

Earth First!



Spread resistance

Statement on Covid-19

Capitalism is milking the opportunities presented by the Covid-19 lock-down and restrictions. Construction on HS2 hasn't been halted, even whilst Covid-19 is used as an excuse to try to clear protesters. Controversial developments are being pushed through during the restrictions in the hope that no-one will notice. Banks are profiting from making loans to people who have no other options to cover their costs.

The Covid-19 situation has highlighted levels of inequality, with members of government being prioritised for testing over frontline medical staff. Low-paid workers are also being hit hard and putting themselves at risk. If their employers are continuing to operate, they cannot claim government support, and so have to choose between putting themselves at risk to work, or simply not having enough money to make ends meet.

We must not allow the current situation to isolate or divide us, or to weaken our resolve to protect the earth against capitalism. Deforestation and industrial-scale animal farming have been linked to the genesis of this disease, and its spread has been aided by an unsustainable globalised travel network, all things driven by capitalism and all things we as Earth First! have been resisting for years. We must be clear to communicate the root causes behind this pandemic, and its spread, and not allow the international spread of the virus to be seized upon by racists, to advance their agenda of fear and hatred of migrants and people of colour.



It is not the fault of working people, migrants, the 99% of us who have limited choices over how we live, that this disease emerged and spread around the world. The slow response by the UK government, despite having been given a head-start knowing what was already happening in Italy, advocating (at its worse moment) what amounted to a cull of the less socially "useful" citizens with it's 'herd immunity' response, can be blamed at least in part for the high death count we see now and we must reiterate this whenever a divisive racist, misanthropic response rears its ugly head. It suits the government well if we blame each other rather than blaming them. We need to show solidarity with each other, not be drawn into playing the blame game, supporting neighbours not grassing them up, and engaging in mutual aid if we are able to.

In light of the Covid-19 situation, we are delaying a decision on whether to proceed with the 2020 Earth First Summer Gathering until its viability becomes clearer. Whilst we would not want our agenda to be dictated by the orders of Government, we are acutely aware of the dangers of spreading the virus that would be created by gathering large numbers of people in a small space, as well as encouraging people to travel long distances across the country – find out more about this year's alternative plans on page the back page.

Right now we must not allow the current crisis to be a smokescreen, behind which work on ecologically destructive projects is accelerated, and we encourage people to take action to resist environmental devastation locally. To facilitate this, and as an alternative to the face to face organising we would usually be doing, we have put together this zine, which contains information about ongoing destructive projects and ideas on how you can resist them. Now is a time to think creatively, flexibly and outside the box in how we protect nature and biodiversity in our local communities.

What is Earth First!?

On these islands, where wildness is scarce and the juggernaut of economic growth is strong, where can our passion and sense of social justice fit? How can we struggle for what is dear to us, for our very survival in an interconnected and unjust web of humans, other animals and plant species?

Earth First! does not accept a human-centred worldview of 'nature for people's sake'. Instead, we believe that life exists for its own sake, that industrial civilisation is leading us to hell in a handcart and is setting us against each other. People and environment cannot be seen as separate, or we are doomed; ecology means that everything is connected. That is why we call for ecological direct action. It is with this understanding that we say Earth First!

The general principles behind Earth First! are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop and reverse the destruction of the earth and its inhabitants.

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or campaign, but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under, as a local group or as an individual. We believe in using all of the tools in the toolbox, from grassroots and legal organising to occupations and monkeywrenching. If you agree with the above and the total liberation of all beings, if you believe action speaks louder than words, then Earth First! is for you. Whether you think of Earth First! as a movement, a network, an idea or simply a name to use for actions, get involved. Our structure is without formal leadership and we do it for passion, love and rage. To put it simply, the earth must come first.

Earth First! arose at the end of the 1970s in the US, and in the UK in 1991, in response to an increasingly corporate, compromising and ineffective environmental community, and the failure of mainstream environmental organisations to have any real effect at preventing the destruction of the Earth. While the multitude of environmental NGOs all started small, with high ideals and a can-do attitude, they soon foundered on the rocks of corporatism. Take any group of well-meaning people, put them in a big office and pay them reasonable salaries, and they will soon find it increasingly difficult not to make compromises to preserve the flow of money which sustains them.

The present system is completely dependent on continual economic growth, and that very growth can only be achieved by consuming more and more resources and producing more and more waste. Humans may not need fossil fuels (nor most other extracted 'resources'), but modern nation states, transnational corporations and similar entities do. Saving the planet, and ourselves, thus means destroying the very system which mainstream organisations are a part of.

Four decades later, the only thing which has changed is that mainstream environmentalism has become even more compromised and ineffective, while the threats we face are now ever more urgent. Some such organisations are now openly collaborating in the destruction of what they should be defending. Meanwhile, a tidal wave of corporate greenwash, almost invisible it is so prevalent, is seeking to confuse and delay any resistance to an ever more aggressive push to monetise what remains of the natural world.

Unfortunately, decades of compromise, collaboration and propaganda make it hard for most people to see what needs to be done. We live in a fantasy world where almost everything that is deemed 'important' is an illusion, and anything 'real' has been buried under layers of abstraction until it has almost no meaning at all. Dragging ourselves out of this morass of lies to face the stark reality beyond is far from an easy challenge, and one that will require a great effort of collective will.

Without people who will take a principled stand and have a vision of a world which is not centred on the system that is destroying it, we are all doomed. Currently, if there is anywhere that those people might come together, be inspired and supported, it is Earth First!

At its best Earth First!'s style offers a way forward. We aren't rebelling against the system because we are sour on life. We are fighting for beauty, for life, for joy and for love. We are willing to let our actions set the finer points of our philosophy rather than debating endlessly about our programme. We are willing to get started now, make mistakes, to learn as we go.

In this particular time, when mounting threats from all sides are driving a renewed awareness of the importance of defending and repairing our battered ecosystems, the resurgence of Earth First! in Britain is a hopeful sign. Whether we can all make it live up to this promise is a question for the future, but right now it is a very small oasis in a very large desert. Let us drink our fill, and be more powerful than they can possibly imagine.

Fighting back against corona capitalism and the virus-state

To quote Laurie Penny, “this isn’t the apocalypse you were looking for”. Hollywood’s disaster porn has sold us a fantasy where bombs, earthquakes, bacteria or deathly viruses will throw us back into the dark ages, as governments lose their grasp on power and it is up to the self-reliant individual to navigate the post-apocalypse alone. Instead, what we’ve found with this global pandemic is that – much like every other crisis – it is an opportunity for the state to evolve, like a virus, to develop new ways to protect itself, enhance its power, increase surveillance and secure private profits.

Never let a good crisis go to waste! State responses to the crisis

What we are seeing in response to the virus is not a response centred on the protection of human and nonhuman health. What we are seeing is an authoritarian moment in world history, with governments using the epidemic to expand their control, close borders and centralise power.

Policing and police violence (as always primarily targeting people of colour), ever more nationalist policies and migration controls serve to individualise guilt and create an *Other* that is invading our communities.

As the pandemic has taken higher tolls on our communities, the blame is laid at individuals who are ‘too selfish’ to abide by a lockdown, not the incompetences of the state and the fools in charge. While blaming city-dwellers for escaping overcrowded apartments to the few impoverished green spaces that are left in our cities, the state willingly sacrifices the elderly and people with disabilities, who it sees as less ‘business-critical’ to the smooth running of the ecocidal capitalist machine.

