

The Ecologist

March/April 1994

CAMPAIGNS

Keeping Hydro-Quebec At Bay

HYDRO-QUEBEC'S 50th anniversary celebrations will be marked by international protests on 14 April, co-ordinated by the Native Forest Network in solidarity with the Cree, Innu and other indigenous people threatened by the company's hydro-electricity schemes. Hydro-Quebec (HQ) is a provincial company best known as the builder of the James Bay projects, but now also working in India, China and Guyana.

James Bay I, started in 1973, is now nearly complete. If the second phase is also built, there will be altogether 215 dams and dikes, 23 power stations and 19 river diversions. Quebec Premier Bourassa expressed the thinking behind this vast enterprise: "Quebec is a vast hydro-electric plant in the bud, and every day millions of potential kilowatt hours flow downhill and out to sea. What a waste!" Opponents argue that it is more of a waste to affect an area the size of Germany so that power-hungry US and southern Canadian consumers can run more televisions and air-conditioners.

Former US Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, one of nine US citizens appointed to the Committee for James Bay II, commented that the scheme "means we in the US may obtain the advantage of lower-cost power, while simultaneously circumventing the difficulties created by our own regulatory process." The environment is afforded little protection, and Cree Chief Namagoose explained that indigenous people "lost a court case [in 1975] and were forced to make a deal with Hydro-Quebec". Billy Diamond concluded: "If I had known in 1975 what I know now about the way solemn commitments become twisted and interpreted, I would have refused to sign the agreement. Protection of the environment in Northern Quebec has been a farce."

Mercury has leached out of the flooded soil and into the food chain: a 1984 survey showed that 64 per cent of inhabitants of a village at the mouth of the dammed

La Grande river had unsafe levels of mercury in their blood. A Cree trapper commented on the official response, which included advice not to eat fish: "Scientists come and tell us we're getting better, but how can you measure a man's fear? How can you measure your way of life coming to an end?"

An HQ public relations factsheet admits that the planned Great Whale reservoirs will flood 1,125 square miles of land, but attempts to reassure

readers that "flooding does not destroy an area but replaces terrestrial habitat with aquatic habitat." Such logic would not appeal to the Cree who told the James Bay I hearings that "only beavers should be allowed to build dams in our territory."

The dams and reservoirs built in Phase I have already flooded caribou calving grounds, fish spawning areas and migratory bird habitats. The Eastmain River now enters the Bay with only about 10 per cent of its former volume, insufficient to create the ice-free passages that Beluga whales need as winter breathing holes. James Bay vegetation is especially adapted to the conditions created by the mixing of fresh and salt water.

The \$60 billion James Bay scheme is unlikely to be a financial success, especially after New York State cancelled a \$12.5 billion power contract with HQ in 1992. HQ justifies the project by predicting that energy demand will grow 40 per cent in 15 years, but this will only be the case if the Quebec Government and HQ con-

tinue to promote domestic electric heating and energy-intensive industry. Four new aluminium smelters and the expansion of two existing smelters have been announced since 1987 despite the current world glut of aluminium. HQ has refused to reveal what discounts it has agreed with metal companies, but Quebec households will effectively be subsidizing cheap aluminium exports to the US.

The Native Forest Network protests in April will point out the flaws in the HQ public relations promises and bolster the struggle of the indigenous people in Quebec and elsewhere whose way of life is threatened by HQ's grandiose and unnecessary schemes.

WRITE TO: Hydro-Quebec, 75 Boulevard René-Levesque, Ouest, Montreal, Quebec, CANADA H2Z 1A4.

Hydro-Quebec, Avenue des Arts, 46-7th Floor, B-1040 Brussels, BELGIUM.

CONTACT: Orin Langel, POB 57, Burlington, VT 05402 USA, E-mail: peacejustice@igc.apc.org
Jake Burbidge, Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4, UK, E-mail: eartharc@gn.apc.org
Tim Cadman and Beth Gibbings, 112 Emu Bay Road, Deloraine, Tasmania 7304, AUSTRALIA, E-mail: cadwood@peg.apc.org



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The Ecologist **CAMPAIGNS**

This section highlights current campaigns, suggests how to support them and gives updates on feature articles. Send details of any campaigns to:

Alex Wilks, The Ecologist (Campaigns), Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1DU, UK, Fax: +44 (0258) 473748, E-mail: ecologist@gn.apc.org
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"Clayoquot Not Clearcut!"

