to do this—Leeds EF!—took action in early 1995 targeting an opencast site in Yorkshire, and at about the same time Welsh activists were setting up camps at Selar and Brynhenllys sites near Swansea.2 These actions, amongst others, led to an increasing alliance between EF!ers and the No Opencast campaign—which raises some questions I will attempt to address later.

Smash the (E)state!

On 5th January 1997 a group of around a hundred anti-opencast campaigners descended on Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, the ancestral home of the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke owns huge swathes of Derbyshire and allows developers to opencast large areas of it—although not near Chatsworth of course!

A sound system played loud recordings of noise from an opencast site so that the people who are routinely subjected to it could give him a feeling of what it was like. Three people got inside his house and waved flags from the windows whilst others held banners outside. The Duke's right hand man mingled with the activists handing out press statements and saying that the Duke would be out in a minute. His peace offering of warm soup was turned over on the ground and after much venom flying in his direction he eventually retreated behind his wrought iron gates for protection.

Scotland, too, increasingly was being ripped up for opencasting, as many at last year's EF! Gathering near Glasgow witnessed first hand. However, due to the fact that all the villages affected were small, and the rural population distribution was fragmented, the opposition mounted was fairly ineffective.

The No Opencast campaign was getting increasingly frustrated by the loaded planning process and the blatant attempts to destroy mining communities and decided to take more radical action. This led to a series of joint actions with Earth First!ers—the first of which was the initial visit to Heseltine's garden. (See box—'Heselmine PLC!') After this the No Opencast campaign and

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EF!ers started to work closely together.
As well as this the widespread opposition against opencasting across most of the country lead to, amongst other things, Friends of the Earth (FoE) organising a conference of anti-opencast campaigners in early 1996. It was attended by local opposition groups and led to the creation of an English and Welsh network, administered by FoE3 and now comprising over 120 anti-opencast groups. (There is a separate Scottish network managed by the Scottish Opencast Action Group (SOAG)).

Notes

1. To give some indication of this look at the arrest statistics for this strike. They included: 4089 for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace, 1682 for obstruction of the police, 640 for obstruction of the highway, 1015 for criminal damage, 359 for assault on the police, 137 for riot and 509 for unlawful assembly. (All from 'Miners Strike 1984-1985. People versus State.' by David Reed and Olivia Adamson. (Larkin: London 1985.)) The strike also provided the final fine tuning of the police into the paramilitary force that they are today. For more details on this read: 'State of Siege: Politics and Policing in the Coalfields—Miners' Strike 1984' by Jim Coulter, Susan Miller and Martin Walker. (Canary Press: London 1984.)

2. For an account of resistance to opencasting in Wales see 'Autonomy, Resistance and Mediation. The dynamics of Reclaim the Valleys!' on page 74 in *DoD* No.6.

3. More specifically it is co-ordinated by Tim Sander of Chesterfield FoE. Tim is now being sued by John Wilson of Fitzwise Ltd., a notorious opencast company. Wilson alleges that in November 1995 Tim produced an agenda for a public meeting libelling him as a hypocrite for moving house in anticipation of an opencast mine being opened nearby. Tim denies the libel, refuses to apologise, and is contesting the case. There is no legal aid for libel cases and so Tim is representing himself. This is clearly an attempt to squash resistance to opencasting and to act as a warning to others. Messages of support and donations for legal costs to: Tim Sander c/o Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ, UK. Telephone: 0171 490 1555.

Reports and Thoughts on the Action in Derbyshire

What follows are three accounts of, and some opinions on, the No

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Opencast action in Derbyshire on Friday 31st October 1997 all written by activists who were there. As well as this there is a short piece on some possible contradictions and problems with the nature of the alliance between radical ecologists and the No Opencast campaign.

"**All this lurking about in the dark inspired a lot of giggling.**"
We met in a squat in London and there were maybe 60 people or so. The idea was that we would hide out there, leave in the middle of the night and arrive at the opencast site in Derbyshire at 5 or 6 in the morning. The time until then was to be well spent in planning our actions.

We were given briefing sheets, explaining what we were going to do. These were counted out and counted back in again and then burnt before we left the building. No one was supposed to go in or out of the building until we all left together. I was posted on guard duty to make sure no one got out. All very Mission: Impossible! Meanwhile, with the aid of some big bits of paper on the floor and marker pens, everyone crowding around was given some idea of the layout of the site and what targets we should head for when we were in.

This action appears to have been one of the few occasions when all the rhetoric about how affinity groups are the way forward constantly spouted by EF!ers in this country actually seemed to materialise into something. We split up into affinity groups to go off and decide in private what we were each individually up for—running about, trashing stuff, occupying machinery etc. and what we wanted to head for—machinery, vehicles, offices etc. You have to come equipped if you're going to be sabotaging things and as none of my spectacularly well-prepared group had brought anything or thought about it at all we decided we weren't going to be monkeywrenching.

However, some people in my group did have a clever plan which could be more widely adopted. They were dressed head-to-toe in standard activist colours (green and black is the new green and black dahling!) with hooded tops and combat boots etc.. Yet underneath this regulation anarcho-garb they were wearing

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rainbow-coloured hippy jumpers. Thus they could cunningly evade police surveillance and confuse police stereotypes.

We had a big school-trip type coach to take us to the site, so we all piled on—the tough kids grabbing the back seat and the swots sitting up front in time-honoured fashion. As we hit the motorway we were informed that all mobile phones had to wrapped in the silver foil that was being passed around to prevent them being used to track our progress by the police. The whole planning of the action operated on roughly this level of paranoia.

Over the top? Well, maybe…

We were woken up 5 or 10 minutes before arrival with chocolate and whiskey which made us all feel a lot better about being in the middle of nowhere at 6 in the morning. As per usual prior to an action I was all nerves and butterflies in the stomach. I've never been able to account for this, as when the action starts I'm relatively calm and in control. We all piled out of the coach and attempted to keep quiet and hid behind a hedge that ran along the side of the road. It was cold and dark but dawn was just breaking.

Because of the military precision of the timing we had to hide behind the hedge for about 5 minutes until exactly the time set for us to go over the top into the site. People from other towns and areas would be entering the site from different directions at 1 minute intervals to meet up with our London crew. All this lurking about in the dark inspired a lot of giggling that did not sit well with the highly organised timing and precision. This wasn't helped by the fact that we had to keep our heads down below the hedge every time a car came past—the bobbing up and down only produced more giggling and noisy shushing and more giggling.

We all poured over the flimsy barbed wire fence and up the steep embankment that marked the perimeter of the opencast site. Getting to the top of the slope was rather an anticlimax—there was just a big deserted site on the other side. We stopped running and sort of ambled in a big straggly group—all semblance of military order now gone. We weren't really sure which direction to go so we all just followed the crowd. "Baaaa!" shouted some wit from the rear.

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The whole action had this weird character—we encountered no resistance which gave the whole thing rather an odd dynamic. It's like the two sides define each other by opposition—take away our opposition and it all felt rather formless. As often is the case when we are successful we become victims of our own success and don't know what to do with the totally unexpected situation of actually outwitting the cops and not being faced with a set-piece everyone-knows-their-role cops vs. activists confrontation. With no antagonism, no adrenaline rush of confrontation, there is no opposition to give us a focus. There was no such focus here, so we just sort of ambled about. Our affinity group sort of fell apart as one guy said he'd catch us up as he just had to go off and chat to a friend. It was good the way the whole event was a chance to catch up with old friends from the other end of the country; faces remembered from past actions and evictions, but it did mean the planned organisation of people into affinity groups kind of fell apart.

A van with headlights full on was driving around the site and seemed to have seen us but drove off in a different direction. There was an initial impulse to hide from them but we quickly realised this was pretty pointless—if they didn't know we were here yet they soon would do. The few mine workers or security who were on site basically stayed out of our way in their little portacabin things throughout the action.

My affinity group/bunch of useless mates (ho ho only joking) soon spotted a great big digging thing on the edge of a rather large hole which we quickly climbed all over. On the top of the pneumatic arm thing we got a great view of the whole site and also got covered in great globs of disgusting grease. From our vantage point we could see other groups arriving from every side of the site. One bunch marched below us led by a bloke in a silly wizard's hat and a drum. "That's Manchester" someone said. We exchanged a few yips and whistles and clenched-fist salutes with them and saw another bunch arriving a bit further around the perimeter of the site. This lot looked like locals/ex-miners, and they climbed all over some digging things.

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digging arm doing clenched-fist salutes for the locals/ex-miners' cameras (which in retrospect was probably not very smart thing to do—even though we were all de rigeur masked-up). From our vantage point we could see various bits of machinery—diggers, huge trucks etc. around the site from which banging, crashing sounds were emanating. Soon I was told we had to vacate our adopted digger because some people had come to trash it.

This kind of set the tone for the whole action—I had gone along with our affinity group decision just to occupy the site and not to trash anything, but now it seemed the only thing to do was trash things. The only things in an opencast mine are trucks, diggers, big bits of machinery etc. It is very unwise to be sitting on a piece of machinery that has been sabotaged when the police arrive. Its kind of like asking for it. So seeing as pretty much every piece of machinery in the place was damaged in some way within half an hour of arrival I felt pretty redundant

Almost as soon as we were into the site people were saying: *there's nothing to do now—everything's been trashed, we might as well leave.* Which was kind of odd and disempowering. The attitude of the 'ego-warrior' that *if you can't climb a tree then there's no point in you being here and there's nothing you can do except make the tea* has been recognised as an actual and potential problem in our movement. The opencast action did to an extent suffer from the same division of labour—if you weren't prepared enough (or knowledgeable enough) to trash machinery then you could end up feeling pretty superfluous. Was this just another example of the production of a hierarchical division between the full-on activists and the 'ground support'? What's the point of a mass action if it's all over so quickly and there is nothing for the mass of people to do?

I got the impression that people were getting more bold as dawn broke, the sun rose and there were still no police or security. It felt like we were a bunch of kids who had been left completely unsupervised at playtime. I think there is some similarity here with the Newbury Reunion Rampage of January 1997 when equipment was torched that had earlier been sabbed. I think this shows an escalating threshold of confidence in what people think they

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can get away with. It was a similar thing here—various bits of kit had some initial damage done to them, i.e. slashing or letting down the tires which was then 'improved' on by people going round an hour or so later making sure the job was done more thoroughly. These have been nick-named quality control teams—people were going around asking *has that been done?*, and then checking to make sure it had been done properly.

Most damage was fairly invisible, not like the spectacular fires at the Reunion Rampage. Fire looks really cool, but we had been informed in no uncertain terms at the pre-meeting that fire in a coal mine was a not a very good idea. The main visible damage I saw was some very obvious smashing of windows. It felt very odd seeing such highly illegal nightwork being carried out in the light of day, as the early morning sun was rising and the mist still clung to the damp grass—bizarre and exhilarating.

After everyone had explored a bit, chatted to friends new or old and most stuff had been disabled in at least some form, people began to congregate at a point where an access road to the mine workings cut between two very steep slopes or semi-cliffs. Perched on top of one of these was one of the mobile lighting rigs used to illuminate the mine workings at night. It was just too inviting. Pretty soon a group of 20 or 30 of us were trying our damnedest to push it over the edge. Although our efforts were fairly feeble (it's not as easy as you think, pushing a lighting rig down a hill!) and the end result was something less than the spectacular crash we had hoped for, this was an example of collective action somewhat different to the sabbing of diggers etc. that had been going on earlier. That seemed to rely on a division between those with the specialised skills, tools and confidence to take it on, and those who lacked these things, whereas here anyone could get involved with the already existing mass of people attempting to heave the lighting thing off the cliff. It was the sort of damage that could only be carried out by a mass of people. It was much more inclusive.

However despite this most people didn't join in but stood around as spectators to our efforts (some with cameras!) Maybe they couldn't see us or didn't realise we could do with some

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help. Even on an action it takes time to break out of everyday passivity and become an active collectivity. e.g: at the Newbury protests in early 1996 there were examples of whole groups of people standing around watching others being arrested and not diving in and attempting to de-arrest them. Even on an action, feelings of powerlessness can overwhelm you or you can fall into regarding the actions of others as a spectacle (even in the case of the most radical actions)—this is where any 'division of labour' into 'climbers' and 'ground support' or 'saboteurs' and 'ordinary protesters' can be a real liability and where confrontation can help—it focuses us as an antagonistic mass—unifies our purpose. I know, I've felt both things myself—quite often at Newbury I felt like a powerless spectator to a drama of security guards and tree-house dwellers carried out before a backdrop of crashing trees. Likewise I have on occasion felt myself as part of a powerful united mass with a common purpose—usually in opposition to a common enemy—almost always the police.

Of course the main feeling on actions is just weirdness, any action that is half-way successful is just not like ordinary life. You can tell a really bad demo because it is just like ordinary life—there is no question of rupture in the seamless banality of the everyday.

Normally if you were merely physically obstructing the site, the strategy would be to stay as long as possible. Here, staying on the site any longer than absolutely necessary would have been foolish—just asking to be carted off (like at the Whatley Quarry national action of December '95). We were faced with a dilemma—stay and fuck things up more since we had the chance and risk getting caught, or scarper while the going was good? The general feeling seemed to be that we should all leave en masse now that the job had been done. We just walked past the two or three cops at the front gate. We had trashed an entire opencast site right under their noses and they were powerless to stop us. It felt good seeing the cops so powerless. We must have looked so smug—no wonder they arrested everyone later in the day at the office occupation.

We had a big circle meeting just outside the gate to the site

help. Even on an action it takes time to break out of everyday passivity and become an active collectivity. e.g: at the Newbury protests in early 1996 there were examples of whole groups of people standing around watching others being arrested and not diving in and attempting to de-arrest them. Even on an action, feelings of powerlessness can overwhelm you or you can fall into regarding the actions of others as a spectacle (even in the case of the most radical actions)—this is where any 'division of labour' into 'climbers' and 'ground support' or 'saboteurs' and 'ordinary protesters' can be a real liability and where confrontation can help—it focuses us as an antagonistic mass—unifies our purpose. I know, I've felt both things myself—quite often at Newbury I felt like a powerless spectator to a drama of security guards and tree-house dwellers carried out before a backdrop of crashing trees. Likewise I have on occasion felt myself as part of a powerful united mass with a common purpose—usually in opposition to a common enemy—almost always the police.

Of course the main feeling on actions is just weirdness, any action that is half-way successful is just not like ordinary life. You can tell a really bad demo because it is just like ordinary life—there is no question of rupture in the seamless banality of the everyday.

Normally if you were merely physically obstructing the site, the strategy would be to stay as long as possible. Here, staying on the site any longer than absolutely necessary would have been foolish—just asking to be carted off (like at the Whatley Quarry national action of December '95). We were faced with a dilemma—stay and fuck things up more since we had the chance and risk getting caught, or scarper while the going was good? The general feeling seemed to be that we should all leave en masse now that the job had been done. We just walked past the two or three cops at the front gate. We had trashed an entire opencast site right under their noses and they were powerless to stop us. It felt good seeing the cops so powerless. We must have looked so smug—no wonder they arrested everyone later in the day at the office occupation.

We had a big circle meeting just outside the gate to the site

and decided to split up—some people went to leaflet the local town, some went to the offices of the opencast company and the rest of us went to the local cafe and were shocked to find we had just trashed an entire opencast mine to the tune of hundreds of thousands or possibly even millions of pounds and had finished the job in time for breakfast. Quickest action I've ever been on.

This action shows we can pull off big actions with enough planning and organisation. Since Whatley in December '95, and excluding the semi-spontaneous pyromania of the Reunion Rampage, there has been rather a record of failure with big national EF! actions, for example—the Sea Empress anniversary action at Milford Haven in February '97, the abortive action at Shoreham harbour in May '97. Superior planning and organisation plus the handy expedient of not telling them beforehand where we were going allowed us on this occasion to totally outwit them. The police can't act spontaneously and are very bad at responding if you catch them by surprise; it is here that our advantage lies, and when we do successfully surprise them we can get away with an incredible amount.

We need to make links, build numbers and have more big mass actions that are inclusive of people from outside the activist community. Leafleting the local area and talking to local people was a most valuable and decidedly unsexy job that needed to be done and I am ashamed to an extent that I did not join the leafleting-the-village posse.

One big fried breakfast later and everyone seemed to have split up—lots of people had gone to the pub I think, but we couldn't find which one, so school-trip over, we lazed about in the sun waiting for the coach to take us home. We got talking to a bunch of local kids (quite possibly the kids of local ex-miners) who told us they regularly broke into the site and nicked and damaged things! A fitting end to our childlike playtime of unsupervised sabotage—there was mutual respect between rebellious kids of all ages.

"A smashing good time!"

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"A smashing good time!"

Around 200 activists arrived by three different routes at the opencast mine at Tibshelf, Derbyshire at approximately 6.15am.

The site was completely undefended and the activists were immediately confronted with diggers and six CAT dumpers lined up. At first people sat on the diggers, but it became increasingly obvious that there was no-one to obstruct. Two security guards in a landy approached the diggers, sized up the number of activists and then buggered off again.

What followed was systematic actions of revenge for earth-rape—the like of which I haven't seen for a while. The six super-dumpers, four or five standard CAT diggers, one super-duper digger (I don't know the makes!) and at least four lighting rigs were trashed before the activists had even recced the entire site. Not content with only superficial damage 'quality control' teams were doing the rounds of the site putting the finishing touches to any of the machinery! Near the northern entrance of the site more plant was attacked, and when finally confronted with a police presence (all six/seven of them) a digger had its hydraulics trashed in front of them by a mainly-masked up crowd!

Probably the best lessons of the action were the surprise factor gained by the frankly paranoid organisation of the action (e.g. meeting at one place, revelation of the target site at the last moment and in person) and the fact that at last the majority of people on site were masked-up or at least attempted some form of disguise. The action was euphoric and good-natured (with the possible exception of Mrs. Scargill) with the workers waved at rather than intimidated. Damage estimates have been suggested at around £4m—all in all an incredible start to a week of Earth Nights!

"What were the aims of the action?"

We have a strange history. Largely a series of victorious defeats which may have muddied the water when it comes to assessing levels of success and failure. The No Opencast action on Friday 31st October was very well organised and certainly no failure, but I find it difficult to go along fully with the celebrations of its success. For me the action raised a number of difficult questions about our strategy and direction. And it left me with a gnawing feeling that when the £ signs light up on the criminal damage register our critical attitude goes to the wind.

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So, what were the aims of our action? To inflict the maximum financial damage on HJ Banks? To create an interface, an active living point of contact between the No Opencast campaign, the local population, other interested angered people and the workforce? To build the campaign, catalyse further actions and help it gain strength? To generate a feeling of empowerment and collectivity within the movement?

This action mainly achieved the first and fourth objectives. However, I would argue in this instance that on this particular day the first objective was the least important. Let's face it, in anything other than exceptional circumstances a one day action will not bring a company to its knees. But because we privileged this course of action we could never get to grips with any wider objectives.

My main criticism is that while a small group of committed activists succeeded in bringing the site to a halt it was done in way that made involving others very difficult. Sure, I helped hand out leaflets in the local town, Tibshelf, but that was after the action had occurred. All that people could do then was join a small group standing round the entrance gates of a site that wasn't working. Of course, it's a good thing it wasn't working, but if it hadn't been working because we were in occupation, people could have come and been part of an active crowd stopping the work. Presumably the campaign against opencast mines will only grow if it can somehow engage people. Some may argue that mobilising support occurs before the event as part of the networking process, but surely the revolutionary potential of direct action can only be realised when people see it as something that they can get involved with; when it creates circumstances which can catalyse further acts of subversion.

Was the action empowering? People certainly felt empowered, but still, questions remain. Individual feelings of empowerment may or may not be connected to whether we are being successful on a much wider level. A mass action is surely at it's best when through our collective power we achieve things that would have been difficult or impossible for a smaller group to do. Sometimes of course it's just better to have shit loads of people.

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You only need one person to occupy a crane but with 30 it just feels so much better. In an ongoing campaign where the sites are well secured it may only be possible to damage machinery with a crowd for cover. On the day of the opencast action, as far as I'm aware we didn't do much that five people with a spare night and some aluminium oxide couldn't have done.

In practical terms what I'm suggesting is that some of us should have occupied the machinery for the day while others went round the area trying to get people involved in the occupation. People may think that would have been a waste of time when we could effectively stop work through criminal damage without the effort of an occupation and if financial damage were our prime objective this would be true. If it was just one of a number of objectives then some kind of occupation makes more sense. As it was, the action took place in a vacuum in which there was little opportunity for it to go beyond itself. Also, (and this is easy to suggest in retrospect) couldn't we have occupied a much larger site, a site where the numbers we had would have actually counted?

Given the absence of mainstream media interest, and the very real problems of dealing with a capitalist media, it seems even more crucial to look at how our activities actually communicate their message. For me the best media is the action itself and the build up to it. Knocking on doors, handing out leaflets, stalls, flyposting etc. Actions bring these activities to life, but only actions where there is a real presence. Sometimes it feels as if we are becoming some Bakuninist revolutionary cadre who believe change will come through our actions alone.

Although the damage on the day seemed opportunistic rather than planned it may still be worth reflecting on how we situate this activity. Criminal damage is not necessarily a good or bad thing (although it's difficult to see what could be bad about a profound dislike of private property). It's a tactic, and the context in which it is used gives the act its meaning and value. Like violence or non-violence it can become ideological, i.e.: be given a value outside its tactical importance, a value in itself. One of the problems with criminal damage is that it feels so damn good. More real perhaps than other methods. For an activist it can

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become a kind of identity-forming ritual in the same way that happens with the martyrdom of non-violence or the revolutionary heroism of violence. This is not to suggest we should be striving for some neutral tactics which we then apply coldly to our strategy. Obviously methods create and incur meanings. It's really just to say that we should be wary of privileging a method over it's context.

One last question—was it necessary for this action to be secret? If it had been open there would have been more opportunity to involve people from the surrounding area, and—in all likelihood—have a bigger overall turnout. Given the nature of an opencast site it would be very difficult for the police to stop a determined crowd from carrying out an occupation. And on the other hand if somehow they managed to stop us, forcing a gigantic police mobilisation on behalf of opencasting might itself be a kind of success. Sometimes, a more open approach may help develop a larger and more political crowd and in consequence force up the political cost of countering our actions.

"Re-open the deep mines? Over my dead body!"
The action in October 1997 at Dole Hill Opencast site sparked off some thought on the collaboration between radical ecologists and the No Opencast campaign and this particular alignment raises interesting questions about the nature of forming alliances with other groups engaged in struggle. There seems to be two areas that are potentially problematic with this particular coalition. These are; firstly the nature of a driving force behind the campaign: the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and then secondly the stated aims of the No Opencast campaign itself.

Although the NUM is radical in appearance, in reality just like all the other unions—a reformist and bureaucratic organisation. This can be seen, not just from a purely theoretical standpoint, but by it's actual behaviour in times of heightened struggle.

The traditional leftists view of unions is as workers' self-defence organisations, there to fight for the needs of the workers themselves. Yet, if we look though history, we see there is far more to unions than this.[5] What then do they do if not the above?

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The answer is that they negotiate with the bosses—they negotiate the going rate for the exploitation of the workers and thus act as a 'manager' for the needs of capital. Unions play out a particular role in this society and this is summed up by Lord Balfour when he said; *Trade Union organisation was the only thing between us and anarchy.*[6] The accusation has also been made that the NUM and the No Opencast campaign have latched onto the ecological direct action movement in order to advance their inherently reformist and unecological aims of re-opening the deep shaft mines. Is this true—are we being used as 'cannon fodder' for these aims—or are we using them to forward our aims of shutting down all opencast sites without re-opening the deep mines?

Whilst I stand with the miners in supporting their struggle to defend their communities there are limits. This is especially true when the publicity put out by the campaign about actions I am on is something I fundamentally disagree with. i.e: Re-open the deep shaft mines! There are potential problems with workers run industries—evidenced by the fact that Tower Hill Colliery, a mine that was threatened with closure and then bought, and since run, by the workers themselves has recently entered into a partnership with Celtic Energy—notorious and hated opencast company.

The similarity with the support given to the Liverpool Dockers has been noted by other people, yet I feel that there are two fundamental differences here. Firstly; not only were the dockers fighting the Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company (MHDC) who sacked them, but they were also battling against their union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) that had deserted and actively worked against them. This is partly why the link-up with the dockers was so important—we were working with the people themselves, not their 'representatives' the union. Yet with the No Opencast campaign we are working alongside the NUM, a union of the same ilk that sold the dockers out so cold heartedly.

Secondly; the docks, in my ideal world, would be closed—they are an integral part of the insane system of mass production and consumption that I oppose. Despite this, whilst they are open, we should support and fight for the demands of the traditional

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workforce of the dockers to work there; as opposed to casual labour with all its vestiges of organised resistance crushed. Yet, were the docks to close, I would not get involved in a fight to re-open them—which in essence is half of what the No Opencast campaign is asking to happen with the deep mines! What are we, as radical ecologists, doing getting involved in a struggle to re-open major industries? For instance, when nuclear power is finally wound up, and car factories closed down, are we going to get involved in campaigns to re-open them as well?

Having said all of the above, contradictions are not something we should be afraid of and aim to avoid by adopting some puritanical Green line—even if that it were actually possible. People change their views and aims; particularly through being involved with direct action, and also when arguments are presented to them in a coherent way. It is, although we seem not to know it, possible to be in a working alliance with people that we share some common ground with and still criticise them on particular aspects of their views. Maybe it is as a result of our relative political naivete that this does not seem to have happened with this campaign. What we do need to decide is on what grounds we form coalitions on, with whom and why. To do this we need to talk, both amongst ourselves and also to others—this is how we will learn and advance our actions.

I have, rather sadly (and yes I admit it—as a bit of a cop-out) no final conclusion to this writing and the questions, if any, it raises about Earth First! and the No Opencast campaign. If truth be told I have attempted to provoke some thought on thorny issues by trying to raise them in the above article—which should in no way be taken as total rejection and criticism of any of the individuals or groups involved in past and present struggles against the further encroachment of the capital and the state. I respect, and acknowledge that we have much to learn from, the miners and similar struggles. What I am suggesting is that we do not lose our critical faculties when it comes to these issues. We must, if we are to change the world to one we want—an ecological one devoid of exploitation, oppression and hierarchy—get involved with other people resisting particular aspects of this

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system. This will involve working with people that we do not necessarily totally agree with on every ideal; and even if we do—as some great wit once said; *If you feel comfortable in your coalition—then it's not broad enough.*

There is a forthcoming No Opencast action later this year—for more details of this and the ongoing resistance to opencast mining contact: No Opencast Campaign, c/o 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London, W6 7NL, UK. Telephone: 0181 767 3142 or 0181 672 9698. For current anti-mining/quarrying camp details see 'Carry on Camping' on page 54 in this issue of *DoD*.

Notes

1. For examples of this during the 1984/5 miners strike see page 4 in *Outside and Against the Unions*—a pamphlet published by Wildcat. Send a donation to: BM CAT, London, WC1N 3XX, UK. See also *Occupational Therapy—The Incomplete Story of the University College Hospital Strikes and Occupations of 1992/3/4* published by News from Everywhere, Box 14, 138 Kingsland High Street, London, E8 2NS, UK.
2. See, for example, "Who Killed Ned Ludd?" in *Elements of Refusal* by John Zerzan (Left Bank: USA 1988)—an account of how the unions were partly responsible for the repression and dispersal of the revolutionary fervour of the Luddite movement in 19th century Britain.
3. Lord Balfour quoted in *Unfinished Business—the politics of Class War*—page 28.
4. Part of the text from No Opencast campaign sticker distributed at the action on Friday 31st October 1997.
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The New Luddite War *(from issue 8)*

We Will Destroy Genetic Engineering!

Two years ago direct action against genetic engineering in Britain was non-existent. Two years later and it has become one of the main struggles in which our movements are involved. Hundreds of new people have got active in everything from mass trashings to night time sabotage. With over seventy experimental Genetically Modified (GM) test sites destroyed, our action is crippling the advance of the technology. This article will cover how the campaign has evolved and some of the reasons why it is so important that genetic engineering is stopped. Many newspapers have covered the ecological and health disasters that could arise if genetic engineering goes badly wrong. Instead this article will chart the ecological, social and health disasters that will arise if genetic engineering goes badly right.

Though Britain has been the (First World) country where actions against genetic engineering have really kicked off, people have been resisting for over a decade all over the world. The first outdoor genetic test site was a crop of genetically engineered strawberries at the University of California in 1987. The night after the plants had been transplanted Earth First!ers climbed fences, evaded security guards and succeeded in pulling up all 2,000 plants[1]. In 1989 Earth First!ers destroyed yet more test sites in the US which in turn inspired actions in Holland where three test sites were dug up. Claiming responsibility for the Dutch attacks, the 'Raging Diggers' stated in their July 1991 communique:

> *The destruction of a test field is designed to both start a discussion on the subject of bio-technology, as well as to offer a direct counter to pro-biotechnology propaganda in the form of sabotage![2]*

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Throughout the early and mid nineties a growing alliance of Indian peasant groups organised against GM and the patenting of seeds. The campaign, which involved everything from setting

up community seed banks to the mass destruction of an installation belonging to the multinational Cargill, culminated in a 500,000 strong demonstration. Back in Europe, 1996 saw German eco-anarchists squatting fields to stop them being planted as genetic test sites. A third of all sites were prevented from being sown that year and many of those which had been sown were subsequently sabotaged. By the end of the year twelve sites had been dug up, and the remaining experiments were under 24 hour police guard[3]. Crop squats and anti-GM actions in Germany continued throughout the following year. The growing international nature of the resistance showed itself on April 21st '97 when activists simultaneously occupied Monsanto's head offices in both Britain and America. Two weeks later a GM potato test site was dug up belonging to the Federal Research Institute of Germany. The leader of the research project described it as 'a direct hit'.

> *On the 8th of June [1997] just five days after the action in Germany the Super Heroes Against Genetix decided to play cricket on a GM potato test field site just outside Cambridge. Due to the nature of a somewhat muddy and sticky wicket, potatoes replaced the traditional red ball. Fielders had a difficult time of it—most of the batting resulting in the 'balls' being smashed to pieces, or else being lost amongst upturned soil. The entire GM crop was destroyed.*[4]

Days after the first British GM test site sabotage, Germany saw another field dug up, this time GM sugar beet. Around two months later more sites were dug up in Britain followed in November '97 by the first of many GM site trashings by the French Confederation Paysanne (p. 103). The following year saw a massive escalation of direct action in Britain with numerous office occupations and test site sabotages. In 1998 over thirty test sites were destroyed, including seven rape-seed-oil experiments in different parts of the country on the same night. Last year also saw the first genetic experiment planted in Ireland. Almost immediately the experiment was dug up, never to be replaced. The year ended with the Indian farmers in Karnataka launching 'Operation Cremate Monsanto' by setting

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fire to three of the company's crops.

Already this year over thirty three sites have been destroyed in Britain either through covert action at night (p. 101) or mass trashings in daylight (p. 99). During the glorious Carnival against Capital in the City of London on June 18th, the British HQ of agribusiness multinational Cargill was closed down and its windows and foyer smashed up (p. 1). The international aspect has grown too, with Indian farmers visiting a squatted genetic test site in Essex and blockading a pro- GM greenwash institute in London (p. 97). On the other side of the Channel, the French peasants are continuing their actions, while across the Atlantic, American activists have destroyed three test sites—one action claimed by the 'Cropatistas'. As I write, three people have been remanded in prison for alleged 'Conspiracy to Cause Criminal Damage' at a GM maize field in Lincolnshire (p. 104). For those unaware of what lies behind genetic engineering this explosion of activity around the globe might seem strange. The next part of the article will aim to give a bit of background to the issues of power behind the struggle.

Elite Technology—Weaponry for the Class War

Enveloped in darkness, they walked silently through the fields, groups of friends intent on destruction. The elite's new technology was their target and night after night they laid their blows at progress. The repression started, but while captured comrades languished in prison, others walked the night time paths. I could be describing today's campaign against genetic engineering but I am not. These bands of merry friends are of the past and despite bravery, imagination and countless escapades they failed. The war waged at the beginning of the last century by the Luddites of Northern England against the elite's new technology—the emerging factory system—was lost, drowned in blood and compromise. The following years saw an armed uprising (the Swing Riots) by the rural poor against new technologies in agriculture, but that too was defeated. The price of such deafets is the ecological destruction, pathologcally warped emotions and wage slavery of global industrialism.

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genetic engineering? No. On the nights I have helped destroy genetic test sites I have thought of people, like those described above, who walked the night time paths before me. Listening to their voices both inspires me and helps me pick out the truth otherwise drowned out by the cacophony of corporate propaganda. With vast budgets the PR departments of the GM companies are trying to convince us that their technology is aimed at feeding the poor and increasing food production [5]. The Luddites of the past remind us of the reality, that the technologies foisted upon the poor by the elite are aimed at accruing profit and power. As one Indian scientist put it, *Monocultures spread not because they produce more, but because they control more.*[6]

We and the Luddites are fighters in the same war. Two hundred years ago the English elite's main enemy was the peasantry who lived for the most part outside the cash economy and were forever rising up. The elite used the enclosure of land and the mechanisation of crafts and agriculture to crush the rebellious autonomy of the English poor. The class was eradicated by physical force and the elite's technology and forced either to become either wage slaves in the emerging factories or on the farms of the rich.

Two hundred years, and many struggles later, the British poor are for the most part wasting their life in crap jobs or depressed and drug-ridden on the dole—their rebelliousness almost totally extinguished, our history forgotten.Meanwhile the—now global—elite continues to wage a war on the class that remains the main threat to its existence—the global peasantry. The relative autonomy and link with the land which fuelled the Zapatiastas in Mexico, the Viet Cong in Vietnam and the MST in Brasil has to be destroyed. This is where genetic engineering comes in.

The new technologies being pushed by the food industry—a sector which has more companies in the top 1000 than any other—aim to purposefully destroy the social fabric that keeps the land community together and to fully incorporate the peasantry into the global cash economy. The threat is neutralised and becomes fuel for the machine's further expansion.

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To understand genetic engineering you have to look at the process it is part of. The last thirty years have seen, in what was called the 'green revolution' (sic), massive industrialisation of agriculture in the Third World. The highly expensive inputs for industrial agriculture; machines, pesticides etc. have forced millions of small farmers off their land. Mechanisation has made redundant many jobs done by agricultural labourers. This process is purposeful, as it was two hundred years ago when the elite dispossessed our ancestors. As one pro-industrialisation advocate put it:

> *Economic development. is not compatible with the maintainance of a people's traditional customs. What is needed is a change in the totality of their culture and their psychological attitude, their way of life. What is therefore required amounts to social disorganisation. Unhappiness and discontentment in the sense of wanting more than is obtainable is to be generated. The suffering and dislocation that is caused is the price that has to be paid for economic development.*[7]

The poor pay the price while the elite reap the profit. Radical social movements usually can't keep up with the rapid rate of social change, failing to effectively organise. As a result the dispossessed turn the violence of the green revolution, not on their enemies (who sit back comfortably in air conditioned offices often thousands of miles away), but on their own class and families. Increases in suicide, the domestic abuse of both women and children, and the re-emergence of serious communal/religious conflict have all been linked by Indian eco-feminists to this social dislocation[8]. In general women bear the brunt of the horror caused, especially the malnourshiment and hunger. In her new book, Germaine Greer points out that women are also increasingly burdened with the sole responsibility of child rearing. Lone female headed families are the poorest sector of the worlds population.

> *As the extended family has crumbled under the pressure of urbanisation, increasing landlessness and economic change men no longer constrained by their elders to live as husbands and fathers have backed away from women and children.*

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One quarter of all families in the world are headed by a loan female. In the Caribbean, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa it is about a third and rising.[9]

Going hand in hand with the destruction of human lives, has been devastation of the ecologies those lives were once a part of. In the Third World, as in Britain, industrial agriculture is responsible for more ecological destruction than any other factor. Corporate PR agencies have been spreading the idea that GM crops will need less chemical spraying and are therefore good for the environment. The truth is that the most common GM plant varieties have been engineered to be herbicide tolerant. This enables a crop to be sprayed with more chemicals than ever before.

In general, genetic-industrial agriculture is characterised by both continuities and discontinuities with the chemical-industrial approach of green revolution agriculture.

It is continous with it to the extent that they both share a static, one-dimensional, commodified, fragmented, uniform, toxic, and capital- and input-intensive approach to agriculture. Genetic-industrial agriculture will continue, and indeed extend, the industrialisation of agricultural production, including the practice of monoculture cropping, the replacement of diverse plant varieties with static laboratory- bred varieties, and the use of toxic inputs.

Genetic engineering will also enable the destructive practices of industrial agriculture to continue where they may otherwise have reached their limits by creating plants that can tolerate greater quantities of chemical inputs or that are adapted to the soils degraded by industrial agricultural practices. For these reasons, the new genetically engineered seeds and inputs will perpetuate and intensify the environmental problems and concentrations of power and wealth produced by chemical-industrial agriculture. Indeed it is the very same multinational corporations that have developed and continue to sell chemical products and hybrid seeds that are now developing and commercialising the products of genetic engineering.

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and reconstitute it in new forms, since they now engage with organisms at the molecular level. In being able to tamper directly with the genetic structure of organisms, and to transfer genes across species boundaries, genetic engineering creates new kinds of ecological dangers as well as new forms of social control.[10]

The Colonisation of the Seed

The relative autonomy of the peasantry has always rested on its ability to grow its own food without the major involvement of the market. Every harvest farmers can collect the seeds from their crops and resow the following year. In many ways, the seed both symbolically and actually holds the key to freedom. Understanding this, the elite's new technologies change the seed from a key to freedom to a key to further slavery.