This blame is laid systematically, without empathy. Victims fleeing domestic violence, rough sleepers, and anyone who just needs a day away from the stifling confines of a city that has colonised every aspect of their lives are not given the benefit of the doubt. People protesting the institutional racism that is also one of the root causes of the current crisis are framed as endangering public health. But the dismantling of oppression will never be the priority of a state when it is a means of control. And it’s this control we’ve seen being used time and again to disproportionately target oppressed minorities. For the cops, the Covid regulations are just another tool in their kit to keep people in line.

At the same time, decades of exploitation, privatisation and destruction of the NHS are paying out. Add a lack of protective equipment to an already exhausted work force - many people of colour, underpaid, and increasingly threatened with deportation – the inhuman challenges that doctors and nurses endure are paid back with a weekly clap on the doorstep, rainbow paintings on the window and designated supermarket slots.

War, frontlines and the state of emergency!

This is not a war against a virus, it is a war against the population. As always, framings of war, emergency and crisis are used to create heroes and villains, to justify policing and to position those who are most essential in this crisis as ‘frontline’, sacrificed for the “greater good” – the economy. It allows for imposition of a new normal – temporary police and state powers that then become part of the system of state control, and are not going away again. (Side note: the climate ‘emergency’ is not going to be any different!)

While finally, nurses and carers receive a bit more public recognition, the crisis also lays bare just how reliant our economic system is on the systematic exploitation of the working classes, and who these “essential workers” actually are. We can go months without bosses, CEOs, Vice Chancellors and high-level bureaucrats, but we can’t go a day without those providing care, food, transport and housing. Taxi and deliveroo drivers are at least as likely to catch Covid as a paramedic; they simply don’t have PPE, nor do they get sick pay.

Belly Mujinga was spat at while working at a train station and shortly afterwards died from Covid 19. If the state really cared about key workers, the police might have done more to seek justice, however instead they closed the inquiry.

A clap or a medal is no substitute for a pay rise for NHS staff, but the way in which a variety of working class workers have either lost their jobs or been dangerously exposed to Covid shows that the solution is way more deep rooted than that. It’s not just our healthcare system that’s undervalued – it’s every life living under capitalism.

The state response thus lays bare the institutional racism, elitism and lack of care for human and nonhuman health that are the foundation of the state.

FUCK THE STATE

FUCK THE POLICE

FUCK PATRIARCHY

Worsening inequalities

The effects are not surprising. While middle class professionals can work from home, enjoy a mortgage holiday, and lounge in their large gardens, it is disproportionately people of colour, women and low-paid workers who have to put our health on the line by turning up to work with insufficient PPE in order to keep the wheels of production spinning. They might be called heroes, but no one is risking their lives out of a sheer sense of responsibility to capitalism. It's because people don't want to be made homeless or starve, and because they care. The platitudes given to key workers seem to be just that, and no more.

At the same time, we are seeing some beautiful community rebuilding and mutual aid in action, neighbours coming together, retribution initiatives, rent strikes and people supporting each other to resist evictions. Rather than 'clapping for the NHS', people are cooking for each other, gardening for each other, sharing groceries, creating community and rebuilding the social fabric that decades of neoliberalism has destroyed.

Localised mutual aid groups have proven so effective at providing for vulnerable people that we've seen blatant attempts by local government to co-opt them. But many are staying strong, knowing that they are in this for the long-haul, centring questions of social justice, racial justice and support for those who are most marginalised in society – homeless people, criminalised people and those who are under threat from deportation.

These solutions have shown that the key to surviving when we can't rely on the state (and when can we?), is not competition or atomisation, but mutual aid and solidarity.

So who is profiting? Or: the power of money

In contrast to the demands by the state that we isolate ourselves and snitch on our neighbours, big business has been making the most of the downtime. Deforestation to make way for HS2 has finished apace, while protestors are facing enhanced restrictions and violence from the police and private security guards and illegal evictions of HS2 camps continue.

Mining companies are profiting from regulatory rollback and lack of enforcement of environmental protections, while mines are hotspots for the spread of the virus.

FUCK WHITE SUPREMACY

Online retailers like Amazon are making record profits, and data mining companies are signing lucrative government contracts for tracking and surveillance. The NHS is now working with Palantir, Microsoft and Amazon to track medical staff and the White House has set up a task force of data-mining start-ups and tech giants including Facebook to develop tracking and surveillance technologies – from geolocation tracking of people through their phones to facial-recognition systems to trace the networks of people who were tested positive for the virus. Even more worrying is the creeping normalisation and legitimisation of their existence, and the gathering and commodification of people's data.

Companies that have suffered under the pandemic, if they're deemed large and critical enough for the smooth functioning of capitalism, are scrambling for bail outs. If the economy does go off a cliff edge because of the pandemic, you can be sure that it is they who will receive the majority of state support, and not vulnerable people who have already had their lives and livelihoods threatened as it is.

What does this mean for us as green anarchists?

It's obvious that we can't fight to go back to business as usual. Business as usual is the problem. We need to fight back and learn for much bigger and longer-lasting ecological and social crises we face.

We know that the pandemic is intrinsically entangled with these crises, and not just the result of government failures but also the consequences of industrial agriculture, biodiversity loss, globalised trade and capitalism.

What this crisis shows, is how the language of crisis and emergency is used by governments to enhance policing powers, control and oppress populations, and protect private profits. It shows that government is not the solution – local community building and autonomy are. It shows just how harmful ecocidal industrial agriculture, logging and mining operations are, and how much we depend on healthy biodiverse ecosystems, local food production and each other.

Let's disrupt greenwashing narratives that focus on the positive impact of fewer flights, or the return of wildlife in our waters. It means little in the grand scheme of climate catastrophe. Let's step up the fight for autonomy, and against the state, the police and the prison system, and their entanglement with ecological catastrophe.

We need internationalist solidarity, we need community, we need direct action and collective organising, we need mutual aid.

LOVE AND RAGE!

NHS not HS2!

Above the hum of the motorway I listened to the coo of the wood pigeons from my pillow,
But I couldn't find heartsease, vetchling nor vole,
It's as if someone stole the wind from the willows.

Everyone loves animals and says they hate to harm them,
But they let someone else bulldoze their homes,
For railways roads and close-mown gardens.

We all love to see the wildflowers line the country roads in May,
Until a grey suit somewhere finds it untidy,
And then sends men to cut it all away.

In Sheffield town we thought the cherry blossom very pretty,
But they had Saruman on the council,
God forbid the roots of trees could undermine his city.

If you go down to the woods today you're sure of a big surprise,
They're tearing them down for a railway called HS2,
So if you go down to the woods you'd best go in disguise.

There's rogue heroes in tree houses who are trying to fight the tide,
And below them men with big machines,
And its time you chose a side.

The suits they pick and choose the laws and think they decide what's right and wrong,
Are you down there revving the chainsaws,
Or can you still hear the ragged blackbirds song?

Will you lie to yourself there's nothing you can do and just stay on your knees,
Will you leave it to some hippies,
Will you watch screens as they evict bats and badgers hacking back the trees?

You shower and brush your teeth each morning and you drive yourself to work,
On the history channel you watch nature documentaries,
While someone above your pay grade works out what it's all worth.

A twenty minute quicker commute will be worth the price of ancient woodland,
King Boris is stood with the Sheriff of Nottingham,
Of course they're calling Robin Hood a hoodlum.

In years to come the species living here will be long gone and the earth that bit sicker,
But the bosses say it's worth it,
Because if you take a train to London now you'll get there twenty minutes quicker.

The Mail tells you what to think- those protestors are just outlaws and yobs,
though you like to walk your dog in the woodlands,
the stormtroopers in high vis are just doing their jobs.

Soldiers following orders like they've done throughout the ages,
Someone higher gave the order,
Politicians pave the way and rich men pay their wages.

