

ANTI-NUCLEAR NETWORK

No. 29 - Autumn '93

features

40p.

Warmth tax, Twyford Down, Moralty and action.

image courtesy of
STOP THORP CAMPAIGN



THORP - Britain's newly built nuclear dustbin at Sellafield - has already had its first accident! On 8th September 280 workers had to be evacuated after chemical leak during testing of the plant. Typically, BNFL are going ahead with testing with uranium even before the so-called 'consultation' period ends on October 4th.

THORP was originally planned in the seventies to retrieve uranium and plutonium from spent nuclear fuel from overseas (mainly from Japan). A public inquiry was held because of the many objections to THORP. Mr Justice Parker's report of the inquiry caused a furore - the report dismissed out of hand all the objections of environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth. Indeed Parker even took the non-proliferation treaty signed by Britain to mean that the UK had a duty to export plutonium.

All the objections to THORP made at the time are even more valid today:

1) That THORP would lead to proliferation:- There are now real fears about the 'Asian Bomb' and a potential nuclear conflict between Japan and South Korea.

2)The cost:- THORP has hugely overshoot its original cost estimates. In 1983 the estimate was 1.2 billion, the final cost was 2.8 billion. Cost estimates for reprocessing have also rocketed.

3)They said Uranium produced would be worthless-they were right:- Reprocessed Uranium is even regarded by BNFL as 'of nil value'.

4)They said it would cause pollution-it will!- Radioactive pollution is now a major reason for keeping the plant closed. Planned Krypton 85 and other radionuclide discharges have alarmed even the governments medical advisory body COMARE!

Greenpeace & Friends of the Earth are again calling for a public inquiry. However the lesson to be learned by environmental groups should be that these *Colleged debates* with the establishment are a waste of time. We should be building a strong anti-nuclear and environmental movement of ordinary people based on direct action. www.laka.org

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NEWS ROUND-UP

- 2 -

August

- 2: Misfired shells have caused uranium contamination in excess of safety level at MOD ranges at Eskmeals, Cumbria & Kirkcudbright, Dumfries says a leaked report.
- 4: Two power stations - Ince, Merseyside & Richborough, Kent have been licenced to burn orimulsion, one of the world's dirtiest fuels.
- 4: North Korea, bowing to pressure, allowed IAEA inspection - the first since May.
- 5: The Government dismissed health & proliferation arguments against the THORP plant & said it would go ahead unless objectors found "compelling reasons" before Oct 4th.
- 12: The Government decided to refit navy nuclear subs at Devonport rather than Rosyth.
- 12: The German government is to spend £300M cleaning up a former uranium mine in Ronneburg, eastern Germany.
- 13: Floods in Bielarus left high radiation level in areas stricken by Chernobyl.
- 19: A nuclear powered French sub collided with a supertanker off the Riviera coast.
- 20: 3 coalminers were killed at Bilsthorpe, Notts by a roof-fall - British Coal's cost-cutting 'roof bolting' process has been blamed.
- 20: Bradwell nuclear power station was shutdown after seaweed blocked the cooling water intake and flooded the turbine hall.
- 20: A leaked Navy report says an accident on a nuclear sub could cause radioactive contamination up to 60 miles away.
- 20: Brazilian police seized 1.4 tons of radioactive Thorium, probably bound for Iraq.
- 20: Academics at Oxford University were instructed to turn solid radioactive waste into liquid and pour it down the drain to ease storage problems.
- 25: A North Korean defector claimed that 100 engineers had died in an accident whilst trying to remove & hide nuclear weapons installations from IAEA inspectors.
- 25: China has supplied parts for the nuclear-capable M11 missile to Pakistan.
- 27: Thousands of anti-THORP stickers have appeared on the London Underground.