CAMPAIGNERS are increasing pressure on Macmillan Bloedel (MacBlo) and the British Columbia (BC) Government to spare Clayoquot Sound temperate rainforest on Vancouver Island.

The BC Government owns \$50 million MacBlo shares and last year awarded the company a 200,000 hectare concession in Clayoquot. The Government admits that: "at the current rate of logging, it is estimated that there will be no substantial ancient forests left on the coast of BC by the year 2008". Rather than act on this, the Canadian Council of Forest Industries (comprising companies, the Federal and Provincial Governments) has merely announced a \$9 million, three year, public relations drive in Europe to improve the image of Canadian forestry.

A government audit obtained by campaigners last August revealed that MacBlo had violated logging guidelines in more than 75 per cent of the cut blocks examined, all within Clayoquot Sound. MacBlo has 23 known convictions under the Fisheries and Waste Management Acts.

British Columbia Premier Harcourt's recent visit to Europe was dogged by protests. Environmentalists walked out of a meeting with him in London, while



nine people were arrested at a demonstration outside. In Germany, *Der Spiegel* magazine has said it will no longer buy paper from MacBlo, and two large publishers, a printers and a major mail order company have undertaken not to use pulp from clearcuts.

In North America, pressure is being applied to companies such as GTE and Pacific Bell which buy paper from MacBlo. In late January, West Coast activists stopped work at

MacBlo outlets in Toronto and Tacoma, Washington State, resulting in a total of 20 arrests. Over 900 people have been arrested at blockades in British Columbia since last summer.

Nuu Chuh Nulth Nations whose traditional territory includes Clayoquot Sound also oppose the logging. Support letters should say Clayoquot clearcuts undermine First Nations' rights, the area's long-term job prospects and the environment.

WRITE TO: Premier Michael Harcourt, Legislative Bldgs., Victoria, BC, CANADA V8V1X4, pledging not to buy forest products from BC clearcuts. Robert Finlay, President, Macmillan Bloedel, 925 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA, V6C 3L2.

CONTACT: Friends Of Clayoquot Sound, Box 489, Tofino, BC V0R 2Z0, CANADA. Womens Environment Network, Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA, UK.

Orissa Mangroves, Turtles Threatened

ENVIRONMENTALISTS in Orissa State, India, are calling for government action to preserve the mangrove forests and the livelihood of local fishers on the Bhitara Kanika coast.

The area, famous for its Olive Ridley turtles, salt water crocodiles and other rare species, is threatened by plans to build a jetty for 500 mechanized fishing boats at Talchua and a plan to fell trees from the Puri-Konark reserve forest to make way for a complex of 60 Indian and multinational hotels. A critic commented that this would be "a pleasure ground for rich tourists from abroad and the affluent sections of our country". Businesses have already cleared many mangroves to make way for prawn farms.

Clearing thousands of acres of mangroves has left the coast more vulnerable to cyclones such as the one which killed over 5,000 people in 1971. Benka Benhary Das, President of the Orissa Krushak Mahasangh group remarked at a recent press conference: "The fishing community is facing economic disaster". His organization has called for the Talchua fishing jetty and the Puri hotel complex to be dropped, and for the Bhitara Kanika area to be declared a national park.

WRITE TO: Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister Of India, New Delhi, 110001, INDIA and Chief Minister Of Orissa, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa, INDIA.

CONTACT: Benka Benhary Das, President, Orissa Krushak Mahasangh, 14, Ashoknagar, PO Bhubaneshwar-751 009, Orissa, INDIA.

CAMPAIGNS NEXT ISSUE: World Bank Prawn Farm Project Threatens Vietnam Mangroves.