They say the work they're doing tearing up the earth is just to feed their children,
They try to kid themselves they're firefighters,
When they're the ones burning down the building.

In what was left of the hundred acre wood I sat with Piglet and Pooh and shared some honey,
And we lamented the things men will do,
For a little bit of money.

The steamroller of progress crushes hedgerows and meadows leaving few survivors,
It might change course for a golf course,
But not for hazel, woundwort, fox or Fiver.

The hunters got Tarka the Otter and men pushed the animals out of Farthing Wood,
So I know which side I'm always on,
My heroes don't wear capes- they wear masks and hoods.

No shade under the greenwood tree- the mayday came too late,
The little hobbit asked the wise wizard,
What can men do in the face of such hate?

This is no surprise you see these trees were condemned by a businessman's plan,
Well my friends the only way to stop them,
Is for little people like you and me to do ALL we can.

Most will do what they've always done- block their ears, turn away, hide their eyes,
So will you come down to the woods today?
You're in for a big surprise...

(by Beau Nafyde, 9th May 2020)



EVICCTIONS MAKE US SICK

Squat solidarity! This MayDay squatters from across the UK came together to co-ordinate decentralised actions across the country in order to highlight our plight and address our needs. Both residential and commercial buildings were occupied to provide housing for ourselves and others left high and dry during this time of crisis, and banners were dropped in support by squats not yet facing imminent eviction.

Land was taken to repurpose for clean open space and food, and food distribution is taking place to aid all who are struggling.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, emergency legislation was introduced and put a hold on all evictions for 90 days. However, it took just three weeks for the judges to surrender to the pressure from bailiffs, landlords and banks, and amend the law.

Squatting cases will continue to be heard via phone, and bailiffs are now again smashing through our doors the way they always have – but this time we're in the middle of a global pandemic and it's scarier than ever before.

Evictions make us sick. In both the metaphorical and physical sense. The government that we didn't choose values landlords' and millionaire owners' property right higher than public health, our lives and the lives of people we love.

We recognise, though, that it's not a matter of choosing a "better" government as for us, whatever government, it ends up being the same. We are a collective of communities living on the margins of society. Some of us are BIPOC, migrants, refugees, queer and transpeople. Some are people living with disabilities, managing various health conditions, healing from trauma and domestic abuse. All of us are building our own refuges, homes and chosen families. COVID-19 has only magnified our already existing health, housing and power inequalities.

We find further discrimination in the illegal evictions that have taken place in these last weeks, as well as the well-evidenced police harassment of those of no fixed abode or street homeless – despite the lockdown rules not applying to those without homes. The government plan to house the homeless has proven to be worthless as people find themselves not able to get a spot, or treated like dirt when they do. State provision has already failed so many. Councils are running out of money, all the while council housing sits empty by the thousands. Specialist services such as domestic violence survivor support and LGBTQI+ housing and support services are fighting to be able to offer much needed refuge.

Meanwhile it is estimated that the number of long-term empty homes in England now exceeds 226,000 (this figure is significantly higher if taking commercial properties into account).

The precarity we face is the same precarity that lots of other people will recognise – it's living payslip to payslip in insecure housing. It's having little to no savings, little to no social network, and sweating to get benefits that barely cover necessities. The government's "solution" – to make receiving universal credit easier and to suspend evictions (which will only postpone them) – is a temporary fix. It won't solve the crisis that started way before the pandemic.

Some say COVID-19 is a crisis for capitalism. We say: to be so, it would have to destroy, or at least scratch the surface of, any of the structures that keep the system in intact. Yet, these structures are staying exactly the way they've been, the way they've been designed to be. It's us – squatters and renters – who get hit the hardest while landlords enjoy their mortgage holidays and property owners fill out eviction papers.

We will not ask permission to find a safe place to sleep and stay alive.
We will sleep wherever we can and want to.

Whether in one of the 837272819191? (only a slight exaggeration!) empty buildings or abandoned unused land plots or secret corners on OUR streets, if that's the place we find the most safe.

We will survive in the ways we need to and know.

We can't just see this as a return to "normal". We need to forge new paths and refuse to be crushed by a crumbling capitalism trying desperately to maintain its grip on the population. Our actions today are not those of politely asking to be reconsidered by the state, or begging to have the amendment overturned.

We're not asking for their kindness as we already know they've got none for us. We acted today because for us, solidarity means attack – attack on the legal amendment and the idea of housing as a commodity.

DEMAND SPACE TO STAY SAFE. TAKE IT IF YOU HAVE TO.

(Written by: Squatters across the UK)



Borrowed Time

May 24, 2020 is the 30th anniversary of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney surviving an assassination attempt by car bombing in Oakland, CA. It's also the 30th anniversary of the day they were arrested and labeled terrorists to the public by the FBI.

I feel a sense of guilt for how much I care about the case of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. There have been greater injustices and there are bigger fish to fry but their story makes my blood boil. I like to think I'm self-aware and I believe I know why I care so much about this piece of history. For starters, the car bombing happened in Oakland, which happens to also be where I live so it's easy to relate to their story through connection of place. Despite living here off and on for over a decade and loving some of the redwood groves Darryl & Judi fought to protect for even longer, I only learned about their story in recent years. I was watching a different documentary that made quick mention of Earth First! activists being attacked by bomb in Oakland and my eyes widened and jaw dropped at what I had heard. I was shocked to learn that people had been car bombed down the street from where I live.

I then watched *Who Bombed Judi Bari?* and became more shocked and incensed that the victims of an assassination attempt were framed as the suspects. The blatant contradictions between the evidence and the claims of the FBI exhibited incompetence at best but with implications of something far worse. Twelve years after the bombing, a jury in a federal court sided with Bari and Cherney and found three FBI officers and three Oakland Police Department officers liable for false arrest, violating civil rights, conducting illegal searches and speaking slanderous statements. After a unanimous verdict, Juror Mary Nunn said, 'The FBI and Oakland (police) sat up there and lied about their investigation. They messed up their investigation, and they had to lie again and again to try to cover up. I'm surprised that they seriously expected anyone would believe them.'



The story of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney is much more than bomb survivors winning a lawsuit against the FBI. Prior to the bombing, Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney had been busy organizing Redwood Summer, a series of demonstrations in Humboldt County to protest logging of old growth redwoods. By the spring of 1990, Bari, Cherney and other Earth First! activists and lawyers had already achieved minor victories delaying clearcutting practices. Greg King, who Cherney pays homage to in our interview, identified and named the Headwaters Forest, now a national forest reserve, by trespassing onto Pacific Lumber Co. timber holdings. Starting with an illegal walk in the woods and then followed by many Earth First! blockades, protest rallies, tree sits, and lawsuits over the course of a dozen years with an eventual federal and state purchase of the land, the public can now leisurely explore the remaining 7,500 acres of the forest.



Judi Bari helped form Local 1 of the Industrial Workers of the World to unionize timber workers at the Louisiana Pacific; the same company that allowed the FBI to conduct bomb instruction classes in a clearcut a month before Bari & Cherney were attacked. In fact, as Cherney notes in our interview, on the very day the bomb instruction classes were taking place in April, 1990, Cherney, King and other Earth First! activists were arrested in Marin County for a public awareness event on the Golden Gate Bridge for the 20th anniversary of Earth Day.

In our interview, I asked Cherney if he believed his efforts to unionize timber workers, the lawsuits he filed, monkeywrenching activities or organized mass protests were the most effective way to prevent logging of old growth (you will have to listen for the answer!) because he applied all tactics available to bring public awareness and prevention to logging practices in Northern California. By the date of the bombing thirty years ago, Cherney and Bari had already been physically attacked and received many death threats but even after the bombing, both contributed to Redwood Summer and to save the Headwaters Forest – all while the person that planted the bomb remained free and uninvestigated.