One of the most important weapons being developed for use against the rural poor is terminator technology. Terminator technology allows seed companies to sterilise new varieties, meaning that farmers will not be able to obtain healthy seeds for the following year at harvest. Instead, every year they will have to buy seeds off the corporations. This is once again an extension of the green revolution that created hybridised seeds that were by nature sterile. However, in the past, hybridisation has not been possible with many crops. Terminator technology will allow companies to sterilise any of their seeds. Research at the moment is aimed at crops such as rice, wheat, sorghum, and soya beans, the basis of a large section of the world's daily survival. To paraphrase Brecht; "First control their fodder, then you're in control of their philosophy".

> *Through patents and genetic engineering, new colonies are being carved out. The land, the forests, the rivers, the oceans, and the atmosphere have all been colonised, eroded, and polluted. Capital now has to look for new colonies to invade and exploit for its further accumulation. These new colonies are, in my view, the interior spaces of the bodies of women, plants and animals. Resistance to [biotechnology] is a resistance to the ultimate colonisation of life itself—of the future of evolution as well as the future of non-Western traditions of relating to and knowing nature. It is a struggle*

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to protect the freedom of diverse species to evolve. It is a struggle to protect the freedom of diverse cultures to evolve.[11]

Like most dominant technologies in this society, genetic engineering is an ecologically destructive, socially devastating weapon used by the elite in its continuing war of expansion against the wild and the world's poor. In this context it is handy to remember that Monsanto was the producer of Agent Orange, the chemical defoliant used by America in its war with the peasantry of Vietnam. It is no accident that Chiapas, home to the Mexican Zapatistas, is the first place where GM trees are being commercially grown.[12]

Disarming the Elite

What strategies can we use? Many reformist campaigners have mistakenly pinned their hopes on two tactics; (a) lobbying government and (b) consumer boycotts. Neither of these tactics can stop or seriously slow down genetic engineering. Lobbying the state will never have an impact because Western governments are in fact corporate fronts and genetic engineering is too important to them. Third World elites who see genetic engineering as a further grasping back of the small amounts of power they have over their turf, almost unanimously oppose patents on life and GM technology. They are irrelevant, none have the power to stand up to the global elite pushing genetic engineering. This was graphically shown at the 1999 International Bio-Safety Protocol Negotiations:

> *As ever the motives were money and power, with the N. Americans wanting to continue in their global control, the Europeans trying to re-assert their right to the global foray at par with N. Americans; and the Southerners trying to be spared from continuing to be the prey.*[13]

The above quote is the view of Dr Tewolde Egziabher, the general manager of Ethiopia's Environmental Protection Authority and chairperson of the African group of delegates at the negotiations. His conclusion was that global elite's aim in running the conference was probably that *it merely wished to fool its own public.*

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disease and other similar crises the European public are very suspicious of anything the companies and government say about food. Most people also feel that GM is inherently wrong, that is tampering with nature. Despite massive PR propaganda by both the state and the corporations this view only solidifies. A report leaked to Greenpeace, written for Monsanto reveals:

> *An ongoing collapse of public support for biotechnology and GM foods. At each point in this project, we keep thinking that we have reached the low point and that public thinking will stabilise, but we apparently have not reached that point.*[14]

Some retailers interviewed believed there was a fifty-fifty chance of losing to the pressure groups. Against the odds, thanks mainly to small local demonstrations, trolley blockades, determined leafleting, and pure public cynicism many retailers are backing out of GM foods. Indeed, the elite is getting very worried at this situation. The deputy head of the American Treasury said in a statement to the Senate this spring that the campaign against genetic engineering in Europe *is the greatest block to global economic liberalisation presently in existence.* People deserve to give themselves a pat on the back for this. However, as the main market for GM crops will be in the Third World consumer boycotts in the first world cannot stop the advancement of genetic engineering.

Two hundred years ago the English elite was forced to construct its new technological weaponry—the factory system—in hostile territory. Night after night the Luddites of northern England laid waste to the technology they knew was aimed directly at the destruction of their communties. Two hundred years later, the elite designs its new technological weapons thousands of miles from the people who will eventually feel the effects. Unable to reach and destroy the experiments themselves the peasantry are forced to rely on us to be the long arms of the third world. We must make the territory hostile again.

The challenge has been taken up and people all over Europe are walking in the footsteps of the Luddites. The test site sabotage is crippling the development of the technology, giving valuable breathing space to Third World movements and really

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The challenge has been taken up and people all over Europe are walking in the footsteps of the Luddites. The test site sabotage is crippling the development of the technology, giving valuable breathing space to Third World movements and really

beginning to intimidate companies. This year after many of its test sites were destroyed, Britain's leading plant breeding company, CPB Twyford, announced that it was pulling out of the development of GM crops. In a press statement they said;

> *…it was felt that the risks of continuing work with GMOs were not worth taking while the threat of indiscriminate vandalism exists.*

Other research organisations have also given up on genetics due to the possibility of their crops being uprooted. This includes the Royal Agricultural College, who were told by their insurers that premiums would rise massively if GM crops were planted. Nearly half of all test sites in Britain have been destroyed this year and the number will continue to rise.

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, dispair and domestic abuse that social dislocation brings. If that is all we succeed in then we have achieved much.

Growing the Global Land Community

As well as the 'thumb in the dam' aspect of anti-GM, campaigns, the resistance is serving other purposes. Groups all over the world are linking up, training and learning from each other. France, America, Britain, Holland, Germany, Ireland and India—people are together taking action. The hope for a free and ecological future lies in these embryonic movements which understand their enemies are the machine and its masters, and their comrades the land and its lovers. In helping to catalyse the growth of these revolutionary ecological groups around the world the elite may have designed a weapon which will rebound on themselves.

Under the cover of the mass, masks and midnight we, the new Luddites, will continue to fight back in the land struggle that has never ended.

beginning to intimidate companies. This year after many of its test sites were destroyed, Britain's leading plant breeding company, CPB Twyford, announced that it was pulling out of the development of GM crops. In a press statement they said;

…it was felt that the risks of continuing work with GMOs were not worth taking while the threat of indiscriminate vandalism exists.

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Under the cover of the mass, masks and midnight we, the new Luddites, will continue to fight back in the land struggle that has never ended.

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!

—from a speech in London by an Indian peasant of the Bharta Kissan Union—Punjab, May 1999

The Triumph of the Code

Enabled by the total colonisation of the seed, control of the global food industry will be further centralised into the hands of transnational corporations. This is the technologies' aim. This fusion of the agribusiness corporation and techno-science now culminates in the triumph of the logic of the code; in particular, the genetic-code of biotechnology, and the bar-code of consumer-industrial capitalism. The genetic-code and the bar-code are the means through which ever more aspects of contemporary life are being colonised, commodified and controlled. In this context, perhaps the fusion of these two codes may even lead to the imprinting of bar codes directly onto the DNA of genetically engineered organisms. Scientists at the Novagene corporation have apparently already *devoted enormous time and money to write the company logo into a cell, the world's first living trademark.* (Cary Fowler et.al, "The Laws of Life," *Development Dialogue*, 1/2 1988, p. 55.)

Further Reading

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"The Luddites War on Industry: A story of machine smashing and spies," *DoD* #6, p. 65 Learn about some of our inspirational political ancestors.

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Footnotes

1. *Earth First! Journal*, June/July 1987
2. Attacks on biotechnology in the Netherlands, *Do or Die* #1
3. Anti-Genetics Actions: Crop Circle Chaos and Vegetable Vandalism, *Do or Die* #6, p. 57.
4. *Genetix Update* June 1997, #1.
5. The increased food production of green revolution agriculture is yet another development fallacy. Study after study has shown that labor intensive small scale agriculture is far more efficient in producing food than capital intensive large scale agriculture. Nonindustrial farming techniques produce a large supply of food, consisting of many crops. Industrial-monoculture on the other hand produces a larger supply of one particular crop but a smaller amount of food in general. This uniform production of crops lends itself to mass society and the non-local—and therefore formal—economy. Production from the perspective of capitalist economics is relevant only if it is commodified. In the starving of the millions we see the conflict between commodity production for the market and food production for the stomach.
6. *Monocultures of the Mind: Biodiversity, Biotechnology and the Third World*, by Vandana Shiva, Third World Network, 1993, p.7.
7. "The Social Anthropology of Economic Underdevelopment," by Sadie, J.L, *The Economic Journal*, No.70, 1960, p. 302.

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8. *The Violence of the Green Revolution* by Vandana Shiva, (Zed Books, 1991)
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10. *Colonising the Seed* by Gyorgy Scrinis (FOE Australia)
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12. See the June 1999 report "Eucalyptus, Neoliberalism and NAFTA in Southeastern Mexico," as yet not published on paper but available on the web http://www.acerca.org/eucalyptus _mexico2.html [Seems to have moved as of 22/7/02: follow the "ACERCA" link from http://www.acerca.org/ then find the paper listed.]
13. "Of Power Affirmed to Men and of Safety Denied to Life," by Dr Tewolde Egziabher, *Third World Resurgence Magazine*, #106 Web: http://www.twnside.org.sg/
14. *Genetix Update* December/January 1999 #11

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My First Genetic Crop Trashing *(from issue 8)*

Actions on genetics test sites were increasing and our group thought it was high time we took part. I'd taken part in riskier actions before and ones involving more damage, but walking to the meet up point I still felt a pang of misapprehension. I met up with my friends and after waiting for someone who was (as usual) horrendously late, we set off.

Bundled as we were, five in the back of a pretty small car. I worried about whether we'd get stopped for simply being overloaded. Then I worried about not having a mask (which I quickly improvised by ripping off my long johns below the knee). I worried when a cop car behind us started flashing its lights motioning for the car behind us. to pull over. Thankfully after about quarter of an hour on the road the little voice in my head saying 'this is madness' became less audible. If you've never been involved in risky direct action then you may have a view of those of us who do it as brave and courageous. The reality is everyone gets scared—you just learn to ignore the nagging voice in your head. Experience pushes up the threshold so that you find it easier and easier to silence that voice in riskier and riskier situations. In truth it's only our fear that holds us back.

After about half an hour in the car. yabbering with my mates, the feelings of misapprehension turned into ones of anticipation. The adrenalin started to rise.

Halfway to the target site we met up with another van full. We didn't know everyone but we trusted those we did to bring only sensible accomplices. We still had a few hours of driving ahead of us so those of us in the back went to sleep. Awoken from our dreams with the news that we were fifteen minutes away from the target we gobbled some chocolate and psyched ourselves up.

One of us had recced the site out beforehand so despite the rather vague grid references on the government register we knew exactly where to go. Our car drove past the field first to check it out. All seemed quiet. We parked up a nearby lane and our ragged looking army piled out. We stretched our legs and

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went to sit behind a hedge—waiting a while for our eyes to grow accustomed to the darkness. Someone started nattering and was answered by the first of many shushes. After about ten minutes, we started trudging through the fields. Walking along the side of the hedgerow, we ducked down so that any cars passing on the (now deserted) country road would not see us. Anticipation, anticipation…

A few fields and a lot of shushes later, we arrived at the target—a test site of genetically engineered wheat. Silently we got to work trashing the crop. We all had different techniques—some edged forward kneeling on the ground and breaking armfulls of wheat—methodical but slow. Others simply trampled the crop, while some munched a path through the experiment with gardening shears. A house was in sight, but we were all dressed head to toe in black and it being late, we hoped the inhabitants were wrapped up in bed.

As we had given ourselves half an hour to carry out our mission, we checked our watches regularly. After what seemed like twenty minutes I looked at my watch to find we had only been there for eight. It had rained all day so the wheat was wet and soon we were all soaking. We didn't care—the adrenaline was rushing. Our faces were sombre and we were concentrating on the job at hand. Suddenly the halogen security lights on the house came on— shining with surprising force directly onto us. After a moment of panic we realised they'd probably just been set off by a fox or something and we got back to our work. Soon afterwards the lights blinked off. After quarter of an hour boredom was setting in—then someone realised that the crop would be destroyed quicker if we all lay down in a line and rolled over it. As we all rolled around bumping into each other the sober faces tuned to maniacal grins. Apart from swimming I challenge anyone to find a quicker way to get soaked than rolling around wet fields in the rain. It was truly great.

Time was running out and so we sped up our rolling. This induced lots of dizziness, maybe not the best thing to happen on an action you may need to run away from at any time. It was at this point that a car drove past. It's headlights reached out

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towards us but thankfully we remained in the pitch dark. What a surreal sight would have greeted the driver if his headlights hadn't been so dirty. As we came to the end of our "mission time" every minute seemed to go quicker. By now it was pouring and we were all pretty weary but a third of the crop was still intact. Breaking our own (sensible) rule we stayed ten minutes extra. The tension had really built by now and mixed with a bit of action hysteria every sound of a distant car brought worried expressions.

We finished off the crop and happy but tired from our manic work we trudged back to our vehicles. Walking bent over, once again a sudden rash of cars drove past—oblivious to our little tribe five feet away on the other side of the hedge—we hoped. Just as we got to the car someone realised they'd left a pair of shears—with their fingerprints on—in the middle of the field. (Always wear gloves!). After a moment of worry we realised another one of us had picked it up—phew!

Driving off. our different vehicles in different directions, we remained tense until we were around ten miles away. Then the smiles and giggling started. Chaos erupted in the back as we took off our top layer of clothes—bought the previous day from a charity shop. We changed shoes chucking the cheap trainers we had bought for the occasion in a bin liner with the clothes and tools. We drove into a town and dumped it all in a skip. We stopped at a phonebox and rang up the van's mobile to see if they were all right—they were. With no evidence of our crimes on us and entering a different county we all fell pretty pleased with ourselves. We got out the chocolate biscuits and put on some loud music. Too buzzing to sleep we \ chattered about future plans and took the piss out of each other for being too jumpy. In the early hour of the morning I was dropped off at home. A contented sleep followed.

The sabotage was both successful and fun. It was one of the first actions our affinity group had done and therefore unsurprisingly we made a few mistakes, mistakes we've learnt from. Having done a few more site trashings, we've refined our techniques. The biggest mistake we made was leaving our vehicles in

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a nearby layby. Their number plates if spotted would have led the cops right to our doorsteps. In subsequent actions we've been dropped off by the drivers, meeting them again at a pre-arranged pickup point and time. For this reason we have not overstayed our "mission time' again even if it has meant not entirely finishing the crop.

Trashing genetic test sites has really helped our group. New activists are now experienced and willing to go on and organise more actions. Activists who have been around for a while have also been re-empowered.

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Sabbing Shell: Office Occupation A-Go-Go! *(from issue 8)*

On January 4, the first working day of 1999, the Managing Directors at Shell-Mex House in London returned from their Christmas vacations to find their offices barricaded. The fact that it was Ogoni Day[1] was not marked on their corporate calendars. Nor was there a reference in their smart new year diaries to the massacre of the Ijaw people in the occupied lands of Nigeria.

Other activists, Shell employees and the media scrambled for more information on the office occupation, which was being broadcast on a live website from inside the building. Meanwhile, in Nigeria the Ijaw people were busy ensuring that Shell's image was not the only thing being damaged. Nigerian oil production has been cut by a up to a third thanks to occupations of oil refineries and machinery sabotage.[2] The resulting military crackdown had begun to filter through during the Christmas holidays. As an act of solidarity the action could not have been better timed. The Ijaw people had demanded the withdrawal of Shell from their lands by January 11, 1999. The Shell-sponsored Nigerian state response had been to execute eight youths and commit a series of atrocities including rape, torture, and looting in the first days of the new year. News of the occupation reached the Niger Delta via the offices of Environmental Rights Action in Port Harcourt. Perhaps it provided a few shreds of hope for the extraordinary people—Ijaw, Ogoni, or part of the grassroots Chikoko resistance movement—who have consistently put their lives and livelihoods on the line by calling for a complete end to multinational corporate oil production in their lands.

Back in the UK the occupation provided a taste of things to come for Shell and other multinational corporations, in what is turning out to be an interesting year. Cries of "Our resistance is as transnational as capital!" are already reverberating in multinational head offices. While refiling various bits of paper in one of the offices, activists found a document entitled 'Global Scenarios'. This booklet predicted a rise in the globalisation of protest which would be difficult to police and control. Shell had already decided that its strategy would be to detach itself from

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its global corporate domination image and focus instead on its contribution to local communities ['Glocalisation', in wanky new business parlance]. European environmental activists got a special mention. Apparently Shell and other multinational organisations are at a loss to explain our ability to become so angry at their behaviour. Their concern centred on our apparent ability to organise quickly and effectively via friendship links and the internet.

The occupation of the Shell-Mex offices in central London was looked upon as an outstanding success. While we would not wish to preach or claim that we have a monopoly on being organised, certain well known but too frequently ignored tactics used during the organisation of this action certainly helped. In a nutshell, a healthy cocktail of elaborate planning, a few splashes of chaos and a whole heap of luck ensured that bosses of multinational corporations in London were reminded on the first working day of 1999 that their days are numbered.

Good and bad things about the Shell Action: a personal view.

The Good Things

We Achieved Our Aims

By the time the action happened, we were, as one of the participants put it, *a group that knows exactly what it wants to achieve and why*. Some of us had become involved in the action simply in response to the question *We're going to hit an oil company on January 4. Wanna come?* The problem is that sometimes, as activists, we don't get any further than this. We know who the enemy is—what more could we need to know? On the Shell action we thought and thought about why we were doing it. Principles and objectives were thrashed out early on. At the time the process seemed pretentious but in retrospect it pulled us together. A briefing document was prepared so that everyone was equipped with the same amount of knowledge. It goes without saying that a sense of passion and anger provided the motivation to act. What made the Shell action a success was that this passion was combined with pragmatic considerations of where to hit, how and why.

The Aims of the Action

- To show real solidarity with people in the Niger Delta

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The Good Things

We Achieved Our Aims

By the time the action happened, we were, as one of the participants put it, *a group that knows exactly what it wants to achieve and why*. Some of us had become involved in the action simply in response to the question *We're going to hit an oil company on January 4. Wanna come?* The problem is that sometimes, as activists, we don't get any further than this. We know who the enemy is—what more could we need to know? On the Shell action we thought and thought about why we were doing it. Principles and objectives were thrashed out early on. At the time the process seemed pretentious but in retrospect it pulled us together. A briefing document was prepared so that everyone was equipped with the same amount of knowledge. It goes without saying that a sense of passion and anger provided the motivation to act. What made the Shell action a success was that this passion was combined with pragmatic considerations of where to hit, how and why.

The Aims of the Action

- To show real solidarity with people in the Niger Delta

rebelling against Big Oil and its private security force (the Nigerian army). It has becoming increasingly easy for multinational corporations to isolate struggles and resistance. The strength of linking together undermines their ability to do this.

- Economic sabotage, in the form of disruption of Shell's working day by direct action. An important factor highlighted at one of the planning meetings was that the Shell-Mex offices was where images were manufactured. The office occupation and banner drop made it harder for Shell to maintain their respectable facade for a day.
- To spread dissent and lower the morale not only of Shell's workforce, but of other oil industry companies and the corporate world in general.
- To carry out a symbolic occupation of the seat of power within Shell-Mex House.

In this glorious anti-corporation year the message was clear and simple. Shell also provided an ideal target. Too often we get side-tracked on single issues. Oil companies, with their hideous environmental and social record, combine a series of struggles not only in the developing world but in the UK too.

It Was Well Planned

Meetings were held well in advance to ensure that the jobs that needed to be done were parcelled out. Tasks were taken on and separate working groups sorted out the internet site, the banner, the text of the leaflet to employees. Each job was valued, criticism was kept to a minimum and praise was dished out regularly. People split up into discussion groups to make decisions and affinity groups were sorted out.

Logistics of how to get into the building, where the Managing Directors' offices were, how to get there, how to barricade, what to wear, and how to negotiate were discussed well in advance. Too many office occupations simply fail because the main concern is how to get into the building. Once we've made it through the door all hell breaks loose. This time we knew where we were going and how to get there. As one group walked up the stairs, they had a long and detailed conversation about

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someone's sister who was undergoing fertility treatment. The result was that we were calm and other office staff smiled as they overheard the conversation.

We Had the Joy of Watching Shell's Offices Get Totally Trashed

...not by us, but by the forces of evil themselves. Knowing how to barricade an office certainly helps. Filing cabinets, expensive desks, computers, and chairs were piled high in front of doors and inner walls. Shell employees and the police then decided to smash through the walls after failing in their exasperating attempts to negotiate with us (the usual *Come out now, you've made your point*!), and they caused thousands of pounds worth of damage. The situationist group occupying Malcolm Brinded's office on the fourth floor arranged seats for a theatre-like view of the Tactical Support Group as they smashed their way in. Offers of tea and biscuits neatly arranged on the coffee table somewhat undermined the police's orders of "On the floor! Now! Everybody!" The police were made to look like fools and we had a good laugh!

It Was Well-Timed

Firstly because of what was happening in Nigeria. Activists' access to the Web while in the building meant that we could get hold of information directly. News of the recent killings in the Niger Delta was still coming through, which had the effect of making us ever angrier. Doubts and fears about what we were doing were instantly dispelled as we continued to hear of the atrocities being carried out by the Nigerian Army. As one activist stated to a Shell bigwig: "You have blood on your hands." Secondly because January 1999 marked the handover from the outgoing head of Shell UK, Chris Fay, to the new man at the top, Malcolm Brinded—both their offices were occupied on January 4th, letting them know that whoever's in charge we're going to be watching them. Also, when Shell turned off the phones and electricity we were self-sufficient. Mobile phones meant that we could continue contact with each other and the outside world.

We Didn't Go To Jail

We thought we would. But we didn't. Instead, we got a few hours in a police cell, followed by release with no charges, presumably because Shell did not want the embarrassment of a

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The Website

One of the concerns around this innovation was that it might be a media gimmick. In the event, this concern was well-founded—the *Guardian*'s piece on the action focused entirely on the website, went on about other revolutionary groups who use the internet (my, how clever of us), turned it into an advert for Undercurrents, and didn't mention the Ijaw once. Seriously.

However, that says more about mainstream media than about the real reason why we went live on the internet with a site which closely resembled Shell's own. We were both using our own media and subverting theirs. By the end of the week a large number of people had visited the site, including Shell in the UK, the Netherlands, the US and Australia; Texaco in the UK and US; oil company Amerada Hess; the US military and US government and some *DoD*gy-looking Romanian finance house. The site received 10,230 hits on January 4th alone. The next day Shell threatened to injunct the web site which appears alongside its own when the word "Shell" is searched for.

The Banner

The banner that appeared mid-morning between two lamp posts on Waterloo Bridge as crowds were beginning to gather around the Shell-Mex offices was excellent. It read *Shell: Filthy, Thieving Murderers—It's Time To Go*: our message, our thoughts, completely unadulterated by the media circus. Discussions that we had after the action focused on how this had more power than any press article. Imagine if there had been a series of banner drops around London to coincide with the occupation!

The Leaflet

A group of five individuals went back the next day and leafleted employees. Shell employees were dying to know what had happened and why. Workers had to file through police lines, collecting flyers as they went. After, suggestions were made about writing up a version of the action and distributing this to workers with an invitation to leak further information to us.

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Such follow-ups limit the ability of companies to whitewash actions and lower morale generally.

The Affinity Groups Worked

Of course, it's easy to be all luvvie and self-congratulatory after a good action, but there are good reasons why the group dynamics worked surprisingly well:

We didn't agree on everything, but through some fairly heavy and long discussions before the action (actually, even before we got down to the planning), we thrashed out what our aims were and whittled them down to some fairly hardcore objectives.

There were differing levels of experience within the group, but everyone worked on respecting each other. There were disagreements but we had the tools to deal with these and the ability to finally reach a consensus. We also didn't break the agreements that we'd made with each other about how we

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Make Your Own Millennium Bug!

There's a lot of job satisfaction in de-activating silicon-based life forms on an office occupation, so we thought we'd offer you the benefit of years of our experience at crashing computers. The three basic techniques that follow apply to Windows 95 or 98, and probably to Windows NT too. Start by opening the Windows Explorer and check how many drives there are—if there are more than four, the computer is probably attached to the office network.

***Re-formatting**: While this may cause the least damage of the three methods, if there is no network attachment it may be your best option. To format the disk, simply select 'Start menu—shutdown—restart computer in MSDOS mode'. When you get the C:\> Prompt, type 'format c:/u'.*

***Repartitioning**: If you're going to re-format a hard disk, you might as well repartition it too—this makes it harder to recover data than just re-formatting it. Stick a floppy disk in when you get to the C:\> Prompt, and type 'sys a:', followed by 'copy c:\windows\command\fdisk.*a:'. If no file is found, type 'copy c:\dos\fdisk.*a:' and format as described above. Reboot the PC with the floppy disk in the machine and type 'fdisk'. Delete all partitions, reboot*

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would conduct the negotiations.

The actual affinity groups were very small (four, four, and five), which made us focused and enabled individuals to work very closely with one another in equality.

We were 'experts' on the Niger Delta situation

Thanks to the briefing document it was difficult for Shell to sidetrack us. When the outgoing Managing Director Chris Fay wheeled out a Nigerian employee who assured us from behind the barricades that he knew we were doing this for him, activists promptly replied and demanded to discuss the current situation in the Delta with the Ijaw. The Nigerian employee disappeared as quickly as he had arrived.

Things That Were Not So Good

We Wanted To Be In There For 24 Hours

Unfortunately the combined force of 30 Tactical Support Unit bods

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Deleting files on the hard disk is pretty straightforward. Highlight those you want to delete—select lots by holding the 'Shift' or 'control' key down as you click. Hold down the 'Shift' key before you press the 'delete' key, and don't release it until the 'confirm file delete' box appears. It is also worth emptying the recycle bin after deleting—click on the bin and choose 'empty recycle bin' from the 'file' menu. Installing a Disk cleanup utility (www.ex-ecpc.com/~sbd/CleanUp.html) after deleting should make it almost impossible to recover the data, is much more effective than simply formatting the disk, and the utility is also small enough to fit conveniently onto a floppy disk.

To delete files from a network drive follow the same procedure as above, but when you've deleted something, go to 'Start menu—Run' and type 'command'. Change to the drive that you have deleted from by typing the drive letter and a colon (eg. 'u:'), then type 'cd/', followed by 'purge/a'. On most networks this should ensure that files are completely deleted.*

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Planning An Action Over The Winter Holidays.

The resulting disruption (no one was where they usually were) on top of a few hangovers and transport nightmares caused plenty of preparation stress which should have been unnecessary. Not least of these was a few of us arriving really late to the planning meeting the day before the action. But then perhaps it's a cop-out to blame it all on Christmas—maybe the truth is that deep inside every sorted activist there's a lunchout dying to escape. [Damn right! (See ya…)—Ed.]

Lack of a collective decision about the presence of the alternative media.

Those who invited Undercurrents assumed that it would be okay with everyone else, while those who would have preferred them not to be involved had not articulated the good reasons why not. This was then compounded by the issue being discussed the night before the action with the Undercurrents person already part of the group. Kinda hard to start a big political discussion at that point.

Total Lack Of Security after the Action Happened

Most activists appear to have rather large egos! Enough said!

Liaison with Nigerian Groups in London

…prior to the action was a bit farcical. But then it's not realistic to expect an action-level relationship after two rushed phone calls to a group or person not familiar with the direct action ethic. Fortunately, such relationships are beginning to be fostered since the occupation took place.

Post-Action Idea: Reallocating the Press Role

Given the emphasis above on direct communication it might be thought that the action did not bother with conventional press. Wrong—we had a press officer, put out a press release, and also had the participation of an Undercurrents activist. (One participant lost all their hardcore credibility instantly when, upon learning of the arrival of TV crews outside, they danced across the room saying *The cameras are here! The cameras are here!*)

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Some interesting suggestions were made after the action about an alternative role for a press worker or Publicity and Communications Person as they could now be known, such as:

- Ringing around EF! and other similar groups to let them know about the action and asking for support—support possibly taking the form of a phone or fax blockade, bogus press calls, leafleting and shutting down local Shell garages.
- Faxing other oil companies to let them know what's happening and informing them that they are equally a target.
- Contacting groups in other countries struggling against the same company.
- Directly contacting the group you're trying to support in your solidarity action.

There was a feeling amongst individuals that far too much time was spent discussing the conventional press. It is well to remember that the deep fundamental change we want will never be achieved by relying on the media industry, which after all is as much part of global capitalism as Shell.

Conclusion

Clearly a one-off office occupation in solidarity with indigenous groups in the Niger Delta is not going to change the world nor bring a company like Shell to its knees.

However as a symbolic act of solidarity it made its point, made the participants feel positive and with any luck gave some hope to those fighting in the Niger Delta. In the game of cricket that has developed with the state (our tactics are well known and the police know how to deal with them), the Shell action proved that if we spend the time and energy in preparation and organisation then office occupations and other such actions still have a role to play. As we were occupying Shell-Mex House, news filtered through of the Reclaim The Streets occupation of London Underground's head offices in support of the striking tube workers, and of 60 people up trees and down tunnels in a Crystal Palace eviction alert: Triple Whammy!!!!!

Update: 21/4/99 The Shell Centre—their other London headquarters—splashed with red and green paint as Mark Moody-Stuart (annual salary

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£1.4m) launched Shell's second annual report, called *People, Planet, Profit—An Act of Commitment*. This was an act taken in solidarity with the people of the Niger Delta and to make clear that despite the greenwash, there is blood on their hands and there can never be a green or ethical oil industry.

We Must Devastate the Hard Drives Where the Wealthy Live!

Notes

1. Ogoni Day has been celebrated since 1993 to mark the anniversary of the day the Ogoni people launched their struggle against Shell and forced the oil company off their lands.
2. Nigeria produces 2 million barrels a day of oil—*up to a third of output was halted at one point last year by piracy and sabotage by activists demanding a fairer share of revenues for the region's impoverished inhabitants. —The Financial Times* 09/06/99.

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Take a Sad Song and Make it Better? *(from issue 8)*
Ecological Restoration in the UK

> *I see what is possible when we stand our ground, our common ground. I see forests and grasslands filled with masses of flowers and the native birds and wildlife that had long ago disappeared from this part of the planet. I see what can be done from the barest beginnings and under the most impossible conditions, with hardly any means or resources. Not by calculating, or waiting for the opportune moment, or the big money, or for a conference to confirm what must be done. I see what can be done by the power of simply doing it. And as I turn toward the starkly contrasting landscape behind me, I see all that is yet to be done.*[1]

Ecological restoration is one of the most compelling tasks that we face, if we are to patch up the battered cradle of life that sustains us, as well as renewing our own bruised mental ecologies. Successfully removing the sources of the ongoing destruction will simply bring us round to our first full realisation of the scale of capitalism's ecologically fractured legacy. The challenge will be to steer ourselves to a gentle landing: not only the unglamorous work of clean-up, but the pre-eminent adventure of remaking an idyll from the wreckage. This unfolding process holds out the promise of a new accord: alienation banished, reconciled with ourselves and the world around us.

One obvious question is: why restore at all? Nature is resilient, with an immense capacity for recovery, so long as natural processes are given sufficient space and time to operate freely. (Even in a hostile environment, life still crowds irrepressibly up through the cracks.) History is littered with stories of the detritus of past empires redeemed by the encroaching vegetation. Bill McKibben describes "an explosion of green" in the north-eastern US after farming was largely abandoned in the 19th century—in New York State alone *forest cover… continued to grow by more than a million acres a decade through 1980.*[2] Closer

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to home, *thousands of acres of woodland sprang up on derelict land in south-east Essex in the 1930s and 1940s.*[3]

Enabling natural colonisation and regeneration, rather than the artifice of planting, is widely favoured. This will *allow the most appropriate species for each location and site to establish and in the long term will be most likely to develop into healthy, biologically diverse woodland ecosystems.*[4] Conversely, the (understandable) *human desire to see instant results or at least appreciable results within our lifetime*[5] risks contriving inferior, quick-fix ersatz ecosystems—or "quite areas."[6]

The desire to leave nature to its own regenerative devices is not just sound ecological sense, but a reasonable reaction to the depths of conservation's mania for management. After the Great Storm of 1987, one organisation blithely proclaimed that *Trees are at great danger from nature*, and another that *unless… positive encouragement [is] given to owners to restore these woods… they will revert to scrub and never recover.*[7] Preposterous statements like *it is important that woodland is effectively managed to ensure its survival*[8] seem to spring more from an insecure need to feel wanted and indispensable—and thus engaging in frenetic busywork to obtain some kind of therapy through landscape. Conservationists often appear to suffer from a paternalist philosophy of Spare the Saw and Spoil the Tree.

Others have a valid objection to any energies devoted to restoration, given the continuing onslaught against the vestiges of the natural that still remain—comparing it to *repaint[ing] the kitchen cabinets when the house is on fire.*[9] Amongst practitioners however, there is a widespread assumption that restoration is never a substitute for preservation—rather that the two should complement one another, particularly in a country as devoid of healthy ecosystems as ours.[10] Developers, on the other hand, routinely abuse the concept of restoration—and the related translocation[11]—of habitats, as a pretext smoothing the way for further destruction. Talk of planning gain, end use, mitigation, and exchange land is predicated on the spurious assumption that we can build a better habitat, as good as new—as if they were just so many interchangeable parts on a Fordist assembly line. This

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kind of habitat engineering is reminiscent of the environment industry's end of pipe approach to pollution, as applied to physical landscapes rather than toxic chemicals: rejecting any inconvenient changes to their processes, instead concentrating on lucrative cures to treat the problems that invariably arise. (Don't forget that the Department of Transport [now DETR] is, laughably, the nation's biggest planter of trees.) Possibly one of the most repellent examples of this is English Nature (the government's abysmal wildlife watchdog) allowing peat-stripping scum Levington to take what it can from the fantastic Thorne and Hatfield Moors SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), only to so-called restore them in about 25 years' time.[12]

However, the fact that nature can and does bounce back unaided should not be cause for complacency. Recovery—particularly back to its original condition—is not inevitable; nature can roll with most but not all of the punches we throw: *'Forests precede civilisation', it is said, 'deserts follow'…The [Roman] Empire's North African breadbasket, where 600 cities once flourished, is now a desert, as are the forests that were the breeding grounds of Hannibal's elephants.*[13] There is a place for human agency in the work of restoration.

Why Restore?

> *Whether or not a devastated area recovers depends on a number of conditions. Most fundamentally, the site needs its original topsoil… if the top horizon [of the soil] is altered—by adding chemicals, ploughing or planting crops—a different kind of vegetation emerges when the site is abandoned… But if neither fertilisers nor crops are introduced, even heavily used areas can return to the condition of nearby undisturbed areas.*[14]

Unfortunately for us, since at least 1945, virtually all of lowland Britain (and much of the uplands) has been subjected to substantial soil 'modification'. It may seem odd to define this as a problem, but huge tracts of our countryside are suffering from 'eutrophication', or excessive fertility—either as a result of direct application of chemicals, or indirectly felt on adjoining land through 'drift' of the chemicals.

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> *The intensity of the seed rain (from a once rich countryside) is much diminished, and though the seed bank in the soil may be long-lived for some species, decades of herbicide and inorganic fertiliser use have transformed soils to make a return to the previous norm difficult without a helping hand.*[15]

While natural regeneration may, in time, make good some of the losses, without any remedial intervention—including drastic measures such as actually stripping the topsoil[16]—we might find ourselves locked into an intractable spiral of decline. An example of this 'defertilising' work—perhaps better described as rehabilitation than restoration—is the 'biomanipulation' practised on the Norfolk Broads to reduce accumulated phosphate pollution and the accompanying algal blooms.[17] Such intervention has been described as a kickstart approach[18]—striving not to prejudice its future direction, but setting nature back down on the launch pad, to go its own way.

Looked at more broadly, our restoration efforts may at least help by *undoing the constraints our industrialism have placed upon [nature].*[19] For instance, while *artificially straightened rivers tend to 'recover' naturally,*[20] this can't always be relied upon; extensive work was carried out on the Afon Ogwen (which *resembled a land drainage channel, not the Welsh river it once was*) in Snowdonia in 1998, because *the natural... regime of the river had not shown any indication of being able to repair itself from the degradations.*[21] Rivers and their floodplains have fared as badly as the soil; there is a powerful case for reversing our ubiquitous drainage works, and reinstating coherent hydrological regimes, in *what must have been a gloriously wet natural landscape*[22]—as long as we can keep the ague (malaria) at bay this time!

The scanty (semi) natural areas that we do still enjoy are in anything but robust shape—ill-equipped to absorb the threats that future change and upheaval might bring. Much of conservation is dedicated to shoring up these wobbly, fragmented habitat islands—atomised, overcrowded life rafts, whose species are being inexorably worn down by 'biogeographical' attrition.[23] As the National Trust's Rob Jarman explains, *each unit of habitat*

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lost [outside] makes the [ecological] communities on the Trust's properties that much more vulnerable to external change.[24] An injury to all is an injury to one—for example, other reservoir populations are less available to bail out local extinctions.[25] Probably the most critical challenge confronting the fragments in their already weakened and susceptible state is that of climate change[26]—or more correctly, the accelerated volatility of the Broken Thermostat effect.[27] As climate change brings the crisis of fragmentation to a head, now more than ever the agenda not only should be, but must be one of *restoration, enhancement and expansion... rather than just trying to harm [the environment] less*[28]—joining up the dots to allow for migration in the face of rapidly changing conditions. It is not just the physical movement of individuals and species that is at stake here, but opportunities for the exchange of unique, locally adapted genetic material, which have been so long constrained; basic genetic diversity is the ultimate insurance policy against unpredictable change.[29]

In a country—like Britain—plagued with an advanced state of ecological decomposition, what might be termed *emergency ward* or *basket case* conservation also becomes very important—this is, perhaps literally, clutching at straws. It can cover particular regions—eg. the Caledonian pine forest of the Highlands, or the native woodlands of Orkney and Shetland—where the habitat is at such a perilously low ebb that it is losing its grip on the cliff edge, and may not currently be able to help itself. It can also encompass country-wide habitat types (and indeed species) whose near or total absence leaves a jarring gap in the continuum of the landscape. To pull a few names out of the hat, the following might fall into this category: the natural transitions of woodland up to and beyond the treeline, flooded or "carr" forest, lowland valley mires,[30] and so on.