Texaco Evades Audit

IN JANUARY, the Ecuadorian Government launched a new round of oil bids, doubling the area of the Ecuadorian Amazon open for exploration. Meanwhile, the planned privatization of state oil company Petro-Ecuador may involve Texaco, although the company recently rejected conclusions of an audit of its oil operations from 1967 to 1992.

Texaco commissioned Canadian company HBT-Agra to perform the audit after groups in Ecuador and abroad demanded that it clear up the damage caused by its operations (See *CAMPAIGNS*, July/August, 1993). Texaco appears to have rejected HBT's findings, even though they excluded questions of local community or environmental group involvement.

Texaco is now negotiating to take over the distribution arm of Petro-Ecuador if it is privatized. Environment group Acci3n Ecologica commented: "The past record of Texaco does not inspire confidence that this will be in the best interests of the people and environment of the Ecuadorian Amazon."

Groups want help to press the President of Ecuador not to let more oil concessions until there has been full consultation with indigenous organizations, to prevent Texaco from taking over any part of Petro-Ecuador and to force the company to take responsibility for the damage it has caused.

WRITE TO: The Honourable Sixto Duran-Ballen, President Of Ecuador, Casa Presidencial, Garcia Moreno 1043, Quito, ECUADOR, Fax: + 593 2 580 569. Send copy to Texaco, 2000 Westchester Ave., White Plains, NY 10650, USA.

CONTACT: Acci3n Ecologica, Lerida 380 y Pontevedra, Casilla 17-15-246-C, Quito, ECUADOR. E-mail: verde@acecol.ec

Campaigner Shot

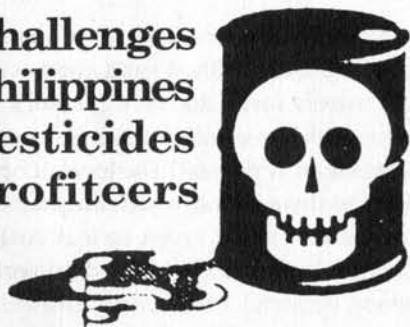
ALEX ORANTES, staff member of Friends Of The Earth El Salvador (CESTA), was shot on 8 December by the newly-created National Civilian Police.

Orantes has been left permanently paralysed from the chest downwards. The agents who carried out the shooting later entered his hospital room and severely burned his wrist in an attempt to intimidate him not to talk about the incident.

SUPPORT CESTA's demand that President Cristiani brings those responsible to justice.

WRITE TO: Lic Alfredo Felix Cristiani, Presidente de la Republica, Casa Presidencial, San Salvador, EL SALVADOR, Fax: +503 79 3401.

Official Challenges Philippines Pesticides Profiteers



A SENIOR Philippines agriculture official has threatened civil disobedience after a legal judgement that German multinational Hoechst can still sell dangerous pesticides in the country in spite of a Government ruling.

In December, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) chair Roberto Sebastian reacted to a judge's second overruling of attempts by the FPA to ban the pesticide endosulfan by stating that the Authority would ignore the judge. "If I and the entire FPA board go to jail, then so be it."

In 1992 the FPA announced a ban on four pesticides including endosulfan, which Hoechst sells under the name Thiodan. When Hoechst took the government to court, Judge Logarta overruled the ban and then issued a court order nearly doubling Hoechst's import quota for endosulfan, categorized by the EC and US as "extremely hazardous". A US study has linked the chemical to breast cancer. Philippines newspapers revealed that the judge once worked for the same company as Hoechst's lawyer.

Growth in pesticide sales in the Philippines has easily outstripped growth in agricultural output over the last five years. Dr Peter Kenmore of the UN Food And Agriculture Organisation has calculated that "Filipinos use pesticides ten times more than is necessary".

The Boycott Hoechst and Peoples' Ban on Pesticides Campaign is calling for people to avoid Hoechst products and wants to persuade the Government and judiciary to limit pesticide use and remove dangerous substances from sale. The group has appealed for pressure on Hoechst abroad and for information and scientific studies about Hoechst's operations.