Judi Bari died before the Headwaters Forest Reserve opened to the public and years before her case against the FBI went to trial. It's been thirty years since she was bombed and no one other than she and Cherney were ever investigated for the act of domestic terrorism. It's hard to imagine justice for Judi Bari without a legitimate investigation into the attack. Mendocino County, the City of Oakland and environmental groups now recognize May 24 as Judi Bari Day but these tributes are not justice.

The documentary *Who Bombed Judi Bari?* includes a TV news clip from the day after the bombing that quickly cuts from a segment about global warming to announcing Cherney and Bari as the suspects and not the victims. The news clip segue exemplifies everything wrong about our nation's response to climate change and environmentalists: instead of labeling the victims of a violent attack as ecoterrorists, what if the public had heard Judi's message – to say nothing of the news report on global warming? In the same thirty years since the bombing, more carbon emissions have been released than all of the previous combined years throughout civilized history. This madness is one of the reasons why this case infuriates me.

I think the thing that draws me most to this story is simply that I admire the actions of the individuals for all of their efforts to save the redwoods with the recognition that I'm too fearful to chain myself to a tree or stand in front of a logging truck. As much as I love old growth redwoods, I'm not willing to make the same sacrifices as Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. But without people like Judi Bari, Darryl Cherney and Greg King standing up, raising banners and raising hell, we would have fewer groves of redwoods standing today.

(Andrew from 'Borrowed Time' - the interview can be found here: <https://borrowed-time.org/2020/05/08/who-bombed-judi-bari/>)

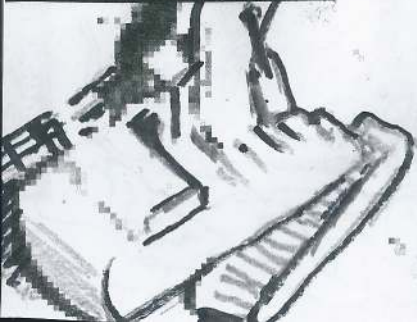
It is hard to watch our world - our one and only Earth - killed with indifference by greedy, grasping, small-minded men.

The tragedy is staggering: thousands of species - unique and precious, beautiful, diverse, the exquisite children of evolutionary millennia - snuffed out daily by poisoned water, air, and soil. In an instant, extinguished forever! So swiftly can man unravel the tapestry of ages.

What words can express this ultimate loss? Our blossoming, bountiful home, bosom of infinite variety, might have sheltered us for aeons -- yet we are forced to watch her stripped bare and hollowed out, as we cling to her hardening husk.

It is very hard to watch our world die.

But what can one aching human do? What force can dull the ravaging scythe? Would one more small body choke the insatiable thresher? Or will we all be swallowed whole, buried in hot and dusty earth.



How the Lockdown has affected wildlife

It is thought that Covid-19 originated from bats, and was passed to humans at a 'wet market'. These are places where wild animals are sold alive, alongside meat and carcasses, in crowded markets. There have been calls to illegalise 'wet markets' to avoid the spread of disease, and as they are often unregulated and endangered animals can be illegally traded.

After the initial horror stories of 'wet markets', we heard good-news stories for wildlife, with pictures of deer in English cities, wild goats in Wales, and boars in Spain. The dolphins in Venice turned out to be faked, really photographed in Cagliari Port, though still benefitting from the lack of humans and the cleaner water.

Factory closures, fewer vehicles and less pollution led to clearer air over India and elsewhere, benefitting entire ecosystems.

Then, however, came the stories of HS2 work continuing and ancient woodland being felled under the cover of lockdown, while fewer protesters and reporters were around. We saw articles about game-keepers killing protected species, and pigeons and monkeys starving without the throngs of people in the streets feeding them, deliberately or by littering. Some seaside towns reported gulls were hunting again with no chips to eat!

Hunting, shooting, and fishing were banned, which will have saved countless lives, but fishing and shooting have been reinstated. Game-keepers, whose job it is to kill predators on shooting estates, were told their work is 'essential'. Although shooting parties were stopped under lockdown, shooting that could be called 'pest control' was still allowed.

All this highlights the massive impact we have on those around us. Those species that have adapted to rely on humans, like pigeons or gulls, have felt the loss of busy places, while animals who would rather keep away from us, have been glad to see emptier streets. Wildlife that is targeted by humans, either deliberately or indirectly through development work, has suffered. We rely on other humans to fight its corner, monitor the shooting estates and oppose developments; surveying and campaigning for the wildlife that will be destroyed.

As our government has moved from disease-control to economic-preservation, and worldwide countries are striving to return to 'normal', streets are busier, we see more cars and more flights, and pollution is rising again. All those animals who have adapted to our new behaviours over the last few months will quickly have to re-adapt, a worrying task for this years' young, who have grown up in lockdown.

We need to take away from this an idea of responsibility. We affect the lives of those around us by something seemingly insignificant like dropping a chip, or adding to pollution, and we cause danger on the roads by driving to the beach. All of these behaviours have an impact because there are so many of us doing the same things. We need to make the 'new normal' less harmful and of course, as well as our individual actions, this means holding the companies who create the mass pollution, deforestation, and wildlife persecution to account.



bathing in sunlight
trees burst into life again
while perching birds sing

gently reminding
Our insanely busy world
of a deeper time

the animal realm
the Kingdom of ancient oaks
light & unhurried

Interspecies relations in a time of Covid

As we have been going through the current crisis, our relationship with other species has come up again and again. From early on, before many of us felt the impacts directly, we were aware that the Covid-19 virus appeared to originate in a 'wet' market. On these markets, dead animals are sold alongside living ones, with associated hygiene issues. On the one hand, this raised concerns over the well-being of the individual animals confined to cages in a busy market place environment, on the other conservationists' concerns around the trade in wild animals, often rare species, were highlighted. Many criticised the treatment of animals in other countries, with others making counter-criticisms of the very similar treatment of animals in UK factory farms and slaughterhouses. Some have been warning for years that deforestation and intensive farming are drivers for new disease emergence; by encroaching on the homes of other animals we make it more likely that we come into contact with other species – and their associated diseases - that we otherwise wouldn't, then cramming together genetically identical creatures helps novel viruses spread. Capitalism is the driver of this environmental destruction, so chief blame can be duly pinned on the world's finance centres.

During lock-down many have enjoyed closer encounters with nature they wouldn't have otherwise and the tables have been turned; as we have retreated into our homes the animals whose habitat we constantly encroach have gained confidence and reclaimed some space. Many have witnessed this in local parks or within their own gardens.



All of this should give us pause to stop and reflect on our relationship with other species; changing our treatment of other animals could go along way towards making this planet a happier and healthier place for us all. While laying blame at the door of individuals may be unhelpful right now we can all question what changes are required of the system we live under which created this situation; a broken system that sees the earth's resources as infinite - purely for human use and abuse - and which prioritises profit above all else and sees both us and other animals as mere tools to be exploited. Covid-19 should serve as a wake-up call for humanity – we are not invincible. We cannot continue exploiting nature as we do currently without any comeback. The need for total liberation has never seemed more clear or more urgent.

CHAOS AND CLARITY

For a period during the lockdown in the UK, all of life's structure seemed to break down. Social and work life had become paralysed and ruled by confusion and restriction. It's a stark shock to the essentials of what keeps people alive when there's no bread left on supermarket shelves, shop keepers are behind a hanging sheet of plastic, people are isolated and allowed out only for 1 hour a day to run in loops round the park like robotic dogs, and key workers are being martyred for a story of nation. Meanwhile transnational corporations are staggered, brought to their knees by a microscopic virus. A hierarchy inversed, even just for a time. The illusion and the machine was forced to a grinding halt.