One must not overlook the inward and social dimensions of ecological restoration—they may even be its most crucial attributes. It is at the least a statement of intent. Without getting too carried away with a sense of our collective power, restoration is ripe with the liberating, even alchemical, promise of transformation—finding its material expression in our immediate surround-

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ings. It offers an exhilarating taste of that most dangerous commodity: hope, and a way out; there's everything to play for, all bets are off. As ever, when people are truly able to make their world—even the tiniest little scrap—the grinding malaise of destruction and loss begins to dissipate, prospects for creation and renewal rebound, and imprisoning notions of 'human nature' go out the window. By getting to grips—down and dirty—with their common patch, so rarely permitted except under the auspices of government and industry, the barren and hostile can become convivial space. We can begin to explore the links between conservation and conversation, between re-creation and recreation. As the Mattole Restoration Council came to realise in Northern California, *through engaging with the fundamental processes of a particular place, we might discover the appropriate models for our own activities and organisation.*[31] The restorer restored; the doing (praxis) is as important as the done (it's never done). Tara Garnett writes of the 'emboldening' effect of, in this case, urban farming: it can *stimulate a sense of common ownership and, in doing so, spur a sense of community into existence. This community may then move on to further collective action*[32]... During the riots in Benwell, Newcastle in the early 1990s, the *sense of ownership of the Park [which they had created] by the local community became very apparent... Many houses and the local pub were burnt, but the Nature Park—right in the centre—was untouched.*[33]

There is also an argument for efforts to maintain the rich, characteristic cultural—or vernacular—landscapes, whose *patterns in particular places were created locally by the daily work of ordinary people.*[34] While requiring potentially problematic management, they developed, at least in part, to satisfy local subsistence needs from local means, in the absence of today's national and global economy. In view of the pressing need to wean ourselves off petrochemical dependence, and to avoid stomping our ecological footprints across the globe[35], habitats like orchards, reedbeds, perhaps coppice, etc., could have a lot to teach us. In conjunction with more recent techniques such as permaculture, they could rejuvenate our sorely depleted skills base, and thus our own resilience and autonomy.[36]

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Conservation and the Control Complex

Conservation has been described as *a unique enterprise in which industry expands as the resource diminishes, and there is no product.*[37] In this respect it is a quintessentially post-modern industry, and conservationists are masters of meta-work (work about work)—ceaselessly networking and strategising within the charmed circle of accredited bodies—and while *ever more effort has gone into conservation of nature… ever greater loss and destruction have occurred.*[38] When considered in historical context, the actual effect of most restoration efforts is only to replace the lost with the new—imparting no net gain. At best, depending on the vagaries of the economy, it is a holding operation—managing the crisis, knife-edge stabilising of the rate of decline. By virtue of being 'non-political' realists, conservationists are of course anything but. Refusing to wrestle with the explosive questions of power relations, land ownership and distribution, they are forced to rely upon the fruitless Voluntary Principle, and its unholy trinity of incentives, policy, and guidance—the beseeching, red-carpet treatment for any landowner gracious enough to change their ways.

W.M. Adams argues that it is *an anathema to many conservationists to consider letting nature go*, and that *caution about the abandonment of land is partly about the loss of control. Much of our conservation is based very precisely on the idea of control.*[39] He likens it to *gardening on a vast scale*[40]—"lawn order." At times, conservationists seem far more forgiving of economic growth than scrub growth—laissez faire for capitalism, zero tolerance for wild nature. (Maybe it is the only thing over which they can exercise control in this society.) Wildness must be quarantined[41] or taken into protective custody—kept in its place and made literally managable. The ferocity with which they fall upon scrub raises suspicions that it is a displacement activity—anything to divert attention from the uncomfortable realisation that you can't restore your way out of a social relationship. Habitat loss has come primarily through social factors, and can only truly be made good by social transformation—not by swimming against the tide with more acute and technically proficient land management programmes.

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Conservationists are incorrigible planners—partly through necessity, as fragmentation demands "an ever more detailed and complex knowledge of the remaining [wildlife] interest"(42)—and its corollary, an ever more specialist and thus inaccessible conservation, reduced to a technical question. Continually sharpening management tools is not a bad thing in itself, but does seem part of the quest for the holy grail of the 'perfect plan', balancing every conceivable need, at which point everything will fall neatly into place. At worst, it smacks of the hubris of the technocrat, inhabiting an ordered, predictable and empirical universe—the tyranny of the measurable—and a reluctance to admit to uncertainty and doubt—There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your management plan. Not being armed with a plan is to go naked and exposed into the wood.

Market values permeate the conservationist worldview:

> *From economics have come words and ideas such as 'producers', 'consumers' and 'efficiency', and using them ecologists have interpreted ecological change as working like a modern industrial consumer society... [leaving] conservation with a strong legacy of an instrumentalist view of nature... [and] nature as system.*[43]

But it's not quite this straightforward. Traditional ways of 'working' the land did at least enable some natural value to endure intact. Intensification on the other hand has meant the disappearance of even the commonplace[44], and a situation in which those areas which are 'zoned' for wildlife—like reserves—often have *no natural environment left in between them.*[45] The archaic and unproductive *1930s agriculture that conservationists practice*46 has become increasingly alienated from the rest of the countryside. Hence there is a tension in conservation. On the one hand there is an impetus to detach land from (at least) the modern, intensive form of economic circulation. Thus there is an implied critique of economic practices; both because, on a practical level, conservationists are only too well aware of the way in which these practices thwart and frustrate their best efforts, and philosophically, because of a sense of nature as being, at heart, unassimilable: other than and perhaps diametrically

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opposed to the economy. On the other hand, conservationists pursue a strategy of safeguarding and justifying ecological value by assigning economic value (the tail wagging the dog?): pricing, or enclosing, everything that moves (and some that doesn't)—running around with a butterfly net and a bar coder.[47] From this perspective the problem is not the market itself, but those things that hang in valueless limbo outside it. They must be reincorporated, if only by being enclosed within a policy framework.

As well as being self-serving squealing for more snout-space in the government trough, the following quote illustrates this well:

> *Neglect is a real issue, because the heathlands play no real role in any economic system and are simply not cared for. What is needed is better funding of conservation schemes which will enable owners and managers to produce the environmental goods that society now demands.*[48]

Farming for Wildlife, Farming of Wildlife

The crisis now afflicting farming is the spectre haunting conservation. Their banal big idea, in response to the looming problems triggered by overproduction, liberalisation of world trade under the GATT Treaty and so on, is to reform the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Apparently our basic structures are sound, it is just the details that need tweaking or fine-tuning—this is a job for the policy wonks! (Some are even still resorting to an 'unfettered' free market—as opposed to the distortions of the CAP—as the answer to all our woes.[49]) CAP subsidies will be redirected towards 'agri-environment' grants, the panacea which will help to reposition farming, and enable farmers to 'diversify'. Agriculture's new identity will primarily be as purveyor of intangible luxury environmental goods, such as delivering biodiversity targets—farming for wildlife—the food surplus presenting us with *a tremendous window of opportunity for redesigning the countryside for other purposes*:[50] in theory, making good those habitat losses. As the Council for National Parks say, *the main product is a wild and sustainable landscape, not stock or timber.*[51] (Whether any of this is 'sustainable' is open to question—it

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hinges upon the continuation of surplus, and a highly sophisticated economy that is able to forego economic return on land and set it aside.)

According to Raoul Vaneigem,

> *so brutal has the exploitation of nature been that its resources—the very nature of its profitability—are threatened with exhaustion; there is thus no choice but to develop ecological markets in order to get the economy out of its present morass.*[52]

Central to this is the task of devising virtuous products, along with *virtuous* jobs like conservation—zealous self-alienation—working long hours for low pay, for the cause.

Farming for wildlife readily becomes farming *of* wildlife: its discrete commodification (and heaven help those uncharismatic species that are left out in the cold, that can't be commodified[53]). For example, Landlife are administering the *Market Gardening with Indigenous Species* project, under which *local farmers will be planting wildflower crops* [sic] *thanks to a grant from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.*[54] (By the way, their National Wildflower Centre's mission is to promote *the creation of new habitats that have economic, environmental, and ecological benefits for the nation.*[55])

Many nature reserves already seem akin to beauty factories, governed by aesthetic productivism. What are sometimes known as Physical Outputs are maximised; one manager, discussing the merits of non-intervention, bemoaned the fact that *funders [of reserves]… want to see action and colour*—hence coppicing, which *bring[s] about a short burst of bluebells and butterflies*[56]—all fluttering, all flowering habitats, practically on performance-related pay. Nature is *consumed in special places… and made to yield predictable products,* becoming *one among a range of commodities that can be purchased by the wealthy to enhance their leisure time.*[57]

Reserve cramming (like town cramming)—or high unit productivity—is partly a consequence of fragmentation. For instance, *woods often act as reserves for the whole landscape, especially in intensively arable regions. Many… should be regarded as grassland reserves, as well as woodland reserves.*[58] They must work flat out to be all things to all taxa—to please all of the

hinges upon the continuation of surplus, and a highly sophisticated economy that is able to forego economic return on land and set it aside.)

According to Raoul Vaneigem,

> *so brutal has the exploitation of nature been that its resources—the very nature of its profitability—are threatened with exhaustion; there is thus no choice but to develop ecological markets in order to get the economy out of its present morass.*[52]

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species all of the time. But *the more effort that is put in to make it rich, the further it departs from naturalness.*[59]

With restoration there is also the temerity of zoning for wildlife—striding grandly about the landscape, prescribing Here a hay meadow, there a salt marsh (but not There), or This is a wood for butterflies, that one is for lichens (a kind of comparative advantage—one hopes with trickle-down-effect benefits for other species).

Reading RSPB[60] reports I am mesmerised by the dance of the graphs. Conservation is reminiscent of an EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) stock-taking system, monitoring a steady stream of population data—eg. such-and-such has just made it into the Red Data Book (the species emergency list)—their stock is low—*Darren, we need more garganey.* The habitat-creation trucks then get rolling for this just-in-time production, bringing new waders on line to match identified need.

Restoration and management for wildlife might actually have detrimental indirect effects on the surrounding area. 'Rewetting' of depleted wetland reserves may exacerbate the serious problem of water abstraction: it can cause the already degraded neighbouring countryside to become even drier and less hospitable, by creaming off what little surplus water there is.[61] These refugia might therefore consolidate habitat fragmentation, monopolising the wildlife, acting like a vortex which strips its hinterland of biodiversity, or like an out of town supermarket, emptying value out of its vicinity. For example, Pulborough Brooks in Sussex's Arun valley (see profile in the Roundup) now harbours *up to 75% of the total Arun valley wintering birds* every January.[62] While *bird counts on the reserve are soaring... counts for the area are still falling disastrously.*[63] By concentrating the "resource" like this, the very visible spectacular displays at Pulborough may be masking the decline rather than reversing it. (Although it seems likely that in the long run the whole of the Arun valley may actually benefit from Pulborough.)

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course.(64) David Helton reported on the 1992 meeting of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), where the doctrine of sustainable utilisation—and by extension, the question of nature's Identity—was up for grabs. Like "farming for wildlife," it involves a species being *taken out of the economics of nature and brought into the economics of man*[65] [sic] and is heralded as *some kind of solution to the problems of human growth, both numeric and economic, without that growth having to stop.* The rhino is *the one large mammal in the world whose existence is conspicuously threatened by international trade*, and has therefore been purposefully excluded from the economic sphere by CITES. And yet, the proposal in 1992 was still to actually "harvest" horn from live rhinos and *put [it]... on the legalised, reopened market*, with the result that *rhinos would be paying their own way in the world.*

Thankfully the proposal was rejected, but as Helton observes, the future foreshadowed by this approach

> *doesn't look like one worth living in, for people or rhinos either. The reason we save the rhino... is because it's... living wild on its own terms and deserving to. If we have to use emergency measures now... it's only so that some time in the future rhinos can return to their proper existence, in a world made sane again, with humanity under its own control and for the other species a normal wild life, not as livestock in a global barnyard—not with the rhino as some kind of tonic-producing cow, an ongoing business. It would almost be better off extinct.*

It's a clearcut choice, albeit one that has been foisted upon us: to

> *either stop growing or go for a desperate long shot and put absolutely everything under human management.*[66]

Disturbing Climaxes

Natural succession is the "process of change in plant communities over time towards a natural climax, for example from grassland to scrub and then woodland."(67) Conservationists have been fighting the 'wars of succession' since at least the 1960s, in an attempt to retain those wildlife values that flow from continuity of traditional management features such as heathland.

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(It should be pointed out here that it can be very difficult to precisely define the traditional practices that conservation harks back to.[68] Also, that arresting ecosystem change in this way has been pointedly compared to the futility of *trying to hold back a flood with a raincoat.*[69]) However, conservationists are now beginning to stage what might be called a managed retreat (a la Dunkirk?) from universally regulating such natural processes—perhaps learning to let go.

The orthodox model of nature emphasised predictability and continuity. Change did figure in the equation, but only as part of an orderly and inexorable progression, with each stage in the succession obligingly laying down the conditions for the next, until it achieved a stable equilibrium—a relatively steady-state (revealing term![70]) climax vegetation like woodland[71]. This is of course at least in part a cultural construct, reflecting the political climate out of which it sprang as much as it does nature. The theory *was strongly rooted in Darwinian ideas of biological evolution, and spin-off ideas of social 'progress'*[72] redolent of a time of Eternal Verities, a naturally ordained and fixed social order and a linear and cumulative conception of history. Humanity was perched in its rightful place atop the evolutionary tree—the Crown of Creation, or climax species—with the imputed hierarchy in nature serving to endorse the ranking of classes and races within humanity itself.

However, we now find that

> *climax, like the horizon, may be a useful concept, but it... can never be reached... when ecologists examined climax vegetation their studies were upset by disturbance. It soon became clear that disturbance was not an exception, a temporary upset, but a central part of the ecology of a habitat.*[73]

Disturbance, from grazing, windblow, fire, flooding, erosion and a host of other factors, is perpetually disrupting *the progression towards theoretical climax,*[74] resetting the clock back. In a sense, there is no beginning and there is no end—it's all process—an open-ended question. It has been pointed out that people respond to events rather than processes—particularly in spectacular society, where social phenomena are prised loose from their

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context and reproduced as disembodied and mystifying events. (Conversely, ecology is, if nothing else, the story of context—the antithesis of spectacular amnesia.) Looked at in this light, nature reserves—managed as frozen moments in ecological time—represent soundbite or event habitats.

This new-found taste for disturbance and uncertainty has led ecologists away from *nature as a well-behaved deterministic system*[75] towards *instability, disorder, a shifting world of upheaval and change that has no direction to it*[76] (Mao's permanent revolution, perhaps?!) Since *autonomy is [now] viewed as a fundamental characteristic of 'real' nature*, it tends to operate as more of *a game than a controllable system.*[77] This suggests possibilities of a more gratifying, sensuous character to humanity's interactions with nature—as a player within the game, not an engineering outsider—whose role might be to *conserve the capacity of nature to re-create itself.*[78]

Disturbance is the engine of ecological variety in the landscape, preventing those species that would dominate under (e.g.) a closed canopy climax having it all their own way. There is what might be called a dialectic between structure (such as the canopy) and disturbance here:

> *Too little disturbance leads to dominance of a few strong competitors, while a heavy disturbance regime [as in most of Britain] is tolerated only by a few hardy species.*[79]

Our best bet could be the supremely difficult practice of faithfully emulating the effects of natural disturbance—the conundrum of planning for chance. We've already been unknowingly engaged in a form of this for centuries:

> *As the original wildwood became cleared and fragmented, disturbance from management gradually took over from natural disturbance… which can not operate on the small scale.*

However, this supplanting of natural processes by management represents a coarsening and simplification—only *some of the attributes of natural disturbance [have] continued*[80]—the effects of our management have been too uniform, and some crucial components have fallen by the wayside.

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What Are We Missing?

> *The ecological effect of most woodland management is to artificially remove the late mature and decaying elements of the regeneration cycle*,[81] including the dead wood *which accounts for 50% of the timber in old forest*,[82] and is *one of the two or three greatest resources of the woodland habitat.*[83]

Without this, we miss out on the *healthy fungal flora [which] contributes significantly to the ecological health of the wood*[84], by breaking the dead wood down and making its nutrients available to other plants. As Hambler and Speight point out, a whopping *70% of the energy flow through a terrestrial ecosystem is through the decomposer community*,[85] including fungi. In our woodlands, this flow is blocked.

Another vital element is one that many of us only saw for the first time after the 1987 storm: the "pit and mound" topography formed by the upended root plates of toppled trees, which can cover *14—50% of the forest floor in some unmanaged American woods.*[86] Ordinarily, rain leaches nutrients away from an undisturbed soil's surface. The upturned trees instead turn and mix the soil, bringing nutrients back up to the surface and encouraging plant germination—acting as "*an added degree of soil rejuvenation.*

According to Tony Whitbread, *woodland soils would not naturally form, layer on layer, without… [such] mixing.*[87] Deprived of such intrinsic features as these, who can now imagine the ensuing richness and vibrancy that our countryside lacks?

Finally, there are the ecotones—twilight zones where a palette of habitats melt seamlessly into and out of one another, in a kind of hybridising. *Many species rely on [this] interface between one habitat and another*,[88] but not only do roads, intensive farming, etc, dismember this delicate habitat continuum, fluid

> *change is often prevented by management*[89] as well. For example, *there may be a sharp boundary between a wood and a hay meadow. Scrub invasion, left unchecked, would soon overwhelm the meadow, but the regime that resists it eliminates the ecotone instead. Such harsh zonation is often the only way to preserve habitat fragments, but leaves no*

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It is difficult to manage for ecotones[91], emblematic as they are of a dynamic, supple landscape of flux—which leaves us with a straight choice between zoning and process. Zoning causes the pattern of habitats to ossify, in a kind of habitat reductionism.

Work, and other 'socially polluting' alienated activities, can be seen as a 'habitat fragmentation' of the time of our lives; with 'management' leading to zoning—artificial disjunctions—and eliminating soft-edged ecotones. As Andre Gorz says, "The way our space is arranged carries on the disintegration of people that begins with the division of labour in the factory. It cuts a person into slices, it cuts our time, our life, into separate slices."(92) If you don't believe me, think about how your lunch hour feels (assuming you are still allowed one), or the slow, ominous countdown of a Sunday night.

The National Forest and the Community Forests—Managing People and Nature

The National Forest, the twelve Community Forests, and the activities of the Groundwork organisation are all examples of a restoration which is as much concerned with the management of people as it is of nature. The National Forest, which aims to create a *multi-purpose forest*[93] over 200 square miles of the Midlands, sees itself as *a model of sustainable development.*[94] The Community Forests are situated on the urban fringe of major English towns, subscribe to the same multi-function forestry framework, and constitute, allegedly, *the most significant environmental programme to be launched in Britain this century.*[95] Pretty much as you'd expect, they are therefore crap. Both kinds of 'forest' have the superficially laudable goal of increasing Britain's pathetic average tree cover of 7% to around 30% in their area. However, 'multi-purpose forestry' is such that one of them actually thought it necessary to remind itself that *Trees will play a vitally important role in achieving the community forest.*[96]

So puny are most of their new woodlands that they deserve to be known as fun-sized woods—in honour of the unsatisfying and anything but Mars Bar of the same name.[97] It seems to be a case of drawing lines on a map and designating publicity or

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policy forests, composed of enterprise glades[98], the modern day bureaucrat's equivalent of the treeless Deer Forests of Scottish feudalism. (There's no shortage of (bureaucratic) deadwood in these forests.) Since the objective is to *improve the image*[99], one gets the impression that they would be as content with just the early impression of forest cover[99] as with the real McCoy—so long as things are seen to be done.

The true agenda of Groundwork and the various forests is one of regeneration and reclamation. By and large they are superimposed on the former strongholds of heavy industry in the Midlands and the North—those areas most badly abused by and then, in the 1980s, abandoned by capitalism. It is about *managing change*[100]—using trees as a device to bring unsightly derelict land back into economic circulation, and addressing agricultural overproduction through farm diversification into forestry and leisure. It is about trying to ensure a smooth transition to the post-modern service or information economy, where the intangible environmental goods and quality of life issues are paramount—eg. as at the new Earth Centre, near Doncaster.[101] In the National Forest, *this regenerated coalfield land, which provided the local community with jobs in the past, will serve them in other ways in the future by providing recreational facilities, wildlife habitats and an attractive landscape.*[102] It is about tailoring a flexible, multi-tasking landscape for a flexible economy—the (relative) solidarity of the old heavy industries giving way to the (relative) atomisation of the casual, service sector—where, doubtless, we'll all work in partnership.

The Red Rose Forest (Manchester) claim, in a particularly howling non-sequitur, that *economic, environmental and social regeneration cannot proceed without one another.*[103] Providing *an attractive environment in which business can flourish*[104] is the Forests' main weapon in the mad, begging-bowl scramble to attract inward investment, giving them *a competitive advantage over competitor areas*[105]—a pitiful Pretty please to developers. Because, more than anything else, *this forest means business*,[106] if all goes according to plan these forests might actually end up more heavily developed than before: *where... [planning] policies allow for*

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increased industrial development, a high quality landscape can be a valuable first step in an area's revitalisation [sic].[107] As well as having their office premises or surplus sites tarted up—what the Mersey Forest calls *screen[ing] industry*,[108] or landscaping as physical PR—usually at public expense, it offers another more subtle service to business. This is the philanthropic advantage that comes when you *display your environmental credentials*, helping to *generate goodwill… [and] raise… product and brand awareness.*[109] Thus we have Manchester Airport supporting a trifling new tree planting programme—mulched with *bioregional* Bollin Valley woodchips, no doubt—through the Manchester Aviation Tree Challenge, and sanctimonious noises about the *important part [that trees play] in reducing greenhouse gases and global warming.*[110]

Nor have the older, more classically industrial uses entirely gone away. Grotesque 'planning gain' and 'end use' scams are rife: "Mining will continue to be a major activity within the Forest… The case for [minerals] development is certainly strengthened if the developer can show a benefit to the National Forest."(111) At Broxtowe in the Greenwood Community Forest (Nottinghamshire), *opencast mining operations* will, in the topsy-turvey world these people inhabit, *ultimately [bring]… about economic and environmental benefits*: a new woodland of 14 hectares which will *provide an attractive backdrop* for a *new employment site of eight hectares.*[112] (This is presumably the kind of thing they have in mind when they talk of—in Groundwork's words—*integrating the economy and the environment.*[113])

Community, Partnership, and All That Jazz

All of this—particularly in the case of Groundwork—comes robotically decked out in odious communitarian jargon, such as stakeholding, capacity building, zero tolerance (controlling anti-social behaviour through environmental design[114]), participation, and partnership. It is consistent with Blairite big-tent politics—subsuming most potential opponents and marginalising those that won't be co-opted.[115] The insidious weed of partnership, with its smothering, spurious consensus (like being love bombed), seems to be springing up everywhere nowadays. Partnership mendaciously supposes that we all come to the table

increased industrial development, a high quality landscape can be a valuable first step in an area's revitalisation [sic].[107] As well as having their office premises or surplus sites tarted up—what the Mersey Forest calls *screen[ing] industry*,[108] or landscaping as physical PR—usually at public expense, it offers another more subtle service to business. This is the philanthropic advantage that comes when you *display your environmental credentials*, helping to *generate goodwill… [and] raise… product and brand awareness.*[109] Thus we have Manchester Airport supporting a trifling new tree planting programme—mulched with *bioregional* Bollin Valley woodchips, no doubt—through the Manchester Aviation Tree Challenge, and sanctimonious noises about the *important part [that trees play] in reducing greenhouse gases and global warming.*[110]

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as equals, and, conveniently, that we all bear a shared responsibility for what has gone wrong—nasty, disruptive blame and dissension must not intrude on these mature deliberations. Class and other power differentials are submerged in the bland, ostensibly classless interest in saving the planet (a union sacree)—political questions are reframed as dispassionate technical ones—the quest for the perfect plan again. It's just a new way—their latest wheeze—for us to get screwed.

> *The cleverly constructed notion of "sustainable development" with its emphasis on harmonious consensus in decision-making, combined with the incorporation of the environment into the market system, has dissipated the imperative that environmental deterioration once had for social and political change.*[116]

Community—partnership's medium—seems to be the elusive Philosopher's Stone of '90s politics; the supreme value before which—irrespective of political persuasion—we must all prostrate ourselves. (Interestingly, the term is most commonly used either where it patently does not exist—eg. the business..., international, the rural community of the Countryside March—or where it is in some way threatened or in question—eg. the black..., the gay...)

Groundwork constantly brag of their presence in depressed, no-go areas—there is more than a hint of the 'community development' troops being parachuted in: *Throughout the western world states are characterised by one of the two symbols of control in capitalist society: the tank or the community worker.*[117] The environmental focus of the work also serves to locate the community's problems squarely within its own physical fabric, rather than as emanating from wider, structural forces—as if by simply beautifying the area, you will beautify the social relationships that people experience.

The partnership and participation must only extend so far. The communities must not realise too uppity a sense of their own strength—which is to say, truly become a community—or the development workers and their political masters might become expendable. In the same way that capitalism, from the 1920s on, had to *simultaneously... encourage and repress the*

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'*creation of dissatisfaction*'[118] if it was to shift its surplus goods, this community development must simultaneously unleash and rein in empowerment. Like derelict land, derelict communities are brought back into economic circulation, and their members enlisted in gilding their cage. Forget building the Situationists' hacienda, mate—you don't want to do it like that—this is building the strategic hamlet.

Local communities are deployed as proxies—a cost-effective means of delivering the desired results.[119] In a hidden subsidy to industry, we do the dirty work of clearing up the 'externalities' they leave behind.

> *Working in partnership with local authorities and businesses, Community Forests harness the commitment and enthusiasm of local people, mobilising them to regenerate their area.*[120]

(Oooh, it sounds so good since you put it like that.) Paul Goon (appropriately) of the government's 'English Partnerships' congratulates Groundwork on

> *their unrivalled ability to co-ordinate local communities, engender enthusiasm and deliver the goods at excellent value for money.*[121]

It echoes Paulette Goudge's comment on Third World aid, that

> '*sustainable development' no longer refers to preserving the environment; it now means developments that communities can financially sustain themselves*[122]

- the Polluted Pays principle.

In contrast to the economy's flexible landscape, in which we are obliged to accept the loss of cherished features, as decreed, heritage is constructed as a reassuring beacon of stability—*that which is forever England.* There is a tension between the frequent appeals to such sentiments of a *common* heritage (*our* patch), and otherwise jealously guarded property rights. It only becomes *ours* when it suits them—we only get to inherit their cast off dregs, and must be suitably grateful when granted that much. (Many of the Groundwork and Community Forest sites are, for instance, former chemical waste dumps and landfills.) Perhaps the residents of the Amazon will one day be exhorted to restore *their* forest, when it

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has finally been logged out for tremendous private gain. Bottom-up is employed to correct the miserable failures of top down. However they choose to label the bottle it always tastes like shit—instead, we must choose praxis over proxy.

According to Ulrich Beck, the ecological movement is not so much *an environmental movement but a social, inward movement which utilises 'nature' as a parameter for certain questions.*[123] While one can quibble with his distinction between the environmental and the social, basically there's a lot of truth to this view. Perhaps the major revolutionary contribution of environmentalism (in the broadest possible sense) is in exploring issues of control over space, the ways in which its use is currently determined, and the ways in which those uses can be radically transformed. These questions may have assumed a greater relative importance in recent years, given the seeming decline of the power to organise and act in the workplace. Like "the Street Party of Street Parties",[124] our very first need, (the one which prefigures and makes possible the rediscovery of all our myriad other needs), is for *a place in which people [can] gather—a common ground—and focus their attentions on things that could improve the quality of their general existence, and that of wild-life.*[125] The act—of occupying a place and remaking it as a space used for interaction and renewal—is an answer to many of our questions in itself. Restoration can be harnessed to make the world safe for capital—by replenishing the regions whose profitability it has exhausted—or can create something which is inimical to it: headstrong communities savouring their own innate resourcefulness. When asked how people might spend their time after the revolution, Marcuse replied that *We will tear down the big cities and build new ones*[126]—whose *districts... could correspond to the whole spectrum of diverse feelings that one encounters by chance in everyday life,*[127] multifarious nefarious space in which hitherto unrequited lives and blighted potential might at last find expression, freed from the monocultural dictates of capital. We are a very long way from that now, but wherever we see *the restoration of whole ecosystems and the empowerment of communities together,*[128] its allure beckons, and

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we are another step closer.

The only half-decent thing to come out of the horrific M3 extension through Twyford Down was the ripping up, re-contouring and grassing over of the old A33 Winchester bypass. It gave the people of Winchester easy access across the flood meadows of the River Itchen to St. Catherine's Hill for the first time in decades. A mere 5 years after the work was done, however, and the local council already wants to re-tarmac 20 acres of the site as a park-and-ride facility. There is strong local opposition to being robbed of their precious green space once more.

Footnotes

1. "Revisiting Auroville", Alan Lithman, in "Helping Nature Heal: An Introduction to Environmental Restoration," Ed. Richard Nilsen, Whole Earth/Ten Speed Press 1991, p.96.
2. "An Explosion of Green", Bill McKibben, Atlantic Monthly April 1995, p.63.
3. "Planting Amenity Trees", Oliver Rackham, in "The Tree Book", J. Edward Milner, Collins and Brown 1992, p.152. For other examples, see also: "From Waste to Wildlife", Charles Couzens, Natural World Winter 1992; "Orchids rise from the ashes", New Scientist 30/9/95; "Return to Paradise", Laura Spinney, New Scientist 20/7/96; "A real waste", Fred Pearce, New Scientist 11/4/98; "The Lowdown on Dirt", Chris Baines, BBC Wildlife Nov. 1990.
4. "Wild By Design in the National Parks of England and Wales", Council for National Parks 1997, p.14.
5. Ibid, p.11.
6. Actually, this was a misprint of "quiet areas" in a management plan, but the voices in my head made it seem like a good idea at the time.
7. "Aftermath", Richard Mabey, BBC Wildlife October 1997. Toy's Hill, Kent is cited as a particularly good case study; the cleared areas needed planting, and are still struggling, while the uncleared are experiencing "prolific regrowth".
8. "Setting the Scene for Growth", The Mersey Forest, p.3.
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11. Eg. see: "Can you really move places?", Trevor Lawson, BBC Wildlife January 1997; "Removals no go" [on Teigngrace], Trevor Lawson, BBC Wildlife September 1998; "Sod Off", [on Ashton Court] SchNEWS 183.

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13. World Wide Fund for Nature "Forests" Supplement to The Observer, 1992, p.10.

14. "Natural Restoration—When Humans Walk Away", Susan E. Davis, in Op.Cit.1, p.22/23.

15. "Creative conservation: a way forward", Richard Scott and Grant Luscombe, Ecos 16 (2) 1995, p.13. See also: "General information about habitat creation", Op.Cit.10., p.3.

16. Eg. See "Habitat Restoration Project: Factsheets and Bibliographies", Rob Dryden, English Nature Research Reports No. 260, 1997.

17. See "Future Nature—a vision for conservation", W.M. Adams, Earthscan 1996, p.168.

18. See Op.Cit.4, p.12; Also pp.9,14,42. See debate on p.12 regarding 'future nature'.

19. Op.Cit.17, p.169.

20. Ibid, p.166.

21. River Restoration News 1, November 1998, p.3.

22. "Biodiversity Conservation in Britain: Science Replacing Tradition", Clive Hambler and Martin Speight, British Wildlife February 1995, p.144.

23. See "The Eternal Threat: Biodiversity Loss and the Fragmentation of the Wild" in Do or Die 5 for a fuller explanation of this process. Also, "Conserving wildlife in a black hole", Adrian Colston, Ecos 18 (1) 1997, p.65, for an excellent example.

24. "Habitat restoration—recanting the status quo", Rob Jarman, Ecos 16 (2) 1995, p.31.

25. Eg. See "Gambling with nature? A new paradigm of nature and its consequences for nature management strategy", Johan van Zoest, in "Coastal Dunes—Geomorphology, Ecology and Management for Conservation", Eds. Carter et al., Balkema 1992, p. 515.

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28. "A Natural Method of Conserving Biodiversity in Britain", A. Whitbread and W. Jenman, British Wildlife 7 (2), December 1995, p.84.

29. Eg. See "Global Warming/Global Warning: Plant the Right Tree", Marylee Guinon, in Op.Cit.1, p.44.

30. Eg. See "Lowland Valley Mires" and "Restoration of Valley Mires", New Forest LIFE Project Information Sheets, Forestry Commission, undated—"The New Forest contains 90 of the 120 valley mires in Europe".)

31. "To Learn the Things We Need to Know", Freeman House, in Op.Cit.1, p.50.

32. "Farming the City—The Potential of Urban Agriculture", Tara Garnett, The Ecologist November/December 1996, p.305.

33. "Changing Places" booklet, BBC Natural History Unit, February 1999, p.5.

34. Op.Cit.17, p.173.

35. Eg. See Op.Cit.32, p.299; also "Cultivated Cities", BBC Wildlife, August 1996, p.56. See: "World Hunger: 12 Myths", Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, Earthscan 1988, Chapter 6, for examples of the vastly increased efficiency of small farmers as opposed to large ones.

36. However, see Op.Cit.22 for a convincing argument that traditional practices are antagonistic to wildlife.

37. 'Twitcher', in British Wildlife February 1998, p.175.

38. Op.Cit.17, p.xi.

39. Ibid, p.162.

40. Ibid. See also: Op.Cit.4, p.7.; Op.Cit.22, p.139; Op.Cit.28, p.85, 86 and 87; "When the Wind Blew", Tony Whitbread, RSNC February 1991, p.22; "Laird of Creation", Richard Mabey, BBC Wildlife January 1992, p.30.

41. Eg. see: Op.Cit.4, p.10.

42. Op.Cit.28, p.87.

43. Op.Cit.17, p.163. See also: "Bionomics—The Inevitability of Capitalism", Michael L. Rothschild, Futura 1992. For a view affirming pleasure for its own sake—in contrast to these mechanistic models of animal behaviour—as part of nature, see "Watching Birds", Peter Porcupine, Here and Now 18, Winter 1997/98. ('Birds just want to have fun'.) See also "When Elephants Weep—The Emotional Lives of Animals", Jeffrey Masson and Susan McCarthy, Jonathan Cape 1994.

44. Eg. see the British Trust for Ornithology's deeply depressing "Common [sic] Birds Census".

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45. Op.Cit.24, p.29.
46. Op.Cit.28, p.86.
47. Eg. see: "Laird of Creation", Richard Mabey, BBC Wildlife January 1992, p.33.
48. Sean Reed, RSPB, quoted in "A do-something charter", BBC Wildlife May 1998, p.31.
49. Eg. see: "The Killing of the Countryside", Graham Harvey, Vintage 1998; also: "Is there life after subsidies? The New Zealand experience", Gordon Stephenson, Ecos 18 (3/4) 1997.
50. "Plenty and Wilderness? Creating a new countryside", Bryn Green, Ecos 16 (2) 1995, p.3.
51. Op.Cit.4, p.17.
52. "The Movement of the Free Spirit", Raoul Vaneigem, Zone Books 1994, p.8.
53. Eg. see "The Bap and the ugly", Trevor Lawson, Guardian 6/8/98. These 'Biodiversity Action Plans' for particular endangered species, with their private sponsorship, seem to have a similar effect to 'Education Action Zones', and the 'Private Finance Initiative' in the health service. (See the comments on the possibility of a 'two-tier' reserve system in " 'Beyond 2000'—will it deliver?", Trevor Lawson, *Ecos* 18 (3/4) 1997, p.58.) Also, under the Earth Summit's Biodiversity Convention, scientists have apparently come to the pragmatic conclusion that not everything can be saved. They have therefore decided to concentrate on those species of potential benefit to us—glorified Research & Development.
54. Landlife Annual Report 1997/98, p.7.
55. Ibid, p.4.
56. "Biodiversity in Conservation" letter, Matthew Frith, *British Wildlife* August 1995, p.405.
57. Op.Cit.17, p.173.
58. Fuller and Peterken, quoted in "Management for Biodiversity in British Woodlands—Striking a Balance", Robert Fuller and Martin Warren, *British Wildlife* October 1995, p.36.
59. "Ancient Woodland: A Re-creatable Resource?", Keith Kirby, Tree News Summer 1992, p.13.
60. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
61. Eg. See "Hydrological Management for Waterfowl on RSPB Lowland Wet Grassland Reserves", Self et al, RSPB Conservation Review 8, 1994.
62. "Restoration of lowland wet grassland at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Nature Reserve," Timothy Calloway, in *UK Floodplains: Proceedings of a*

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47. Eg. see: "Laird of Creation", Richard Mabey, BBC Wildlife January 1992, p.33.
48. Sean Reed, RSPB, quoted in "A do-something charter", BBC Wildlife May 1998, p.31.
49. Eg. see: "The Killing of the Countryside", Graham Harvey, Vintage 1998; also: "Is there life after subsidies? The New Zealand experience", Gordon Stephenson, Ecos 18 (3/4) 1997.
50. "Plenty and Wilderness? Creating a new countryside", Bryn Green, Ecos 16 (2) 1995, p.3.
51. Op.Cit.4, p.17.
52. "The Movement of the Free Spirit", Raoul Vaneigem, Zone Books 1994, p.8.
53. Eg. see "The Bap and the ugly", Trevor Lawson, Guardian 6/8/98. These 'Biodiversity Action Plans' for particular endangered species, with their private sponsorship, seem to have a similar effect to 'Education Action Zones', and the 'Private Finance Initiative' in the health service. (See the comments on the possibility of a 'two-tier' reserve system in " 'Beyond 2000'—will it deliver?", Trevor Lawson, *Ecos* 18 (3/4) 1997, p.58.) Also, under the Earth Summit's Biodiversity Convention, scientists have apparently come to the pragmatic conclusion that not everything can be saved. They have therefore decided to concentrate on those species of potential benefit to us—glorified Research & Development.
54. Landlife Annual Report 1997/98, p.7.
55. Ibid, p.4.
56. "Biodiversity in Conservation" letter, Matthew Frith, *British Wildlife* August 1995, p.405.
57. Op.Cit.17, p.173.
58. Fuller and Peterken, quoted in "Management for Biodiversity in British Woodlands—Striking a Balance", Robert Fuller and Martin Warren, *British Wildlife* October 1995, p.36.
59. "Ancient Woodland: A Re-creatable Resource?", Keith Kirby, Tree News Summer 1992, p.13.
60. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
61. Eg. See "Hydrological Management for Waterfowl on RSPB Lowland Wet Grassland Reserves", Self et al, RSPB Conservation Review 8, 1994.
62. "Restoration of lowland wet grassland at Pulborough Brooks RSPB Nature Reserve," Timothy Calloway, in *UK Floodplains: Proceedings of a*

Joint RSPB, Linnaen Society, Environment Agency Symposium, Eds. Bailey et al., Westbury Publishing 1998.