CONTACT: Boycott Hoechst and People's Ban on Pesticides Campaign, c/o CWERC/CPA Commission on Environment, 16 Loro Street, Dizon Subdivision, Baguio City, PHILIPPINES 2600. E-mail: cwerc@phil.gn.apc.org

Bangladesh Abandons Plastic Bag Ban

THE BANGLADESH Government has suspended a ban on the manufacture of plastic bags after pressure from industry representatives. Bangladeshi groups want support to ensure that the ban, which would have started in January, is implemented after the current review.

UBINIG (Policy Research For Development Alternative) says plastic bags are "spreading like locusts, piling up in the streets and fields, clogging water routes and blocking drainage, being eaten by livestock, and replacing environmentally preferable jute bags". A Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) seminar claimed, however, that plastic bags are not a major environmental problem in Bangladesh and that the ban was "whimsical". The DCCI also argued that Bangladesh is justified in making plastic bags because the US still does.

UBINIG finds this argument ironic, as US Environment Protection Agency data

shows that three out of five US industries with the largest toxic emissions are involved in plastic production and the US exports nearly one million pounds of toxic waste a day — primarily to Asia.

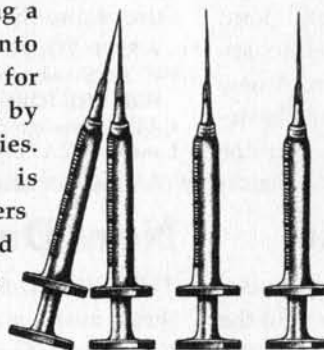
Bangladesh peoples' organizations and environmental groups are appealing for letters to counter the Bangladesh Plastic Product Manufacturers' Association lobby and ensure that their government imposes a ban. Letters should mention what is being done in other countries to reduce disposable plastic use and manufacture, commend the Bangladesh Government for its progressive stance on the ban and point to the fact that, as plastic cannot be safely burned or buried, its use must be avoided wherever possible.

WRITE TO: Honourable Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Honourable Akber Hossai, Environment Minister, Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka, BANGLADESH.

SEND copies to: UBINIG, 5/3 Barabo Mahanpur Ring Road, Shaymoli, Dhaka-1207, BANGLADESH.

Anti-Pregnancy Injection Danger

A PETITION demanding a halt to research into contraceptive "vaccines" for women has been signed by 232 groups in 18 countries. Signature collection is continuing as campaigners fear the injections would damage women's health and, if administered on a mass scale, could make many women infertile without their informed consent.



researchers have created a dangerous confusion with vaccines against diseases.

The "vaccine" aims to trick a woman's immune system into attacking a part of reproduction in the same way it would attack a germ. Critics fear that the immune system might be triggered to regard other parts of the body as "foreign" and that the effects

could be permanent. The petition further points out that: "Interference with the immune system for contraceptive purposes is indefensible at a time when primary health care systems in many countries are being dismantled, when the incidence of many infectious diseases is increasing and when we have become acutely aware of the preciousness and complexity of our immune defense."

Groups are calling for a radical reorientation of contraceptive research so that it serves women's needs rather than the ideology of population theorists.

FOR A COPY of the campaign statement contact: Women's Global Network on Reproductive Rights, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 32, 1012 RZ Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS.

Operation Roadblock Aims To Force Policy U-Turn

ON 4 FEBRUARY direct action began against the A11 road being built across the Lizard grasslands near Wymondham, Norwich. Meanwhile, M11 campaigners in East London are launching a major month of action from 15 March to try to bring construction there to a standstill.

The campaigners are drawing up a national rota of people prepared to spend a day protesting at the M11 Link Road site in Wanstead. They say this is just what Environment Minister John Gummer was encouraging recently when he asked citizens to take action on environmental protection. If Operation Roadblock attracts 100 people a day, as is hoped, it may force a U-turn on the M11 and even the entire £23 billion national roads programme.



On 16 February, over 750 police and bailiffs were employed to evict people who were barricaded inside five houses in Cambridge Park, Wanstead, which had earlier declared independence from British "infrastructural imperialism".