July

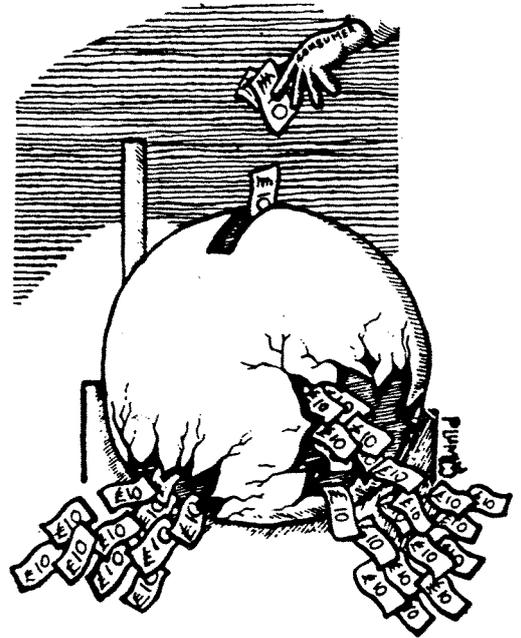
- 3: 700 Sellafield workers smashed Directors cars and went on the rampage after being sacked by BNFL and given an hour to collect their belongings.
- 4: BNFL documents show that Energy Minister Tim Eggar lied when he claimed that the cancellation of THORP would lead to £5Bn in compensation claims.
- 4: 500 people staged a mass trespass at the M3 site at Twyford Down.
- 8: The Government backed down on plans to build a road through Oxleas Wood, S. London.
- 11: Lindis Percy, who has trespassed at Menwith Hill US spy base more than 500 times, was jailed for 30 days for contempt of court.
- 19: The G7 group of polluter governments has granted £18.5M to Bulgaria to shore up the fast collapsing Kozloduy nuclear plant.
- 21: Nuclear Electric announced the closure of Trawsfynydd nuclear power station.
- 22: The Government plans to widen parts of the M25 to 14 lanes.
- 22: Roger Windsor, the man who tried to smear Arthur Scargill with corruption allegations, has been exposed as an undercover agent for MI5.
- 23: Many Gulf War veterans are said to be suffering from a debilitating illness thought to be caused by uranium contamination from armour-piercing shells.
- 24: Seven anti-roads activists were jailed for defying an injunction at Twyford.
- 24: An explosion rocked the Russian nuclearreprocessing plant at Chelyabinsk.
- 27: Tom Thorpe, a Harwell scientist who was investigating claims that the AEA sabotaged the British wave power programme, has been removed from his job.

June

- 1: Denmark & Ireland have called on the UK government to cancel THORP, and have tabled motions at the Paris Convention objecting to increased radioactive discharges.
- 3: 8 people were arrested after clashes with workers building a road bridge to Skye.
- 4: The National Audit Office says decommissioning & reprocessing will cost £40Bn.
- 12: Conditions at the Arzamas-16 nuclear weapons plant could lead to another Chernobyl-type disaster say Russian scientists.
- 17: Madha Patka, leader of the Narmada movement against the Sarovar Dam in India, was arrested on the 15th day of a hunger strike & taken to hospital seriously ill.
- 23: A leaked World Bank report shows it would be far cheaper to close down Russian & east European reactors than to try to upgrade them.

...continued on page 6.

Warmth Tax



The Government's plan to introduce a 'warmth tax' - by putting VAT on domestic fuel - will adversely affect the health of millions of people on low incomes, and endanger the lives of thousands, particularly children and pensioners.

Newly appointed Environment Secretary Gummer whose previous achievements include making his young daughter eat a hamburger to prove that humans can't catch mad cow disease' recently made another ludicrous pronouncement. He told early morning listeners of radio 4's Today programme that VAT on fuel would help save the ozone layer! In fact domestic heating has no effect on the ozone layer which is at risk from CFC's and several other chemicals.

Apparently Gummer is unaware that the new tax is designed to combat global warming . Unfortunately many environmental experts now expect that it will do little to reduce U.K. CO2 emissions it is also a tax on renewable energy and not a true carbon tax.

It is likely however to raise revenue for the Treasury which was probably the intention all along.

Other facts the John Gummer may not be aware of are

1) That the poorest 20% of households live in hard to heat housing and fuel bills account for a large slice of their weekly income. The governments proposed compensation for those on income related benefits will not affect those just above benefit level e.g. pensioners!

