

# The Ecologist

## CAMPAIGNS

July/August 1993

### Mexican Mountain Forests In Danger

THE World Bank has delayed disbursement of a \$45.5 million loan to the Sierra Madre forestry project in northern Mexico partly because of opposition from Mexican and US groups.

The project is supposedly "designed to improve forest management to produce more and more wood in a shorter period, while protecting the environment", but the project's budget indicates its real aims. Ninety per cent of the funding is allocated to repair forestry roads and credit for logging equipment, while only 10 per cent is for environmental protection, training and institution-building.

Native Seeds/SEARCH, a traditional agriculture/conservation group, says the 27 million hectare project would encourage logging and harm the agriculture of the Tarahumara and other indigenous peoples. Forest ecologists doubt the planned seed-tree forest regeneration technique would maintain the region's 200 species and subspecies of oaks.

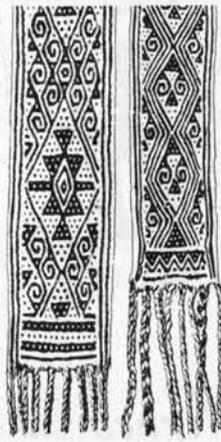
The recent Chase Manhattan Bank loan of \$350 million to the Anahuac pulp mill is the first sign of an expected influx to northern Mexico of US companies aiming to sell forest products on the NAFTA market. Access to the forests has been facili-

tated by the privatization of *ejido* (communally held) lands, permitted since 1992. Further proposed reforms would legalize long-term leases of forest land to foreign companies and the replacement of native stands with exotic agroforestry plantations.

Native Seeds/SEARCH is approaching *ejido* owners of old-growth forest areas in the Sierra Madre to ascertain their interest in alternative income-generating projects which, if successful, could counter the World Bank's "new strategies for rational forestry development in selected sites in northern Mexico". Groups are insisting that consultation with traditional leadership of indigenous communities, rather than fictitious tribal councils or non-indigenous *ejido* leaders, is far more important than the Bank's current environmental impact studies in determining whether to release the loan.

**For more information contact:** Native Seeds/SEARCH, 2509 N. Campbell Ave. #325, Tucson, Arizona 85719, USA. Tel: +1 (602) 327 9123.

**Write protest letters** to the British/US or other Executive Director at the World Bank: 1818 H St., NW, Washington DC 20433, USA.



### Jumma Repatriation

IN April 1992, Bangladeshi soldiers and settlers burned alive over 1,200 Jumma people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area of east Bangladesh and caused tens of thousands of Jummata to flee to India. The Indian and Bangladeshi governments are now planning to repatriate them against their will.

Since the 1970s, the Bangladesh government has moved over 400,000 Bengali settlers from the plains to the CHT area. Thousands of hill people have been displaced, killed or forced to adopt Bengali culture. Jummata repatriated to Bangladesh in 1981 and 1984 were violently treated, in spite of verbal government assurances of their safety, so now the Jummata are demanding UN supervision and a government commitment to negotiate a political end to the CHT atrocities.

**Protest** at the repatriation plans. Send letters to the Prime Minister Of Bangladesh, Suganda House, PM's Secretariat, Dhaka, BANGLADESH and the Prime Minister of India, PM's Secretariat, New Delhi 110001, INDIA.

**Survival International** holds a vigil to oppose the violence in the CHT on the last Thursday of every month from 12-2 pm at the Bangladeshi High Commission, 28 Queens Gate, London SW7.

### East Timorese, Xanana Gusmao, Imprisoned for Life

XANANA Gusmao, East Timorese resistance leader, was sentenced to life imprisonment on 21 May at a trial which Amnesty International claim was rigged.

Xanana, defiant in his defence, strongly condemned the Indonesian government for its crimes against East Timor since the 1975 Indonesian invasion, and the US administration and other Western governments for their complicity. He made clear that "the people of East Timor attach more value to freedom, justice and peace than

to the development which is carried out here with help from Australia, the US and European countries which have close economic relations with Jakarta". He concluded, "it is of no consequence to me if the court passes a death sentence. They have killed more than one third of the defenceless population of East Timor."