63. "Nature and Nurture", Maev Kennedy, "A Living Countryside", RSPB/Co-op Bank supplement to *The Guardian*, undated, p.11.

64. Eg. See *The End of Nature*, Bill McKibben, Viking 1990.

65. "Sustainable Tuesday," David Helton, *BBC Wildlife*, May 1992, p.46.

66. Ibid, p.47.

67. Op.Cit.4, p.9.

68. Eg. see: Op.Cit.22, p.141; Op.Cit.58, p.29/30; Op.Cit.24, p.30; Op.Cit.61, p.47.

69. "Pitfalls on the Way to Lasting Restoration", Seth Zuckerman, in Op.Cit.1, p.13.

70. Founded on an assumption that empires aren't fleeting and anomalous—that they won't appear and disappear, as habitats do.

71. Or possibly peatland—eg. see: "Forests destined to end in the mire", Fred Pearce, *New Scientist* 7/5/94.

72. "Natural Restoration—When Humans Walk Away", Susan E. Davis, in Op.Cit.1, p.23.

73. "When the Wind Blew", Tony Whitbread, RSNC February 1991, p.32.

74. Ibid, p.34.

75. Op.Cit.25, p.510.

76. David Cayley quoted in Op.Cit.17, p.163.

77. Op.Cit.25, p.503. Although, inexplicably, van Zoest goes on to say that *autonomous processes are allowed or stimulated as long as they lead to the desired goals.* (p.514.) While this may be a good working description of liberal democracy, it is not autonomy, which must surely be unconditional—the quality of autonomy is not strained…

78. Op.Cit.17, p.163.

79. Op.Cit.25, p.507.

80. Op.Cit.73, p.59.

81. David Streeter, quoted in "On the Sidelines", Richard Mabey, BBC Wildlife October 1990, p.728.

82. Op.Cit.7, p.74.

83. Charles Elton, quoted in Op.Cit.22, p.144.

84. Op.Cit.73, p.12.

85. Op.Cit.22, p.142.

86. Op.Cit.73, p.41.

87. Ibid, p.15.

88. Op.Cit.28, p.86.

89. Op.Cit.73, p.44.

90. Op.Cit.28, p.86.
91. Eg. see Op.Cit.73, p.51.
92. "Dear Motorist... The Social Ideology of the Motorcar", Andre Gorz, Institute of Social Disengineering, undated, p.8.
93. National Forest Company Annual Report 1997/98.
94. Chairman's Comment, National Forest News Autumn 1998, p.2.
95. "Thames Chase: Community Forest Facts" information sheet, undated.
96. Forest Plan Summary, Great Western Community Forest March 1994, p.6. See also "Magic Forest up Mr. Downing's Street," *Greenwood Community Forest Annual Report* 1996/97, p.11, and the National Forest Corporate Plan, July 1997, for similar inane remarks.
97. English Nature recommends that *New woodlands should be a minimum of two hectares in area, and preferably larger than five hectares*, if they are to be of any value. ("Woodland Creation for Wildlife," *EN Habitat Restoration Project Fact Sheet 3.*) *In England more than 50% of approved Woodland Grant Schemes [the main financial mechanism for new planting] were under 3 hectares and over 75% were under 10 hectares.* (Op.Cit.4, p.35.) In the Red Rose Community Forest, much of the planting "was on plots averaging 2.35 hectares in size." (*Red Rose Community Forest Annual Report* 1997/8, p.3.)
98. This is the actual address of the National Forest, if you can believe it.
99. Op.Cit.8.
100. Forest Plan Summary, Great Western Community Forest, March 1994, p.4.
101. Eg. see "Phoenix Park", John Vidal, The Guardian 24/3/99.
102. Scumbag head of the Forestry Commission David Bills (see *Do or Die #7*, p.19) in *National Forest News*, Autumn 1998, p.3.
103. Lord Macclesfield, in "Red Rose Forest—A Place for Life", Red Rose Forest, undated, p.2. (I can only assume he must be talking about the famous Manchester on Mars, because it can't be on my planet.)
104. Councillor Round, quoted in "Invest in the Success of the Mersey Forest", The Mersey Forest, undated.
105. "Community Forests", Countryside Commission Fact Sheet 1994, quoted in ibid. Other fawning references to inward investment in Forest literature are too numerous, and too nauseating, to mention.
106. Forest News 7, Forest of Avon, Autumn/Winter 1998, p.2.
107. Op.Cit.95.
108. Op.Cit.99. Also: "Gaining public acceptance... [by] improving the image of development" in Op.Cit.104.

90. Op.Cit.28, p.86.
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109. Op.Cit.99, p.5.
110. Op.Cit.103, p.24.
111. Susan Bell, Countryside Commission, in "Greening the Heart of England", Fred Pearce, New Scientist 24/9/94, p.33. See p.35 here for an excellent summation of the bullshit of the National Forest in action.
112. Greenwood Community Forest Annual Report 1995/96, p.10.
113. One of their "three key themes" in: "Environments for people", Groundwork Information Sheet, undated.
114. Eg. See 'Direct Action News' (oh my god!) 19, Autumn 1998, Groundwork Creswell/Ashfield & Mansfield, p.4; "Bringing people into the process", Groundwork Today 26, undated, p.7.
115. The textbook strategy of 'greenwashers' worldwide—see " 'Democracy' for Hire: Public Relations and Environmental Movements", John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, The Ecologist September/October 1995. Also: "Environmental groups and the business community: A fatal attraction?", Jamie Wallace, Ecos 18 (3/4) 1997.
116. Review of "Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives", Eds. Avruch et al, by Sharon Beder, The Ecologist November/December 1994, p.236.
117. "Community Work and the State", Eds. Craig et al, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1982, p.2. However, it would be a mistake to think that these are communities threatening *militant working-class action*—instead, they are mostly experiencing *the inchoate rather than the organised working-class response to the changes taking place in advanced capitalist society* ("Hard Lines and Soft Options: A Criticism of Some Left Attitudes to Community Work," J. Smith, in *Political Issues and Community Work*, Ed. P. Curno, Routledge 1978, p.23)—responses such as crime, vandalism, drug (ab)use, family breakdown, etc.
118. "Scenes from a California Maul: Execution and Riot", Red Wood, *Fifth Estate*, Autumn 1992, p.7.
119. See the remarkably frank Majid Rahnema, quoted in "The Business of Conservation, or the Conservation of Business?", *Do or Die* #6, p.23.
120. "What are Community Forests?", Countryside Commission leaflet, undated.
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122. "Own Goals", Paulette Goudge, The Guardian 17/3/99.
123. Quoted in a review of his "Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk", Ecos 16 (2) 1995, p.76.

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124. See “Reclaim the Streets”, Do or Die 6, p.6.
125. “It’s an orchard, Jim—but not as we know it: Community Orchards and Local Agenda 21”, Duncan MacKay, *Ecos* 18 (1) 1997, p.47.
126. Quoted in Op.Cit.92.
127. “Formulary for a New Urbanism”, Ivan Chtcheglov, 1953. If you will allow me to sketch in some of the intoxicating possibilities (‘moveable feasts’—the ‘instantly revocable delegates of the landscape’), in what might be the world’s most self-indulgent footnote: orchards, beekeeping, community composting, reedbeds, pleasure gardens, adventure playgrounds, orreries, ponds, ‘abandoned’ wilderness (‘a dark wood’), hanging gardens, greenhouses, moots, dance halls, speakeasies (shebeens), helter skelters, dance halls, climbing walls, bandstands, rockeries, cairns, stupas, prayer wheels, dovecotes, samizdat (community) walls, zen gardens, windmills/turbines, pagodas, hollow hills/earth houses, houseboats, raft villages, mudslides, burrows and tunnels, gigantic mirrors reflecting one another, gongs, amphitheatres, trampolines, mazes, rope swings, bouncy castles, flags, kites (as in the Pakistani kite festivals), trellis walkways, an intractable swamp, sacred groves, maypoles, topiary, sundials, follies, mushroom cellars, haylofts, stills, birdtable and birdbath forests, wicker men, giant metronomes, ‘Ames rooms’, stockades, crypts… this gets addictive, I must stop now and take my pills. Even if you don’t like my suggestions, they are intended merely to give a sense of the wealth of opportunities available to us in ‘dealienated’ settlements. Spare a thought for your own desires and invent your own list.
128. Op.Cit.17, p.162.

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Bashing the GE-nie Back in the Bottle *(from issue 9)*

Borders No Barrier to Sabotage
The last year has seen a global expansion of resistance to genetic technology. Across the world shadows in the moonlight have razed GE crop trials to the ground. Spades, sticks, scythes, sickles and fire have brought in the harvest. Doors have splintered as labs are broken into. Pies have been aimed at the arrogance of the powerful. Harassment and disruption has greeted the biotech industry wherever it has gathered…

Since the last issue of Do or Die was published in August 1999, there have been anti-biotech actions in America, Britain, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, India, Australia, Greece, Ecuador, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Bangladesh and the Philippines. (Undoubtedly there have been actions we haven't heard about in other countries. This especially applies to the Third/Majority World.) Many of these countries are new to trashing the GM-technocrats' tools. In other countries where resistance to genetic engineering is more established, tactics have evolved, groups consolidated and actions have become increasingly audacious.

Our success—especially in Britain—is remarkable, but we should not fall for the myth of imminent victory. At least in terms of genetic engineering, resistance is not as transnational as capital. Corporate and state bodies have been channelling more and more funds and time into GM crops. Actions are slowing this rate of acceleration but we're still losing the race.

This should not dissuade us from doing what needs to be done. To 'merely' delay massive social dislocation and biological pollution is worthy of the risks involved. As well as the 'finger in the dam' aspect of anti-GM campaigns, the resistance is serving other purposes. Groups all over the world are linking up, training and learning from each other. The hope for a free and ecological future lies in these embryonic movements which understand their enemies are the machine and its masters and their comrades the land and its lovers. The resistance against genetic engineering has catalysed the growth of revolutionary ecological

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groups around the world. The elite may have designed a weapon which will rebound on themselves.

The aim of this article is to give an overview of actions over the last year in this global anti-technology war. It will not give a political, ecological or strategic background to genetic engineering. If you're new to this struggle it would be a good idea to read 'The New Luddite War' in the last issue of Do or Die, which also includes some recommended reading.

Hurricane Sabotage Hits GM Harvest

Over the last year the country that has seen the most dramatic growth of anti-GM sabotage has been the US. The world's first outdoor genetic test crop was of strawberries at the University of California in 1987. The night after the crop had been transplanted, EF!ers climbed fences, evaded security and succeeded in pulling up all 2,000 plants.[1] In 1989 American EF!ers destroyed yet more test sites, but as the ’80s slipped into the ’90s the US sabotage stopped.

Twelve years after the first action, the decade-long lull came to a dramatic end. On the 27th of July 99, The University of California once again became the launch pad for a wave of action—this time much bigger than the first. That night a group calling itself 'The California Croppers' trashed 14 rows of GM corn. The following night saw an acre of GM corn elsewhere in California destroyed. A month later, resistance had spread to the East Coast where yet more experimental GM corn was destroyed, this time at the University of Maine. A week later Vermont, two days after that Minnesota. Two weeks later 50 rows of GM corn were destroyed at a Pioneer facility and the campaign moved up a notch with company vehicles damaged. Corn sites continued to be laid waste. GM melons, walnut trees and tomatoes got mashed.

June 2000: The Anarchist Golfing Association destroys GE grass at Pure Seed Testing in Canby, Oregon causing $500,000 worth of damage and causing 10-15 years of research.

After only two months of the campaign there had been twelve successful sabotages, proceeding to a point where in one action saboteurs could destroy 50 rows of transgenic corn, an acre of herbicide tolerant sunflowers, one hundred melons and

groups around the world. The elite may have designed a weapon which will rebound on themselves.

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trash irrigation equipment and greenhouses undetected.

The last year has seen more and more crop experiments destroyed, ranging from sugar beet to GM trees. While straight site trashings continue, actions have also escalated to levels which Europe has yet to reach. In the third month of the campaign, all the windows on one side of a GM company's offices were caved in.

Five months in and a communiqué announces that 3 hours before the beginning of the new 'biotech century' the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) had broken into the office of a Michigan University GM researcher, dousing it with gasoline and setting it on fire, causing $400,000 of damage. The work destroyed was funded in part by the multinational Monsanto, which led the communiqué to claim the action as the first US burning in solidarity with the Indian KRRS (Karnataka State Farmers Association) Cremate Monsanto campaign. State response was quick and a month after the attack Craig Rosebraugh, who had been acting as ELF Press Officer, was raided at 8.00am by 15 FBI agents with guns drawn. Simultaneously other agents raided the offices of the Portland Liberation Collective. Though obviously triggered by the arson, these raids were linked to a Grand Jury investigation into the ELF.

As the year has gone on, daytime actions have grown like their nighttime counterparts. The road to Cargill's international HQ was barricaded in March causing two mile tailbacks. The blockade was initially carried out by the normal criminal band of EF!ers and anarchos but they were later joined by a noisy carnival of supportive locals, scientists and farmers. After the cops dislodged the barricade the diverse bunch slowed the traffic around the HQ for hours. Outside the citadel of corporate agribusiness, voices joined together chanting: *Burn the Buildings, Pull the Crops, This is Where the Research Stops!*

The same month saw Bio-Devastation 2000, a series of actions in Boston aimed at America's biggest gathering of GM scientists and business. 2,500 people took part in an anti-corporate, anti-GM carnival. Thirty gallons of GM soya beans were dumped blocking the conference centre's entrance. Activists infiltrated and caused chaos in meetings, disrupting speeches and flanning the faceless bureaucrats. One woman even managed to sneak

on the special conference shuttle bus and harangue a captive audience of delegates. Outside the conference centre the police had panicked and prepared for a Seattle. Windows of high street shops, even a pizza emporium, were boarded up, whilst cops patrolled the streets.

Minneapolis was the host for the next confrontation when the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG) met at the end of July.

> *A police helicopter hovers above us. At least 30 people have been arrested. Three hours ago one hundred unmasked people broke a police line intended to box us into a street. Using plywood sign/shields and a plastic banner that repelled tear gas and pepper spray, the frontline rocked our world and we escaped from their trap, only to re-take the WHOLE STREET downtown, where later we were separated and one group was surrounded. Last night we had a two hour teach-in and speak out, attended by 300 people, who then marched together in the night. Our presence was strong and we got away with no arrests. A cop got tossed from his horse. Today was our time to take to the streets, we chanted "Reclaim the Streets, Reclaim the Genes" and "I-S-A-G, Fuck your Biotechnology."*[2]

Only a few months before in Boston the state had prepared while the rebels were unable to put up street resistance. By the time the ISAG conference came along, the police needed to use heavy force. They fired bean bag rounds, rubber bullets, pepper spray and used batons and still failed to clear the streets of resistance. That night, gun wielding cops stormed one activist house and tried to frame some of its inhabitants on drug dealing charges. This repression will not break the rebels' resolve.

The tailing off of anti-GM sabotage at the end of the 80s was due to contemporary events in EF!. A widespread state repression campaign culminated in the FBI car bombing California EF!ers, and a SWAT team arresting EF!ers attempting to down powerlines in the Arizona desert. Dave Foreman, EF!'s co-founder and editor of the sabotage handbook *Ecodefence* awoke in bed looking down the barrel of a cop's gun.

People became understandably afraid. A split within EF!

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partly exacerbated by repression led to it taking an ostensibly more revolutionary path, but one that was more concerned with civil disobedience than sabotage. Even wilderness defence saw a decrease in ecotage, and the anti-GM campaign as a new front simply didn't survive.

The 90s have seen the US movement trying to reconcile the contradictions these times left it with. In the re-emergence of anti-GM resistance we see the convergence of mass street action with social change aims and wilderness-ethic sabotage. This is extremely healthy for the movement as a whole. Let's hope however that this new flurry of action does not lead to the type of attacks the movement suffered from a decade ago. Even if it does, maybe now the movement is more prepared. As one of those raided after ISAG put it in a statement to the City Council:

> *We will continue no matter how many times you kick us in the face or pepper spay us. We will continue despite your truncheon blows or shooting us with rubber bullets, because what does not kill us makes us stronger.*[3]

As of October 2000 there have been 40 anti-GM sabotages in America. Despite Grand Juries and police surveillance our friends are still uncaptured.

For more details contact the Bioengineering Action Network (BAN), who are the best contact for the States. Serving the same function over there as the Genetic Engineering Network does over here, they are however openly loads more radical, militant, and wild.

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Extra-environmental

Derek Wall Fingers the Green Nazis *(from issue 1)*

Have you heard rumours of Satrivi Devi, the Hindu fascist, who praised the SS for their protection of animals and Hitler for his love of trees? Perhaps you have read *Ecology in the 20th Century*, where Anna Bramwell, an ex-young member officer of the Conservative Monday Club, argues that much of Green philosophy is rooted in the ideas of conservative and sometimes racist thinkers! What the hell is going on? Perhaps you have been approached by the distributists to help co-ordinate an anti-McDonalds day. Or been sent a copy of *Green Dawn*, an innocuous looking and rather environmentalist paper, put out by the National Front [NF]. Or have you been fooled, as Jonathan Porritt and the Centre for Alternative Technology were, into writing for *Scorpion,* published by Martin Walker, the former NF organiser for Central London.

A few years ago, some Deep Ecologists said some racist and extreme things. Ed Abbey complained of Mexicans swamping the US, forgetting that all sorts of races propelled not by genetics but economics and greed had formed the US on the blood of the Indians. The despicable Chris Manes in his EF! Miss Anthrope column claimed to be taking the piss with his view but briefly associated EF! US with the view that AIDS was a good thing and the Ethopian famine victims (who starved while we in the West dined on their countries) deserved to die. Deep Ecology is no longer associated with such unpleasant views: loving nature and all species requires respect for our own species. Real fascists, the guys and gals who back up their racist views with baseball bats and on occasion bombs, the European equivalent of Guatamalan death squads—who believe in an international Jewish conspiracy, the Fuhrer prinzip, celebrate Hitler's birthday—have for a long time been trying to infiltrate the green movement.

Eco-fascism is on the march with a three pronged assault that if successful will destroy Ecology.

The first prong is ideological. Martin Walker set up the magazine *Scorpion* to link neo Nazis with the Green movement, and has over the past four years hoodwinked a whole series of

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prominent Greens from John Papworth (former editor of *Resurgence* and an ex-advisor to Zambian leader Kenneth Kaunda) to Peter Cadogan, the pacifist and decentralist, into attending its conferences. Another *Scorpion* conference goer Anna Bramwell (see *Searchlight*) in her books *Ecology in the 20th Century* and *Blood and Soil: Walther Darrè and Hitler's Green Party*, has argued that the first Greens were to be found in Hitler's Germany and that "Ecologism" is a phenomenon of the "despised white European north." As far back as 1973 racists were blaming Third World overpopulation for the problems created by First World greed, in what was termed The Lifeboat Thesis, arguing against aid to famine victims but saying nothing about the links between Third World starvation and First World overconsumption. New Right ecologists have little to say of the brave struggle of African, Asian, and South American greens like Chico Mendes (the Brazilian trade unionist killed for protecting the rainforests), or the rural women involved in the Kenyan Green Belt movement. The plight of the Tasmanian aborigines and other Native people who lived in balance with the environment but were exterminated by European colonialists is forgotten. According to Anna who somehow managed to attend the 1989 Green Party conference, ecology should not be confused with the fight for social justice.

The second prong is organisational. Suddenly the brown shirts are green. The Strasserite blood and soil wing of the NF has been followed by other Fascist groups into exploiting environmental issues. Where NF once accused the anti-nuclear movement of being financed by Moscow gold, they now endorse opposition of the building of Hinckley point. The myth of a racially pure rural Britain peppered by nationalistic communes is closely linked to NF protests over the grubbing up of hedges and acid rain. Hull NF have advertised for members worried by "the growing scandal of filth and pollution in our waterways." Despite their hatred of other races the far right have become animal lovers. In fact the far right think of everything: Mosley supposedly invented Keynsian economic growth, Hitler built the first motorways, and both were supposedly advocates of the EC

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before anyone else thought of it. That the far right have taken up green issues should not fool us to their real nature, it should not lull us into inaction.

The final element is of direct infiltration. The far right have a strategy of moving into all major political parties and former members of the NF and British National Party have turned up as Labour, Liberal and Conservative candidates in the past. The NF are reputed to have put candidates under the Green or Ecology label in the past in areas where the real Greens are thin on the ground. Further afield Die Gruenen have had major problems with fascist infiltration and have closed down several local Green groups. The NF have gone as far as to stand a candidate under the title of Greenwave, a name ripped off an organisation set up by members of Greenpeace. Obviously neo-nazis find it easier to get votes under bogus green banners than as fascists. In 1989 a parliamentary by-election candidate for the real Green Party was offered help by a mysterious individual from the East End of London, who suggested that she campaigned under the slogan *On the Crest of the Greenwave*, she declined and other members have been warned of the threat. Yet as long ago as the mid 1970s other would-be environmentalists campaigned under the title of the Survival Party, complete with far right ideology and Mosleyite Flashes of lightning insignia on their publications. The far right soil everything they come into contact with and the greens must be aware of their corrupting influence, step up their vigilance and work for radical policies that attack the racism and inequality that underpins ecological destruction.

The animal rights movement, bizarrely, has been plagued by former and existing members of the NF. There is no doubt the fascists will attempt to infiltrate Earth First! Many of them appear like your average hippy! They are by no menas all skinhead thugs (equally groups like Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice and all the sound Gay/Lesbian suedeheads illustrate that having short hair doesn't mean you are a nasty nazi!). Be warned! They are thin on the ground but beware. The British National Party, the largest (perhaps 600 plus) nazi group, ignore Deep Ecology, but equally demand opposition. There is an excellent article in

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Finally why not join your local Anti-Fascist Action group or Anti-Fascist Alliance group, remember the Anti-Nazi League is a naff vehicle for those merchants of debased Leninist bollocks, the Socialist Workers Party.

Remember, people are dying because of Nazis in France, Spain, Germany, and in this country.

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Critical Mass: Reclaiming Space and Combating the Car
(from issue 5)

> *What a difference there was between the old and new parts of Mexico City only twenty years ago. In the old parts of the city, the streets were still true commons. Some people sat on the road to sell vegetables and charcoal. Others put their chairs on the road to sell tequila. Others held their meetings on the road to decide on the new headman for the neighborhood or to determine the price of a donkey. Others drove their donkeys through the crowd, walking next to the heavily-loaded beast of burden; others sat in the saddle. Children played in the gutter, and still people walking could use the road to get from one place to another. Such roads were not built for people. Like any true commons, the street itself was the result of people living there and* making *the space liveable. The dwellings that lined the roads were not private homes in the modern sense—garages for the overnight deposit of workers. The threshold still separated two living areas, one intimate and one common. But neither homes in this intimate sense nor streets as commons survived economic development. In the new sections of Mexico City, streets are no more for people. They are nowadays for automobiles, for buses, for cars, for taxis and trucks. People are barley tolerated on the streets unless they are on their way to a bus stop. If people now sat down or stopped on the street they would become obstacles for the traffic, and traffic would be dangerous to them. The road has been degraded from a commons to a simple resource for the circulation of vehicles."*
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> —Ivan Illich, "Silence is a Commons",
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As Ivan Illich says, it is about "making (our) spaces liveable"—reasserting our control, in a myriad of different ways, over those spaces that once belonged to us but have since been illegitimately wrested away from us, through the process known as "enclosure." This is what happened to the Dongas at Twyford Down on De-

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cember 9th 1992, to George Green in Wanstead, and to countless other places. This is where demos, or actions, come in- in a sense the issue that they are ostensibly concerned with is of secondary importance to the feelings that our actions engender within ourselves and others- how much of a scene we make and the imprint that it leaves behind. The US anarchist writer Hakim Bey talks of temporary autonomous zones, and this is at the heart of what every demonstration is, or should be striving for—a glimpse of the future (present?) society we long for. The best demos are a gap opening in the clouds of alienation, apathy, and impotence, and a sliver of electrifying sunlight breaking through. The stranglehold of orthodox reality is broken—to quote one example, it seems that at a recent Oxford Cycle action, the traffic was brought to a standstill by a prank that subverted police's public order expectations and left them confounded—they were confronted by waiters who had appeared out of nowhere and were causally serving tea at Oxford's newest cafe, as if it were the most normal thing in the world. The street had been redefined.

This brings us to Critical Mass—an idea and an attitude for bike actions that sprang up in San Francisco, and has now spread to other US cities and international locales, as the potential for mayhem inherent in bikes has been realized and refined. The Mass began as an *informal commute home together to show bike solidarity with no real agenda* (*Maximum Rock n' Roll*, Feb. 1994)- Just 50 riders cycling home in the dark. It has since proved to have an irresistible momentum, as hundreds more cyclists have gotten involved in Critical Mass manifestations, and the actions themselves have become more intentional. Their experience has shown the willingness of police and motorists to resort to potentially lethal force to defend what?—One of the supreme totems of our age—the private motor car, and the inalienable right of the motorist to drive, without hindrances of any kind. In one incident in San Francisco in April 1993, a driver reportedly rammed a group of cyclists on the Mass, and proceeded to run over one of its members. The police present duly charged the victims and threatened to arrest other witnesses. I'm sure such experiences will be familiar to those who have participated in

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Carmageddon actions in the U.K—or indeed, in anti-roads campaigns in general.

When death may be the penalty for enjoying an innocuous pleasure such as communal cycling, your ideas tend to become radicalized. Critical Masters now see *cars (as) embodying the epitome of American destruction* (*Maximum R 'n R*). Consequently, aggressive drivers are spat upon or blocked in for longer. The focus of the masses has broadened, with people biking through supermarkets, McDonalds (stealing their flags and causing the manager to lock himself in the process), and other temples of latter day capitalism. Most notably, hordes of cyclists attempted the world's first cyclotron, surrounding the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange in a bid to levitate it. (Remind you of anything?)

One of the most recent events involved blocking a Berkeley motorway, which led to the worst police reprisal so far seen: some of the participants were charged with "felony assault on a police officer with a deadly weapon, to wit: one bicycle" and 61 bikes were confiscated, some of which disappeared while in police hands. The officer who masterminded this operation hit the nail on the head in hilarious fashion when he accused Critical Massers of being *nothing more than self-proclaimed anarchists and local activists who have adopted innovative tactics to create civil disorder in an attempt to carry out the 'anarchist revolution'*. Give that man a D-lock!

Two of those involved in Critical Mass make a very significant point when they say it "above all builds community…at San Francisco Critical Mass in September for its first birthday, people brought huge cakes and brownies and we all sang happy birthday, and had fun in Golden Gate Park." (*Maximum R n' R*). Again, this feeling of community, and, ideally, tribal links will be familiar to many UKEF!ers. If revolution is the festival of the oppressed, struggling for something you believe in helps to bind you together, restoring the connections between people that this society so often severs as it tries to atomise us. A new zine culture—the "Xerocracy"—has emerged to cater to Critical Mass, fostering communication between strangers whose only previous connection was ownership of a bike and a desire for change,

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An example of resistance to this trend, and reclamation of this space for the people and community was Claremont Road at the M11. The contents of houses—chairs, sofas, a bath tub, a pool table, etc.- were turned out onto the street, breaking down the odious division between public and private spheres. There could be no greater contrast with David Engwight's findings, where *Heavy Street (high traffic levels)…was used solely as a corridor between the sanctuary of individual homes and the outside world. There was no feeling of community and residents kept themselves to themselves.* In our society, it is not just the physical environment that is colonized and enclosed—it is our minds also. By and large, cultural products are manufactured for us, we passively consume them, and our own idiosyncratic imaginations begin to atrophy. Critical Mass, and many other similar actions in the UK, are thus also important because they subvert this trend. A platform—a vehicle even (excuse the pun)—is provided for people to act out their fantasies, to play, to let rip. One example is Xerocracy, another is that *often (the mass) is chaotic, and indecision in the middle of the intersection can be annoying—or lead to outbursts of theater and fun like die-ins and resuscitating people with bikes.* (*Maximum R n' R*) People exult in the atmosphere and surprise themselves with their hitherto-neglected capabilities. The first time that the A33 at Twyford was blocked (March 1992) was such an occasion—having stilled the ceaseless roar of the traffic (the lifeblood of the cybernetic machine that we inhabit), we reveled in our power and new found freedom. We capered about, danced, sang, hooted, and grunted through road cones as if regressing to

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primal selves, did an absurd Conga through the stalled cars, openly attempted rash acts of sabotage—possessed by an almost palpable spirit of the moment: for a brief moment, anything seemed possible. To refer back to what I said at the beginning, we were sunbathing.

Critical Masses have been happening all over the country, with over 1,500 at the last London CM and over 300 in Brighton. Join these explosions of bike power: Last Friday of every month: Aberdeen, Bath, Bradford, Cambridge, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesborough, Sheffield, Southampton, Stoke, Wolverhampton, York. 1st Friday: Birmingham. 2nd Friday: Nottingham, 1st Saturday: Brighton.

Addresses:
1) Bike Not: London
2) The Broken Spoke: San Francisco, CA
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Reclaim the Streets *(from issue 6)*

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

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

The Evolution of RTS

RTS was originally formed in London in Autumn 1991, around the dawn of the anti-roads movement. With the battle for Twyford Down rumbling along in the background, a small group of individuals got together to take direct action against the motor car. In their own words they were campaigning: *FOR walking, cycling, and cheap, or free, public transport, and AGAINST cars, roads, and the system that pushes them.*[1]

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

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

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quality of life, and community fragmentation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The power that such activities embody inevitably challenges the state's authority, and hence ihe police and security services' attention has increasingly been drawn to RTS. The organisation of any form of direct action by the group is closely scrutinised. RTS has been made very aware of this problem. Vehicles carry-

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Yet RTS has not been deterred: they hold open meetings every week, they continue to expand and involve new people, and are also frequently approached by other direct action groups. Alliances have sprouted with other groups—the striking Liverpool Dockers and Tube Workers to name two—as recognition has grown of common ground between these struggles. Throughout the UK and Europe new local RTS groups have formed and late this summer there are likely to be Street Panics worldwide. These new groups have not been created by London RTS. they are fully autonomous. London RTS has merely acted as a cala- lyst; stimulating individuals to replicate ideas if they are suitable for others to use as well.

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

The Future Street Party?

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

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

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

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

Selling Space

The words "street" and "road" are often taken to mean the same thing, but they can be defined in opposition to each other, to represent different concepts of space. In everyday usage the distinction is still common. We talk of the word on the streets, taking to the streets, and street culture. A street suggests dwellings, people, and

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interaction, in a word: community. A road, in contrast, suggests the tarmac, the horizon, progress, and the private enclosure of the motor car. We speak of roadworks and road rage.

The road is mechanical, linear movement epitomised by the car. The street, at best, is a living place of human movement and social intercourse, of freedom and spontaneity.6 The car system steals the street from under us and sells it back for the price of petrol. It privileges time over space, corrupting and reducing both to an obsession with speed or, in economic lingo, turnover. It doesn't matter who drives this system for its movements are already pre-determined. As Theodore Adorno notes in Minima Moralia: "Which driver is not tempted, merely by the power of his engine, to wipe out the vermin of the street, pedestrians, children, and cyclists? The movements machines demand of their users already have the violent, hardhitting jerkiness of Fascist maltreatment."

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

The modern city is the capitalist 'machine' extended. A factory city serving dominant elites; a transportation hub for import and export, its citizens, as wage slaves, are kept in huge dormitories close to their place of labour. Its inhuman scale, impersonality, and sacrifice of pleasure to efficiency are the very antithesis of a genuine community.The privatisation of public space in the form of the car continues the erosion of neighbourhood and community that defines the metropolis. Road schemes, business "parks," shopping developments—all add to the disintegration of community and the flattening of a locality. Everywhere becomes the same as everywhere else. Community

Startled Mr. Lacey?
Thought you had just taken a job managing an obscure little port, then suddenly there are street battles outside your office, your car gets trashed four times, you can't go shopping without being attacked by grannies, your house gets trashed and you have to move two times, your wife leaves you and your kids won't talk to you. Bad career move, eh Phillip.

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becomes commodity—a shopping village, sedated and under constant surveillance. The desire for community is then fulfilled elsewhere, through spectacle, sold to us in simulated form. A tv soap "street" or square mimicking the arena that concrete and capitalism are destroying. The real street, in this scenario, is sterile. A place to move through, not to be in, it exists only as an aid to somewhere else—through a shop window, billboard, or petrol tank.

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

The barricade blocks the road but opens the way —Paris, May '63

Street Party as Public Meeting

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

The street party, in theory, suggests a dissolution of centralised power structures in favour of a network of self-controlled localities. The street party could easily involve a public meeting or community assembly that works in opposition to the state: towards taking direct control of its locality and giving all an

becomes commodity—a shopping village, sedated and under constant surveillance. The desire for community is then fulfilled elsewhere, through spectacle, sold to us in simulated form. A tv soap "street" or square mimicking the arena that concrete and capitalism are destroying. The real street, in this scenario, is sterile. A place to move through, not to be in, it exists only as an aid to somewhere else—through a shop window, billboard, or petrol tank.

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

The barricade blocks the road but opens the way —Paris, May '63

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The street party, in theory, suggests a dissolution of centralised power structures in favour of a network of self-controlled localities. The street party could easily involve a public meeting or community assembly that works in opposition to the state: towards taking direct control of its locality and giving all an

equal voice in decision-making. By including and engaging with other struggles, by involving more local associations, clubs, and tenants, work, and community groups, by helping others organise smaller street parties that bypass official channels, we extend the practice of direct action and make such a politics possible. In practice that is already what is happening, but without an understanding of where we wish the street party to go it becomes all too easy for authority to co-opt or subvert its form.

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

The Street Party of Street Parties

Revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society wrote Raoul Vaneigem.[8] The street party can be read as a situ-esque reversal of this assertion; as an attempt to make Carnival the revolutionary moment. Placing "what could be" in the path of "what is" and celebrating the "here and now" in the road of the rush for "there and later," it hopes to re-energize the possibility of radical change. The continuing emergence of street parties in Britain and increasingly in other countries shows that the desire for this change is not limited to economic equality, to ending injustice,

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or ensuring survival. It is an expansive desire: for freedom, for creativity; to truly live. This desire, for the present social order, is revolutionary.

While four out of five westerners live in the city, while two-thirds of the world's population share the common space of its thoroughfares, it is: *On the streets that power must be dissolved; for the streets, where daily life is endured, suffered, and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is enjoyed, created, and nourished.*[9]

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

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

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

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of the city's elemental matter and make it their own.[10]

For more information contact:
Reclaim The Streets
E-mail: rts@gn.apc.org
They have an internet web site at
http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk./campaigns/rts.html

References:

1. Reclaim The Streets leaflet
2. *Immortality* by Milan Kundera (Faber and Faber: London 1991)—page 271
3. Reclaim The Streets Agit-Prop (distributed at the M4I Street Party on Saturday 13th July 1996)
4. What is Reclaim the Streets? leaflet.
5. To take a facile example, imagine singing: "We're on the 'street' to nowhere"—not quite right is it? On the other hand, how about: "Our house, in the middle of our 'road'.1* Trivial maybe, but indicative of the difference.
6. And to "reclaim the streets' is to enact the transformation of the former to the latter. In this context the anti-roads movement is also a pro-streets movement. The struggle against the destruction of nature' is also a struggle for the human-scale, the face-to-face, for a society in harmony with its natural surrounding.
7. Leaflet for Street Party II, Rage against the Machine—Saturday 23th July 1995
8. *The Revolution of Everyday Life* by Raoul Vaneigem. < 1967)
9. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* by Murray Bookchin, (1971)
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Stop Making Sense: Direct Action and Action Theatre
(from issue 6)

In 1973 Jacques Camatte indicated

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

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

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

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nology. Resisters, I suggested, were cast as victims and cops were cast as victimizers. In short, in the scenario that has emerged at the sites of many direct actions, the participants assume particular roles. As a result, direct actions are already theatrical events in which the various players act out their parts. My proposals are based on a recognition of this fact, and suggest that direct action activists should take advantage of direct action's dramatic elements. This does not mean deliberately staging events for the media as Greenpeace, for example, has, because that means merely playing for the cameras—and once the cameras have gone, the whole momentum of the action can disappear, which sometimes means that the whole campaign disintegrates. On the contrary, taking advantage of the dramatic nature of direct actions means manipulating events by consciously intervening and shaping them in ways that are positive for the resistance.