2) That a true carbon tax would provide a more progressive and environmentally effective measure than the proposed VAT tax. Also a carbon/energy tax was supposed to fund a government programme of domestic energy efficiency.

Max Wallis, a mathematician from the University of Wales has suggested that a true energy tax should more accurately reflect the pollution from energy production. Oil refineries for example produce carbon dioxide and natural gas and coal production produce both CO2 and methane.

And what about radioactivity from nuclear sites, a tax on sites producing radioactivity e.g. waste dumps could bring in revenue for a very long time indeed.

Unfortunately Gummer is not alone in supporting this tax, it is also supported by Friends of the Earth who apparently discount its regressive nature by publicly declaring that 'taxing energy is taxing pollution and FOE welcomes the Chancellors new commitment to this principle .

It is time that FOE recognised the brutal world of the nineties, leaving behind its Porrit induced fairyland of classless politics and address the environment of ordinary people.



A nuclear waste train passing Gospel Oak station, north London on Thursday 29th April 1993 at 10.26pm. For details of future actions contact London Region CND 071- 607 2302.

GROUP 4 LOSES IT

In 1976 a force of 'Special Constables' was set up by Tony Benn (then Minister of Technology) which would be under the direct control of the Atomic Energy Authority. They were responsible for guarding nuclear facilities and checking up on anti-nuclear activists who sought to hinder the progress of nuclear power (crumbs that's us! Ed.)

Times have changed since then and the 'New Scientist' of 10th July reported that with the privatisation of most of the UKAEA in prospect, the 'Special Constables' were also likely to be privatised. The most favoured contender for the contract was a well known security company famous for losing prisoners in its charge and beating up protestors at Twyford Down.

New Scientist of 17th July however published a letter from the AEA denying that the 'Atomic Constables' would be privatised at all - apparently this was the last thing on their minds. Having been recently deserted by their high profile director Norman Fowler, it looks like Group 4 have lost out again on the 'plutonium contract'. Shame.

French farce

An employee of the experimental French nuclear plant at Cadarache, about 50km northeast of Marseilles caused a level two accident and radiation leak by leaving a tap running in a basin on a Friday evening. Because the water in the basin sometimes contains dangerous substances it empties into a storage tank. Over the weekend the tank filled up - a detector which should have showed when the tank was full failed - the

water overflowed into a tank of low level radioactive waste - a second detector failed - radioactive liquid poured onto the laboratory floor and drained into the building's sump - here a pump that should have sent to a waste tank was wrongly connected and sent the liquid to a rainwater tank outside the building. The tap was turned off before the overflow reached the tank which holds water from the reactor's cooling system which is normally emptied into the river.

Eau, and the purpose of the Cadarache site - research into nuclear safety!

Slovakia

The European Bank, until recently headed by the infamous Jaques Attali, is intending to throw its (ie our) money away on yet another extravagance - by a loan to finance the construction of a nuclear power plant at Mochovce in Slovakia. The plant is of the flawed VVER 440/213 design and as usual the full costs of waste disposal and decommissioning have not been considered and will be paid for by the Slovak people. Earth First!, Slovakia have already organised several actions against Mochovce. The Bank's address is EBRD, 1 Exchange Square, London EC2A 2EH.

Earth First!, A Hlinku 11, 96001 ZVOLEN, Slovakia.

The SUN says?

Commuters leaving Angel Tube station were surprised to see several newspaper placards declaring "The Sun says stop THORP now". When we phoned the Sun they strongly denied that they were running the story and said that several of their posters had recently been stolen.

Morality and Action

The nuclear industry is thoroughly immoral - it has and will continue to:

- lie : about accidents, cheap electricity
- waste resources : money and materials which could be better used
- pollute : uranium mining, radiation releases
- cause deaths : through cancer and leukemia
- aid the arms race : providing material for weapons whose use is illegal
- deliberately murder : Karen Silkwood

These sorts of action are also carried out by most governments - who have supported the nuclear industry for reasons of power rather than economics. This is not to deny that there may be a few well intentioned people in such organisations - but good intentions are not enough. Whether we work in the nuclear industry or not, the same laws should apply; and we should equally be prepared to analyse our actions.