The international solidarity movement for East Timor will continue to lobby national parliaments, the European Parliament and other international institutions. Contact: TAPOL, 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 8HW, UK. Tel: 081-771 2904, Fax: 081-653 0322.

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### The Ecologist

#### CAMPAIGNS

This section highlights current campaigns, gives updates and suggests ways that readers can support them. To publicize your campaigns please send details to:

Alex Wilks, Campaigns, *The Ecologist*, Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1DU, UK. Fax: +44 258 73748, E-Mail: ecologist@gn.apc.org

## Anti-Golf Drive

THE Global Anti-Golf Movement (GAG'M), launched on "World No Golf Day" in April, has called for an immediate moratorium on golf course development, the conversion of existing courses to public parks or forest and an end to aid funding for golf tourism-related projects.

Golf is now a "multibillion dollar industry involving agribusiness, construction firms, consultancies, golf equipment manufacturers, airlines, hotel chains, real estate companies, advertising and public relations firms as well as financial institutions". GAG'M is calling for a halt to the "Golf Green Revolution" which is turning land into a monoculture of exotic grasses, dependent on huge quantities of water and chemicals (see *The Ecologist*, May/June 1992). The new alliance rejects the golf industry's claims that it can create environmentally-sensitive courses and deplores the displacement of communities in the name of "an elitist and exclusive resort lifestyle and notion of leisure".

Golf courses provide little employment and occupy around 5.9 million acres worldwide, a figure which is set to rise as the golf boom continues in Europe, North America and especially South-East Asia. In 1991, developers submitted applications for 1,800 new courses in Britain to add to the existing 2,000. The Malaysian tourism development plan has already created 153 new courses. In Germany, 200 new courses are planned north of Berlin alone.

Corruption handicaps golf's opponents. In Indonesia, President Suharto and his family own over half of the country's courses and in Hawaii, a company building a 27 hole course in a wilderness area recently paid the local mayor \$23,000.

Anita Pleumarom, of the Asian Tourism Action Network, commented, "the big losers are the local people whose government agencies . . . subsidize this fickle business by spending tax money for golf tourism promotion", an opinion echoed by an Indonesian banner slogan: "To the golfers who are our fellow countrymen, your pleasure means death for us".

GAG'M is compiling a directory of international groups concerned about golf course construction. To add your name or obtain GAG'M's conference documents, write to:

Asia-Pacific People's Environmental Network (APPEN), 19 Jalan Kelawai, 10250 Penang, MALAYSIA. Fax: +60 (4) 375705.



## Texaco Taken to the Cleaners

US and European campaigners are calling on consumers to send Texaco messages on toilet paper and boycott its products until it cleans up the damage caused by its oil operations in the Amazon region of Ecuador.

Although Texaco has now left its 20 year concession, forcing the company to remedy or compensate for its pollution may deter oil companies ARCO, Oryx, Elf-Aquitaine, Occidental and Maxus, which are now taking concessions in the area, from acting irresponsibly.

If the current dash for Ecuador's oil continues, a proposed 250 mile network of roads will open up the Amazon to speculators and settlers. An estimated seven million acres of pristine forest will be affected by spills of oil and the chlorides, cyanide, arsenic and cadmium used as "production water".

As a result, forest people suffer from skin and respiratory problems, gastroenteritis and cancers. Crops, game and fish have been affected, while communities have been introduced to consumer goods by Protestant missionaries working with the oil interests to undermine the tribal hierarchy and create dependency.

Maxus Energy, which manufactured Agent Orange herbicide, is building a road and pipeline south of the Napo river to extract oil from the Huaorani Indian Reserve and Yasuni National Park. Ecuadorian environment groups accuse the com-

pany of spilling 1.5 tons of toxic chemicals into the Napo and of attempting to bribe a director of the Huaorani Indian organization.

The Ecuadorian government is overlooking the harmful effects of oil production in its drive to service the country's foreign debt — oil is the number one foreign exchange earner. National and international groups are, however, appealing for a full appraisal of Texaco's record and a halt to new oil development until there are proper negotiations with Ecuadorian indigenous peoples' organizations.