The Covid-19 crisis has enforced a state of liminality; to be betwixt and between. Lockdown expresses liminality through its ambiguity and chaos, isolation of the individual as its subject and its inevitability as a state of transition. The crux of this point is that the pandemic crisis must induce change to social life in the micro and macro scale. As we ease out of more prohibitive lockdown measures, there is a danger of this period only going to reinforce the status quo. A pressure valve release where people take a breather before ploughing on in to inevitable collapse. The government is scrambling to ensure this is the case. It frantically asserts its power through police repression and nationalist rhetoric, prioritising business over health, capital over community.

We must ensure that the cracks in capitalism, entrenched further by the pandemic, widen to allow new ways of social organising come to fruition. The new communities forged through mutual aid networks need to withstand and grow. Organically groups have grown based on solidarity outside of the enforced external structures that prove themselves obsolete. The mutual support between ordinary people will always be stronger than any charity or meagre state handouts. These networks make our human bonds stronger and realise what was always present.

These cracks are revealed and deepened as it becomes clearer day by day that our social makeup is based on vast inequalities. Covid-19's disproportionate death toll is a race and class issue. The conduct of the state mark these intersections as intentional fractures through the human condition as a means to uphold the powerful. The Black Lives Matter protests have been sparked at a crucial time.

The liminal chaos and clarity that comes through the crisis has awoken more people to the importance of standing and acting together against the ineptitude and repression of governance as it exists today. This time is transitional and we can decide its direction together.

Spindalwort



WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE BADGER CULL?

It is not cancelled.



Earlier this year, the 'phasing out' of badger culling was announced. A clever move, as papers, looking for a good-news story, picked it up, and told us that culling was over! Sadly, this is not true. The media talked about moving from culling to vaccination, and developing a workable cattle vaccine against Bovine TB. However, it also gives vague dates for this 'phase out' - 'mid to late 2020s' - and insists that culling will continue in areas 'where the epidemiological evidence supports it'.

The whole story is confusing, but basically good news: the badger cull trial, originally planned to last 25 years, will be a few years shorter. However, it's made to sound like badger culling will stop immediately. That's not true.

Support for anti-cull groups, already challenged by the lockdown, dwindled as people believed we had won! We had a hard task explaining that this was a victory on our part, but also make it clear that culling will still go ahead this year, and maybe for another 10 years.

Ground breaking Derbyshire

Last year, the Derbyshire cull was set to start in September. Cages were found, farmers had been trained, and Derbyshire police had spent £35,737 on preparations. But on 6th September 2019, when all other cull zones started, the licence for Derbyshire was withheld. The reason given was the leading vaccination program, and that more time was needed to work out how culling and vaccination could run alongside each other. Brilliant news for Derbyshire's badgers in the short term, though the part of the zone that spread over the border into Staffordshire still culled 1039 badgers last year.

DEFRA took the government to court for withholding the licence, although T&G Stone, the local cull company, had already been financially reimbursed. In May, Judge Andrews gave a verdict of 'not guilty' saying the government had the right to refuse the licence on 'political grounds'. The court report mentions us as the 'vocal opposition' - something we are very proud of.

This was another challenge of reporting, again people thought the Derbyshire cull was cancelled forever. However the case was purely about LAST YEAR, and had no effect on future culls. Licence applications have already been put in for Derbyshire and all other zones for the 2020 cull, expected to start in September, with 'supplementary' cull zones starting around now.

What can I do?

Please celebrate these two bits of good news: DEFRA can't sue the government over pulling last year's Derbyshire cull licence, and the current intensive culling style looks like it might be slowly phased out (over up to 10 years). But please don't believe it's all cancelled. Anti-cull groups are still working hard to prepare for culling to start in September. Please, join us in our 'vocal opposition'!

Find your local group:
badgeractionnetwork.org.uk





★ZAPATISTA★

Statement on Covid - 19

'The word, the listening ear, and the heart have many ways—paths, calendars, and geographies—in and on which to meet.'

Communiqué of the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee—General Command of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation

Mexico, on the COVID 19 Pandemic

March 16, 2020

To the people of Mexico:

To the peoples of the world:

To the National Indigenous Congress—Indigenous Governing Council:

To the Sixth in Mexico and abroad:

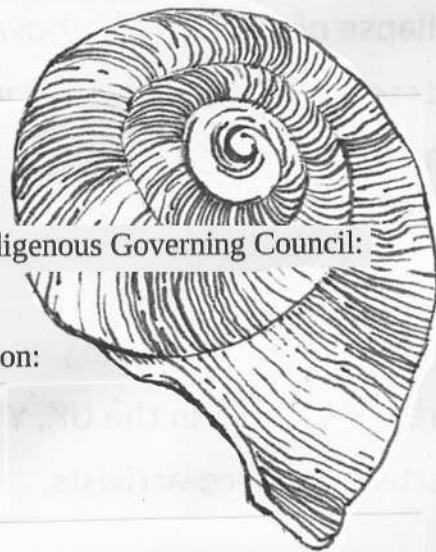
To the Networks of Resistance and Rebellion:

Sisters, brothers, hermanoas:

Compañeros, compañeras, compañeros:

We write to inform you that:

Given the serious and scientifically proven risk to human life presented by COVID-19 or “Coronavirus”;



Given the frivolous irresponsibility and lack of seriousness shown by the bad governments and the political class in its entirety who are using this serious humanitarian problem to attack each other instead of taking the necessary measures to confront a life-threatening virus which endangers all regardless of nationality, gender, race, language, religion, political affiliation, social class, or history;

Given the lack of accurate and timely information about the spread and severity of the virus and the lack of a coherent plan to confront it, and;

Given that our commitment as Zapatistas is to struggle for life;

We have decided the following:

First: We declare a red alert in all of our communities, towns, barrios, and Zapatista organizational bodies.

Second: To the Juntas de Buen Gobierno [Good Government Councils] and the Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities in Rebellion, we recommend the full and immediate closure of the Caracoles and Centers of Resistance and Rebellion.

Third: To the bases of support and the entire Zapatista organizational structure, we recommend adherence to the series of recommendations and special hygiene measures which will be distributed in all Zapatista communities, towns, and barrios.

Fourth: Given the total absence of the bad governments, we strongly urge everyone [todos, todas, todoas] in Mexico and around the world to follow the necessary scientifically-based sanitary measures that will allow us to survive this pandemic.

Fifth: We call on you to sustain the struggle against femicides and violence against women, to continue the struggle in defense of territory and Mother Earth, to maintain the struggle for the disappeared, murdered, and imprisoned, and to hold high the flag of the struggle for humanity.

Sixth: We call on all not to lose human contact, but rather to temporarily change our forms of relating as compañeras, compañeros, compañeroas, sisters, brothers, and hermanoas.

The word, the listening ear, and the heart have many ways—paths, calendars, and geographies—in and on which to meet. This struggle for life can be one of them.

That's all.

From the mountains of Southeastern Mexico,

For the Indigenous Revolutionary Clandestine Committee—General Command of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation,

Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés.

Mexico, March of 2020.