"The end justifies the means" is nonsense, since the end result must include all the effects of the means of action and thus depends on the particular means chosen. This is one of the faults of the nuclear industry - they do not take an overall view of the effects their actions have on people and their environment. If they really thought through what they were doing they would realise that nuclear power is both unnecessary and dangerous; though some do realise it but continue this work for financial reasons.

Often we do not act, out of weakness or laziness or being unsure or ignorant. This is understandable and only human, but we must take responsibility for our inaction as much as for our actions, without feeling so guilty about either that we cease to try to put things right. But although we may understand something this does not mean that we agree with it.

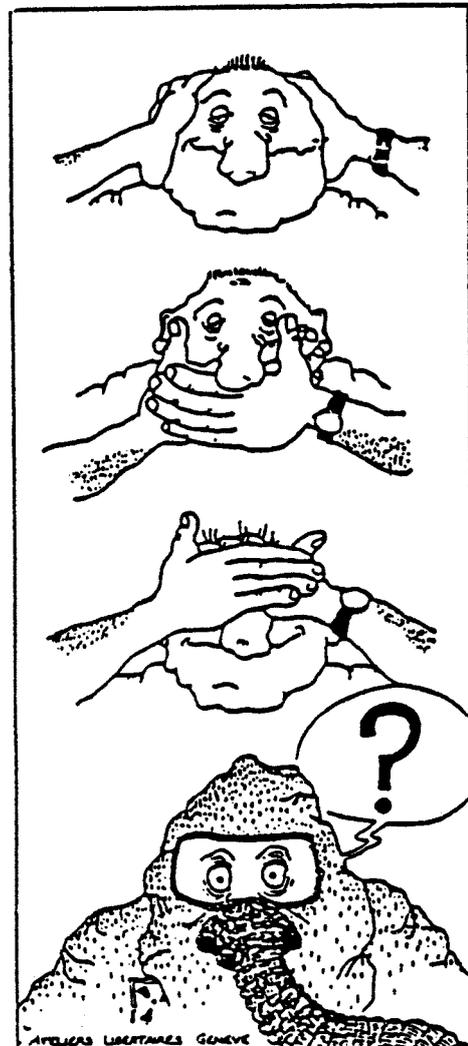
There is significant difference between an illegal action and an immoral one. Some practices, such as slavery, were at one time legal but immoral - thus it is sometimes necessary to take illegal actions in order to prevent immoral acts or to get the laws changed.

Actions cannot be absolutely classified into moral and immoral - we may tell a

lie to avoid hurting someones feelings, or steal food to feed a hungry child or ourselves. But for an act to be moral it must at least be done with awareness of the possible consequences. Sometimes it is even necessary to take action which is regarded as immoral rather than not act at all knowing that the inaction will result in a much worse outcome. This is made clear in Krishna's actions in the Mahabarata, and in other major religious and secular traditions. (Often in contrast to the establishments which purport to be based on these ideas.)

The justification of actions as for the greater good does not absolve us of the responsibility of their effects, whether seen or unforeseen, nor of the effects of our not acting. Our lives are worthless if we do not do as we believe, but our actions must be guided by good judgement - which must come from both the head and the heart. This is not dependant on being an "expert" in nuclear physics, but does require common sense and being able to see further than next year's balance sheet.

David.



NEWS ROUND-UP

June (continued from page 2)

- 24: A radioactive fuel pipe blockage stopped reprocessing at Sellafield.
- 28: The UK was the only country to vote against tighter controls on radioactive discharges into the sea at the 13-nation Paris Convention.
- 30: BNFL is to shed 3,200 jobs at Sellafield, blaming delays in commissioning THORP.
- 30: The Australian government has accepted £20 million compensation from Britain towards the cost of cleaning up the sites of 1950's A-bomb tests.