For Texaco campaign details, contact Harald Eraker: FIVH, Informasjonssentret, Pb. 4743 Sofienberg, 0506 Oslo, NORWAY, Tel: +47 (2) 201 045. Or write to Texaco on toilet paper, asking for a clean up: Texaco Inc., 2000 Westchester Ave, White Plains, NY 10650, USA.

Write to the President of Ecuador, demanding independent monitoring of Maxus operations and that oil companies negotiate with indigenous peoples' organizations. Address: Arq. Sixto Durán Ballen, Presidente del Republica del Ecuador, Garcia Moreno, 1043 y Chile, Quito, ECUADOR.

## Road Lobby Retreats



THE British Roads Federation, the main industry body promoting roadbuilding, has withdrawn its support for the controversial Oxleas Wood road scheme in east London. This indicates that the direct action tactics used at Twyford Down over the past year and the broad new alliance of anti-road groups are being taken seriously by the road lobby (see *Campaigns* March/April 1993).

People across the country over the next few months will expose the folly of the government's £23 billion road-building scheme. Walk For The Earth is organizing a walking tour around proposed road sites in the north of England from 18-25 September. They will visit the areas which the Department of Transport wants to tarmac over for the M1/M62 link near Huddersfield, the M62 widening, the Preston Southern and Western bypass, the Bingley bypass, the new dual carriageway near Keighley and the Wharfe Valley "improvements". The walkers will oppose these plans, advocate a pro-rail policy and encourage people to reconsider their own transport use.

To Walk For The Earth contact: WFTE, 10 Broughton Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks, HX7 8JY, UK. Tel: 0422 844710.

## End Nuclear Testing Now!



CAMPAIGNERS are trying to prevent President Clinton from bowing to pressure from the defence lobby and from Britain to resume nuclear testing from early 1994.

They argue that if Congress permits resumed testing after the current nine month temporary ban, it would "signal a new round in the international arms race" and make it impossible to win further support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which will soon be renegotiated. They stress that the US has violated this agreement for decades, by testing and stockpiling more than 10,000 nuclear warheads. Since 1945, it has conducted an average of one nuclear test every 18 days, at a cost of \$30-60 million per test, resulting in an estimated 430,000 additional cancer cases.

Victims of nuclear tests, often indigent peoples, have not been fully recognized or compensated. Chief Raymond Yowell, Chief of the Western Shoshone National Council, whose ancestral lands include the Nevada Nuclear Test Site (which Britain and the US would use for the nine tests which Congress may be asked to approve) demanded "Why continue the contamination of Mother Earth when everyone knows there is no need for more nuclear testing?"

An international appeal against nuclear testing is circulating, backed by people such as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Alice Walker and Noam Chomsky. Protests have been called for 6 August, the 48th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

**For more details contact:** The International Action Center, 39 W. 14th St., 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011, USA. Tel: +1 (212) 633-6646, Fax: +1 (212) 633-2889. or: Peacenet e-mail: afreeman.

## Financial Meltdown

**A NATIONAL Audit Office report estimating the costs of decommissioning Britain's nuclear facilities at around £18 billion has met with an ingenious response from the nuclear industry: build more reactors to earn sufficient funds to decommission existing reactors.**

This argument, which ignores the many factors making nuclear power uneconomic, such as the huge costs of reprocessing spent fuel, will be scrutinized later

this year in the government's review of nuclear power.

British Nuclear Fuels is pressing for a government licence to open Thorp, the £2.8 billion nuclear waste reprocessing plant at Sellafield, but there is strong opposition in Britain, Ireland and Denmark to the discharges it would produce. Greenpeace threatens to take the government to court if Thorp is opened without a public enquiry: the government is refusing to publish its own consultants' reports on Thorp while the rationale for producing weapons-grade plutonium is anything but clear.