Many Londoners consider it pointless to spend £250 million on a road which will merely mean that cars get stuck in a bottleneck three miles closer to the city centre than at present. The level of opposition to this scheme, which threatens 400 houses as well as green spaces such as George Green and Bush Wood, is creating severe financial and security difficulties for contractors Norwest Holst. This may deter other companies from making offers for the next two M11 contracts.

TO SUPPORT THE MONTH OF ACTION AGAINST THE M11: Phone 081-558 2638, or write to: PO Box 956, Leytonstone Delivery Office, London E11 1AA.

FOR WYMONDHAM CONTACT: Lizard Earth First!, The Greenhouse, 48 Bethel Street, Norwich NR2 1RN, Tel: 0603-631 007.

GATT Faces European Vote Test

THE EUROPEAN Parliament has won the right to debate GATT before it becomes law. The debate may be held in early May, just before the Parliament breaks for the elections.

Campaigners stress that people should now write to their MEPs asking how they will vote on GATT. Letters should point out that the GATT deal has no social chapter or environmental component. A new briefing on GATT and European jobs details how the agreement will undermine

workers' ability to demand better working conditions or higher wages, as companies will be free to relocate to an area where the workforce is more pliant.

On 14 April *The Ecologist* and others will hold a protest in London to demonstrate against the implications of GATT for Europe and the rest of the world.

WRITE TO: Your MEP, Palais de L'Europe, F-67006, Strasbourg Cedex, FRANCE.

FOR THE JOBS BRIEFING, SEND SAE TO: GATT Campaign, 3rd Floor, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH, UK.

Narmada Latest

THE INDIAN MINISTRIES of Social Welfare and Environment have told the Gujarat Government not to close the sluice gates at the base of the Sardar Sarovar dam because resettlement and environment measures have not kept pace with engineering work. It has been announced that the dam will not be built above 67 metres before the monsoon.

Dam opponents are concerned, though, that Environment Minister Kamal Nath has agreed to release 1,500 hectares of forest land to resettle people and at police brutality against villagers in Akrani district, Maharashtra opposing a road being built across their land. On 1 February, 150 police stormed two villages and brutally beat tribals and activists, leaving three unconscious. There were over 60 arrests.

WRITE TO: Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India, New Delhi 110001, INDIA.

New Dams Danger

THE WORLD BANK is about to approve three more major dams in Asia: the Xiaolangdi dam and the 200m Longtan dam in China and the Arun dam in Nepal (See *CAMPAIGNS* Nov/Dec 1993). The Xiaolangdi dam would displace 171,000 people and affect 300,000 others in the area where they are moved to.

The World Bank's *China Involuntary Resettlement* report reveals that, for 11 out of 36 projects causing resettlement it has funded in China since 1984, "project documents do not provide estimates of the number resettling".

The Bank's miserable record in implementing its resettlement and rehabilitation policy over the last 14 years has sparked calls for a moratorium on projects displacing large numbers of people.

WRITE TO: Lewis Preston, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington DC 20433, USA.

IN BRIEF ●●●●●●●●●●

● FRENCH DAM CANCELLED

In January the French government cancelled the proposed Serre de la Fare dam. It also announced an alternative river management programme for the Loire, including a ban on gravel mining, restoration of river bank habitat and the demolition of 2 dams to restore migration routes for Atlantic salmon. SOS Loire Vivante, the grass-roots organization that used tactics from letter-writing to non-violent occupations of the dam site, said the decision would help "protect a superb part of our heritage, the wild Loire, Europe's last living river."

● RECLAIM ARMY LAND

The Faslane Peace Camp is organising a "Reclaim the Land" protest on Sunday 28 March. This aims to highlight the fact that the military is the second largest landowner in Britain and owns 14,000 acres in the Strathclyde region alone.

CONTACT Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire, G84 8NT, SCOTLAND.

● GLOBAL SUPERBODY

GATT chief Peter Sutherland wants to establish a new group to coordinate the World Bank, IMF and the new World Trade Organization, set up under GATT.

● TRAVELLERS JUSTICE

The new Friends and Families of Travellers group is campaigning against travellers' evictions and the Criminal Justice Bill.

CONTACT: FFT, 33 Bryanston St, Blandford Forum, Dorset.