May

- 9: Japan has revealed to the UN that Britain has secretly shipped more than 1 tonne of plutonium to Japan - enough to make 100 A-bombs.
- 12: Government advisors say that plans to bury nuclear waste in a human-made cavern under Sellafield could contaminate the groundwater with radiation.
- 16: Hundreds of children have died and many more are at risk from the legacy of uranium mining 50 miles SW of Leipzig. Local people say the German government needs to spend at least £1 billion to clean up the radioactive waste.
- 17: The UKAEA was fined £8,000 + £10,500 costs for exposing two Harwell workers to radiation during the decommissioning of a reactor last April.
- 18: Snails clogged the hydraulic system of a French reactor at Gravelines forcing it to be shut down.

LETTERS

Dear ANN

I have got hold of a copy of issue 28 of your newsletter and find it interesting reading. It is so important that people are kept informed of the facts behind the issues so that they have grounds on which to raise objections. However, I would question your notion on the eco page that you seek a "ecological libertarian socialist society", yet I support what yourselves and the groups featured within your pages are doing.

In my understanding, ecologism and socialism are two quite distinct ideologies, as socialism is still committed to the principle of infinite economic growth (albeit under a different system of ownership from capitalism), whereas ecologism stands apart from what may be called "industrialist" ideologies and rejects the notion of growth. In its "pure" form, ecologism seeks a reduction in the quantitative demand for production and recognises that not only is infinite growth impossible within the finite context of the Earth's capacity to supply the industrial process and absorb the waste from it, but that human needs are best met not by continued economic growth but by the transformation from an industrialist to a sustainable society in which natural resources are replenished as they are consumed, and non-renewable resources are left well alone.

Perhaps a better phrase for what you seek to say would be an "environmentally conscious socialist society", as environmentalism adopts a managerial approach to the planet within the context of industrial production and consumption, attempting to reduce, not eliminate, the environmental impact of the industrial process. However, socialist societies are just as environmentally damaging as capitalist ones, the only difference being that they seek growth in the name of collective enterprise rather than private profit. The real enemy of the planet is the industrial "more is better" approach, and as long as industrial societies of one kind or another persist, so will environmental damage.

Sincerely, Adrian

ECO! page



Above: Protesters following the route of the M3 extension during the trespass at Twyford Down

UNCIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The campaign against the M3 at Twyford Down in Hampshire marks the return of direct action to the mainstream of the environmental movement for the first time since the heyday of the anti-nuclear movement in the late '70s. Twenty years of going through the "proper channels" - arguing at public inquiries and lobbying politicians - was seen to be a complete waste of time, even by former Winchester Tory councillors. When Friends of the Earth gave up the Down as a lost cause and "Fucked Off Early" a new alliance was formed by those who believe in "No Compromise in Defence of Mother Earth".

Leading lights in the Twyford campaign have been Earth First!, an ecology group that started in the USA with the publication of Dave Foreman's book "Eco-defence: a field guide to monkey-wrenching". But there are others in the loose alliance - local people, anti-roads campaigners from around the country, Class-War, the 'Dongas' tribe. Philosophies range from hippy mysticism to green anarchism.

Actions have been going every day for several months, ranging from lying in front of bulldozers, occupying bridges to the large scale trashing of contractors equipment at the Oliver's Battery site earlier this year.

The mobilisation and mass trespass on the Down on 4th July turned the cutting of this "Tory Canyon" into a pyrrhic victory for the Government and forced them to back off from plans to drive a road through Oxleas Wood in South London. The determination of activists to defy legal injunctions showed the way forward.

Even Friends of the Earth started a "beat the bulldozer" pledge at Oxleas Wood - although what this actually meant since they also adopted a "code of practise" including "no damage to property" was never put to the test. Earth First! were prepared to sacrifice principles on this issue in order to join the Oxleas Alliance with the likes of FOE, the World Wildlife Fund and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation - a mistake that hopefully won't be repeated.

For the lesson of Twyford is clear - we need an alliance for direct action, not an unholy marriage of the living with the (brain) dead. Some self-appointed leaders are also trying to impose their Gandhian pacifism onto the movement - another attempt to take protest back within "respectable" boundaries.