In "Notes on Political Street Theatre, Paris 1968-1969," Jean-Jacques Lebel deliberately talks of the Paris uprising of May 1968 in theatrical terms. He says,

> *The first stage of an uprising ... the first stage of any revolution, is always theatrical... The May uprising was theatrical in that it was a gigantic fiesta, a revelatory and sensuous explosion outside the 'normal' pattern of politics.*[2]

It is in this sense that I wish to propose direct action as theatre: not as a dull ritualized scenario with pre-formulated roles for cops and resisters, and with an almost inevitable outcome, but rather as an explosion, as a riot of colour and effective action. In short, I propose the direct action as a prefiguration of uprising, as insurrection in miniature.

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

> *Street theatre as such started to pop up here and there in mass demonstrations, such as the 13th of May, which gathered more than a million people. Large effigies appeared of the CRS (French riot police), of DeGaulle, and other political clowns. Short, funny, the*atrical rituals were performed *around them as they burned. When the officially-subsidised*

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Odeon Theatre was occupied by the movement, many small groups of students and actors began to interpret the daily news in the street in short comic dramas followed by discussions with the passing audience.[3]

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

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

Here, Lebel is referring to extending agit-prop (agitation and propaganda) theatre to the streets. In the 1920s and 1930s radicals staged agit-prop plays in theatres and community centres, on picket lines and dole queues. These were explicitly didactic plays—i.e. they had specific political messages to convey, and were designed as a form of political agitation and propaganda. Lebel indicates that in May 1968 these agit-prop productions were shifted even further away from the private space of the theatre to the public space of the streets, in order to address wider audiences. Lebel comments,

Our orientation was agit-prop, yet we wanted to be creative and not just limited to old political clichés—above all we considered "theatre" only as a means of breaking down the Berlin Wall in peoples' heads and helping them out of their state of passive acceptance. We didn't give a shit about "art"—we were interested in sabotaging capitalism by helping to blow its arsenal of images, moods, perceptual habits, and tranquilislng illusions of security.[5]

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

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

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

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

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

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In political street theatre, although the script is collectively written and the actors are activist-amateurs, the relationship

between performance and audience remains unchanged. The actors act out a play and the audience passively watches a performance. Moreover, the theatrical performance only plays an indirect role in events. In the case of direct action, however, this need not be the case. The performance can become an integral component of the direct action. This is what I term "action theatre."

Action theatre would take planning and preparation of course, but there is no need to write a script—all that is needed is a general scenario and a broad understanding among participants that they know what roles they are playing. Suppose, for example, that there is a small group of people of different ages, races, genders, shapes, sizes, etc—some of whom look straight or conventional. They plan a scenario, the parts they will play, and what they intend to achieve. They target a site: maybe a shop, a bank, a McDonalds. They enter the site separately, at different times, and pretend not to know one another. One starts making a fuss, asks to see the manager, and starts having a loud row with him/her. One by one, others join in. Some may initially appear to offer counter-arguments to the politicised points put forward by the initiator, but then be won over. Maybe the real customers will be drawn into the seemingly spontaneous debate (maybe they could be drawn in by someone asking them, "what do you think?"). Maybe they won't, but even so, they will be alerted to some issues. The security guards will be loath to get heavy with seemingly legitimate customers—particularly if there seem to be many people involved.

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

A variation on this scenario is to place the group of actors in (say) a store that is about to be occupied. Again, these plants will act as legitimate customers. When the direct action com-

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mences, the plants can support the action, complaining to staff about security guards and police, threatening to report them, and encouraging real customers to do the same. The outcomes here would be preventing cop brutality and false arrest, as well as indicating to store managers, cops, and customers that direct action is legitimate and widely supported.

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

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

References

1. Jacques Camatte, *Against Domestication* (Black Thumb Press 1981) p15.
2. Jean-Jacques Lebel, "Notes on Political Street Theatre, Paris 1968-1969," *Drunken Boat* #1 (Autonomedia, n.d.), p.27.
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mences, the plants can support the action, complaining to staff about security guards and police, threatening to report them, and encouraging real customers to do the same. The outcomes here would be preventing cop brutality and false arrest, as well as indicating to store managers, cops, and customers that direct action is legitimate and widely supported.

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

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Lights, Camera… Activism! *(from issue 7)*

Video Media and Direct Action

This article has been written in an attempt to stimulate much-needed discussion in direct action circles about alternative media and its role in our struggles. With the space available the article cannot look at all areas of alternative media, nor tackle the areas it does look at in any great detail. I hope it will, however, act as a catalyst for discussions that should, for once, include the activists on the other side of the lens…

If you live and work in a city you are, on average, filmed by over 400 CCTV cameras per day. If you also manage to squeeze in an early morning national action you could potentially add another dozen cameras to that figure—but that's OK because it's our own media—isn't it?

> *I was surprised that not only were people quite happy to send me footage of actions without asking for any control over its use, but some of them had sent tapes to TV stations and couldn't remember getting them back again afterwards.*
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> Researcher, Channel 4, November 1997.

There is a basic philosophy underpinning direct action that goes a lot deeper than the net result of the day's action. As the RTS poster states: *Direct action is founded on the idea that people can develop the ability for self rule only through practice, and proposes that all persons directly decide the important issues facing them. It is not a last resort when other methods have failed, but the preferred way of doing things.* The issues that have to be tackled are how the ideas and theories behind direct action transfer to the alternative media; whether there are certain ethical criteria that have to be fulfilled for the alternative media to interact successfully with other areas of direct action, rather than become part of the mainstream with a profit motivated agenda.

Although there are many areas of campaign support that need to be looked at in detail, this article focuses primarily on video cameras because, in the wrong hands and with the current state of understanding, they can prove incredibly dangerous.

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Misuse of video cameras can adversely affect the action itself, as well as increasing the risk of arrest for the activists involved.

One case occurred at the launch of a new car in London. The camera operator, working on the Undercurrents video news magazine, had been allowed to record the planning process as well as the action itself. On the day all went as planned, with the car at the centre of the action finishing up covered with paint, and the activists quickly leaving the scene before the police arrived. Incredibly, the person with the camera decided to remain to film the police response—and was subsequently arrested. The tape inside the camera not only contained all the footage of the action but also the build up to it, and the faces and voices of those involved. Although no one was prosecuted as a result of the seizure of the footage it gave the police unnecessary intelligence that could be used in the future.

On another occasion people were arrested after a demonstration at Hackney Town Hall; unedited activist footage from the action was given straight to the local TV station—who then handed it to the police. During the action the videographer was questioned and claimed to be filming for Undercurrents. This was later found out to be untrue—but, despite the person with the camera being a stranger to everyone on the action, one word acted as a passport to record every intimacy and potentially incriminating act during the action itself.

There are always two sides to every debate however. Many of those currently taking direct action are there after watching *Undercurrents* at a festival, whilst others may have read through a copy of *Squall* or *Do or Die* and been motivated by the dramatic photographs that complement the articles. But even that raises questions about the movement's potential to recreate itself in the image of its media representation.... All of which leads to the same point: there has to be a continuous appraisal of the methods and motivations of those involved (at all levels) in alternative media—and at the moment that is not happening. The following aims to highlight points in the process from action to advert and examine the image, theory, and motivation.

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recording of the image. People will often try and avoid getting their faces near a police Evidence Gatherer (EG) film unit; likewise most will avoid trashing machinery with police filming nearby, yet many appear happy to trust those on site with cameras—as long as they're wearing green and black. Quite a few will remember the open cast action in Derbyshire, when every machine on site was trashed and over 350 000 damage was caused (*SchNEWS*, November 7, 1997); police attendance was negligible and no arrests took place on site. People may also remember the video cameras filming the smashing of machinery from afar, whilst others stood at the side taking photographs.

What action was taken to ensure that none of the footage taken was incriminating—or distributed without the control of those recorded? The answer, as usual, appeared to be very little. If you see someone turning up on their first action with a camera—or even if you see someone you know and trust filming anything potentially incriminating—you have a responsibility to others on the action to question exactly where their motivations lie, and to take appropriate (intelligent) action. Actually taking part in direct action should come before the recording of the event for others. It should not be seen as a spectacle, but as the way to achieve results—people taking back control of their lives.

At present, the activist community seems to have lost control of the image that is often the only connection those not involved have with what is going on and why. The camera can be there as an integral part of the action, a key weapon to be used as part of the greater campaign, but the camera operator should never be—or be seen as—an outside unit. They are there to complement the action, and to support those on the front line; this means working with the various campaigns before hitting the Record button, and finding the balance necessary for the relationship to work. Trust can only be built up over a long time. If those with the cameras haven't got the patience to get to know at least some of those taking part in the action they want to record, they certainly haven't got the patience or knowledge necessary to be given control over the resultant images.

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is based developed primarily from inside the environmental direct action movement, and this should have ensured that the whole process—from the recording of the initial image through to final distribution—remained within the control of those actively involved in the movement. It should also have ensured our media could develop as an independent and ethically sound means of information dissemination—but the image, from inception to distribution, has fallen from being part of the process to its current position apparently very distant from the ethic it claims to represent.

According to Michael Albert (*Z Magazine*, Oct. 1997):

> *What makes alternative media alternative can't be its product in the simplest sense. ...[It] can't just mean that the institution's editorial focus is in this or that topical area; being alternative must have to do with how the institution is organised and works.*

At present there is one agency that specialises in the production and distribution of alternative video in the UK: Undercurrents. Based initially in London, and now in Oxford, there are a number of lessons that can be learnt from recent revelations about the working ethics of the organisation (see box).

We should note the ease with which control over footage from actions can be taken away from the activist community and placed in the hands of those who may have very little or no experience of direct action. Undercurrents have stated that there has always been a hierarchical regime in place within the organisation, and expect the video activist to accept that fact as a fait accompli.

However, whilst it may be easier to work with such an organisation on their terms, the activist community must both challenge those ideas with which it disagrees, and as necessary find or create alternative outlets for the work. As already stated, direct action does not end when the camera goes back in the bag, and the same ethic has to follow the images from beginning to end. There should be a fluid process in place that allows both common sense to prevail and for overall control to remain within the represented community.

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Whilst Undercurrents may state they are not deliberately taking control of the image for their own ends, they are demonstrating enough of a lack of understanding to trigger warning bells in all those who come into contact with them. Their explanation, that because the mainstream media want moral rights over all works they use, the activist community must also sign away their moral rights to an outside force, is incredible in its

Focus on Undercurrents

A document was circulated last year that detailed some concerns about Undercurrents. Written by several activists with experience of working within the organisation, the main points raised were:

That Undercurrents' contracts ask contributors to waive all moral rights to their work, whilst claiming incorrectly that work could not be used by the mainstream without the waiver.

That the contracts asked contributors to sign exclusive rights over to Undercurrents for between 20 to 25 years.

That the contract demands contributors agree to promote the video in any way possible in order to widen distribution.

That the majority of money from the sale of footage (70 per cent after all costs have been taken) remains within Undercurrents instead of being offered back to the campaign that produced the images in the first place.

That Undercurrents have been quietly working as a (fairly) exclusive news agency; acting as mainstream when dealing with outside media, yet still claiming to be activists when working in the activist field.

That the explicit hierarchy at work within the organisation disallows much sense of ownership to anyone who comes to work there.

That Undercurrents can only profit in this way because its actual methods of operation radically contradicts what we feel is most activists perception of the organisation.

That unless there is a large scale change within the organisation activists should begin to view it very much as they do mainstream media organisations.

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There are numerous publications that attempt in different ways to fulfil the alternative criteria. Examples include *SchNEWS*, published each week in Brighton, and the *Earth First! Action Update*. Both work in different ways, and have put in place criteria that attempt to ensure the media (and thus the image) remains within the control of activists and is not taken over by an unrepresentative elite. In the case of *SchNEWS*, all articles are written, edited, and published by activists; this should ensure that not only do those involved in a campaign get an opportunity to represent themselves, but that training is freely available for all those who want to become more involved in the process. In the case of the *EF!Action Update*, the creation of an elite is avoided by rotating publication of the newsletter each year.

Where we go from here needs debate that must take place at all levels. The action and current standpoint of Undercurrents should be seen as unacceptable. We need to challenge, change, and learn from our current position to ensure that we never find ourselves in the situation where control of the image has passed to those who place their own survival above the greater good of the movement. The next time someone asks you where you're from, and tells you to put the camera away, it's not necessarily part of an ego-war, it could be because they have never seen you before, and want to know where your motivations lie. Do you know?

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Friday June 18th, 1999 *(from issue 8)*
Confronting Capital and Smashing The State!

As the economy has become increasingly transnational, so too has the resistance to its devastating social and ecological consequences. The June 18th (J18) International Day of Action in financial and banking districts across the world was probably the largest and most diverse day of action against global capital in recent history. Hundreds of actions took place in over 30 countries on every continent,[1] all *in recognition that the global capitalist system is based on the exploitation of people and the planet for the profit of a few and is at the very root of our social and ecological troubles.*[2] But where did this extraordinary show of international solidarity spring from? And how and why are such diverse groups building global networks of struggle to counter the globalisation[3] of misery under capitalism? What follows is a personal account of the history, context and organisation of the events leading up to June 18th. It is a story that needs telling…

Contradictions Of Globalisation

International solidarity and global protest is nothing new. From the European-wide revolutions of 1848, through the upheavals of 1917-18 following the Russian Revolution, to the lightning flashes of resistance nearly everywhere in 1968[4], struggle has always been able to communicate and mutually inspire globally. But what is perhaps unique to our times is the speed and ease with which we can communicate between struggles and the fact that globalisation has meant that many people living in very different cultures across the world now share a common enemy. An enemy that is increasingly becoming less subtle and more excessive (capitalism with its gloves off) and therefore easier to see, understand and ultimately dismantle.[5]

A Common Enemy

The irony is that before the onslaught of globalisation, the system was sometimes hard to recognise in its diverse manifestations and policies. Abstract critical theory was confronting an abstract multifaceted system. But the reduction of diversity in the corporate landscape and the concentration of power within

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international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the financial markets, has clarified things and offered a focal point for protest and opposition. It is a lot easier to oppose concentrated uniform power than diverse and flexible forms.[6] As power heads further and further in this direction, those opposing it seem to become more and more diverse and fluid, and hence much harder to diffuse and undermine.[7] As the elite, their transnational corporations and their puppets the IMF and WTO impose free market policies on every country on the planet, they are unwittingly creating a situation where diverse movements are recognising each others' struggles as related and are beginning to work together on an unprecedented scale.

The global race to the bottom in which workers, communities and whole countries are forced to compete by lowering wages, working conditions, environmental protections and social spending, all to facilitate maximum profit for corporations, is stimulating resistance all over the world. People everywhere are realising that their resistance is pointless if they are struggling in isolation. For example—say your community manages, after years of tireless campaigning, to shut down your local toxic waste dump, what does the transnational company that owns the dump do? They simply move it to wherever their costs are less and the resistance weaker—probably somewhere in the Third World or Eastern Europe. Under this system, communities have a stark choice; either compete fiercely with each other or co-operate in resisting the destruction of our lives, land and livelihoods by rampaging capital.[8]

Diversity Versus Uniformity

To accelerate profit and create economies of scale, global capital imposes a monoculture upon the world with the result of making everywhere look and feel like everywhere else—the same restaurants, the same hotels, the same supermarkets filled with the same musak. Sumner Redstone, the multibillionaire owner of MTV, summed up this denial of diversity when he said, *Just as teenagers are the same all over the world, children are the same all over the world.* On his business trips, he obviously forgets to stop

international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the financial markets, has clarified things and offered a focal point for protest and opposition. It is a lot easier to oppose concentrated uniform power than diverse and flexible forms.[6] As power heads further and further in this direction, those opposing it seem to become more and more diverse and fluid, and hence much harder to diffuse and undermine.[7] As the elite, their transnational corporations and their puppets the IMF and WTO impose free market policies on every country on the planet, they are unwittingly creating a situation where diverse movements are recognising each others' struggles as related and are beginning to work together on an unprecedented scale.

The global race to the bottom in which workers, communities and whole countries are forced to compete by lowering wages, working conditions, environmental protections and social spending, all to facilitate maximum profit for corporations, is stimulating resistance all over the world. People everywhere are realising that their resistance is pointless if they are struggling in isolation. For example—say your community manages, after years of tireless campaigning, to shut down your local toxic waste dump, what does the transnational company that owns the dump do? They simply move it to wherever their costs are less and the resistance weaker—probably somewhere in the Third World or Eastern Europe. Under this system, communities have a stark choice; either compete fiercely with each other or co-operate in resisting the destruction of our lives, land and livelihoods by rampaging capital.[8]

Diversity Versus Uniformity

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and visit the slums of Delhi or the impoverished rural villages of Africa. In New York, London,[9] and Berlin, kids may have succumbed to his spell of sameness, as they sit prisoners of their own homes, their dull eyes glued to the screen. But the majority of the world's children would rather have clean water than Jamiroquai.

Herbert Read in *The Philosophy of Anarchism* wrote that, *Progress is measured by the degree of differentiation within a society.* The president of the Nabisco Corporation would obviously disagree, as he is *looking forward to the day when Arabs and Americans, Latins and Scandinavians will be munching Ritz crackers as enthusiastically as they already drink Coke or brush their teeth with Colgate.*[10] Progress under the capitalist system is measured by economic growth—which inevitably means monoculture. Just because more money is changing hands doesn't mean that life is getting any better, it is quite the opposite for the majority of the world. But by embracing diversity, social movements are proposing powerful challenges to capital's addiction to uniformity.

Space For Utopias

Capital was only able to become truly global after the fall of the Berlin wall and the break-up of the Eastern Bloc. The fall of Communism not only opened up the space for capital to be unrestrained, but also gave a new lease of life to radical movements.[11] For more than 70 years, Soviet-style socialism was seen as the main model of revolutionary society, and of course it was a total social and ecological disaster. But its shadow lingered over most radical movements. Those who wished to discredit any forms of revolutionary thinking simply pointed to the Soviet model to prove the inevitable failures of any utopian project.

Now that the Soviet Union has ceased to exist, it has become a lot easier for those of us working in radical movements to conceive of different societies without having to refer to a failed model. Ideas of utopia can return unhindered. The space has been cleared and the power of radical imagination is back at the centre of revolutionary struggle. Not only has the imagination been freed, it has also become more diverse and fluid than it

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was ever able to be under the shadow of the strict monolithic ideology of Soviet socialism. There is no longer any need for universal rules, there is not just one way, one utopia to apply globally, because that is exactly what the Free Marketeers are trying to do. The radical social movements that are increasingly coming together don't want to seize power, but to dissolve it. They are not vanguards but catalysts in the revolutionary process. They are dreaming up many autonomous alternative forms of social organisation, and they are celebrating variety and rejoicing in autonomy.

The Ecology of Struggle

In Post Scarcity Anarchism, Murray Bookchin wrote that "in almost every period since the Renaissance, the development of revolutionary thought has been heavily influenced by a branch of science." [12] He gives the examples of mathematics and mechanics for the Enlightenment, and evolutionary biology and anthropology for the 19th Century. Ecology has influenced many movements today, and that is perhaps why their model of organisation and co-ordination resembles an ecological model, working like an ecosystem. Highly interconnected, it thrives on diversity, works best when imbedded in its own locality and context and develops most creatively at the edges, the overlap points, the in-between spaces—those spaces where different cultures meet, such as the coming together of the American Earth First! and logging unions or London tube workers and Reclaim the Streets. The societies that they dream of creating will also be like ecosystems—diversified, balanced, and harmonious.

Enough Is Enough

The ecological crisis changes the way many of these movements think and act. Kirkpatrick Sale illustrates the scale of the biological meltdown. *More goods and services have been consumed by the generation alive between 1950 and 1990, measured in constant dollars and on a global scale, than by all the generations in all of human history before.*[13] The level of ecological destruction is mind-blowing, and the present generation feels an incredible urgency about the future.[14] We know that mere reform is useless

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because it is clear that the whole basis of the present system is profoundly anti-ecological, and that there is no longer any use waiting for the right historical conditions for revolution as time is rapidly running out.

Radically creative and subversive change must happen now, because there is no time left for anything else. During the May '68 insurrection in Paris, a message was scrawled on the walls of the Theatre de L'Odeon: *Dare to go where none has gone before you. Dare to think what none has ever thought.* Despite capital's rapacious ability to enclose and recuperate everything, the space has now been opened up, and we can finally pay attention to that message.

Transnational Resistance

On New Year's Day 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect, 2,000 indigenous people from several groups came out from the mountains and forests of Chiapas, the most Southern state of Mexico. Masked, armed, and calling themselves Zapatistas, their battle cry was *Ya Basta* (*Enough is Enough*). An extraordinary popular uprising which was to change the landscape of global resistance forever had begun. Five towns were occupied and 12 days of fighting followed. This was not an isolated local act of rebellion; through the Zapatistas' resourceful use of the internet, which could not be censored by the Mexican state, people all over the world soon heard of the uprising.[15] These masked rebels from poverty stricken communities were not only demanding that their own land and lives be given back, neither were they just asking for international support and solidarity. They were talking about neoliberalism, about the death sentence that NAFTA and other Free Trade agreements would impose on indigenous people. They were demanding the dissolution of power and the development of civil society, and they were encouraging others all over the world to take on the fight against the enclosure of our lives by capital. Public sympathy in Mexico and abroad was overwhelming, on the day of the ceasefire, celebratory demonstrations took place in numerous countries. In Mexico City, 100,000 marched together shouting "First World HAHAHA!" Phenom-

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enal poetic communiques came out of Chiapas and were rapidly circulated through the internet. There was a new sense of possibility, and the Zapatistas and their supporters were weaving an electronic fabric of struggle to carry the seeds of revolution around the world.[16]

People's Global Action

In 1996 the Zapatistas, with trepidation as they thought nobody might come, put out a call for a gathering—an 'encuentra' (encounter)—of international activists and intellectuals to meet in Chiapas and discuss common tactics, problems and solutions to the common enemy: capitalism.[17] Over 6,000 people attended and spent days talking and sharing their stories of struggle. This was followed a year later by a gathering in Spain, where the idea of a more concrete global campaign, named People's Global Action (PGA), was hatched by a group made up of ten of the largest and most innovative social movements, including the Movimento Sem Terra, the Brazilian Landless Peasants Movement (see *DoD* #7, page 88) and the radical Indian Farmers—the Karnataka State Farmers Union (KRRS). Four hallmarks were proposed by this group in an attempt to get people to rally around shared principles. These were:

- A very clear rejection of the institutions that multinationals and speculators have built to take power away from people, like the WTO and other trade liberalisation agreements (like APEC, the EU, NAFTA, etc..)
- A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations in which transnational capital is the only real policy maker.
- A call for non-violent [hmmm] civil disobedience and the construction of local alternatives by local people, as answers to the actions of governments and corporations.
- An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy.

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Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The first gathering of the PGA was held in Geneva—home of the much hated WTO. More than 300 delegates from 71 countries came to Geneva to share their anger over corporate rule. From the Uwa peoples of Columbia, Canadian Postal Workers, European Reclaim the Streets activists, anti-nuclear campaigners, French farmers, Maori and Ogoni activists, through to Korean Trade Unionists, the Indigenous Women's Network of North America, and Ukrainian radical ecologists, all were there to form *a global instrument for communication and co-ordination for all those fighting against the destruction of humanity and the planet by the global market, while building local alternatives and people power.*[18]

One of the participants spoke of this inspiring event:

> *It is difficult to describe the warmth and the depth of the encounters we had here. The global enemy is relatively well known, but the global resistance that it meets rarely passes through the filter of the media. And here we met the people who had shut down whole cities in Canada with general strikes, risked their lives to seize lands in Latin America, destroyed the seat of Cargill in India or Novartis' transgenic maize in France. The discussions, the concrete planning for action, the stories of struggle, the personalities, the enthusiastic hospitality of the Genevan squatters, the impassioned accents of the women and men facing the police outside the WTO building—all sealed an alliance between us. Scattered around the world again, we will not forget. We remain together. This is our common struggle.*

One of the concrete aims of this gathering was to co-ordinate actions against two events of global importance that were coming up in May of that year, the G8 meeting (an annual event) of the leaders of the eight most industrialised nations, which was to take place in Birmingham and the second ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation which was being held a day later in Geneva.

For four consecutive days in May 1998, acts of resistance echoed around the planet. In Hyderabad, India, 200,000 peasant farmers called for the death of the WTO; in Brasilia landless

peasants and unemployed workers joined forces and 50,000 of them took to the streets; over 30 Reclaim the Streets parties took place in many countries, ranging from Finland to Sidney, San Francisco to Toronto, Lyon to Berlin. In Prague, the biggest single mobilisation since the Velvet Revolution in '89, brought over thousands into the streets for a mobile street party that ended with several McDonalds being redesigned and running battles with the police. Meanwhile in the UK, 5,000 people were paralysing central Birmingham as the G8 leaders fled the city to a local manor to continue their meeting in a more tranquil location. The following day, the streets of Geneva exploded. The G8 plus many more world leaders had congregated there for the WTO ministerial and to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GAAT), the forerunner of the WTO. Over 15,000 people from all over Europe and many from other continents demonstrated. Banks had their windows smashed, the WTO Director General's Mercedes was turned over and three days of the heaviest rioting ever seen in Geneva followed. The dust settled, the world leaders stuck in their glass bunker beside Lake Geneva made a statement saying that they wanted the WTO to become *more transparent!* As if that was going to make the blindest bit of difference.

June 18th—Keep on Building

It was clear that things were really moving and that we had to keep the momentum going, and build on the success of the May actions. The question was how? Then came an idea—why not go for the jugular this time? Why not aim at the heart of the beast, the pulsating core of the global economy, the financial and banking districts, the engine room of all ecological and social devastation? This time we could make it bigger, better and even more diverse. According to an article in *The Daily Mail*[19] entitled "Invitation to a Riot," June 18th was organised by ringleaders during a *secret council of war*, several other papers mentioned *cells* and *shadowy groups*; while others concentrated on the *protest by Stealth*, the fact that it was all *plotted on the internet*[20] and was therefore *secret*. If you believe the papers, the internet is so secret that *The Sunday Times* had to *intercept an e-mail*—

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which happened to be on the open discussion list—to show to its readers. Apparently the fact that it was "hatched" on the internet also meant it was *impossible for the police to estimate how many protesters*[21] *might be involved*[22] or know what the protest was actually about!

Geneva 1998: oops that was a director general's posh car

The media go to extraordinary lengths to make people believe that this kind of thing can't be organised by fairly normal people, using fairly normal everyday life tools such as conversations, phone calls[23] and public meetings. Only shadowy types using weird and highly unusual things like computers and the internet and meeting in strange, secret places like pubs and community centres could possibly organise such an event. But how did it all start, and in what ways was it really organised? If you work for MI5 or the police, don't get all excited and think I'm about to divulge the names and techniques of all the *organised anarchists*[24] that you so desperately want to catch.[25] I'm going to do no such thing, but what I do want to attempt however, is to demystify the whole process of organising June 18th.

Desiring The Impossible

Those moments where incredible dreams are first shared and aired, where imagination becomes actual by speaking, are wonderful to look back on. Sometimes it takes so little, just a conversation at the right time with the right people, and the seed of an idea is planted and takes root. Like all good ideas, lots of people were thinking the same thoughts at the same time, and all it took was a bit of talking to make those dreams real.

Last year for the May '98 actions, Reclaim the Streets had spent some time trying to work out how to hold an event in the City of London, this was before it was decided to move the whole thing up to Birmingham. But the ring of steel, the blanket CCTV coverage and the fact that the event was going to be during the weekend and the City would be empty of office workers put us right off. However, the desire to do something in this small square mile of land right on our doorsteps, Europe's leading financial centre, and one of capital's oldest and most powerful sites, proved too strong. Having a tendency to believe

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in the reality of our desires, we couldn't let this one go.

Then during a hot summer's day in June 1998, a conversation occurred between an RTS activist and someone from London Greenpeace (LGP—the anarchist collective not linked to Greenpeace International) who had been involved in the Stop the City demonstrations during the '80s. It turned out that they had been thinking similar thoughts about having an event in the City that year to bring all the single issue campaigns together around the common enemy of capital, and a date had already been set for a public meeting. LGP felt that the time was right to take on such an audacious target. The Stop the Citys in the '80s had come out of the momentum of the peace movement. In the last few years, the ecological direct action movement had been getting stronger. There seemed to be an upsurge in workplace action—the Jubilee line wildcat strikes, and the Thameside care workers being two examples. Street Parties had sprouted up across the country with thousands taking direct action and there was a sense that there was enough momentum to take on such an ambitious and cheeky action.

The idea was taken back to RTS's weekly public meeting and to LGP's. In mid-August, the first of many public meetings about June the 18th was held in a community centre in Central London. As well as RTS and LGP, several groups were present, ranging from the Mexico Support Group, London Animal Action, through to McLibel and Class War. A date was decided, June 18th, to coincide with the G8 summit. It was a Friday—therefore a work day in the City. An initial proposal text was agreed and rough ideas of a timetable for the day and different groups to approach for involvement were discussed. It was agreed to hold open co-ordinating meetings every month, and these continued to take place right up to a few weeks before the actual day.

At this point, there was much debate and some pretty dire brainstorming sessions trying to find a title for the day. Suggestions like A Carnival against Commerce, Laughing All the Way to the Bank, For a Millennium Without Multinationals, Reclaim the City, and Reclaim the World all were mentioned, yet nobody could agree on a suitable name. Time passed and still no title

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had been thought of, so we stuck to the date—June 18th—with a subtitle of *a day of action, protest, and carnival in financial centres across the globe*. For some extraordinary reason, perhaps due to the fact that a date provides the ultimate in global ownership, no one is taking on someone else's tag, it seemed to work and eventually, many groups began simply calling it J18.[26]

Good Ideas Spread Like Wildfire

By the end of August 1998, the first leaflet was put together—an A4 cut and pasted photocopied sheet—and it was taken to the EF! Summer Gathering for discussion. A small number of people thought it was a suicide mission to try and occupy and transform the city on a work day, when many people would be unable to attend because they were working,[27] but others were excited by it and they agreed to take the idea back to their localities and discuss it. By the beginning of September 1998, an international proposal had been written was taken to the PGA Convenors' Committee meeting in Finland and discussed with social movements from each continent, who gave the go-ahead for it to be networked internationally. Soon after this, an international networking group was established to distribute and translate the proposal into eight languages. Paper copies found themselves in many backpacks and were taken to far flung places on people's travels.

Preparation pays off—but how many emails before we too get this? (Narita Airport protestors in Japan in the 1970s)

A J18 e-mail discussion list was set up, where any message sent from anywhere in the world is automatically distributed to everyone who is signed up. This list was entirely public, anyone with an e-mail account could join. During the run up to the action, over 1,000 people passed through the list, and there was a steady membership of about 400 people. Over 300 different people sent an e-mail contributing to the discussion, which showed a suprising level of participation. Someone who had very little experience designing web pages used a web page making programme and set up a basic web site with the proposal on it.

Academics and corporations agree that the internet has become one of the most potent weapons of resistance for activists fighting global capital. A PR manager teaching multinationals

had been thought of, so we stuck to the date—June 18th—with a subtitle of *a day of action, protest, and carnival in financial centres across the globe*. For some extraordinary reason, perhaps due to the fact that a date provides the ultimate in global ownership, no one is taking on someone else's tag, it seemed to work and eventually, many groups began simply calling it J18.[26]

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By the end of August 1998, the first leaflet was put together—an A4 cut and pasted photocopied sheet—and it was taken to the EF! Summer Gathering for discussion. A small number of people thought it was a suicide mission to try and occupy and transform the city on a work day, when many people would be unable to attend because they were working,[27] but others were excited by it and they agreed to take the idea back to their localities and discuss it. By the beginning of September 1998, an international proposal had been written was taken to the PGA Convenors' Committee meeting in Finland and discussed with social movements from each continent, who gave the go-ahead for it to be networked internationally. Soon after this, an international networking group was established to distribute and translate the proposal into eight languages. Paper copies found themselves in many backpacks and were taken to far flung places on people's travels.

Preparation pays off—but how many emails before we too get this? (Narita Airport protestors in Japan in the 1970s)

A J18 e-mail discussion list was set up, where any message sent from anywhere in the world is automatically distributed to everyone who is signed up. This list was entirely public, anyone with an e-mail account could join. During the run up to the action, over 1,000 people passed through the list, and there was a steady membership of about 400 people. Over 300 different people sent an e-mail contributing to the discussion, which showed a suprising level of participation. Someone who had very little experience designing web pages used a web page making programme and set up a basic web site with the proposal on it.

Academics and corporations agree that the internet has become one of the most potent weapons of resistance for activists fighting global capital. A PR manager teaching multinationals

how to deal with modern day activist groups was quoted as saying *The greatest threat to the corporate world's reputation comes from the internet, the pressure groups' newest weapon. Their agile use of global tools such as the internet reduces the advantage that corporate budgets once provided.* Harry Cleaver, a professor of economics in the USA, has written that *the most serious challenge to the basic institutional structures of modern society flow from the emergence of computer-linked global social movements.*[28]

Despite the fact that most people on the planet don't own a phone, let alone a computer linked up to the internet, many social movements in both the North and South now have some sort of internet access. It's a relatively cheap medium that enables small groups with very few resources to communicate on a mass scale. June 18th could not have happened globally without it. The cost of sending letters or making phone calls halfway across the world would have been prohibitive. But it's the way the internet spreads ideas rapidly and in every direction through web sites, discussion lists etc. which is extraordinary. Once a message has gone out, a simple click of a button can send it to thousands of people and each one of these in turn can forward that message within seconds. Ideas spread and multiply at the speed of light.

There is a great anecdote which describes the decentralised multiplying nature of the internet. Someone in the international networking group sent an e-mail to an anarchist group in New York, which was then forwarded by them to Chicago, who in turn forwarded it to Boston and so on to several other cities in the US until eventually it reached Mexico City, where it was forwarded to Zapatista supporters in Chiapas, who were friends of the originator of the e-mail in the UK but who had no idea that she knew anything about J18. They then e-mailed her saying *Wow, have you seen this proposal? Have you heard about this action?* The message had literally gone around the world.

Traditional media was also of key importance, and by the time 20,000 red, green and black leaflets[29] had been printed and mailed out (yes, real stamps and licking envelopes) to around 1,000 groups around the world, many countries and groups had

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already got involved—including the North Sumatran Peasants Union, the Policy Information Centre for International Solidarity (PICIS) in South Korea, Chicoco (the coalition of tribal people fighting the oil industry in Nigeria), the Canadian Auto Workers Union, Green Action in Israel and a coalition of several groups in the United States and Australia.

J18 was spreading like wildfire. Like a virulent virus, it had taken hold of people's imaginations. Uncontrollable and untameable, it had moved from city to city and country to country. Like the financial markets, it fed on rumour and speculation. Unlike the markets, it needed co-operation, community and hope to keep it alive.

The Importance of Process

Although what happened on the day went beyond many people's wildest dreams, the process that led up to it was just as important. Although it had some failings, it did achieve much which will strengthen many of the movements who worked on J18. Primarily, I believe there are three key areas in which the process succeeded—group building, education and networking, both on local and international level. I can only speak about the first two in terms of what happened in the UK, but I'm sure similar processes happened in many places where actions were organised.

Acting Together

Produced in the months leading up to June 18th were two useful action oriented publications. "Squaring up to the Square Mile" was a 32-page pamphlet detailing the institutions and workings of the city. The accompanying publication was an A3 map of the city, marking financial institutions and places. See the resources section for how to get your own copy.

In terms of group building, what seemed clear was that the process of local groups getting together to plan their autonomous actions on the day was incredibly important. June 18th was providing a common focus for groups up and down the country. New groups were forming and existing groups were coalescing and expanding. Local meetings which brought together diverse interest groups began happening in Sheffield, Cardiff, Newcastle, Brighton, Bristol, Glasgow, Manchester and Southampton to

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name but a few (eventually there were over 35 different UK groups and places that had their own June 18th point of contact.) Local posters and stickers were produced, stalls and exhibitions appeared in cafes and at festivals. With the freedom to act completely autonomously, yet knowing that there would be many other groups doing actions on the day providing both cover and support, groups found extra confidence and security and felt part of a wider process. All sense of feeling too small and too isolated seemed to evaporate. The success of the day itself will also help inspire them further. Hopefully many of these groups will continue working together for many years to come.

Learning Together

There has been a tendency in the UK direct action movement to concentrate on action at the expense of more conscious thinking and theoretical clarity.[30] The positive side of this is that it has enabled wildly imaginative actions and strategies to take place. It has also helped avoid the ideological factionalisation and bickering that has beset much of 'traditional' politics. The downside of this however, is that if we want to build *organised popular movements which think things through, which debate, which act, which experiment, which try alternatives, which develop seeds of the future in the present society,*[31] then we have to get a lot better at thinking, talking and educating ourselves and others. June 18th once again acted as a focusing agent, bringing together diverse people from different single issue campaigns, and getting them to think about one question—the question of capital.