**Thorp can be stopped.** Write to your MP or to John Gummer, Environment Minister, House Of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

## Eastern Europe Nuke Protests



**THE SEVENTH anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, on 26 April, was marked by demonstrations at nuclear power stations in fifteen countries in Western and Eastern Europe, including Beznau in Switzerland, Trawsfynydd in Wales and Mochovce in the Czech Republic. Campaigners are countering the nuclear industry's intense lobbying for contracts in ex-Soviet countries as its sales to Western Europe fall.**

*Dangerous Liaisons*, a new report by Friends of the Earth, shows that G7 governments are spending twice the amount on expanding Central and Eastern European nuclear power as on safety for existing reactors.

The US Export-Import Bank has offered a \$136 million loan to the US company Westinghouse to complete the Temelin reactor in the Czech Republic, which is 90 per cent built, based on seriously flawed Soviet designs. At a mass demonstration at Temelin on 24 April, 35 people were arrested as some activists blockaded the gate while others walked through a hole in the security fence and climbed a crane. The protest was jointly organized by the Czech group, Children Of The Earth, and by Anti-Atom International, an Austrian coalition of over 35 groups and attracted campaigners from countries including Croatia, Lithuania,

Ukraine, Germany, the US and Denmark.

On the same day, Austrian protesters from Global 2000 hung a large anti-nuclear banner on Westinghouse's Vienna offices. Westinghouse is notorious for saddling the Philippines with a \$2.1 billion power station that has never been used because it is unsafe.

The European Bank For Reconstruction (EBRD) and Development is considering its first loan for Eastern European nuclear power. Electricité de France and three German companies, Siemens, Preussag and Bayern-Werke, are lobbying for a \$780 million loan to complete a partly-built nuclear power plant at Mochovce in Slovakia, which would export a significant amount of its electricity to Western Europe. This would be the first nuclear loan approved by the EBRD and would set a dangerous precedent. Friends of The Earth Slovakia has asked for letters to the EBRD opposing the Mochovce loan, as the reactor has major basic design flaws and is a far more expensive option for Slovakia than end-use energy efficiency investment.

**Send letters** to the US Import-Export Bank opposing its funding of the Temelin project: 811 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20571, USA. Or join the action camp at Temelin throughout July. Contact: Hnuti DUHA, Jakubské nám. 7, Brno 60200, CZECH REPUBLIC. E-mail: Paxus@ecn.gn.apc.org.

**Send letters** opposing the Mochovce loan to EBRD, 1 Exchange Square, London EC2A, UK.

## Flood Plan Demands

**DELEGATES from Bangladesh voiced strong criticisms of the World Bank-coordinated Flood Action Plan (FAP) at a European Parliament conference in May. They demanded an immediate halt to construction elements of the FAP, an independent review, full availability of all FAP studies and genuine public debate on solutions to Bangladesh's serious water problems. (See *The Ecologist* Sept/Oct 1992).**

Shapan Adnan, a professor at Chittagong University, detailed the harm that embankments built in the 1960s had caused to crops, fisheries and farmers. He expressed the fear that the imminent "pilot" embankment projects are the "thin end of a wedge" of what Mushrefa Mishu, Student Unity Forum President, described as "perpetual technological bondage" for Bangladesh's people. Mishu condemned

the "donor agencies [which] consider us guinea-pigs of their hydrological laboratory".

Abdus Sattar Khan, Chair of the Bangladesh Peasant Federation, said FAP's dismissal of the silt and other agricultural benefits of Bangladesh's rivers showed there is "a national and international conspiracy behind this. We have to resist it at any cost."

Other speakers discussed the cyclonic storm surges from the sea which cause more deaths and damage than river flooding and proposed cheap, village-level, measures to counter this, such as shelters, warning systems and afforestation. Only one per cent of FAP's budget is allocated to combatting cyclonic flooding.

The International Flood Action Plan Campaign Coalition is working to persuade parliamentarians to take up these issues with the 15 FAP donor agencies.

Write to the Minister for Overseas Development or equivalent Minister in your country asking that no construction funds be released without comprehensive environmental studies and full involvement of the Bangladeshi people.

## Narmada Review

Local, national and international pressure persuaded

the Indian government to agree in June to "discuss and review all relevant issues" connected with the Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river.

Prior to this announcement, repression against those opposing the dam was increasing. In May, police occupied Manibeli, the second village behind the dam, for a week, demolished houses and beat up and arrested villagers.