But the activists at Twyford are becoming increasingly clear in their aim, targetting the construction firms, car & oil companies behind the road lobby. And, surprise surprise, these construction firms, such as Laing who are doing the preliminary work on the M11 Link Road, are also the firms that are building nuclear plants, such as Sizewell B.

The next major focus of the anti-roads campaign will be the proposed building of the M11 link road through north-east London. This time the Tories will be playing away in an urban environment - and the issue is polarised around the issue of homes versus roads with 400 houses threatened. The fight has started - it's up to us to win!

Steve.

People needed everyday and to squat,
nearest tube - Wanstead.

Contact Patsi 081-

for details.

NETWORK

East Anglian Alliance Against Nuclear Power have a new name and a new office/resource centre. Contact East Anglian Safe Energy Alliance, 43 High Street, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17. 0728-604849.

SCANN is no more! Since the Royal Navy announced that their ships would no longer carry nuclear weapons its main objective has been realised. The main threats are now the deployment of Trident subs & the road transport of nuclear warheads. SCANN has passed its resources onto Faslane Peace Camp, Helenburgh, Dunbartonshire who are co-ordinating these campaigns. Tel 0436-820901 for latest actions.

We get so much info about anti-roads campaigns, and not wishing to duplicate other's efforts we suggest that anyone interested get in touch with Reclaim the Street Action Network, PO Box 1593, London SW9 8LT. 071-737 0100.

Resources Please send SAE's.

"Do or Die" - radical EF! mag (£1) from: MSEF, PO Box 23, 5 High St, Glastonbury.

"Contraflow" - a subversive read, from: 56 Info Shop, 56 Crampton St, London SE17.

"Green Revolution" - incisive green mag: PO Box 845, Bristol BS99 5HQ.

Musicians Network - gigs, benefits etc: 181a Brecknock Rd, London N19 5AB.

"Freedom to breathe or freedom to drive?" leaflet: PO Box 2401, London N8 9LR.

"Houseman's 1994 Peace Diary" £5.50 + 60p p&p: Housemans, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

Despite TV - independent video makers. Facilities & tapes for sale and hire. 113 Roman Rd, London E2. 081-856 9835.

Diary

October

3: Benefit at the Hackney Empire for Mordechai Vanunu - having served 7 years of an 18 year sentence for revealing Isreal's nuclear programme to the world. Also vigil every Saturday 12-2pm outside Israeli embassy, Kensington High St, WC1. Details - 071 - 387 5096.

4-6: Support Chris Cole - pacifist charged with criminal damage to military equipment at British Aerospace factory in Stevenage. Luton Crown Court. Details CND 071- 607 2302.

9: Rally for a nuclear free world, 1-6pm Westminster Central Hall. Speakers, stalls, music, films. Details National Peace Council, 88 Islington High St, N1.

16: March against MacDonald's - assemble 1pm Euston BR sation.

16: Unity demonstration - Close Down the BNP's HQ - assemble 1pm Winns Common, Plumstead.

19: Bury Dungeness Nuclear Power Station, Littlestone Sands - details 0622-717043.

30: London Greenpeace Fayre - Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Walk across Europe against nukes in '95: For Mother Earth, Zilverhof 19, 9000 Gent, Belgium. Tel (32)91/33.32.68.



The Anti-Nuclear Network

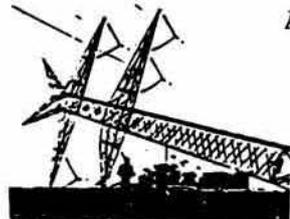
The ANN is a federation of autonomous local groups opposed to nuclear power. We support effective direct action.

Thanks to Gareth, Newcastle - £3; Gill, CND Cymru - £10; Helen, Llangefni - £8; Adrian, Bournemouth - £2; Colin, Liverpool - £5; Paul, London - £20 for this issue.

All correspondence to:

Anti-Nuclear Network,
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London N4 2DE.

or annews on Greennet.



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