Few people seriously understand economics, and even fewer understand the complexities of the arcane currency, futures and options markets that lie at the heart of the world's economy. There are very few places which will tell you about such things in clear and simple language.[32] It is in the interest of the elites to make these things inaccessible and difficult to understand for the average citizen. In many ways, it resembles the hold on power that has gone on for millennia within religious societies. The high priesthood would often hold arcane ceremonies in temples hidden from the populace, and for over a thousand years, mass was held in Latin which excluded the majority of the population

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from understanding it. Now, in their towering glass temples of Mammon, the elite, the bankers, traders and financiers are still waking up at dawn and engaging in secret rituals. Aloof and isolated from the devastating effects of their magic, they sit safely in front of their screens playing with numbers and abstract mathematical equations, knowing that most people will never make a connection between these arcane games and the misery of their everyday life.

As a first step towards unlocking the City's mystique[33] and to help educate ourselves on the issues of contemporary capital and financial markets, Corporate Watch and Reclaim the Streets produced a clear and concise 32 page illustrated booklet entitled *Squaring Up to The Square Mile—A rough Guide to the City of London.* 4000 copies of this excellent publication were distributed to groups preparing for J18, alternative bookshops and conferences, and a version was also put up on the web. Tucked inside the booklet was a full colour map of potential targets in the City—banks, exchanges, corporate HQs, investment houses etc., all to help people planning their autonomous actions. A wonderful way of showing that theory without action is useless.

Face-to-face debate is as important as radical literature, and at the end of February 1999, a day of self education was held in a squatted social centre in Stoke Newington, London, which involved over 100 people participating in theoretical workshops and debates about the issues surrounding J18. As well as this, various people travelled around giving workshops at conferences and gatherings, sometimes illustrating them with slide shows and the J18 video. This 18-minute video featured an amusing spoof Hollywood trailer for J18, complete with deep husky American voice and superfast paced edits, an ironic short film on the resistance to the IMF and World Bank and a couple of spoof adbusters adverts about growth economics and the G8. One hundred free copies of this were distributed globally, and it was shown in many places ranging from Israeli and US Cable TV, squatted social centres in Europe, through to benefit gigs in London. Some people even illegally dubbed it onto the beginning of rented video tapes!

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Sharing Together

As has been described extensively above, one of the central ideas behind J18 was the need to create international and local networks of resistance. But perhaps describing this amorphous and fluid form of communication as a network is misleading. Harry Cleaver describes a net as a *woven fabric made up of interlinked knots—which in social terms means interlinked groups. This is applicable enough when it comes to easily identifiable, co-operating groups, such as NGOs.*[34] But, what is missing from this description, continues Cleaver, *is the sense of ceaseless, fluid motion within 'civil society' in which 'organising' may not take the form of 'organisations' but an ebb and flow of contact at myriad points.*

For Cleaver, the perfect metaphor for the type of organising that is presently taking place between grassroots groups is water, *especially of oceans with their ever restless currents and eddies, now moving faster, now slower, now warmer, now colder, now deeper, now on the surface. At some points water does freeze, crystallising into rigidity, but mostly it melts again, undoing one molecular form to return to a process of dynamic self-organising that refuses crystallisation yet whose directions and power can be observed and tracked.* The process of J18 was exactly like this, and this fluidity is one of our greatest strengths against the rigid constraints of capital.

The Day Gets Nearer—The State Prepares…

It was no coincidence that on January 29, a full-page article appeared in *The Daily Mirror*, with the headline "Police spy bid to smash the anti-car protesters." Including 10 surveillance mug shots with WANTED printed above them, the article began *An Anti-Car group is being targeted by police who fear it plans to bring chaos to Britain's roads. Every police station in Britain has been circulated with photographs of Reclaim The Streets demonstrators in a bid to identify ringleaders.*

Five months to go 'til J18 and the state had begun their counteroffensive. According to an article, a Special Branch document obtained by *The Mirror* admits it is almost impossible for police to monitor groups like Reclaim The Streets. It says: *Increasingly, the environmentalists represent an impenetrable*

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The Angry Brigade knew this in 1970 when they declared *We were invincible because we were everybody. They could not jail us for we did not exist.*[35] You would have thought that 25 years later, the state would have cottoned onto us!

The Day Gets Even Nearer—We Prepare…

J18 stickers, which were printed with over 30 different designs, were beginning to be seen everywhere—lamp posts, cash machines, bus stops—you could hardly walk down a street in Central London without seeing one. A Virgin Airways advertising campaign proved particularly apt for stickering, as Virgin had recuperated Communist slogans such as "A revolution is in the Air," "Up the Workers"—and orange stickers on the deep red background below these slogans looked great! A sticker was even seen stuck to the back of an unsuspecting police officer during the Mayday Reclaim the Streets tube party![36]

Numerous gigs took place to raise awareness and money. Fifty thousand club-like metallic gold J18 flyers[37] which opened up to reveal a quote from Raoul Vaneigem saying *To work for delight and authentic festivity is barely distinguishable from preparing for general insurrection*[38] somehow disappeared within a month as did 10,000 fly posters.

Meanwhile, NATO was bombing Serbia back to the stone age in order that Western Capital could enclose this last enclave of the Eastern Bloc. We asked ourselves who was going to rebuild the bridges, oil refineries, roads, schools, hospitals and power stations and who is going to replace the millions of pounds worth of weapons used every day? Could it possibly be Western oil, engineering, construction and arms companies? Many of us felt compelled to do something, to take action. But

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With only four weeks to go, the media war began, The Sunday Telegraph's Business Section front page headline declaring "City faces mass protest threat" went on to claim: *Banks and finance houses are being urged by the City of London Police and the British Bankers Association to tighten security and alert their staff after uncovering plans by protest groups to bring Britain's financial centre to a standstill.*[39] After describing J18 fairly accurately, mostly quoting the web site, the article went on to quote a City professional as saying: *We will not bow to these people. We have money to make here.* But it was clear that the City was taking things very seriously. All leave was cancelled for City of London police officers on the day. The Corporation of London sent letters out to the Managing Director of every firm in the square mile (and many outside it) with instructions to circulate the warning of *major disruption* and the need for extra security measures to be taken on June 18th to all staff. Two weeks to go and the Big Issue's front cover had a montage of a businessman on fire, with the headline "Breaking the Banks" and a five page feature on J18 inside. The heat was on…

Leaked letters from firms in the City showed that enormous amounts of security precautions were being taken, including barricades erected in entrances to buildings, extra security guards, minimising meetings with people not normally in the particular offices, discouraging visitors to the building and keeping deliveries to an absolute minimum for the day. There were even rumours that several firms told workers not to bother coming into the City on the day and to work from home.

One particularly worried and especially aggressive city worker sent an abusive e-mail to one of the groups, threatening to *smash your pinko faces in.* He sent it via a hotmail account, thinking it was an anonymous way of e-mailing someone. Within hours a cyber-geek on the J18 discussion list had managed to

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trace the origin of the e-mail to merchant bankers Merryl Lynch. The IT manger there was immediately told of his worker's abuse of company computers—we never heard of him again!

The Last Few Days…

Now with only a short time left to go, 8,000 red, green, black and gold masks were printed and painstakingly hand threaded with elastic. Final preparations were happening across the country: autonomous action plans tightened up in Bristol, giant carnival heads with sound systems inside were nearing completion in Sheffield, the London International Futures Exchange (LIFFE) was measured up so that it could have a wall built in front of its entrance, the web masters and mistresses put finishing touches to the special web pages which would stream live video from London and Sidney on the day, wigs and disguises were bought, freshly painted banners hung up to dry, four different sound systems donated separate pieces of equipment so that a communal sound system can be driven in on the day, blockading teams memorised maps and mobile phone numbers, people had to file past a competing team of police surveillance and media cameras to get into a meeting, and a crew of Red Bull junkies sat up all night editing a 32-page spoof newspaper, called Evading Standards, for distribution across London.

A year on from that hot summer's day's conversation, everything was set to go. Hundreds of groups in 43 countries had said they were going to do something on the day, and the City of London Police estimated 10,000 people would turn up for the actions in the Square Mile. But despite all the endless meetings, careful preparations and military precision planning we knew that only one thing will enable the day to succeed—the active spontaneous actions of the participants. Spontaneity is one more vital tool of resistance to join fluidity and diversity. It is the freedom to play. The desire beyond want and external compulsion. It's the play of life itself and the very opposite of work, order and hierarchy.

Revolutionary epochs are periods of convergence when apparently separate processes collect to form a socially explosive crisis—perhaps it was an unwittingly accurate description of our

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times, when the leader of The Express claimed that it was Critical Mass which *planned…[June 18th]…across the world.* You and I know that Critical Mass does not exist, that it's just an idea—the blocking of rush hour traffic by mass bike rides—and it certainly didn't organise June 18th. But perhaps there is no better way of describing what is happening around the world. A critical mass is building—and every year, every month, and every day it gets bigger and stronger. Reports of strikes, of direct actions and of protest and occupations from across the world flow along the same lines of communication that carry the trillions of pounds involved in the reckless unsustainable money game of transnational capital. Soon there is going to be an explosion—an explosion that will be so different from any other revolutionary upsurge that those in power won't even realise that it is about to transform their world forever. There is much work to be done, but the hope and possibility expressed during the process and events of June 18th have brought us one step closer to this wondrous moment…

Footnotes

1. See the June 18th website for a complete list of actions: http://www.j18.org/
2. From the first June 18th leaflet, published 1998.
3. Globalisation has become a buzzword and can be a confusing term. I prefer the term Neoliberalism, used in Europe and Latin America, but will use the more common English term. My understanding of globalisation is best summed up in the following section of Reclaim the Streets Agitprop: *Capital has always been global. From the slave trade of earlier centuries to the imperial colonisation of lands and cultures across the world, its boundless drive for expansion—for short term financial gain—has recognised no limits. Backed up by state power, capitalist accumulation has created widespread social and ecological devastation where it ever extended. But now, capitalism is attempting a new strategy to reassert and intensify its dominance over us. Its name is economic globalisation, and it consists of the dismantling of national limitations to trade and to the free movement of capital. It enables companies, driven by the demands of the rapacious gambling of money markets, to ransack the entire globe in search for ever higher profits,*

times, when the leader of The Express claimed that it was Critical Mass which *planned…[June 18th]…across the world.* You and I know that Critical Mass does not exist, that it's just an idea—the blocking of rush hour traffic by mass bike rides—and it certainly didn't organise June 18th. But perhaps there is no better way of describing what is happening around the world. A critical mass is building—and every year, every month, and every day it gets bigger and stronger. Reports of strikes, of direct actions and of protest and occupations from across the world flow along the same lines of communication that carry the trillions of pounds involved in the reckless unsustainable money game of transnational capital. Soon there is going to be an explosion—an explosion that will be so different from any other revolutionary upsurge that those in power won't even realise that it is about to transform their world forever. There is much work to be done, but the hope and possibility expressed during the process and events of June 18th have brought us one step closer to this wondrous moment…

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lowering wages and environmental standards in their wake. Globalisation is arguably the most fundamental redesign of the planet's political and economic arrangements since the Industrial Revolution. Global Street Party Agitprop—May 16th 1998.

4. See: *Year of the Heroic Guerilla: World Revolution and Counterrevolution in 1968*, by Robert V. Daniels, Harvard University Press 1989, for an overview of the global struggles in 1968. Or for a very readable pictorial account: 1968, Marching in the Streets, by Tariq Ali, Castelle 1998.
5. Ironically, this was one of the central weaknesses of the Soviet-Style state. Uniformity undermines diversity and the capacity to diffuse opposition.
6. The engines of capital, the financial markets, may be 'anarchic', flexible and fluid—but they are still governed by one unbreakable law—profit.
7. A further irony is that the same tools that enable capital to disregard borders and produce commodities thousands of miles away from their markets, the internet and cheap air travel, are the same tools which are helping global social movements to meet and work with each other. Of course I am aware of the ecological and social costs of the computer industry and air travel. The only way I can resolve this contradiction is by applying a homeopathic metaphor to it. The word homeopathy comes from the Greek and means "similar suffering." The idea is that a substance that can produce symptoms in a healthy person can cure those symptoms in a sick person. For instance, if you suffer from hayfever, running nose, and eyes, then you take a minute dose of onion, because onion juice produces similar symptoms (something anyone cutting up onions will have experienced.) The concept of this minimum dose states that we must only use as little medicine as possible to stimulate the body's own healing mechanism. So if we apply this to the use of destructive technologies to enable social change, it is clear that the amount of air travel and internet used by activists is minute, compared with what is used for capitalist gain and perhaps this minute amount of poisonous substance may actually stimulate the healing capacities of the social body.
8. See Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello's excellent book about global struggle: *Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up*, Second Edition, South End Press, Cambridge 1998.
9. Despite the fact that a recent government statistics reveal that one in three children in the UK is brought up in poverty.
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11. See: *A Handicap Removed* by Dominique Vidal, Le Monde Diplomatique, May 1998.
12. *Post Scarcity Anarchism* by Murray Bookchin, Black Rose Books, Montreal 1971.
13. *Rebels Against the Future—Lessons for the Computer Age* by Kirkpatrick Sale, Quartet Books 1996.
14. The generations of the '50s to the '80s had the threat of nuclear apocalypse hanging over them, but that was a question of probability—*If* there were a nuclear war. The question is no longer an if, because there is certainity that as long as business continues as normal, the biosphere will be irrevocably damaged. If it hasn't already been so.
15. Emanating from Subcommandante Marcos' now legendary jungle-battered Olivetti laptop.
16. See the excellent writings of US academic Harry Cleaver about computer linked social movements—available on the web at: http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/hmchtmlpapers.html
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19. *The Daily Mail*, Monday June 21 1999, p. 23 'Invitation to a Riot' by Steve Doughty and Peter Rose.
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26. There is a very unfortunate similarity between J18 and the name of the violent ultrafascist group C18 (which stands for combat and then the initials of Adolf Hitler, A and H the first and eighth letters of the alphabet). None of us clocked on to this until too late, but some of the media did mention it!
27. Most large-scale action, especially street parties, have taken place on weekends. Holding something which required thousands to participate, if it was going to work, on a weekday was admittedly quite a risk.
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30. See George MacKays introduction to *DIY Culture, Party and Protest in '90s Britain*, Verso, London 1998 for an academic but interesting critique.
31. From J18 international leaflet—quoted from Noam Chomsky. No further reference available.
32. If you are going to read any paper that tells you the real stories about what is going on in the world, who pulls the strings and how the system works, then you have to fork out 85p for the *Financial Times*. Or go into a large branch of WH Smiths, where they trust you to pay just by dropping the change (a few coppers can do) into a bucket. It will be the most educating shoplifting you have ever done.
33. From the introduction of *Squaring Up to the Square Mile—A Rough Guide to the City of London*, Corporate Watch and Reclaim the Streets, J18 Publications 1999.
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35. The Angry Brigade Communique 6/7, 1970.
36. RTS organised a Tube Party in support of Tube workers and against the privatisation of the London Underground, which took place on May 1st, 1999.
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Desire is Speaking: Utopian Rhizomes *(from issue 8)*

The similarity of squatters' cultures in various Western European countries is remarkable, I wrote in a report of a tour of my band in May 1995 through four or five different West European countries. The buildings, music, clothes, codes, and of course, the inevitable dogs, are practically the same everywhere. Can it be that the dominant West European mass culture produces its own subculture? Isn't it time for something new? This observation points to the existence of a West (and increasingly East) European network of people who do not necessarily know each other, but share ideals, practices, and preferences that are different and opposed to the dominant culture: a network of bands, squats, zines, labels, mail orders, newsgroups, and people.

The '70s are generally considered to be the last utopian period.[1] After the failure of the near-revolution of 1968 it became clear that the spectacle transforms our desires into something it can cope with. The spontaneous explosion of desires was absorbed through student councils, democratic reforms, wage increases, employee participation, and freedom of the press. In the Netherlands, the actions of the Provos and Kabouters were overruled by Marxist student leaders and the politicians of the New Left. The desires became harmless, the utopian moment passed by.

After the utopian period of Love and Peace, the '80s with all its No Future attitude can be considered to be an atopia. With their dark clothes and nihilistic attitude, punks were not exactly flower children. They had no poetic vision of the future. Only the here and now existed, with the notion that you have to make the best out of that. If the system sucks, create something yourself, something different, something better, or at least something more fun.

When mainstream punk died a few years after it appeared on stage, the punk movement could start. Bands sprouted like weeds because according to the DIY ethos of punk anyone can play: you're a musician if you want to, not because a producer

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When mainstream punk died a few years after it appeared on stage, the punk movement could start. Bands sprouted like weeds because according to the DIY ethos of punk anyone can play: you're a musician if you want to, not because a producer

of a record company or journalist says so. With the bands came the venues, labels, rehearsal rooms, mail orders, zines. An inspiring underground culture appeared, while the media had lost their interest.

The same can be said for the squatters' movement. In Holland, and also abroad, the punk and the squatters' movements of the '80s were very much interwoven. Especially in the beginning, punk bands depended on squats for their gigs. If a huge house was occupied, the first thing you did was open a bar and try to create a gig space where (punk) bands could play. Famous in Amsterdam were the Emma—a huge warehouse, and the music studio—Jokes Koeienverhuurbedrijf. Not just Amsterdam, but many other towns had their own squats with gig spaces as well. Some of these have been legalized, others still exist as squats, some have disappeared. Nowadays they don't only feature punk bands, because in the end, even squatters learned to dance to techno and jungle.

The squatters' movement did not only offer space for bands but for a lot of other things as well. It was supposed to have died in 1984, after the eviction of a huge squat called the Wyers.[2] I always considered this notion funny, because I arrived in Amsterdam in 1984 and since then the main part of my life has taken place in squats or legalized squats. Most of my friends used to live in squatted houses, and we frequented squatted bars, discos, gig venues, and restaurants. Almost everything you needed or wanted could be found in squatted buildings, from grocery stores to saunas. Some of these facilities were especially directed at squatters, but a lot were also accessible to the general public. Back then it was no problem at all to live in what might be called a squatted zone for almost 24 hours a day; you could even travel to squats in other European countries in your holidays. You only dropped in at the dole office for this month's cash, or sometimes you got yourself a job (although this was not done back then).

Some people just squatted out of necessity, while for some it fitted into a broader ideology. But no matter how many squatters flirted with revolutionary ideas—for example, there were many support committees for the guerrillas in Central America,

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and some people went to Nicaragua to support the Sandinista revolution—most of them dissociated themselves from the theoretical discussions of young anarchists and communists in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Most squatters didn’t want to change the world, but live their life here and now the way they chose to. If we can speak of any ideology, it was the ideology that there was none. As a female squatter said to a journalist of the newspaper *de Volkskrant*:[3] *Not an abstract ideal, nor the adherence to an ideology, or even a better society, but the improvement of a lousy personal situation. That is why I am involved.*

Just as in the women’s movement, the slogan “the personal is political” was in vogue. Squatting and direct action became an attitude to life. Politics starts in you daily life, where power relations take hold, where you can start changing things and create room for different ways of living, working and relating to each other. In the squatters’ magazine *Bluf!*,[4] someone said in an article called “Utopia,”

> *I feel at home in the squatters’ movement because I can live and work there and be politically active, together with people who generally have no illusions, without getting stuck in a ‘no-future’ attitude. People who have no illusions about the welfare state regarding housing, work, culture, love and whatever else is for sale. No illusions about parliamentary politics. People who resist nonetheless, not against the establishment, nor randomly, but because they have their own ideas about how they want to live and who want to fight for a space to realise that. In short: people who do not want the patterns and perspectives of their lives being dominated by what society has to ‘offer’, but by their own insights and desires.*

There are altogether fewer squats now than in the ‘80s, due to hassle through new laws which have resulted in quicker and easier evictions. A lot of squats only exist for a few months. The problem with this is that it’s harder to create gig venues, cafes, shops, and other facilities. At the end of the ‘80s and the beginning of this decade a lot of the projects and infrastructure of the squatters’ movement disappeared or chose some legalized form

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to continue their activities. Some of the initiatives now make use of state-subsidized jobs, employing each other on workfare schemes. Squatters are idealistic, but also pragmatic, or perhaps strategic is a better word here. In order to survive you have to use the various possibilities the system unintentionally offers you. But in Amsterdam it's still squatday (squats are being opened) almost every Sunday, and many young people opt for the uncertain but exciting life in a squat.

According to social scientists and journalists,[5] social movements are considered important when they play a role in the political arena, the media, or both. The squatters movement did so between 1976 and 1984, at least in Amsterdam. Squatters were large in number and well organised into neighbourhood groups; they had political impact and staged spectacular riots, and because of that, gained a lot of media attention. The squatters' movement disappeared as a political factor and as a media event after 1984, but the (new or legalized) squats and networks survived, and they turned out to be fertile soil for other initiatives and experimental ways of life.[6]

Out of the squatters' movement came a network of squats, communally owned houses, food co-ops, LET-systems (local exchange systems without money, based on trading skills), sound systems, bands, mailorders, festivals, direct-action groups, research groups, no-paper (immigration) groups, publishers, magazines, internet providers and newsgroups, infoshops, people's kitchens, mobile kitchens, etc. Within this movement, a few thousand people are on the move. A lot of people are disappointed that there isn't a shared utopia anymore, no expectation of a better future. According to some of them, the shared utopian vision has always been *the core of left politics, and that has to stay that way.*[7] Well, if this is true, then perhaps the movement isn't left anymore. But the dischord with the existing order and the desire to create something different here and now still remains. The shared utopia disappeared, but the utopian practices didn't.

At the moment, when neo-liberalism is the only ideology and the market economy has colonized everything—even our genes—these practices show us possibilities for other ways of

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At the moment, when neo-liberalism is the only ideology and the market economy has colonized everything—even our genes—these practices show us possibilities for other ways of

living, other economies, or even the end of economy. There is an ongoing discussion about the necessity of creating an alternative economy that is less dependent on the mainstream market and the state. The Dutch VAK-group, for example—a federation of houses, studios, work places, companies, a farm, and financial institutions—strives towards an alternative infrastructure based on anarchist ideas, such as local democracy and federation. By supplying financial means, skills, experiences, and other services, new projects can be supported and existing projects can network.

Desire, however, doesn't know exchange, but only theft and gift. The market economy expands by appropriating things that were freely available before. It is only after claiming exclusive ownership that things can be bought and sold. In this context, de-economizing is the breaking down of exclusive ownership: the reclaiming of public and private spaces, goods, and provisions. The struggle against the economization of our daily lives is not merely a struggle against the market, but against economy itself, against the notion of scarcity. Most of the movement's practices are based on this notion of abundance.

According to the squatting movement, there are enough places to live in; you only need to occupy them. Punk and DIY culture show that anyone can make music, records, organise gigs, make 'zines, just do it. Like primitives, travellers are the hunters and gatherers of contemporary wild nature: the technological megacity, which offers more than enough waste to live on. The refugee aid movement or no-paper groups (supporting illegal immigrants) show that hospitality costs nothing, but is a way to meet new friends, come into contact with other cultures, and enhance your experience. Queers show that there is more than heterosexuality or homosexuality, more than man and woman. A collective like Rampenplan, which consists of a mobile kitchen, a publisher, and a direct action video group, shows that it is possible to cook organic meals based on the principle of a fair price and in doing so generate money for other projects, without expecting anything in return. Even the LET-schemes, which use the principle of exchange, are based on the notion that everybody has some skills to offer somebody else, on

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abundance instead of scarcity. But most important is that the movement shows that you can have fun doing what you do, that you can play instead of work.

So what kind of community is the Dutch movement? It is clear that people participate together in direct actions and demonstrations, read the same magazines, go to the same bars, gigs and festivals and some of them live together in squats or communally owned houses. They certainly meet. But they also meet people 'outside'; they attend schools or universities, or have a job. Hardly anyone is a full-time squatter anymore. You can live in a squat and study and work and play in a band and make love with men and women…

Although there are always people who try to formulate criteria as to who is inside and who is not, the movement of the '90s is relatively open, and because of that also lacks the sometimes suffocating pressure towards uniformity that was characteristic of the social movements of the '70s and '80s, like the women's and gay movements, and also the squatters movement.

What we see here is not a community, nor solidarity groups, but configurations of desire: networks of friendship and expression that undermine the prevailing relations of production, society, politics, family, the body, sex, and even the cosmos. Lacking a single clear goal or programme, we see a multitude of struggles. There is no utopian tree from which readymade ideas about another world can be picked, but endless rhizomes on which, at unexpected moments, flowers appear.

The concept of rhizomes, modelled on the strange root systems of certain plants, was introduced by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They're opposed to the tree, which stands for the dominant Western reality and all of Western thought, from botany to biology and anatomy, and also gnosticism, theology, ontology, philosophy. The tree exists in a hierarchical order of a central trunk with larger and smaller branches. The trunk forms the connection between all parts, thus in a way limiting connections. A rhizome, on the contrary, can be connected with any other at any point. A tree can be cut down, whereas rhizomes are much less subject to destruction.

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Rhizomes can grow again along another line if broken at some point. Rhizomes are abundant; if weeded out in one place, they will definitely show up somewhere else. Rhizomes are endless, as are desire and the imagination.

So utopianism didn't disappear after the '70s, it's everywhere—sometimes hidden, sometimes exposed. It can't be exterminated, because it's like a weed. It's the voice of desire and the imagination in a world dominated by material interests and reason. Like weeds, desire can be 'cultivated' for a shorter or longer period, it can be locked up within political organisations or single issue groups, but it can never be weeded out. In some periods it's more underground, voluntarily so or because the state or political organisations (right or left) force it to be. But it will always find a way to break out. It will always find a hole to break through and flow free, a hole in the spectacle, temporarily or permanent.

submitted by *Ravage*, bi-weekly magazine,
Van Ostadestraat 233n, 1073 TN Amsterdam, Holland

Footnotes

1. Saskia Poldervaart, 'Anti-utopisten maken zich er gemakkelijk vanaf' in 'de Volkskrant', June 1998
2. See Virginia Mamadouh, 'De stad in eigen hand', Amsterdam 1992.
3. 8 March, 1980
4. No. 79, 28 September, 1983
5. Scum [editor's comment]
6. I prefer not to use the word *lifestyle*, because its meaning has been obscured, both by marketeers and the American social ecologist Murray Bookchin. See his essay 'Social anarchism or lifestyle anarchism, an unbridgeable chasm', AK Press 1995.
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Running to Stand Still *(from issue 9)*

Globalisation, Blagging, and the Dole

Over the years the government has helpfully financed many campaigns and actions against itself. Lots of people in the direct action movement rely on dole money from the state in order to survive. However, over the last few years there has been a big shake up of the welfare state. What has our response been to this? How will it affect us? And has the supply of free money finally run dry?

Throughout the past two decades, the dole has provided the basis for a number of creative projects and movements, some of which have been overtly political. In the 1980s, the relaxed benefit regime allowed many to drop out of work and form new types of antagonistic lifestyles and tendencies, for example around the anarcho-punk scene. This was carried on into the 1990s when the dole became the basis for the growing anti-roads movement, the campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill, as well as the more recent development of the militant direct action movement. Being on the dole has simply given us the time to become full-time politicos; the dole has in effect been a trouble-maker's grant. After all, who can find the time to do an office action on a Monday morning, spend days waiting for an eviction or take part in days of action from J18 to Bastille Day that always seem to be on a week day? Fair enough, phoning in sick became part of the action on J18, but we can't exactly phone in sick every week when we want to go to an action, let alone risk being locked up in a cell for days. But apart from giving us the time to become full-time politicos, in an important sense opting out of work has become a political statement in itself in the direct action scene.

Riot to Work? The unemployed did things differently then… A march of the Right to Work Campaign in London in 1908. There was a national Right to Work movement in the early years of the last century with committees being set up across the country between 1904 and 1908. Their threat was not an idle one—in 1905 there was serious Right to Work rioting in Manchester.

The first major attack on this lifestyle came in the mid-1990s

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when the Conservative government replaced the old-style benefit regime with the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). This was followed shortly by the workfare scheme, 'Project Work', which was piloted in a number of towns and then implemented more widely by the New Labour government. Both were met by some collective resistance. However, when New Labour introduced a much more ambitious quasi-workfare based programme, the New Deal, the limited collective resistance there had been previously was reduced to individual solutions, characterised by blags and scams.

It was this lack of collective resistance to the New Deal, and more recently to the Welfare Reform Act, that led some to emphasise the tragic consequences this would have for the direct action scene.[1] Arguing that the dole was the financial basis for the so-called full-time politico, the recent attacks on the dole were seen as potentially a threat to this movement. Whereas previously long-term unemployment, and hence the political opportunities it afforded, could almost be thought of as a lifetime career, the slogan *no fifth option*[2]—repeatedly voiced by the Blairites in No. 10—served to illustrate that such careers would no longer be possible.

However, two years into the New Deal, it seems that all this fuss was over nothing. Quite a few people have been on the introductory stage of the New Deal as well as on placements, and contrary to the doom and gloom predictions, in some areas at least, people have found it quite easy to blag their way through it. Perhaps the introduction of Welfare to Work-type schemes wasn't such a big threat to the movement after all.

The Global Workhouse

Before discussing the effectiveness of blagging, it is necessary briefly to examine the rationale behind the current tendency for workfare-type programmes and to situate their introduction in the context of our struggles. After all, what has the New Deal got to do with genetics, road building, animal liberation, prison actions or reclaiming our streets?

The concept of globalisation is one that many in the direct action movement have used to make the link between our diverse struggles. As has been discussed in these pages, "globali-

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sation" is the problematic term commonly used to describe the strategy pursued by capital in response to the last revolutionary upsurge which took place at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.[3] In Britain and other advanced industrialised countries, the post-war compromise between capital and labour was essentially based on a productivity deal in which higher wages were conditional upon a growth in productivity. But by the end of the 1960s, workers demanded higher wages only now for less and less work. At its highest point, this tendency expressed itself as a refusal of work at the point of production. The link between wages and work was being stretched to the limit and beyond. The response of capital was flight from investment in those industries and countries characterised by this bloody-mindedness and refusal. Such flight thus served to outflank areas of working class strength.

This restructuring was particularly acute in Britain. Unlike some of the other advanced industrialised countries, Britain was a relatively developed centre of finance capital, and therefore could afford to abandon huge swathes of its manufacturing industry. Politically, therefore, the Thatcherite project meant the introduction of policies that capitalised on the transformation of large-scale manufacture into footloose global finance capital.

Most importantly, the post-war consensus around full employment was abandoned. Instead, unemployment was allowed to let rip. Along with anti-strike legislation, the creation of a pool of unemployed workers was intended to eliminate some of the more militant sections and to discipline the working class as a whole.

While the neo-liberal policies employed by many of the governments in the advanced industrialised countries had some success in curbing militant and revolutionary tendencies among workers, they also served to create a number of barriers to further capital expansion. From the point of view of capital, a pool of unemployed workers encourages those within work to work harder and accept lower wages by operating as the competition. Yet if the pool of unemployed is allowed to become stagnant, it will no longer represent such competition, and instead existing workers will still retain some leverage in their relations with

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the bosses. What had in fact emerged was a dual labour market where those out of work were either unwilling to find work or perceived as being unemployable; as a result, the people in work could move around from job to job still demanding relatively high wages.[4] It therefore became hard to impose flexible working conditions. Some of the highest expressions of this unemployed recalcitrance were among those who consciously used the dole as the basis for various anti-capitalist projects. In effect, the refusal of work that had previously appeared at the point of production had now been displaced onto the dole.

Industrial capital in countries such as Britain transformed itself into globally footloose finance capital in order to seek the most accommodating labour markets. Yet, in proletarianising workers in less-industrialised countries such as Taiwan and Korea, it served to create militants where they hadn't previously existed. The multinational companies and investment firms that we associate with globalisation therefore continually need nation-states to re-impose the most conducive labour conditions so that they can flee those countries where they are threatened by worker militancy. In short, globalisation is essentially about the re-imposition of work.

In Britain and other advanced industrialised countries, the stagnant reserve army of labour had to be done away with in order to attract greater capital investment. It is no coincidence that all these countries are now pursuing similar policies in order to develop compliant labour market conditions. The policies in Britain, the USA, France, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Canada, Australia and New Zealand go by a number of names and vary in their degree of compulsion, but all are variations on the theme of work-for-dole, or workfare. Workfare, then, is the face of globalisation for many of us. Workfare overcomes the problem of recalcitrance in the reserve army of labour by inculcating work discipline in everyone. Both those who seek a job but who have been out of work for too long and those who found in mass unemployment an opportunity to pursue anti-capitalist lifestyles are to be instilled with the necessary work discipline to participate in the labour market.

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Although in Britain it is New Labour which has made the principles of workfare the keystone of its attempt to restructure the labour-market, the foundations were already laid by the Conservatives, with the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in 1996. Being unwilling to increase public spending, the Conservatives hoped that the dual labour-market could be overcome simply by pressuring people into the existing jobs. By putting in place sanctions for any of us who couldn't provide proof that we had been applying for jobs, it replaced the notion of us being passive claimants with one of us being active job-seekers. A further advance was made in the re-imposition of work with Project Work—a quasi-workfare scheme presented as a work experience programme rather than work-for-your-benefits.

But as with other overtly neo-liberal measures introduced by the Tories, these policies not only failed to gather public support, but the orthodox neo-liberal insistence on not increasing public spending on welfare was to be their downfall. The punitive approach to unemployment meant that not only claimants directly affected by the measures came out in opposition, which on the direct action and anarcho scene mainly manifested itself in the actions of the Groundswell network, but the dole workers themselves put up considerable resistance, in some areas downing tools on the day the JSA came into force.[5] But although this resistance did prevent the smooth implementation of both the JSA and Project Work, the limits of both ultimately became obvious more as a result of them being grossly under-funded, and consequently serving more to fiddle the unemployment figures by pushing people off the dole than dealing sufficiently with the dual labour market.

The New Deal and the Welfare Reform Act

When New Labour, shortly after they came into office, launched the New Deal as the government's flagship policy, it was hoped that both the problem of public perception of the schemes and the problem of their overtly punitive nature could be effectively avoided. In line with the so-called Third Way between social democracy and neo-liberalism, they abandoned Conservative dogma against state intervention. By investing £3.5 billion in the

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programme (a lot more than they could ever hope to save in the short-term from getting people off the dole), their intention was clear: the New Deal was not just supposed to slash a few million quid off the welfare bill, but was an altogether more ambitious scheme aimed at tackling the dual labour market once and for all.

And unlike the old punitive schemes relying on merely pushing people off the dole, the New Deal was sold as a state-led attempt to do away with social exclusion. Consequently, when the New Deal was launched as a compulsory scheme for 18-24 year olds in April 1998, the initial Gateway stage was presented not as an extension of the intensive job-search introduced with the JSA, but as a three-month period of individualised job counselling. The subsequent four options of educational training, sweeping streets on the Environmental Task Force, or a placement either in the voluntary sector or a subsidised job were presented not as working for your dole but as work experience programmes that would provide the unemployed with a smooth entry into the job market. The New Deal has since been extended to most other age groups, single parents, and partners of the unemployed.

With the recent introduction of the Welfare Reform Act, this help has been extended to all other claimants not sufficiently covered under the other schemes: by the simple act of centralising all the benefit offices into a one-stop-shop, the work-focused interviews associated with the JSA will now be extended to all other claims. Under the banner of helping the disabled back into the community, they are justifying getting people off the sick (whereas encouraging people to go on the sick previously served as a means to fiddle unemployment figures, New Labour has made it clear that whatever your condition, there is now no safe haven from the labour market). Moreover, abandoning the social-democratic dogma of public ownership, New Labour have sought to introduce the dynamism of the market into the Job Centres themselves, by privatising Employment Service functions at the same time as some of the new elements of Welfare Reform have been introduced. Thus not only is the New Deal delivered by private firms (such as Reed Employment) in some areas, but the new intensive Employment Zones are the responsibility of consortia

programme (a lot more than they could ever hope to save in the short-term from getting people off the dole), their intention was clear: the New Deal was not just supposed to slash a few million quid off the welfare bill, but was an altogether more ambitious scheme aimed at tackling the dual labour market once and for all.

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With the recent introduction of the Welfare Reform Act, this help has been extended to all other claimants not sufficiently covered under the other schemes: by the simple act of centralising all the benefit offices into a one-stop-shop, the work-focused interviews associated with the JSA will now be extended to all other claims. Under the banner of helping the disabled back into the community, they are justifying getting people off the sick (whereas encouraging people to go on the sick previously served as a means to fiddle unemployment figures, New Labour has made it clear that whatever your condition, there is now no safe haven from the labour market). Moreover, abandoning the social-democratic dogma of public ownership, New Labour have sought to introduce the dynamism of the market into the Job Centres themselves, by privatising Employment Service functions at the same time as some of the new elements of Welfare Reform have been introduced. Thus not only is the New Deal delivered by private firms (such as Reed Employment) in some areas, but the new intensive Employment Zones are the responsibility of consortia

made up of partnerships between the Employment Service and companies such as Ernst & Young and Manpower.[6]

In other words, although New Labour tries to present their Welfare to Work programme as a more integrative approach to the issue of unemployment, and as such a departure from the punitive and openly neo-liberal approach of the previous government, the reality is that they do this only because it is a more efficient way of integrating the recalcitrant unemployed into a flexible labour market. The language and state-intervention normally associated with social democracy has come to the service of a neo-liberal agenda. And as is acutely clear for anybody who has had to sit through one of their work-focused interviews, and politely turn down their help, the bedrock of the New Deal is of course still the harsh JSA regime they so proudly proclaim themselves to have departed from: refuse the counselling or the 'options' and you will have all your benefits stopped.