Online Course on the Zapatista Movement

Manchester Zapatista Collective is putting together a 'little course' on the Zapatista Movement. The Zapatista Movement came to the attention of the world when the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) rose up on 1st January 1994 in the very South of Mexico. For twelve years previously, indigenous communities had been organising in secret to build a better, self-determined life for themselves, where their dignity would be respected. Some of their ideas were traditional, some

came from grassroots organising of a branch of the Catholic Church that adhered to the theology of liberation, and some ideas came from an urban armed group, the FLN. This group eventually dissolved and turned into the EZLN, which is an almost entirely indigenous group, from 12 indigenous communities. In 1994, the Zapatistas took back land that had been stolen from them before. Since then, they have built autonomy on this land.

They have now built their own form of participatory self-government, healthcare, education, security and justice system. They also initiated international solidarity networks, not based on the idea of support, but based on the idea that everyone has to organise and to change their circumstances where they are, always as part of a shared project with everyone else who is part of these networks. The EZLN have not used their weapons since 1994, though others have used weapons against the communities.

The course looks at different aspects of this movement, both from the indigenous territories in Chiapas and elsewhere. It is structured in sections which are available online, on crabgrass, and each person can do each section in their own time. If you're interested in signing up please contact Manchester.Zapatista.Collective@riseup.net

Think Global – Act Local



For many involved in the environmental movement and direct action in particular, we are used to travelling across the country to the latest direct action hot spot or protest camp, even when these sites may be at the other end of the country. In fact, the Earth First! Winter Moot and Summer Gathering invite us to do exactly this twice a year. You can bet, though, that we all pass through numerous sites of ecological destruction when we do this. The current restrictions give us a perfect opportunity to reflect on this and experiment with doing things differently.

There are a number of reasons why we may choose to travel further afield. Maybe we feel a situation is of strategic importance and requires all hands on deck in a particular place at a particular time. Maybe we aren't aware of campaigns going on locally that we can get involved in. Perhaps we're looking for a protest site to live on, either because that appeals to us, or we currently have nowhere to live and such a site doesn't exist locally. Maybe our friends, who we already know and feel comfortable working with, have made a call out. We may prefer to work where organising is done on anarchist lines, a commitment to safer spaces is adopted or the space is vegan. We may feel more comfortable organising with people who are a similar age to use, dress similarly or belong to a similar subculture. We may want to very specifically be involved with direct action campaigning and not feel confident to launch such a campaign locally. The latter is a key driver behind the enthusiasm for a the Earth First! summer gathering to include a day of direct action – to build such confidence.

Some of these may seem like very valid reasons, or may be things we hold dear and don't want to let go of. Others may, on reflection, seem superficial, or lead to strategically less useful activity, or may quite simply be overridden by the desire to do *something* to keep on keeping on with our environmental activism in the current situation. Now does seem a very good opportunity for us all to question whether we are directing our resources in the best way and ask ourselves what we can do close to home to protect our local environment. This might mean organising in different ways – reaching out to local community green space protection campaigns or other local environmental groups for example, or having the confidence to go out and act alone, in pairs, or small groups to take some small scale direct, even if it's just graffiti-ing or even chalking. This can be as much about building your confidence initially, though it's wise to think clearly about what your message is and what you're trying to achieve. A very positive thing that could come out of this would be to build stronger links within our local communities and take ownership of protecting our environment at a local level, in the same way as many have taken ownership of looking after each other through the setting up of mutual aid groups. The importance of access to green spaces for all has come to the fore during this crisis - imagine if the groups formed in local communities could now also come together to protect our local green spaces.

ANGRY WORKERS

Fighting the machine from within - Organising amongst industrial food processing and Heathrow workers



The western fringes of London are integrated tightly into the global fossil-fuelled machine. Heathrow airport is the main employer. A lot of fruit and veg arrives in passenger machines. 60% of all the food consumed in London is processed or redistributed in our local area. Warehouses of all major supermarkets are located here. Tens of thousands of local low-waged and often migrant workers keep the machine running and are the first whose health and well-being is affected. Most people who work at Heathrow airport live close to it and its toxic air.

For the last six years we, AngryWorkers [1], have been organising in this area, amongst fellow low-waged workers in west London. We set up a solidarity network in order to support each other against the pressure from landlords, rip-off visa agents and small bosses, and organised workplace groups in warehouses and food factories. To circulate these experiences we published a local working class paper called WorkersWildWest. [2] Food processing itself is a back-breaking job. As van delivery drivers we are stuck in London traffic ten hours a day. In our discussions and in newspaper articles we denounced the usual blackmail of 'jobs vs. nature and health'. We said clearly that our jobs are tied into a destructive machine and that our daily struggle for better conditions at work has to grow and question the whole way we live.

Workers tend to hate their jobs. The question is: where does the social power lie to change the current way we produce our lives? For a worker - in particular a female migrant worker - the question of power is a daily question. Do I stand up to the team leader who tells me that I can't go to the toilet? Do I say that the line runs too fast? Do we fight back against bullying and harassment? *The confidence to question the way they force us to live has to be born out of these daily conflicts.*

We tried to connect the local struggles to their global dimension. We distributed news about strikes at Amazon warehouses in Poland and Germany to Amazon workers near Heathrow. As shop stewards we organised a wage campaign in our food factory and circulated news about migrant workers' wage struggles in greenhouses in Spain from where the factory received their vegetables. While many on the left were transfixed by the Labour leadership contest, we tried to build global connections and local counter-power. We wrote down our experiences of the last six years in a book 'Class Power on Zero-Hours'. In the book we describe the local area, the development of food production in capitalism, the conditions and struggles within the machine. We also write about what we think the potentials and challenges are for a global insurrection against the state and capital. You can read more about the book here: www.classpower.net

[1] www.angryworkersworld.wordpress.com

[2] www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com



Peeling back the cover on environmental threats in the North West

Not many outside of the North West will have heard much about Peel Holdings, a private company registered to the Isle of Man. Yet, this company is wreaking havoc on our local environment here on Merseyside and across the North West. Its activities are numerous, but here we highlight Save Rimrose Valley and Save Oglet Shore - local campaign groups resisting two of Peel's eco-plundering schemes.

Save Rimrose Valley

Rimrose Valley is the biggest country park in the city region. It is situated in North Liverpool, in a poorer part of an already poor city, and provides much-needed outdoor space and access to nature for people from all over Liverpool, and particularly to those living nearby. Yet, this public space, which has been so vital for people's well-being during the Covid-19 lock-down, is under threat. Why? Peel Ports, subsidiary of Peel Holdings which owns the Port of Liverpool, isn't satisfied with its current profit level and wants to expand the port's operations. In addition to increased pollution from shipping, this will lead to increased traffic on the roads - rail options haven't been fully considered. Congestion and air pollution are already huge problems near the port, as the port traffic has increased on the A5036, leading to log jams. HGVs in particular have added to the deterioration of the local environment, making life miserable for those living along this route. It seems that Peel Ports expects the UK Government and the general public to solve the problems it has created with a new taxpayer-funded road. Peel have a very cosy relationship with Highways England on its road plans, as revealed by recent Freedom of Information requests.* A consultation presented a fait accompli to local inhabitants offered two stark choices: expanding the A5036 or building a new road through the Rimrose. Despite it not being respondents' favoured choice, Highways England intends to extend the nearby motorway right through the country park. Obviously, this is completely unacceptable both in terms of the local impact on biodiversity and community access to nature, but also globally. Carbon emissions from shipping are huge and need to decrease, not be set on course to increase through these expansion plans. The venture is being met with resistance locally by the Save Rimrose Valley Campaign who have submitted objections and organised local protests. To find out more and get involved, go to www.saverimrosevalley.org or Save Rimrose Valley - Campaign News, on Facebook

*References:

<https://www.saverimrosevalley.org/post/press-release-documents-expose-peel-ports-influence-in->