In Bombay, protestors attended huge rallies; Medha Patkar, leading activist of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) anti-dam movement, and Devram Kanera, a farmer, started a hunger strike which lasted 15 days until the government announced its review. Shripad Dharmadikary of the NBA described the government's agreement to a review as "a major victory", but cautioned that if it did not take place, the NBA would launch their struggle afresh.

International pressure on the Indian government is critical; the rising monsoon waters are threatening to inundate the first villages behind the dam. Please ask



that the review be carried out by independent experts, that its findings be made binding and that it take place immediately. Write to: Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, PM's Secretariat, New Delhi, 110001, INDIA, Fax: +91 11 301 6857. Contact Survival International for background information and Narmada urgent action bulletins in English, Hindi and other languages at 310 Edgware Road, London W2, UK. Tel: 071-723 5535, Fax: 071-723 4059.

## British Strikers Seek Support

ON 25 MAY, strikers on the picket line at Burnsall Limited, a West Midlands metal finishing company, were attacked by three replacement workers. The 19 black workers, mainly Asian women, have been on strike since June 1992 demanding union recognition, equal pay and basic health and safety at work.

Kuldip Dhaliwal was stabbed in the hand, but he and three fellow strikers were charged with causing an affray. Although two strike breakers have also been charged, the strike's organizers are accusing the police of cooperating with the factory's owners to end the strike. The anniversary turnout on the picket line on 15 June, however, showed the determination to continue.

For information about how you can support the Burnsall strikers and other black workers in Britain contact: Londec, 205-217 Instrument House, London WC1, UK. Tel: 071-713 7907.

## British Forests May Be Privatized

A civil service review team was set up in April to consider the privatization of the two million remaining acres owned by the government Forestry Commission. Forestry unions have joined countryside and environment groups to prevent the loss of Britain's public forests.

Prime Minister John Major wrote to forestry unions in early 1992 promising that the Commission's forests would not be privatized, but he has now disclaimed his letter, with the excuse that it was "drafted incorrectly during the frenzied activity of the election campaign". Environment Minister John Gummer has made clear his priorities are "to raise money and get the forest estate out of the public sector". The government has already sold 410,000 acres of forests since 1981.

Environment groups realise that private investors would be unlikely to encourage mixed woodlands; it is estimated that even maintaining the Forestry Commission's current level of spending in this area would require a taxpayer subsidy of £400 million over 10 years to make the privatization attractive to investors. The Ramblers Association fears loss of recreational access and even sawmill owners object to privatization, because they now get a constant supply of wood, regardless of market conditions. A minimum demand of all these groups is that there should be full consultation and public debate before the fate of Britain's forests is sealed.

Write to your MP expressing your concern. The Ramblers' Association is organising a Woodland Walk day on Sunday 26 September to draw attention to threatened small woodlands.

For information write to: The Ramblers Association, 1/5 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2XX, Tel: 071-582 6878.

## IN BRIEF ●●●●●●●●

● SPANISH environment group Vida Sana is campaigning to persuade Spain's hospitals to buy organic bread only, because the Spanish Foodstuffs Code forbids the use of avoidable chemical inputs for "fundamental foods". Making public institutions buy organic produce would help combat desertification which, according to the Spanish General Directorate of Environment, now threatens 50 per cent of Spanish farmland. Vida Sana calculates that if all hospitals only bought organic bread, 35,000 hectares would have to be converted to chemical-free agriculture, saving 174,000 litres of pesticides, 349,000 litres of herbicides and 8,561 tons of oil per year.

Contact: Asociación Vida Sana, Clot 39, Barcelona 08018, SPAIN.

● The British government is pressing ahead with plans to outlaw gypsies but not "until Parliamentary time allows". Only two Local Authorities have expressed support for the government's plans but, while legislation is pending, site-building for travellers has been halted, leading to a growing number of illegal encampments. Although the British government recently signed a UN Resolution condemning forcible evictions, these are continuing apace.

For a copy of "Alternative Proposals for Constructive Reform of the Caravan Sites Act 1968" by Travellers' Organizations, telephone 05242 62284.