Dole Workers and Activists

Despite the clear discrepancy between the reality of the recent attacks on the dole and the ideological offensive that has accompanied it, a lot of lefty-liberals seem to have bought into it. Indeed it has to some extent succeeded in getting the people on board who had previously shown the most fierce and effective resistance to the JSA and Project Work, namely many of the dole workers. To some extent identifying with the concept of work being important for your self-respect, many see their role as being one of helping the individual claimants into a better existence. The New Deal with its seemingly individualised claimant-based approach and job counselling seems to do just that, and as a result the resistance of the past has become more muted, despite continuing cynicism among dole workers about government policies.[7]

A similar thing seems to have happened in the direct action scene. Where there was at least some collective resistance against the JSA and Project Work, resistance to the New Deal has been if not non-existent, then much less visible—mostly taking the form of individual blags. Has the direct action scene been taken in by NewLabourSpeak? We think not. In fact, in an important sense, they couldn't be further apart. Where the lefty-liberals' part

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endorsement of New Labour's Welfare to Work programme, in contrast to their opposition to the previous schemes, is essentially based on an identification with social democracy, the people in the direct action scene seem to have no such illusions about the supposedly progressive nature of this. The notion of duties and responsibilities to society is quite clearly seen as duties to state and capital. And the notion of work being good for your soul hasn't exactly had any resonance either.

The reason why there has been no overt resistance to the New Deal and the Welfare Reform Act in the activist scene lies not so much in ideology as in practicalities. The very inclusiveness of New Labour's Welfare to Work scheme has made it a great deal easier for us to blag our way through than it was at first thought. Ironically, one of the reasons why this has been the case in at least some areas around the country lies in the fact that the dole workers have in certain unforeseen ways taken seriously the new ethos of the New Deal. Many dole workers resent the policing aspects of their job and have taken advantage of the flexibility of the new schemes to avoid pressuring people; they have allowed people to stay on the Gateway job counselling stage well beyond the three months limit set by the government. Their acceptance of the New Deal and the Welfare Reform Act as genuine measures to help claimants also means that they have welcomed claimants' own initiatives, thereby making it easier for us to sort out our own soft placements. The result has in many areas been that a lot of claimants have found it easier to stay on the dole without much hassle.

But apart from this, people in the direct action scene have, as always, been quick in developing a number of elaborate blags and scams. Before the current purge of those entitled to sickness benefit, the easiest and quickest way to avoid being included in the New Deal would be to fake depression or an unidentifiable physical illness. But even if this is no longer possible, plenty of other avenues are still open. Out of a whole number of scams, the most common one has been to find some fake placement with a friend or contact in which you are officially placed on a work experience programme in whatever company. In this way

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many have been able to keep the dole office off their back, without ever having to show up either at the so-called placement or to sign on every fortnight. Of course, not all of us are so lucky—instead we find that we are actually expected to help out a bit at our fake placement (a favour for a favour). But even so, digging some organic allotment once in a while, helping out in some right-on book shop, political archive, or Third World centre isn't really that much of a hassle. In fact, it might not even be that far removed from what we would be doing anyway. Even better, some have been able to turn the New Deal to their own advantage by getting on an otherwise pricey mountaineering, desk top publishing or web design course—all handy skills when you want to set up a road camp, occupy buildings, or produce political magazines and web sites.

And if things start to get tough, if you are signing on with your partner, you can always swap the claim, or alternatively just sign off for about three months, do a bit of work and go abroad. So even if schemes such as the New Deal initially appeared as a potential threat to the movement, in some cases quite the opposite would seem to have happened. Not only have a substantial amount of people around the direct action scene been able to work their way around it, but it has arguably helped us to become more effective political activists. If the old dole regime was characterised as a trouble-maker's grant, this term has now gained an added meaning (a trouble-maker's training scheme?).

However, it is quite likely that the effects the changes in the dole have had on our movement are not at present visible. For largely unrelated reasons there are currently no large-scale campaigns involving loads of people. There are very few protest sites now and those which there are are smaller. The sort of activity that direct action people have been engaging in recently is more compatible with work; single big demos, one-day things, etc.—not living up a tree for a year. It is possible that were there again to be a large campaign which would require people to be on the dole we would notice our depleted ranks more than at present.

Working to Avoid Work

Not everyone can blag all the time, and the government is slowly

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catching up on our different blags. As a lot of people have come to realise lately, remaining on the sick is becoming increasingly difficult.[8] The government has even picked up on the phenomenon of the full-time politico and has used it to cut our benefits by arguing that we can't be actively seeking work if we are involved in these sorts of activities. This has obviously been hard for them to prove unless they have got evidence of us living on site or otherwise engaged in some clearly 'full-time' activity.

But as people who have been PANSIED (Politically Active Not Seeking Employment—apparantly one of the dole office's official categories!) at various protest sites have found out, it is even possible for them to overcome this barrier. At the Manchester Airport protests in 1997, the dole office tried a new strategy. They simply matched up the signing records to where different sites had been (e.g. someone who had suspiciously moved between Exeter, Newbury, and Manchester), and attempted to cut people's dole on the basis that they weren't actively seeking work. (In this case, the protesters were able to successfully argue that they were religious and not political activists, threatening to take the DSS to court if they didn't give everybody their dole back.) In November 1999, a similar thing happened to 15 activists who had been living on or associated with the Gorse Wood site in Essex—only this time it seems that it came about through co-operation between the dole office and police intelligence, as people who had been spotted on site but weren't actually living there were amongst the 15 who got their dole money stopped on the basis that they were fraudulently claiming benefits.

In general, then, while a given individual might be able to blag for a certain amount of time, the government is always seeking to close these loopholes. Blags that existed in the 1980s dole heyday no longer exist; and by the same token, today's blags will eventually be snuffed out: you can run but you can't hide!

The inherently temporary nature of dole-blags means that the search for new blags becomes an objective in itself. But a culture of blagging—blagging as an end in itself—has side-effects upon ourselves and what we are striving to do as a movement. The need to find individual blags can obscure the overall situa-

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tion in which we are all having to channel our creativity in these ways. It is as if this culture of blagging has taken on a life of its own, to the extent that we become blind to the overall facts of the situation. It is as if we are so used to being on the receiving end of countless state attacks, that we have given up on trying to collectively resist them and instead pat ourselves on the backs when we have found a new way of fiddling them individually.

But whilst we pat each other on the back for all our scheming, the government has meanwhile succeeded in getting what the Conservatives could only have dreamt of: in a very short space of time they have managed to dispose of the idea of passive claimants, and made it into an active process. Only five years ago we could have sat back content in the knowledge that if we wanted a life of leisure (if a rather low-budget one) all we had to do was to show up at the dole office every fortnight. Now, if not actively seeking work, we are actively avoiding work. And this in itself has become a full-time occupation.

In fact, the extent to which the culture of blagging has taken on a momentum of its own also becomes obvious in our relation to work. Whereas the whole alternative scene of the 1980s and 90s was accompanied by an anti-work ethic—a sentiment carried forward into the direct action scene today—it seems that our idealisation of blagging has gone so far that we are even willing to do a bit of work if this becomes necessary. This has become clear in cases where our fake placements actually expect us to help out by playing on the good old unwritten rules of favour for favour—a crude form of what can only be termed moralistic blackmailing that most of us might be annoyed by, but are nevertheless willing to accept. In effect, although blagging was only supposed to be a means to avoid work, we have conceded to working in the name of blagging.

Assets to Globalisation

In addition, the resourcefulness of people around the direct action scene has also helped the implementation of the recent attacks on all claimants. One of the major problems the government has encountered in implementing their Welfare to Work schemes has been that of finding the necessary amount of place-

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ments needed for the people they still haven't managed to push into a job on the Gateway stage of the New Deal. This might at first seem strange as from the employer's point of view New Deal placements would seem like an offer they couldn't possibly resist. Here's the deal: get people on the New Deal to work for you for free. And don't worry, there's no catch. You don't even have to commit yourself to employing them afterwards. As soon as the 6 month period of free labour is up, you just get rid of them and take on some new trainees. However, if there is one thing that employers like less than paying £3.60 an hour to their employees, it is having workers they can't even rely on to show up, let alone do *an honest day's work*, hence the cautious take-up rate for the New Deal placement schemes. So by finding our own placements we are helping the government in one of the tasks they have found most difficult to complete. Insofar as these are soft placements, this is obviously not a direct substitute for what the state would have wanted, but it increases the success rate of New Deal placements, hence giving it more credibility.

More importantly though, finding placements (real or otherwise) serves to justify putting more pressure on all other claimants who might not be as resourceful or have as many (green) middle class connections as some people in the direct action scene do. Measures such as the New Deal and the Welfare Reform Act have actually met substantial passive resistance from most claimants, which is exactly why the government has decided to increase some of its sanctions lately. But if there are claimants who, before even being forced into a placement, continually manage to find their own, as well as successfully completing them without any complaints from either the claimant or the placement provider, it obviously legitimises putting more pressure on the remaining claimants. They appear less co-operative and therefore become the *undeserving poor*; those who have had the offers of work and who must be 'scroungers' because they have refused such offers. They are therefore to be subject to more pressure and sanctions. It is ironic that the people who are actively trying to resist measures such as the New Deal, by doing so with individual blags, actually end up leaving the rest in the shit.

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The seemingly boundless resourcefulness of people around the direct action scene does mean that we have avoided what was otherwise depicted as a doom and gloom scenario of welfare reform being a serious threat to the movement. But not only does it require more and more work for us to simply avoid being forced off the dole, but our continuous blags have also had the effect of justifying increased pressure on other claimants. Maybe more importantly though, it seems to have made us blind to the overall picture of why and how the state chooses to attack us. We constantly talk about the evils of globalisation and neo-liberalism, but when we actually experience what that means in Britain in our own lives we don't even seem to notice, let alone do anything about it except as individuals. Yet individual solutions are effectively collective problems. The welfare reform we have seen the government pursuing for the past three years has entailed attacks on the benefits of different groups, one at a time (single parents, the disabled, under 25s etc.); the government has been careful not to attack everyone at once for fear of prompting collective resistance. By using individual solutions such as blagging we are relying on the atomised and fragmented climate they are seeking to create and therefore just playing into their hands. As mentioned, globalisation has been one concept the direct action movement has drawn upon in order to overcome the fragmentation of struggles. Yet, since globalisation is actually about the re-imposition of work, and since the struggle within and against work is part of our daily existence, the concrete link we really need to make is between global capital and our own experience of being pressured to work. Individual blagging, when posited as the principal solution to the attack on benefits, only serves to further the very globalisation we are supposedly resisting in our trips to Prague or Seattle. Blagging isn't against globalisation; it is part of it..

Notes

1. See the pamphlet Dole autonomy versus the re-imposition of work: "Analysis of the current tendency to workfare in the UK" by Aufheben.
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employment, study or training, work in the "voluntary" sector, or work on the Environmental Task Force. Refusing the options can mean a benefit sanction.

3. See "Globalisation: Origins—History—Analysis—Resistance" in *DoD* #8.
4. Though there is often talk of a skills gap, what apparently puts bosses most off employing the unemployed is our lack of soft skills—by which they mean basic work-discipline.
5. Job Centre workers and claimants had different reasons for opposing the JSA, but both were opposed to the increased 'policing' aspects—the dole workers because they realised that it would bring them into greater conflict with claimants. Although the common ground of discontent between claimants and dole workers could have been used to our advantage, in most areas around the country it wasn't. In fact, the struggle against the JSA by some people around the Groundwell network often manifested itself in very personalised struggles against the dole workers themselves (e.g. Three Strikes and You're Out, an initiative whereby individual dole workers who gave claimants hassle would receive warnings on their first and second offences and action would be taken against them on the third). In Brighton, however, an alliance was made, and occupations of Job Centres were accompanied by downing tools.
6. Employment Zones involve a personal job account whereby money is supposedly spent on whatever the claimant and advisor regard as maximising employability—be it wage subsidies or training schemes. Any money left over when the claimant is shoved into a job is kept by the providers as profits. Employment Zones were introduced in 14 high-unemployment areas in April 2000. The scheme is compulsory for those over 24 who have been claiming JSA for over 12 months.
7. This simmering down of resistance should not be overstated, however. It was always more overtly collective than that of claimants themselves and has expressed itself in continuing opposition to the incursion of private companies into the Employment Service; the involvement of such private firms threatens not only the new ethos of the New Deal but also the wages and conditions of the relatively entrenched public sector dole workers. Indeed the latter is the key reason for the government's decision to involve the private sector in the Employment Service.
8. Just as the Conservatives introduced the All Work Test to make the conditions of claiming sickness benefit more stringent, New Labour have introduced further hurdles with their Personal Capability Assessment test: if you can lick a stamp you can work, never mind that you're dying of heart disease.

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8. Just as the Conservatives introduced the All Work Test to make the conditions of claiming sickness benefit more stringent, New Labour have introduced further hurdles with their Personal Capability Assessment test: if you can lick a stamp you can work, never mind that you're dying of heart disease.

Space Invaders: Rants about Radical Space *(from issue 10)*

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

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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.

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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

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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 directly 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 who 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

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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 that 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, 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, 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 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

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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 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

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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

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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.

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).

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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

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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
Web: http://www.autonomous.org.uk/

The Cowley Club
12 London Road Brighton BN1 4JA
http://www.cowleyclub.org.uk/
Social centre in the heart of Brighton with members bar, vegan café and radical bookshop. Has regular events.

Rants about Radical Space
62 Fieldgate Street London E1 1ES
http://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

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http://www.veggies.org.uk/rainbow/welcome.htm
vegan café, bar, radical information, resource library, space for radical events

56@ Infoshop
56 Crampton Street London SE17 3AE
http://www.safetycat.org/56a/
radical bookshop, anarchist archive, wholefood co-op, and bike workshop

Kebele Community Centre
14 Robertson Road Eastville Bristol BS5 6JY
http://www.kebele.org/
ex-squatted social centre, café, bike workshop, anarchist library, housing co-op, more

1 in 12 Club
21-23 Albion Street Bradford BD1 2LY
http://www.1in12.com/
anarchist-managed social centre with cheap beer, punk gigs, information, resources

Warzone
3-5 Donegal Lane Belfast
http://www.martinx.demon.co.uk/about.htm
anarcho-punk social centre 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
http://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
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 on these, you could try contacting the London Social Centres Network:
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Movement

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Earth First! and Tribalism: *(from issue 2)*

A Lesson from Twyford Down

After over a year of Earth First! activity in this country, it is time to reassess the situation and ask fundamental questions about the way groups run themselves. Looking through the British EF! Contact list one thing stands out: EF! Groups seem to exist mainly in urban areas.

There are obvious reasons for this—there are more people in cities and many EF!ers are students or ex-students. This pattern is reflected in all radical groups. However, is this pattern healthy, and if not, are there any alternatives?

Reviewing EF! actions on this isle, the most effective campaign has undoubtedly been Twyford Down. The first action happened in February of last year, and there have been hundreds of actions since. A campaign that has been so successful that Tarmac Construction spends just under a quarter of a million a week on security to combat it, and the DoT employs a private detective firm to find out who activists are.

What, I ask you, has been the reason for this success? The answer is that since April last year the resistance at Twyford Down has had a physical and spiritual focus—a community! Since the end of this February, Camelot EF! Has managed to have an action nearly every day. This is because of empowerment, connection with the Earth, and community.

Ninety-nine percent of Earth First!ers are ill; not half as ill as *Sun* readers, but nevertheless ill. We walk around with this beautiful dream of wilderness and small happy communities emblazoned in our hearts, but we walk on concrete, and go to sleep in a house where at best we live with two or three friends, if that. The group comes together in some room above a pub once a month, and the only life we see is the occasional park or piece of wasteland. For Christ's sake, we can't even see the stars because of the horrible yellow glow given out by thousands of streets lights.

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There is no point in us fighting to help the Earth survive if

we ourselves make ourselves unhealthy, if we are stressed out, exhausted, and feeling spiritually low. I put it to you that if the movement is to really be effective, we must be strong and after an action be able to return to the camp fire and sing and drum and smile and cry—not be surrounded by concrete madness, the antithesis of everything we believe in.

Moving into the country is easier than you think, all you need is say eight or so friends, some tarps to make benders with, and a peep at the land register to find land with Ownership Unknown. You will of course need new skills (like lighting a fire and building benders) but you can always learn these skills at the Winchester Institute of Outdoor Living, a.k.a. Camelot EF! Get yourself sacked from your job. Money is no problem, the state pays for people to be eco-activists—it's called the dole. You will be surprised at how little it costs to actually live communally: a tenner a week at most. You can spend the rest on campaigning. If you think you need access to a computer, you can always stick a microchip nightmare in a van, and fix it up to a generator or wind turbine (Generators are freely available from all road building sites around the country).

Let us live on the edge of town, commute to our office occupations (!) and our Carmaggedon actions, let us sabotage the city rather than let the city sabotage us. Let's live wild, take back the hill forts and Visualize Industrial Collapse.

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Direct Action Six Years Down the Road

(from issue 7)

The British EF! movement has been dominated over the last six years by campaigns against roadbuilding. These seem to have had results—for instance, roads budgets slashed, miles of media column inches written, and the anti-roads "ecowarrior" enshrined as a cultural stereotype. This article discusses how successful our struggles have been, whilst also attempting to look to the future.

The wider anti-roads movement has many agendas. Many local groups and activists with no involvement in direct action have also been working harder than ever in the last few years, as have mainstream anti-road groups such as Transport 2000, Alarm UK and Friends of the Earth (FoE). Although we combine on a practical level to "stop the road" with various tactics, underlying objectives may vary from a sustainable transport policy (whatever that means!), to promotion of a lifestyle or an organisation, or to global industrial collapse. To what extent you judge the last five years to have been a success may depend on your objective.

In terms of stopping roads being built, direct activists don't have a very good record. With some notable recent exceptions—Guildford, for instance—most roads we have fought have been, or are being, constructed. Roadbuilders don't like publicly backing down to hippy law-breakers, however much we cost them otherwise. Meanwhile, the English roads budget has been sliced from about £23 billion to a few £billion since 1992; nearly 500 out of 600 road schemes have been scrapped since 1989; that's 500 places untrashed, saved—for now. These are massive cuts; Construction News wrote in May *...the major roadbuilding programme has virtually been destroyed*[1]. The important question is: how much did all our bulldozer-diving, fly-posting, phone-calling, tree-sitting, media-tarting, etc. contribute towards this?

A broad range of activists have been inspired by direct action protests, and road-blighted local communities have been radicalised. As one East London resident said of the protest against the M11 Link: *...all I was trying to do was defend our local bit of land. I've never thought of myself as political before but this has*

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shown me that all life is politics—if you step out of line.[2] Nimbys have redefined their patch, as described by a local anti-M25 campaigner: *Our whole approach is 'not in my back yard, not in our county, not in our country and not on this planet'…*[3]. In addition, national groups have been keen to take advantage of the public interest direct action has generated. Anti-roads protest has had a huge impact on the modern green movement.

Today's EF! movement cut its teeth on fighting roads, and has thus been shaped in many ways, in terms of tactics, attitude, ambitions, and politics. The energy and activity of our movement owes a great deal to anti-road campaigns. It is important to recognise this, whilst acknowledging that different issues may need different approaches.

The road-building issue has been relatively successful in creating wide debate. The broad relevance of the issue must be a factor; there were so many road plans in the early 90's that there was one near most people, and everyone's life is affected by road transport. Holes in the ozone layer, burning rainforests, and even nuclear power stations, are much less immediate to most British lives. Road building allowed a crucial link to be made between consumer lifestyles and environmental destruction. The struggle against the M11 Link in 1993/4 added a crucial social element—resistance to the destruction done to urban communities by car culture, a mission continued by the subsequent rapid spread of Reclaim The Streets (RTS) actions.

It seems fair to link the rise in direct action with the diminishing road budget (down every year since 1993, the year of the big Twyford actions). The controversy generated by our protests has surely made this budget an expedient target for Treasury cuts, and the roads lobby has had a miserable few years as a result. Of course, the cuts are motivated by the need to save cash more than anything else, as illustrated by the promotion of privately-financed roadbuilding, such as Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) schemes, and by Labour's approval of the Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) this summer.

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The Noisy Defeats, Quiet Victories scenario suggests that anti-road direct action is very unlikely to stop that particular road, but creates a climate of opinion where other road schemes are more likely to be defeated before they start. It's hard to quantify any such general link. However, pro-roads lobbyists and local green activists agree that the Twyford protests were a major factor in the scrapping of the East London River Crossing through Oxleas Wood in 1993; and that Newbury had an effect on the decision to drop the Salisbury Bypass because of its "environmental disbenefits"4 in 1997. In both cases the threat of large-scale direct action was there, and in the case of Oxleas, explicitly spelt out. The threat was coupled with the involvement of a wide range of mainstream groups, and a strong local campaign. (Of course, the threat of direct action often doesn't stop roads, as illustrated by Newbury....)

A crucial ingredient in the Noisy Defeats, Quiet Victories scenario is a hungry, broadly sympathetic media. Direct action can only make roads controversial, and news consumers aware, if we get coverage. This has generally worked surprisingly well for us. An important side effect has been the elevation of the roads protester to (sub)cultural icon status, appearing in TV and radio soap operas, in several novels, on children's TV... the list goes on. These days everyone knows that roadbuilding means dreadlocked hippies up trees, just as foxhunting means saboteurs.

This media and cultural focus on protester lifestyles and spectacular tactics helps to alienate many people from our struggles, to stereotype activists, and thus to fit the movement into a pigeonhole (or perhaps a tunnel?). Everyone's heard of Swampy, but few know what he was digging under, or why, or could relate

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this to their own lives. Our impact on the public consciousness has been large, but few seem prepared to get out of their car, still less to demand an ecological revolution!

Let's turn from hearts and minds to pockets. As tactics have evolved, and our mobilisation abilities grown, our power to inflict economic damage has increased. This damage doesn't just mean trashing machines etc, but also includes extra security costs, and delays to work—time is money, remember? Although costs we inflict are dwarfed by those caused by an industrial labour dispute, for instance, this is something we're quite good at. Unfortunately, our enemies are increasingly good at countering it.

There are now a host of specialists who have made a career out of trying to contain us. Individuals like John Chapman, site engineer at Twyford and then Newbury, spring to mind; he rates himself as an expert in finishing roads on time despite protests. Andrew Wilson, the Under Sheriff of Lancashire, touts for business (along with sidekick Amanda Webster) as a consultant to beleaguered contractors, with a 24-hour phoneline for those really urgent protest problems. Devon's Under Sheriff Trevor Coleman, with his recently-launched Major Protest Unit available for hire, is his major competitor.

We think also of Brays Detectives, who have grown from a small firm tailing unfaithful husbands to become the British specialists in protester surveillance; and Richard Turner Ltd, transformed from cleaners and painters of tall buildings to the market leaders in dishing out violence in doomed treetops. The security sector has of course received a big boost from our struggles, not to mention fencing contractors, manufacturers of fluorescent jackets, and so on. We have created opportunities for a whole new sector of capitalism.

This is market forces in full effect; just as specialist drainage contractors might be hired to deal with problematical ground conditions, so the anti-anti-roads gang can be hired to thwart those pesky protesters. Contractors are judged by their ability to deal with protests; Tarmac's pious public declaration that the Newbury Bypass was too environmentally damaging for them (with no chance of securing the contract anyway) was a PR coup.

this to their own lives. Our impact on the public consciousness has been large, but few seem prepared to get out of their car, still less to demand an ecological revolution!

Let's turn from hearts and minds to pockets. As tactics have evolved, and our mobilisation abilities grown, our power to inflict economic damage has increased. This damage doesn't just mean trashing machines etc, but also includes extra security costs, and delays to work—time is money, remember? Although costs we inflict are dwarfed by those caused by an industrial labour dispute, for instance, this is something we're quite good at. Unfortunately, our enemies are increasingly good at countering it.

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They were assisted by FoE's foolish public praise for this cynical greenwash, exposed a few months later by Tarmac accepting a Newbury aggregates subcontract! Tarmac, complete with new green logo, have also established an Environment Advisory Panel to fight the PR war for them. Market forces again: our struggles are a challenge for corporations to adapt to, or risk losing business to more sophisticated competitors. As protester-bashing consultant Amanda Webster says: *The advent of the protest movement will actually provide market advantages to those contractors who can handle it effectively.*[5] We are a market risk. Thus, DBFO contractors now routinely take Protester Risk into account when submitting their bids. One way to avoid being "taken into account" is to spread, diversify, and increase the risk. Companies have found themselves (and their suppliers and subcontractors) increasingly targeted in their offices and distant sites, at AGMs and at directors' homes, not just on the construction site. Anti-roads battles are also anti-corporate battles; this will become more evident as privately-funded road building continues. The forthcoming important campaign against the BNRR must also aim to do damage to Kvaerner/Trafalgar House.

Civil engineers are coping with the lack of British road jobs by diversifying into rail projects, and, more significantly, by seeking more roads business in underdeveloped overseas markets, like Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and South and Central America. This puts our successes in curbing the British roads programme into perspective. In the face of an increasingly globalised corporate hegemony, the importance of linking global struggles, and of sharing information between activist groups world-wide, also increases.

Our enemies can't just accommodate our threat by adapting their business practice, so must attack our movement more directly. The GAndALF trial is very significant here; it is (amongst other things) an attempt to forge a link between extreme animal liberationists and extreme EF!ers. The animal lib movement has long been demonised, largely via the media, in the public eye, and we may soon get more of the same treatment, backed up by legal sanctions. Smear stories about anti-road campaigns have already

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been around for years.

A classic divide-and-rule tactic to marginalise a radical movement is to incorporate it as much as possible into the mainstream, whilst isolating and discrediting those who refuse to be incorporated. *The Guardian* thinks that *The challenge facing John Prescott…is how to bring such [direct action] protesters back into the political system.*[6] Bollocks to that; the challenge facing us is to resist all attempts to artificially divide our movement into reasonable vs. extreme, and show solidarity for those collared for conspiracy charges or other serious offences.

We want to be a real threat to the malignant cancer of corporate capitalism, rather than a media freakshow or irritating market risk. To do this on even a local level, we must innovate and expand at least as much in the next five years as we have in the last five. Broadening our support base, maximising our subversive edge, linking struggles, taking the fight to the enemy, working in (not with, in) local communities—these, surely, are key factors in making us strong enough to be that threat.

It's been an eventful and exciting few years. Much has changed since the first protests at Twyford Down, and we have achieved a lot. As the EF! and anti-road movements develop and diversify, and our opponents gear up their determination to defend their oily industrial interests, we can expect the next few years to be no less eventful.

Shortly after the announcement that the Newbury Bypass would be postponed for a year, an exasperated local pro-roader was heard to wonder *what the hell will it take to shut these people up?* We're not going to shut up, but must continue to build on our successes, keeping our anger, and our hunger for real change, sharp. We need to show that we won't be satisfied with deep cuts in the road budget, better public transport, and more cycle lanes, or whatever. We must demand the earth.

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know

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There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-doves broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

—Rudyard Kipling.
The Way Through the Woods

References

1. Construction News, 15/5/97
2. The Observer Life, 27/2/94
3. The Daily Telegraph, 28/7/97
4. *Department of Environment, Transport, and the Regions News Release* #176/Transport, 28/7/97
5. Construction News, 28/5/97
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Action Stations! *(from issue 9)*

Planning direct action

This article explains some of the things to think about when planning an action. It's been written for smaller affinity group actions, rather than for mass street mobilisations. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide that has to be strictly followed, but more a list of things that might need to be sorted out for an action to happen successfully. Remember, in the best tradition of transferable skills and multitasking, many of the ideas mentioned here could be used in other areas of subversive activity. Eco-bank robbers anyone?

Pre-Action

Aims and Activity

What would you like the action to achieve? It may be education and agitation, economic damage, physical disruption, solidarity with others in struggle, or elements of all of these and more. It is best to clarify which is your priority. This helps identify the activity needed to achieve your aims.

You may decide on a banner drop, GM crop trashing, machine sabotage, office or site occupation, leafletting, propaganda production or something else completely.

Target

You may have a target in mind already. If so, think through whether it is possible to achieve the aims wanted with the activity you've decided upon.

When you have an idea of the aims, activity and target you have an outline plan. That is—you know what you want to achieve, and will do so by taking a certain type of action on a specific target.

When you have this you can move onto the first reconnaissance (recce) for the action.

Primary Recce

Even if the action is to be done at night it may be best to make this first recce a daylight one. Use it for gathering 'hard information'. Get maps, photographs and plans of the target and the surrounding area. Look for likely drop off points for people,

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entrance and exit points from the target as well as escape routes. Also look for places for the driver to park up away from the target, or circular routes that could be driven whilst the action takes place.

Primary Plan

After the first recce sit down with your fellow planners in a secure location and work out a basic plan. This should include a route to the target that is free of CCTV, a drop off or park up point, entrance point/s into the target, exit point/s and escape route/s.

It should be decided when the action will take place, what time of day or night, roughly how long each part will take (getting to the drop off point, drop off point to target, doing the action, re-grouping, getting back to the pick up point and getting away) and how many people will be needed. The plan should also include where the vehicle will be left/taken and possible routes there.

The plan should also involve communications. This includes who might need to communicate with who and how on the action. This might be between drivers and the people they have dropped off, lookouts and people on the action or a radio scanner monitor and everybody else.

Secondary Recce

If the action is going to be at night make this second recce at night as well so as to familiarise yourself with the area in the dark. It may be possible to do both recces on the same day, and then have time for planning the action afterwards.

On this second recce look at the target in more depth. Pay particular attention to any security systems. Actually time the different stages of the action. Think about what tools you will need to do the job and what you will do with them afterwards. Check out the approach and escape routes in more detail, and also the vehicle park up/driving route for during the action. They should all be CCTV-free and there should be alternatives in case of unpredictable circumstances such as cops, roadworks or other people parked up.

Check that the drop off and pick up points are away from buildings and lights, and there is space to turn a vehicle around.

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If the pick-up point is quite away from the target you may need to decide on a re-group point near the target so everyone leaves together.

Decide what communications equipment you will need and test that it works in the area. Think about the likelihood of carrying away evidence on your clothes and look for places on the getaway route for dumping clothes and perhaps tools. Look for possible regroup points (perhaps a mile or so away) where people could meet up if the action goes wrong and everyone has to scatter.

Detailed Action Plan

This plan should fill out the basic plan with all the rest of the information needed to carry out the action. It should go from the point people meet to go on the action to the point people disperse at the end. It needs to include precise timings, which routes will be taken, what will be happening at each stage of the action, who will be communicating with who, what tools and other equipment will be needed, what will happen to the vehicle, and what roles need to be filled, e.g. driver, navigator, spotters etc.

The plan should also identify places to dump incriminating evidence as well as regroup point/s. If possible try and arrange to have a trusted person on the end of a phone, well away from the area the action is taking place in, who can be called in an emergency. It might be helpful if they had a large detailed map of the area to direct you if you ring up and are lost. Use a secure mobile for this rather than a landline.

Back up Plans

The back up plan/s should be done in the same way as the main action plan. Back ups could be alternative actions to do at the target selected, or new targets entirely.

Consideration should be given to the conditions in which the initial plan will be abandoned and how the decision to revert to a back up plan will be made and communicated to others.

Running Through the Plans

If possible everyone going on the action should be involved in talking through the plan and making any changes needed. Roles identified should be filled so everyone knows who is doing what.

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Decisions should be made about what to take (see Checklist for Recces/Actions) and it should be established who is going to acquire the different items and bring them to the meeting point for the action. Everyone should make sure they have any mobile phone numbers or radio channels being used on the action. This is the point to identify any new skills the group will need to use and arrange to practice them in a 'neutral' setting rather than in the middle of an action.

Finally, people should decide how to organise themselves on the action. You could pair off in buddies or split into smaller groups. Doing this makes it easier to look after one another, move quickly and know if anyone is missing. Make sure everybody knows the names and addresses they will be using if arrested.

Action

Before going to the meeting point for the action, run through the checklist of what you will need and give yourself time to get it all together. Be on time to meet up so people aren't left suspiciously hanging around. It may be best to meet up at a neutral place rather than somebody's house or the centre of town.

Once on the way to the action, make sure everyone is clear about what they are doing. Try not to stop on the way unless you really have to, and remember that if you do have to stop most petrol stations and town centres have CCTV. All being well, you'll arrive at your destination without incident. Put any disguises, such as hoods, masks or gloves, on at the last moment, as if you get pulled by the cops it's good to look straight.

If the action is taking place at night it's best not to use torches or internal car lights for around 20 minutes before you get dropped off. This allows your eyes to become accustomed to the dark.

Once the action starts try to keep focussed on what you are doing, but aware of where others are and what is going on around you. It's important to follow the communication structures you have decided on, e.g. making sure you are in earshot/sight of each other if you need to pass a message on/check everyone is there. Everyone should have a watch that has been

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synchronised beforehand, so at the designated finishing time for the action people know to re-group and get ready to leave. If there is no finish time maybe have an easily identifiable signal.

Get together at the re-group point and check everybody is there and okay. This is easier to do if everybody has teamed up into buddy pairs before the action and then sticks together and keeps an eye on each other. If people are missing try and find out what has happened to them. Depending on the type of action and what happened this may be a point where you want to destroy any incriminating evidence.

If the action doesn't go according to plan and people are forced to scatter, try to stay with your buddy or group, move fast and keep in mind the direction you are going. If it's taking place at night you can very easily get disorientated and lost, so before the action have a look at the map and get a clear idea of what direction and where you could head to if this happens.

The most important thing is to not panic. Remember that many people have got out of the most pear-shaped situations by having a clear head and a grim determination not to be caught!

If it's possible get to the pre-arranged meeting point. If that's not an option get out of the area as quickly as you can, and ring the emergency mobile as soon as it is safe to do so so people know you're okay.

Post-Action

Debrief

Try and have a meeting of all those that were on the action to discuss how the planning and execution of it went. Think about what was good and bad and try and learn lessons for the next action. This is best done in the first few days after before memories get fuzzy and important details are forgotten.

Mutual Aid

Look after yourself and one another. Don't pressure people to go on actions if they are tired or stressed out. Take time out to relax and don't get into 'the struggle is my life' martyrdom headspace. Address problems and power relations within the group. In the longer term make an effort to learn skills that only one or two people have. This stops them being put under unnecessary

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pressure, and ensures a balance of responsibility.

Security

Don't let your security slacken because the action is in the past. The cops have longer memories than we do and if your action is considered serious by the state an investigation into it can continue for months—or even years.

Political Understanding

Analyse the tactical and strategic impact of your actions. Are there better targets or ways of operating? Read our history and learn from current and past struggles, movements and groups.

Communication

It is sometimes useful to communicate to other people what you have done. Maybe write a short article reporting the action for *SchNEWS, EF! Action Update* and other newsletters. Consider issuing an anonymous press release/communiqué to other media. These could be done through an anonymous web based email service set up for this purpose and then only used once. Maybe produce flyposters or stickers about the action and put them up around your local area and send them to other groups. If useful lessons were learnt from the action let other people know by writing a leaflet, discussion document or article.

Broadening the Struggle

Help facilitate other people's involvement in the resistance. If you have a closed cell/group help interested people set up another group. If you work in an open group let people know what you are doing and how they can get involved. Doing stalls and printing leaflets with your contact details on are two ways of doing this. Continue with your own activity!.

Further Reading

Ecodefence! A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching edited by Dave Foreman and Bill Haywood (Third Edition, Abbzug Press, 1993)

Ozymandias Sabotage Skills Handbook Volume 1—Getting Started by Anonymous (Self Published, First Edition 1995). http://cafeunderground.com/Cafesite/Rooms/Ozymandia/sabotage_index.html [See http://www.reachoutpub.com/osh/]

Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Road Building published by Road Alert! (Self Published, Second Edition 1998). http://www.

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eco-action.org/

“An Interview with an ALF Activist’ in *Without a Trace* by Anonymous (Self Published pamphlet).

Checklist for RECCES/Actions

What follows is a checklist of equipment that may be needed for your recce or action. Use it as it stands or modify it for your particular group, way of working or task. Hopefully it will help avoid those awkward moments in the van when somebody asks, “So, who brought the map then?” and everybody looks blank.

Group Tat

Transport with a full tank of petrol and keys
Vehicle breakdown and recovery details!
Spare vehicle keys
Road map
Detailed map of action area
Communications gear with new batteries
Emergency money
Binliners for post-action evidence disposal
First Aid kit

As well as this you will need equipment that is specific to the recce or action that you are doing. Amongst other things it may be worth taking binoculars, radio scanner, notebook and pen, flag, camera, and a Global Positioning System (GPS). You’ll also need any tools or props specific to the tasks you are going to do on the action itself, i.e. sabotage tools, crowbar, sticks etc. Remember to take any spares or back up gear like new batteries.

Individual Tat

Spare clothes and shoes
Waterproof jacket and trousers
Watch
Masks and other disguises
Gloves
Small torch (best with red or blue filter)
Compass and unmarked map of the area
Food and water (maybe a flask of hot drink)
Petrol and emergency money

eco-action.org/

“An Interview with an ALF Activist’ in *Without a Trace* by Anonymous (Self Published pamphlet).

Checklist for RECCES/Actions

What follows is a checklist of equipment that may be needed for your recce or action. Use it as it stands or modify it for your particular group, way of working or task. Hopefully it will help avoid those awkward moments in the van when somebody asks, “So, who brought the map then?” and everybody looks blank.

Group Tat

Transport with a full tank of petrol and keys
Vehicle breakdown and recovery details!
Spare vehicle keys
Road map
Detailed map of action area
Communications gear with new batteries
Emergency money
Binliners for post-action evidence disposal
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Bag to carry stuff in

In addition to all this everybody going on the action should have a working knowledge of the whole plan and their role in it.

Security

To have a completely secure action is impossible. Whatever you do there is a risk of getting caught. Security is about taking measures to lessen the chances of this. A few ways people get caught include

Physical Evidence

Diaries, plans, manuals, stuff left at the action by accident or on purpose, communiqués, stored information on computers and paper trails from the use of bank cards and the hire or purchase of equipment. Avoid these by always paying cash and destroying or removing everything relating to the action before you go on it. Don't take anything traceable to you (like ID or engraved jewellery) on actions. Consider using false ID if you are hiring gear. If you must use a computer encrypt all files with PGP.