Save Oglet Shore & Greenbelt

To the south of the city, Peel is up to similar tricks with attempts to expand Liverpool Airport - jointly owned by Peel and Ancala, with 10% retained by Liverpool City Council. Peel wants to encroach onto greenbelt land at Oglet Shore. Campaigners from the Save Oglet Shore & Greenbelt campaign argue that Oglet Shore is a vital Green Lung in an area that has lost large amounts of open space in recent years and where life expectancy is lower and the incidence of cardio vascular disease, cancer and breathing problems higher than in the rest of Liverpool. Since the lockdown, the Oglet has provided an invaluable open space for walkers, cyclists, runners, and families from all around Liverpool. Natural England classifies the Oglet as "some of the best and most versatile agricultural land". Local campaigners stress that the Oglet is adjacent to the internationally important wetland areas of the Mersey which has RAMSAR status, and that the fields, hedgerows, wooded cloughs and ponds that flank this neglected section of The Mersey Way are a vital and increasingly scarce habitat for bats, amphibians, insects, rare plants and birds. It is home to many RSPB Red List farmland birds such as grey partridge, snipe and lapwings, which have suffered a 50% decline over the last 25 years. Protected birds including barn owls and lapwing maintain a precarious foothold here, and the area provides an important roosting, foraging and nesting area for the wetland birds of the Mersey, crucially at high tide. It is a vital habitat for these species, and the threats to this habitat, together with the airport's dedicated bird scaring unit, are creating an incredibly hostile environment for wildlife.

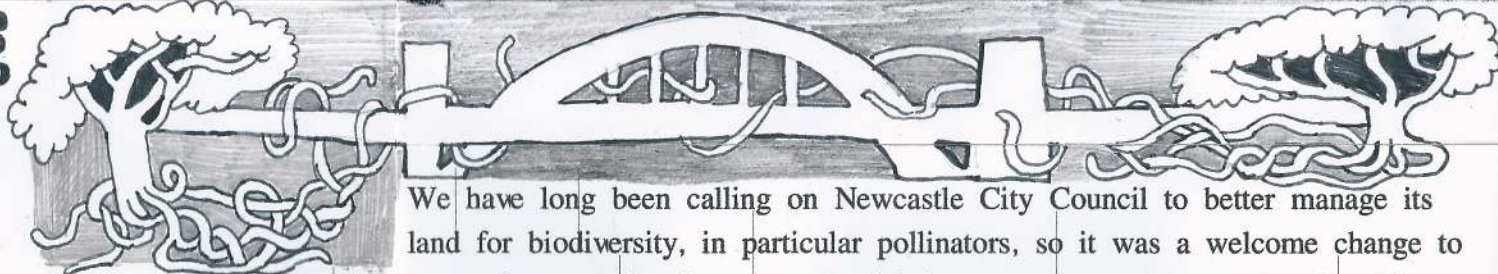
Again, expanding the airport when we need a reduction in emissions is absurd, not to mention that in light of the current pandemic passenger numbers are unlikely to see an increase any time soon. Local residents are resisting the airport expansion and fighting to protect this local green space. Please support their fight to stop Liverpool Airport expanding. Sign the petition and go on the Facebook page to find further ways to object: Save Oglet Shore & Greenbelt <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-oglet-shoreline-1>



We demand clean air for all

A recent report by The British Lung Foundation found that there are 1000 plus deaths directly attributable to toxic air pollution levels in the deprived areas of Liverpool. The city region declared a climate emergency in July 2019, with the Metro Mayor recognising the "value of the region's natural environment and open spaces and the multi-functional role they play in supporting wildlife habitats: increasing our resilience to climate change; improving people's health and well being; and making the city region an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest". This declaration sits uneasily alongside the planned expansion of both the seaport and the airport. The Heathrow 3rd runway expansion was turned down as it was incompatible with climate commitments, these plans are similarly incompatible and must also be stopped. Presently campaigners are attempting to do this via the legal route but they should rest assured that Earth Firsters will be ready to help support them with direct action if the time comes.

SAVE NEWCASTLE WILDLIFE



Save Newcastle Wildlife recently lost its legal battle against Newcastle City Council's decision to allow Persimmon Homes and Taylor Wimpey to build 1,200 houses adjacent to Havannah Nature Reserve, one of the most important wildlife habitats in the North East and home to Newcastle's last known breeding population of red squirrels.

The fight against the plans was ongoing for a number of years and was covered extensively in the local press. Our 'Don't Hem In Havannah' petition was signed by more than 12,000 people, many of whom gave generously to our Crowd Justice page to cover legal costs.

Despite the heightened awareness around the importance of green space and nature, and Newcastle City Council's commitment to tackling both the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis, the development is still going ahead. We have called on both housing developers to deliver wildlife-friendly measures in all new developments onsite. Whether they will take this advice on board remains to be seen.

The need for nature and access to green space has never been greater than during lockdown, which has given many of us time to slow down and appreciate the natural world. In recognition of this, we have launched a new campaign calling for more parks in Newcastle. More than 300 people have signed our 'Newcastle Needs More Parks' petition, asking Newcastle City Council to commit to delivering new parks across the city, particularly in areas where parks are not easily accessible. The Newcastle Chronicle has covered our campaign and you can read the full story here. We are hoping we can get 2,500 signatures, which will trigger a full Council debate on the matter and a serious commitment to addressing the shortfall in parks. Please add your name and share widely to make Newcastle a greener and healthier city, for people and wildlife.

We have long been calling on Newcastle City Council to better manage its land for biodiversity, in particular pollinators, so it was a welcome change to see spring growth allowed to flourish in grassed areas across the city this spring. It was disappointing, however, that this was merely a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic and that grass cutting resumed exactly at a time when many flowers were coming into bloom and supporting a range of pollinators.

We have now put together a 'Pollinators in Newcastle' survey to better understand people's views and opinions on long grass, mowing times and pollinators. So far, most people who have responded would like to see more long grass across the city, while many do not know that Newcastle City Council sprays the harmful herbicide, glyphosate, on public land across the city. We are now actively calling on the Council to produce a comprehensive pollinator strategy, which includes reducing mowing times and creating wildflower areas across the city to benefit bees and other pollinating insects in collaboration with community groups, local residents and Parish Councils. We are encouraging people to support our campaign by writing to their councillors and calling for action. We have included some points on our blog post, which can be viewed here:

<http://www.savenewcastlewildlife.co.uk/?p=750>



Resisting Airport Expansion at Southampton/Eastleigh

AXO was a rebirth of AXE (Against eXpansion at Eastleigh), a shortlived campaign in 2006-2007 against the expansion of Southampton (Eastleigh) Airport. It formed following a conversation with the leader of the Southampton City Council, who said he would go with what the people of Southampton wanted - which he assumed was approving airport expansion. The airport falls outside the Southampton boundary - it is in Eastleigh - but city council customarily makes representations in relation to matters concerning the airport.

We gave out large numbers of leaflets, ran stalls, and ultimately got over 1500 signatures for a petition against expansion. This ought to have meant that we got a full council discussion. However, the council avoided this with such excuses as "now is not the time". However, they did arrange a Scrutiny Panel to discuss it. So we encouraged people to email councillors. No councillor wanted to meet us, but it seems that the pressure of emails was enough. Southampton City Council formerly objected to the airport's planning application.

The relevant planning authority which will take the decision is Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC). EBC is majority Liberal Democrat, with two Conservatives and three independents. The independents have been responsive to our communications and are pushing for a full council decision. The leader of the EBC has indicated that he supports expansion, in contrast to the national Lib Dem position. Most of the other Lib Dem councillors have not responded to communication from us, probably because we are in Southampton. So we are looking for people who live in the area represented by EBC to email their councillors. This includes Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Horton Heath, Hamble and Hedge End.