Forensic Evidence

Mainly just fingerprints and DNA, but also includes matching up of tool usage, soil samples and footprints. Watch out for prints on things that aren't immediately obvious like torch batteries. Ensure everything is fingerprint free before the action and wear gloves and hats. Dispose of traceable items like clothes and tools as soon as possible post-action.

Witnesses

People being able to identify you or your vehicle, not just at the action, but also on the way there, or even just leaving your house at a connected time. Includes images from CCTV or police video/stills teams. Plan meet-ups, routes to the action, etc. avoiding cameras and nosy neighbours. Disguise yourselves and wear indistinguishable clothes. Don't tell people what they don't need to know.

Surveillance

Includes phone taps, post and email interception, listening devices, and following you or placing tracking units in your vehicles. Conducted by numerous, and sometimes competing,

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Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring!
(from issue 10)

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

It's time to CELEBRATE our resistance: digger diving, window smashing, pleasant picnicking, office occupying, hoody wearing, gene-modified [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 RE-SIST. 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.

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.

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basis of our worldview.

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

Industrial development accelerated in the 'Third World' following World War II. 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 envi-ronmental movement fundamentally challenged the established conservation organisations which for so long had acted as

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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 es-sentials 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 de-fused—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 respecta-bility 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 be-tween 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 pres-sure crushing the radical content and practical usefulness of groups.

Those attracted to campaign jobs were often exactly the wrong class of people (inclined to pa-per 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.

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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!*
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> — Howie Wolke, EF! co-founder.

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sick of 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 poly-thene 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,

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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 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]

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.

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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 infiltra-tion, 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, 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 the state attacks seriously weakened US EF! and it would never fully recover its accelerating drive. Nevertheless it did survive and at the beginning of the '90s it was still the kickass environmental movement of the developed world. It's 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]

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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.

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- Earth First! Birth Period (1991–1993)
- Land Struggle Period (1993–1998)
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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.

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> *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 (world's seven leading state powers) came to London. EF!ers 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 doleys 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, me-dia 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 'Re-claim the Streets' a small roadblock done by South Downs

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> *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 al-ready the police were wading in and holding people in a big cage.*[8]

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 dockworkers 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.[9]

While the national days of actions at Twyford continued down south, up north the campaign to stop peat extraction from Thorne Moors hotted up. 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! The FoE central office quickly condemned the action on television.

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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, divi-sions were definitely present. The recent Moors sabotage and unwise interviews to the press con-cerning 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 rain-forest 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

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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 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 don-gas—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!,[10] 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 complemented each other it would be ridiculous to iron over the very real family squabbles. As the summer progressed there was tension within the Dongas

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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[11] 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 im-portant areas—SSSIs (Special Sites of Scientific Interest) and so it was obvious that by fighting roads one could take on Thatcher's 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 the destruction of local green space by Tesco, 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,

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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 infor-mation 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*, #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 fol-lowed 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 di-rect 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

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> *At 0845 hrs 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.*[12]

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: three bulldozers, three Tarmac trucks, two diesel pumps, one work shed and a control station.[13]

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 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.*[14] 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*

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course most of the dongas are now destroyed, but its destruction has given birth to a movement and the fight goes on.[15]

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 EF!ers 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 EF!, 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.*[16]

The boats were impounded and most were arrested. Bussed a hundred miles away, the group was given strict bail by an

course most of the dongas are now destroyed, but its destruction has given birth to a movement and the fight goes on.[15]

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 EF!ers 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 EF!, 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:

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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 in-volved 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![17] 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 EF!ers. 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 EF!ers were also involved

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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 North 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 our 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.*[18]

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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.*[19]

Land Struggle Period (1993–1998)

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 *Copse*s, and the struggle was also understood in the national ecological context.

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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 camp-fire 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.*[21]

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.

> *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.*[22]

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 1, 1994, the Indigenous Zapatistas of Mexico launched themselves on to the stage of world history. Liberating town after town, freeing prisoners, redistributing 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.

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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.*[24]

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 con-tractors preceded to destroy the houses while many people were still occupying them… It took ten hours to remove 300 people.*[25]

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

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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.*[26]

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; 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 for-mula; digger diving, office occupations and crane-sits, alongside overt and covert sabotage. The state was being challenged—it would soon escalate its response.

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> *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.*[27]

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.[28]

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 main-stream 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 soli-darity 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

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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[30], but in truth most trashings were carried out by those camping on-site; 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[31] 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 [ALF].

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,

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Some celebrity liberals[31] 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 [ALF].

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,

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and a fleet of six trucks owned by the main contractor. The police say that forensic evidence confirms arson.[32]

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

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been any serious opposition within parliament.[33]

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 EF! Action Update put it: *As far as it affects Earth First!ers… its purpose is not so much to imprison us as to intimidate us—and we mustn't let that work.*[34] 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.

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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.[35]

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 EF!ers 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 re-formed. 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, smoth-

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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.*[37]

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.

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 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 secu-rity thugs in hospital. As one woman from the local Avon Gorge EF! group put it: *I guess people had had enough of*

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being used as punch bags.[38] 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.*[39]

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.

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Green Anarchist [*GA*]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 *GA* 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 de-scended 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 ma-noeuvred. Tripods were carried nine 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

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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.*[41]

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[42], 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 that 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!)

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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 fac-tored 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.

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 were 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

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 fac-tored 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.

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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

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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.[43]

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 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 nightwork did get done. The amazing community had evolved over two and half years of occupation—its effect would last far longer.

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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.[44]

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 en-trances and occupied roofs at the Docks. Around 800 protestors and dockers mingled on the ac-tion 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 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.

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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 that 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.

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Public defeats also resulted in a loss to the movement's "threat capacity"—something that had the power to stall develop-

ments 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.*[45]

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 weren'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 kickstart the debate on globalisation.*[46]

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/opencast 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)

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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 on, find out what’s next, live outside, strategise, hang out, incite, laugh, and conspire.*[47]

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 nation-wide.
- 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, fewer people would get

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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.[49] The keynote evening talk on the weekend was done by a woman recently returned from the Zapatista autonomous ter-ritories. With the first congress of 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.*[50] 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.*[51] 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, EF!ers, and the like.

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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.*[53]

Needless to say, the Brits lost. Ideas were swapped, arguments had, and plans 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:

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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, 36 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.*[55] 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.*"[56]

On May 16th the annual G8 meeting came to Britain. The last time it had been here in 1991, half a dozen EF!ers 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.

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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, 36 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.*[55] 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.*"[56]

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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?[67]

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.

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.

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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![58]

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 whom (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.[59] The year would see over 50 experiments trashed.

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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.

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> *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.*[60]

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

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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 in-creasingly getting stuck into community organising. In fact, in the 12 months following the Global Street Party, there were 34 direct action camps across the country.[61] Most of these were now a combination of tree-houses, benders and tunnels and set up against a diverse set of devel-opments. 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 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

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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.*[62]

This campaign won. The eviction cost, and the prospect of more trouble, freaked out the council no end. Though this period saw far fewer 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[63] 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 setbacks 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.[64] One major area that many have 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.[65] While these actions don't directly defend ecologies they work (we hope) to grow libertarian and ecological tendencies in society, an integral part of the revolutionary process.[66]

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,[67] 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 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 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.

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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 that 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[68]), 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.

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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 so-called 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.

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> *January 4 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.*[70]

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 thought better of it for a number of reasons. Firstly it seemed a neat end point; secondly much of this issue of *DoD* 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

themselves into two senior management offices and the corporate library in Shell-Mex House in London.

January 4 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.[70]

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 thought better of it for a number of reasons. Firstly it seemed a neat end point; secondly much of this issue of *DoD* 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

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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 an 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.

Appendix

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.*[71]

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.

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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 20 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.

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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 [SWP] (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.

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.

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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 depend-ing 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.

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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.

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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 Rus-sian 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 recy-

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cling 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.[73] 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[74]) 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 main-taining an equal emphasis towards destroying the existing culture and its fucked up systems.* — Making Punk A Threat Again[75]

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

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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 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 that 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...*[76]

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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 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 that 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...*[76]

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 anarchist's 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.'[77]

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."

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Out of this process emerged an organic community and a

sense of mutual aid unequalled by any workers movement of that era.[78]

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.[79] 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 work-place 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.

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

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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 a 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 been predominantly 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 have 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 ‘Club18-30’. [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 multigenerational counter cultures is essential simply from the perspective of our network survival.

Opening Up Space

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tion 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.*[80]

Although women—especially the young—lag behind men as successful suicides, they are way ahead when it comes to attempts.

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

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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 Resistance 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 be-cause they were striking against the resistance of people who had changed, who had been com-pelled 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*

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> *change will be welcomed by those 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.*[81]

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 counterpoise 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.*
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The rich will try to pre-empt and destroy by military means any movements of the multitude with 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 Situation-ist 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 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, 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.*[83] 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 terri-tory 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.*[84]

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

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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.*[85]

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 intrinsically 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 that can weather the storms of struggles and relationships.
- It means creating our lives so parenting and activism neither conflict with each other nor 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.[86]
- It means training.
- It means laughing together as we fight together.

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.

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- It means demolishing authoritarian socialists in general and Nazis and Stalinists in particular.
- It means not allowing us to drift apart.[86]
- It means training.
- It means laughing together as we fight together.

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 de-veloping 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, sin-gle 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 sabo-tage 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

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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.[87]

In the final analysis, all revolutions are fought over the question of land. —Malcolm X[88]

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,

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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.[89]

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.

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 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,

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What would the world be, once bereft,
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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 melt-down) 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.[90]

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

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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.*[91] 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.

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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.[92]

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.

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We no longer have that luxury.

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 un-born 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 lim-ited 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

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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.

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

Myers' Hotspot priority system uses vascular plants as the main

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

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 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.*[93]

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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 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.[93]

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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.*[94]

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 nine 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,[95] 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 habi-tat

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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 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

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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,[96] 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

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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.[97]

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. EF!ers 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 dis-proportionate 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.[98]

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 nine 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.

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,[99] 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.[100] 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

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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 eco-influenced anarchist groups and significant clashes continue between its 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

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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,[101] 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 su-per-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,

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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 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! oriented itself primarily with reference to North

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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.[102]

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.[103]

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 car bombings 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 im-portant 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

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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.[103]

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 car bombings 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 im-portant 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.

6. ***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.
7. ***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

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we have most extensive links—these should be consolidated. Filipino EF!ers and anarchists should be given substantial aid. [Since this was first distributed EF!ers from Leeds have formed the Philippine Solidarity Group, providing practical aid for EF! and indigenous groups there. This has included direct financial aid, on-the-ground solidarity, prisoner support etc.]

8. ***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

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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 de-fend 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.[104] 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,[105] The Land is Ours occupations and trespasses,[106] 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[107] of prime national importance, which

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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.

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[108] 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

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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 reputa-tion, 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).

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.]

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.[109] 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

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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]. 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 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

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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 eco-systems 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 eight 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 1, 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

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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.*[110] 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.*[111]

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 coordinated 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 coexis-

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Unfortunately what makes Scottish bio-diversity globally unique—its climate edge position resulting in an amazing coexis-

tence 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.*[112]

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 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

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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 day's exposure to mountains is better than a cartload of books.* Or a radical eco rag like this for that matter.

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 in-to. 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 Bioregional 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 Kickstart 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 habi-tats 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.

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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 10 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[113]).

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 monkey-wrench 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!

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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 that must have seemed endless now brought to the edge by machines which must have been unthinkable;[114] 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.[115] Yet many are under serious threat of being wiped out. In the seas are some of the planet's 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.[116] 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.

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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 [SSCS]. 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 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.[117] 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 weren'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

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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 point. 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 be-ind 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, a little funding, 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’s glaring victories no other groups

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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.

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.[118]

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.[119] 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.

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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.*[121]

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

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

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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 to Reclaim the Valleys, which 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.[122] 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.

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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 to Reclaim the Valleys, which 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.[122] 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.

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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.
5. Skill Up: Our circles should try to increase our watery skills.

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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. Nevertheless, many practical things can be learned from this network.

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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.*[123]

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.*[124]

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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.*[125]

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 be 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.]

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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 EF!ers 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 EF!ers said on return; *For the past year, much of the work of Solidarity South Pacific [SSP] 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 visited and worked on the project we have made the decision to withdraw our support for it.* While this was very disapointing, 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 EF!ers. 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

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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.*[126]

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.

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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!

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 al-ready 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…*
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> *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.

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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 Portu-guese 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 30 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.[127]

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

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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

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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[128] 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.[129]

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

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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 unlike-ly 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 dam-aged 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 faultlines 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 for them to turn to anarchist ideas rather than authori-tarian ones. In fact libertarian tendencies in the people are likely to be heavily curtailed when confronted with the interwebbed complexity of industrial society, people's 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,
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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 partly decide what happens in a crisis are:

1) How well known are anti-authoritarian ideas? In crises people's perception of the possible widens. Ideas that under normal circumstances are rejected out of hand, in moments of crises can be judged 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[130] 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 inter-vene 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 to 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.

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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.

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.[131] 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 not only has purpose but is in their interest. Those who have once stood up are likely to stand again.

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

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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, 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?…*
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> *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

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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.

Task Conclusion: Don't Call Up Blood

It is worth here underlining the point that we should not look

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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 that 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.

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.*
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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 es-calates 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?

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

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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 block-ades. This is exacerbated by the fact that many struggling communities do not have basic immun-ity to Western diseases and live on marginal land, or in slums and shanty towns. Thanks to mal-nutrition they often have weakened immune systems from the start.

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

2) Money for Refugee Camps

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One Bougainvillian told me that due to the medical block-ade by Papua New Guinea (PNG), £25 raised in Britain to smuggle in medical aid could save the life of half a dozen revolution-aries on Bougainville. If that's not a good deal I don't know what is! Saving the lives of six, self-described ecological revolutionar-ies, 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 sup-port 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

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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

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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 EF!ers 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.[133]

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 en-gaged 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:

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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 under-lining that these can largely only be carried out in situations no more

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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

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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 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 Palestini-ans 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

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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 be-yond 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.[134] 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.[135] 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.

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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 sup-port 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.*

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Solidarity Actions

For years we have been barricading ourselves inside corporate offices, disrupting AGMs, block-ading 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.[136] 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. 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

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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. 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.

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

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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[137] 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.*[138] 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.

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'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.*[139]

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 possi-bilities 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?

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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 op-pression, 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.[140] 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 that 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

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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.[141]

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 below. [see appendix 11.9.2001] 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[142] 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

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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 at-tacks 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.[143]

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 an-archists, 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 authoritarian 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 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

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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.[144]

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*

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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.[145]

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 dep-redation 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..

Conclusion: Fires in the Night

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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 ille-gal, 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

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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 civilisation's 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 'symmet-rical 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.

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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

Appendix

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 signif-icant 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.

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The intergenerational 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.

The Mediterranean Hotspot

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

Endemics are concentrated on islands, peninsulas, rocky

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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 nine species, eight 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

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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 interest-ing plants are the cedars: one endemic to Cyprus and represented only by a very small relic popu-lation; 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 'Mediter-ranean' 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,

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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 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.

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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, that 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 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 de-mands. 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.

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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.

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 (Balerarics, 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

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

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.

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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.

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 (Balerarics, 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

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.

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 redirected.

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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.

(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 strug-gle 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

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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 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.

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

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

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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

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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 orient themselves towards *Third World* struggles according to their present class position, and the fact that our shared past is their shared present. Unfortunately the vision of many communists, liberals, greens, and anarchists 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 Majority World. This really is a false dichotomy and both sides take their ridiculous scripts from the Left.

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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*

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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

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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.[146]

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 move-ments 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

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.[146]

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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 that, 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.*[147]

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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.

References

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15 Ibid., p. 22
16 'Skye Campaign Soaked in Sea of Anger', *Do or Die*, #3, p. 11
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18 'For Flapjack and Mother Earth: Earth Warriors At Jesmond Dene', www.eco-action.org/dt/jesmond.html
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24 *Copse*: The Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting by Kate Evans, (ISBN 0 9532674 07), p. 32
25 EF! Action Update, #9
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34 "CJB: Business As Usual," *EF! Action Update*, #12
35 *Schnews*, #3
36 'London Regional Report', *Do or Die*, #5, p. 23
37 Ibid., p. 25
38 'Meanwhile Down in the West-Country', *Do or Die*, #5, p. 18
39 "It's (Not Really That) Grim Up North!" *Do or Die*, #5, p. 12
40 *EF! Action Update*, #23
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42 *Copse*, p. 105
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49 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.
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52 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.
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66 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!

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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 30 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.

87 In the city's 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 takeover 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 #7*, p. 40

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and Social Discontent From the West Midlands by M. Raven.
93 *Hotspots*, p. 37
94 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.
95 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.
96 Caribbean Environment Watch produce a useful newsletter: *CEW*, 141 Coldershaw Road, Ealing, London, W13 9DU.
97 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.
98 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 sur-vival 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!
99 As well as mainstream conservationists some Turkish anarchists have recently done anti-GM actions—hopefully an indication of the greening of that scene.
100 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

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country's colonial past, are much more aware of the 2001 Berber uprising in Algeria than British activists.

101 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.

102 *Hotspots*, p. 177

103 *Hotspots*, p. 182

104 See "Farmageddon: Confronting Industrial Agriculture," *Do or Die #7*, p. 40

105 See 'Victory at Offham', *Do or Die #6*, p. 62

106 See 'South Downs Mass Trespasses '98: Notes on Packed Lunches and Revolution', Anon., South Downs EF!

[107 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 col-lective power. Ecological importance relates to the intrinsic value of sites irrespective of our ability to defend them.

108 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.

109 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 #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.

110 *Common Sense and Sustainability: A Partnership for the Cairngorms*—Executive Summary, The Scottish Office, p. 4

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115 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* #8, p. 251

116 'Wildlife in Danger', The Ecologist, March 1999.

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118 'Occurrences in the Ferocious Isles', *EF! Journal*, September 1986.

119 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

120 Notorious Vessel Meets Explosive End! : www.seashepherd.org/research/international/villduen.html—link broken [alternate link: http://www.newsweek.com/so-much-saving-whales-158105]

121 "How to Sink Whalers, Driftnetters, and Other Environmentally Destructive Ships" by Sea Shepherd Agent #013, p. 343 in *Ecodefence*, Ed. Dave Foreman, ISBN 0963775103

122 See: "Putting a Spanner in the Oil Industry's Works," *Do or Die* No.7, p. 66

123 "Hadzabe: East Africa's Last Hunting and Gathering Tribe," *Do or Die* #8, p. 267

124 For more information see: www.eco-action.org .

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Lobster Magazine #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 opera-tions 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.
128 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* #213, p.22.
129 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.
130 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.
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132 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 Amiritsar in 1919. Nearly 20 years later Udham 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

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134 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' 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 of more 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 community's 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.

135 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.

136 A lot can be learned from this action. See the article "Sabbing Shell" in *Do or Die*, No.8, p.125

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139 "A Strategy to Win" by Bill Ayers in *New Left Notes*, 12.9.1969.
140 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.
141 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 work-place 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.
142 "Easton Cowboys Go West" in *Do or Die* #8, p.248
143 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* #8, p.224
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145 "Being Busy" by Anonymous (SDEF!), in *On Fire: The Battle of Genoa and the Anti-capitalist Movement*, p.41
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Afterword

Do or Die Editors Interview

This inteview was conducted at the end of 2006 for the American Earth First! Journal.

Describe the project: its inception/inspiration...
None of the current ex-editors were involved at the beginning of the project. The editorial group has changed over time, with quite a few people passing through.

Do or Die (*DoD*) started in 1992, within a year of EF! starting in Britain. It pushed a green anarchist, direct action perspective. At this time EF! was split and was half liberal and half radical.

DoD has never fulfilled the role of the *EF! Journal* in the States. The *Journal* is the official voice of EF! with the editors accountable to the gatherings. *DoD* was always a voice of Earth First! *DoD* explicitly gave publicity to sabotage and had a no compromise attitude. Some people in EF! didn't like it at first and even tried to expel *DoD* from EF! *The Earth First! Action Update* [*EF!AU*] has worked more like the *Journal*—it has had a rotating editorial collective and has been accountable to gatherings.

Early on *DoD* was supposed to carry more news and was supposed to be more frequent—every three months or so. It started out as a 24-page zine photocopied at night at American Express by members of staff (the European headquarters of AMEX is a well-known and much-hated landmark in Brighton). It kind of mutated into a massive book over time.

It might be useful for American readers to point out the other ways in which *DoD* is different from the *EF! Journal*. *DoD* has always been all voluntary—no one has ever been paid to work for *DoD*. Also *DoD* has pretty much always been all anonymous—no writers, photographers, or artists were credited. This is something which is pretty much taken for granted in the EF! scene in the UK (the *EF!AU* was also pretty much anonymous after the first two or three years) but is more unusual in the USA.

Afterword

Do or Die Editors Interview

This inteview was conducted at the end of 2006 for the American Earth First! Journal.

Describe the project: its inception/inspiration...
None of the current ex-editors were involved at the beginning of the project. The editorial group has changed over time, with quite a few people passing through.

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This has sometimes caused confusion amongst people who didn't realise that *DoD* was written by lots of different people. Some of the articles in *DoD* were written by people from the editorial collective, but there were probably 50 or 60 contributors per issue. An article being in *DoD* didn't necessarily mean it was written by us or that the editorial collective supported everything in it. Hence there was lots of stuff in *DoD* that contradicted lots of other stuff in *DoD*. Sometimes this was explicit—like when we had pro and anti articles on some subject—e.g. legal social centres in issue 10 or the issue of mental illness at the Newbury Bypass protest in issue 6.

Anonymity was a point of principle and mostly due to repression of known leaders and personalities in EF! in the USA (e.g. Judi Bari) and in the British animal lib movement (e.g. Arkangel) at around the time that EF! was getting going in the UK. It seemed sensible to avoid a cult of personality—there was an awareness of how EF! in the USA had been split by groupings forming around particular charismatic individuals—e.g. Dave Foreman and Judi Bari.

It also needs saying that the people involved in putting together *DoD* were not writers or journalists. Pretty much everyone involved spent more time on actions than they did on *DoD*. We did not want to be journalists—reporting on other people's struggles, we wanted to record the voices of the people involved in the struggles themselves. If we couldn't bully them to write for us we would often interview them.

DoD was produced by and largely aimed at a few hundred people in the UK eco scene. Although it had a wider circulation than this, it was largely produced with this audience in mind. But, *DoD* has also been really liked by all sorts of other people who often didn't like each other at all. For example lots of more traditional anarchist communists really liked *DoD*, as did lots of conservationists—the magazine was big enough that very few people read all of it—people just read the bits they liked and ignored the rest. We'd get comments from more traditional anarchists saying that they really liked it, but it was a shame about the articles about beaver restoration or Native American spirituality.

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And then we'd get almost exactly opposite comments from other people who liked the beavers but weren't so into class struggle.

DoD was at its strongest when it had the most contributors and also when the editorial collective was at its biggest (6-ish, as opposed to 2-ish at some other points). Personally I think issue 8 was a bit of a high point. But then again—it's also what you've got to work with—there was a lot to write about in 1999. It also maybe depends what you like. For example *DoD* 9 was more anti-capitalist, summit protest oriented, and it's some people's favourite issue—more traditional anarchists liked it, but it had less eco stuff in it and was less of a mish-mash than some other issues. That was partly a reflection of what was going on at the time and of the people who were putting it together and of the fact that that issue had a very small editorial collective and so it just was not possible to have such a varied contents.

Each of the people involved in the editorial collective brought their own interests and knowledge to it, so it was partly the make up of the editorial collective that made the magazine what it was—one person knew about conservation biology, one knew about counter-insurgency theory, one knew about ultra-left theory, one knew about European punk squats, etc. So we missed out on stuff when the editorial collective shrunk sometimes.

There was more of an international focus in recent issues—this was possibly due to a slow down of ecological resistance in the UK—there was less day-to-day stuff happening than there was in the mid-'90s. However, there was still a lot of stuff going on. Also the movement as a whole gained a more international perspective and *DoD* reflected that as people started looking to the wider causes of what they were fighting—to globalisation and to the summit meetings of the global elite for example.

Describe its role/influence in the UK's eco-anarchist movement...
Basically what happened within EF! was that we won. *DoD* and the political perspective it represented was relatively unpopular at the beginning. *DoD* was essentially trying to fulfil the same role that *Live Wild or Die!* did in the States—a radical anarchist fringe publication trying to ginger things up a bit. When we say

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that we won—in that the green anarchist perspective went from being the minority to the majority perspective within EF! in the UK over the course of the 1990s—that isn't quite as arrogant as it sounds… It may have been partly due to our efforts but is probably more due to people's own experiences of resistance over time. This resulted in lots of people dropping much of non-violent pacifist ideology, moving more towards an anarchist position and supporting sabotage actions.

The reason maybe why our ideas reflected the way things were going a bit more than some other people's was perhaps that the people involved in doing *DoD* had been influenced by other tendencies, mostly animal liberation, as opposed to others who had come to EF! from more liberal environmentalist organisations like Friends of the Earth.

How long did it run for? Why did it cease production?

DoD ran from 1992 to 2003-ish—over ten years. We stopped it because most of the people in the editorial collective did not personally want to be doing it anymore and wanted to move on to other things. The project was very time consuming and always seemed to end up with us spending the summer sitting in front of a computer in some sunless basement. We did not want to hand the project over to an entirely different group of people—that would have made it into something entirely different (this is kind of what happened to *Fifth Estate*—and maybe it would have been better to have just ended it). We didn't stop producing *DoD* for financial reasons. Our "suicide note" in the last issue has led some people to assume this. Neither did we stop producing the magazine because of lack of popularity or distro problems or because we thought it had no point anymore—right up to the end there was no lack of submissions or sales or of things to write about. Ideally, in the abstract, *DoD* would have carried on, it's just that personally there weren't enough people who actually wanted to carry on with it. As one ex-collective member memorably said: "kill it while it's good." It wasn't that we felt it wasn't relevant anymore, or wasn't serving a useful purpose.

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do some of things on the Four Tasks list [page 333], not just to produce the world's biggest English-language anarchist journal.

I want to focus on the last issue a bit. What kind of response did you all get to "Down With The Empire, Up With the Spring"? Was it circulated independently of the book format in the UK?

Some of the ideas from "Down with the Empire, Up with the Spring" (DwtE) were originally circulated in a discussion document in '97/'98. But the real first appearance of it was about a year before *DoD* #10 came out. The second part of the article ("The Four Tasks") was circulated as a little free pamphlet (that became known as *The Little Grey Book*) at the EF! Winter Moot.

That stimulated things—people acting on what it said; some good criticism that was incorporated into the final version; and quite a common response—"good strategy, shame it's too late—why didn't you write this when we still had a movement?" The answer to this is probably that the author was too busy being in the movement when it was in its heyday to be able to stop and think about it. He sat down afterwards to strategise. DwtE came out at a point when the movement was in downturn. This might be another thing perhaps not appreciated by Americans—the US and British EF! movements have had their peaks and troughs in different places—when one was on the up the other has been in decline… The starting point for DwtE was the need to change because of changing demographics—people getting older, having kids, getting jobs, the dole becoming harder and harder, it becoming harder and harder to live as a traveller.

Reactions to it over the past three years or so have been varied… DwtE said that summit demonstrations were a good thing but the article found favour with those who opposed them. There was an emerging split—or perhaps rather a divergence—within the movement between those who were more into the anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation thing—summit demonstrations, no border camps, etc. and those who were more into the green anarchist/primitivist angle. New people came into the movement around summit demonstrations, etc. in the late '90s/early '00s

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The British response to DwtE came earlier—many people in the movement read it in its early *Little Grey Book* version and by the time it appeared in *DoD* #10 and became more widely distributed, many people had already started acting on what it said. There have been a couple of DwtE reading groups.

An international response to DwtE came about two years later once it had appeared in *DoD* #10 and then been distributed around the world. DwtE has been translated into French (where there have been reading groups reading it) and Dutch (where it has been republished in a journal and then as a book, with added material about the Dutch radical eco movement). It has also been republished in the USA in two separate editions, again with added material making it more relevant to the local conditions. We are still hearing about translations and reactions—you get delayed reactions from around the world as it is translated into other languages, etc.

A number of projects have been solely inspired by DwtE in the UK and Europe. Some of these have been successful and saved bits of nature from destruction. On a wider level DwtE reflects what was going on anyway… the author was not the only person thinking these things—he was drawing on a shared pool of ideas.

What do you see occurring within the EF! Movement/network at the present?

Well, Part One of DwtE gives you a pretty good background up to about 2002-ish and since then… well the ageing process has continued—the generational, cyclical nature of British radical politics. There has also been the sort of split that we mentioned above. But there is still stuff happening… In a way for ecological resistance,

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the situation now feels quite similar to about 1992—before the anti-roads movement took off and before the movement against the Criminal Justice Act brought lots of people together.

It's all relative—ecological resistance obviously had a heyday in the mid-'90s. It was not obvious at the time that it was the heyday. This has only become clear in retrospect. So from the perspective of people who lived through that, the situation now must seem like a bit of a comedown but there's still quite a lot going on—there are at least five active permanent protest sites; we just had all the G8 protests last year; two years running large numbers of people from the radical ecological movement in Britain have gone over to defend the wilderness in Iceland; we also just had the Camp for Climate Action this summer when several hundred people tried to shut down the biggest CO2 producing power station in Britain… Just check the web and you can see there's actually a lot of stuff going on. People's it's-not-like-the-good-old-days feeling probably says more about them getting older than what's actually going on…

In some ways the movement has been a victim of its own success—we won quite a lot, against road building for example. They cut the road building programme almost to nothing and so then there were far fewer protest sites, but not for any bad reason, but because there wasn't so much need for them. Likewise a few years ago you might have been hearing about lots of anti-GM sabotage actions and you might not be hearing about them so much anymore. That is attributable not to the decline of the movement but to the fact that we won and there have been as far as I'm aware NO GM test sites at all for the past few years (They are just now talking about trying some again next year).

In the mid-'90s the radical eco movement was really the only game in town. In a very moribund political scene, it was the only thing going on with any life or vitality. Every other radical tendency was in decline. For a few years it was *the* social/political trend to which everything else had to orient itself—everyone wanted to jump on our bandwagon. The mainstream environmental movement had to reposition itself relative to us; the anarchist movement had to do the same; aspects of this movement were

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picked up in fashion, music, on radio and television, etc. (There was a point where it was de rigueur for every TV soap opera to have its own road protestor character.) This is different now—by comparison the radical eco movement seems not so significant now, but that may be partly because there's more other stuff going on… the radical eco scene is now merely one thing among many—anti-capitalism/social centres/the anti-war movement, etc.

Talking about the radical eco movement is one thing, talking about the EF! network is another—they are not the same thing, although I guess the radical eco movement is bigger than and encompasses EF! Earth First! existed before there was a big wave of eco-direct action and now it exists again after that wave has come and gone as a network of groups, individuals, and social centres etc. most of whom probably don't actually call themselves Earth First! But in a way that's not much different from how it has always been. There are still EF! gatherings every summer, attracting 200-300 people, occasionally Winter Moots, attracting fewer, the *EF!AU* on paper has kind of died at the moment, but there is now a website for Earth First! action reports. There are now fewer EF! groups, the network itself is less visible—you could say it barely exists, but then it has barely existed or existed in a very underground, invisible way for most of its existence! Many of the most famous EF! things were never done under that name. June 18th was organised by the J18 Network, there was The Third Battle of Newbury, there was Road Alert, The Genetic Engineering Network… Even in the heyday of ecological resistance in the UK, Earth First! was often a largely invisible part of it—many Earth First!ers chose not to use that name and worked under a variety of "flags of convenience"—using different names for different actions.

One reason EF! now might seem more non-existent than it is, is due to lack of infrastructure—the *EF!AU* has stopped, *DoD* has stopped—pretty much the only thing that keeps Earth First! existing as a thing is the Summer Gathering. There's actually a lot of stuff happening on a local level. There's a lot of people out there being very busy, but half the time we don't even know what *we* are doing, let alone anyone else. When there have been national

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campaigns like the anti-roads thing (especially in the heyday of the camps, because people were travelling from camp to camp and hitch-hiking constantly back and forth across the country) or the genetics campaign there has been more of a sense of national unity (ooo-err!) and more of an awareness of what everyone else was doing, of what we were doing as a collective entity.

So maybe that's a problem with the non-existence of *DoD*—it was one of the things giving us some national-level infrastructure, a channel of communication between us and us and between us and the rest of the world. Now though there is a new generation that watched the battles at Newbury on the television as they were growing up and has been reading *DoD* and DwtE because there hasn't been so much going on recently.

Do we need another** Do or Die **style publication? Is there still an existing movement that would make use of a publication for "voices from the ecological resistance"?

One criticism of *DoD* that was expressed sometimes was that such a well-produced huge magazine was shading out other independent media publication that would otherwise exist. We can now see that this criticism is the rubbish that I always suspected it was. *DoD* died ages ago and nothing has sprung up to replace it—there is realy nothing filling that niche… lots of things, like the Iceland campaign or the Climate Camp will probably go pretty much un-analysed, un-recorded…

It's hard to say what the influence of *DoD* will be. *DoD* will retain some influence for longer because it's a book and therefore gets kept on people's bookshelves when they clear out and throw away magazines. It survives better also in libraries and archives than zines or whatever. Newsprint decays. For us the change to a journal format was a very good thing. It survives longer…

Generational info gets lost. Our underground history gets lost as people get older, drop out, clear out their old pamphlet collections… *DoD* is endlessly referenced by academics whereas all zines disappear. What survives for posterity will be a view of history based largely on what academics write. When we're all 70 and the actions of our youth have been totally rewritten

campaigns like the anti-roads thing (especially in the heyday of the camps, because people were travelling from camp to camp and hitch-hiking constantly back and forth across the country) or the genetics campaign there has been more of a sense of national unity (ooo-err!) and more of an awareness of what everyone else was doing, of what we were doing as a collective entity.

So maybe that's a problem with the non-existence of *DoD*—it was one of the things giving us some national-level infrastructure, a channel of communication between us and us and between us and the rest of the world. Now though there is a new generation that watched the battles at Newbury on the television as they were growing up and has been reading *DoD* and DwtE because there hasn't been so much going on recently.

Do we need another** Do or Die **style publication? Is there still an existing movement that would make use of a publication for "voices from the ecological resistance"?

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and distorted by historians, *DoD* is going to be one of the only surviving sources for the actual voices of the people involved. Because of its format it has for some become *the* representation of a time period because it has survived better than other things.

DoD has also had quite an afterlife in academia. For people trying to write about the radical eco movement in the '90s, or about anti-globalisation or whatever, *DoD* makes very good source material. It's all straight from the horse's mouth as we have articles written by activists. It's not academic so referencing it probably looks like you've done your research, but it's also very easy to find as most of it is on the web and due to our clever webmaster we always get very high search results on search engines.

We never exploited it as much as we could have done. We could have pushed the distro loads more and done a lot more of getting it distributed all over the place. For example for sure we could have sold about 100 times more copies in the USA if we'd had some way of sorting out the distribution. It's just that that's a boring bureaucratic job that no one really fancied doing very much, we wanted to have lives instead. Hence why we stopped doing it too.

What do you think of a proposal that the* EF! Journal *in the US change format to be less frequent, but larger with more analysis and broader in scope, accompanied by a more regularly published* EF!AU*? Did that model seem effective for disseminating news and ideas in the UK?

We can't really give advice to the US. Things don't just simply transfer to the USA. But that said, the way it worked with the combination of the *EF!AU* and *DoD* wasn't bad, it seemed to work pretty well for a while. The *EF!AU* was always written in a pretty neutral objective way because it had to keep everyone in the movement happy—it couldn't too obviously take sides. The idea of something that is the official voice of a movement that also takes sides in ongoing arguments is pretty problematic. The *EF!AU* just did news and info and contacts. Also, it's worth pointing out, that it wasn't only the *AU* and *DoD*, various other publications did and still do come out of the radical eco scene and, more widely, the

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various overlapping direct action/anti-capitalist/anarchist scenes… The *EF!AU* was the only thing that was ever officially EF! and that didn't try and cover all the divergent opinions. Other publications covered all the divergent ideas—e.g. *Corporate Watch*, *DoD*, *Green Anarchist*, and various other local ones…

Anything else you want to discuss or mention?

There should have been more about climate change in DwtE. It's later than we thought when we published DwtE. There should have been more stuff on preparing for crisis in it. The Four Tasks of DwtE will be affected by climate change. Things are speeding up more than anyone thought. The Hotspots analysis is still useful but we're further down the road than anyone thought. In DwtE we said give the Hotspots 10 years and then maybe swap to Coldspots. We probably haven't got that long. But even then, the idea of switching to Coldspots is still assuming that habitat destruction is the main problem, but if the Amazon catches fire we're in a different place altogether.

Things have happened since we published *DoD* #10, e.g. the stuff that James Lovelock has come out with and the realisation of the effects of global dimming, which puts us about 10 years further down the road than we thought we were. The increasing realisation of the severity of the climate crisis affects different people in different ways. Some people think it's too late and have given up. Other people are inspired to take action *now*—e.g. the Climate Camp.

Discussion of collapse is becoming increasingly mainstream (at least here in the UK). People now are thinking that they will live to see the collapse. This was not necessarily true of eco radicals in the early '90s. We were getting bigger and stronger and the problems didn't seem quite so insurmountable… The default then was that you were involved in these politics because you thought that you could save the world. Now that's not necessarily true. There's no implicit assumption that we can save it. There's less hope.

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