Join our mailing list to hear if/when there's a meeting.

Email foesoton@gmail.com

<http://axosouthampton.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/aXoSOU>





(NORTH EAST ENGLAND)

Druridge Bay is a 7 mile-stretch of beautiful beach, from Amble in the North to Cresswell in the South. Near the village of Cresswell at a site called Highthorn, Durham-based Banks mining company wants to extract coal.

A timeline of events:

12th October 2015: Planning permission was first submitted with a proposed start date of 2017.

28th January 2016: Public meeting held, council appears very favourable to proposal, opponents jeered.

30th May 2016: Bill Oddie attends a family beach party and picnic in opposition to the proposal.

5th July 2016: Northumberland County Council gives go-ahead to proposal.

8th September 2016: Government steps in and orders a public enquiry after local residents put pressure on constituency MP Anne-Marie Trevelyan, who together with Caroline Lucas submit an Early Day Motion.

31st May 2017: Public Inquiry begins, local campaigners are joined by Friends of the Earth in opposition to Banks mining, inquiry runs for 3 weeks.

23rd March 2018: Secretary of State Sajid Javid overrules Northumberland County Council and refuses planning permission.

17th October 2018: Banks mining go to the high court to overturn the government's decision.

23rd November 2018: High Court rules in favour, but final decision to be made by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

20th May 2019: Decision is due, but nothing happens as Brexit is the governments' priority

5th April 2020: Decision expected, but the Coronavirus crisis is more pressing

STAY LOCAL

Campaign against Coal!

Some good news!

The two opencasts against which Earth First! took direct action during the 2019 summer gathering will close imminently!



Hargreaves, who own Field House opencast mine, the site of EF! 2019's mass trespass in Durham, have announced it is exiting coal mining. Consequently, Field House and House of Water opencast mines are closing by July 2020 - leaving Scotland coal mine free!

Banks Group's Shotton mine, where a FLINT (female, lesbian, intersex, non-binary and trans) action shut the site for the day, reached the end of its (extended) planning permission and is now being backfilled.

The coal industry is dying, but it ain't dead yet

There are only four power stations burning coal now, and these haven't supplied the UK grid with coal-powered electricity since 10th April 2020. This is the result of decades of campaigning against coal power, as coal used to supply 40% of the UK's electricity.

Yet there are still six UK opencast mines. Banks Group still want to start two new ones, and are applying to extend Bradley opencast in the Pont Valley. ***The government has made no move to stop new mines, it's up to us.***

There's a proposal for a new underground coking coal mine off the coast near Whitehaven which is soon to be decided by Cumbria County Council.

West Cumbria Mining want to export coal to steel works in Europe for fifty years!

An Australian company is looking to start an underground coking coal mine at Lochinvar, near Gretna on the Scottish/ English border. If it were to start it would cause a planned collapse of the ground above the site where the coal is extracted. This is because longwall mining methods would be employed, a sort of mining not currently used in the UK.

Steel is a big cause of carbon emissions; the steel plants at Scunthorpe and Port Talbot are among the biggest single point carbon emitters in the UK. Yet, the issue of steel is barely discussed by eco-activists.



Existing Opencast Mines

Banks Group

Bradley opencast, between Leadgate and Dipton, on the A692. This mine is due to close in August, but Banks Group want an extension (see above). Site of Pont Valley Protection Camp in 2018. Opposition run by Campaign to Protect Pont Valley.

Brenkley Lane, near Seaton Burn, NE13 6DA. Not due to close until 2021.

Celtic Energy

East Pit, Neath Port Talbot, SA18 1UP. A massive opencast mine causing landslides.

Nant Helen, Powys, SA10 9HN. Due to close after a Welsh Minister refused to renew a license application in June 2020. Without this license, the opencast can't continue.

Merthyr (South Wales)

Ffos-y-Fran, the UK's biggest opencast. CF48 4AH. An opencast with a long history of being shut down by actions. United Valleys Action Group and others stopped a new opencast, Nant Llesg from being started in 2018.

There is also a small opencast mine in Derbyshire.

How you can help fight coal in the UK and abroad

- Take action on the sites! They are big, you can stay physically distant and now masks are encouraged to be worn in public. This can include digger diving, lock-ons, graffiti, use your imagination.
- Stick up posters in trees, on signs, in windows or on bridges near proposed opencast sites to show they aren't wanted and increase local debate.
- Read up on the impacts of the global coal trade and its colonial destruction: Slow Death in Siberia <https://www.fern.org/news-resources/slow-death-in-siberia-100/> and London Mining Network www.londonminingnetwork.org
- Object to proposals for a new opencast by Banks Group at Dewley Hill. See how here: <http://defenddewleyhill.org.uk/>, but ignore the dates. Covid restrictions mean that this application is unlikely to be heard before lockdown lifts.
- Don't be fooled by government backslapping about how we've 'won against coal'! While there are mines and steel works using coal, there's more to do.
- Don't live near the sites or companies? Fight against the nuclear or biomass industry near you, or against HS2, to topple racist icons, support your own community... It's all linked. Sadly, wherever you live, there will also be an attack on the natural world and communities under threat.
- Keep up to date by checking out <https://www.coalaction.org.uk/> or search for Coal Action (UK) on social media as things are changing all the time and help is often needed.



Holding the Mining Industry to Account Pandemic Profiteering & Global Extractivism

If **anyone** thought that a global health crisis might shock the giants of international mining in to behaving with some decency and prioritising people's rights & safety over profit, then they would have been dead wrong. From what we here at London Mining Network have seen, the worldwide effects of COVID-19 have provided the major players in mining an opportunity to do what they do best – profiteer and avoid accountability.

For three major London-based mining companies (Rio Tinto, Anglo American & Antofagasta Minerals) the COVID lockdown came in to effect during Annual General Meeting (AGM) season. While AGMs are partly excuses for company



executives to show off the years profits to the shareholders, they also provide a useful platform for holding the company to account by having 'dissident shareholders' asking tough questions to the higher ups. On top of this, they provide a focal point for campaigners, who can take the opportunity to protest and draw attention to corporate abuse in sight of investors.

With social distancing currently a necessity, these mining companies had to call off their in person AGMs. Perfectly reasonable if they hadn't then used the opportunity to dodge any kind of accountability. Two of the three (Anglo American and Antofagasta) chose not to allow any real time questioning of their

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network**



executives, instead only responding to pre-submitted questions after the event. No chance of any embarrassing questions about their evictions of indigenous people, ongoing legal troubles or environmental devastation that way. While Rio Tinto did allow people to ask questions over the phone, their answers were mostly non-answers and six weeks later they still hadn't published written answers to written questions.

London Mining Network, as an alliance of human rights, development, environmental and solidarity groups, is led by the needs and voices of communities experiencing first hand the negative effects of mining operations. Usually during AGM season, we would host a speaking tour of folks from the front lines of the struggle for human, worker's and environmental rights in the face of extraction operations.

Bringing these voices to the forefront shows the real human stories of what happens when mining companies put profit before people and galvanises resistance to them. This year, it's not been possible to invite our friends to come speak, so we had to get inventive. We've run social media campaigns, created some video satire and grouped together with activists across the world

to put pressure on these London based mining companies. No matter what the situation, we won't let them walk away from the environmental destruction and human suffering they cause and we'll continue to stand in solidarity with those who resist them every day.

To find out more about LMN, see our twitter or Facebook. You could also consider becoming an affiliate member to get more involved – for more info. see londonminingnetwork.org

La lucha continua!

Notes from Wealden Hedgerows

Extreme Energy Extraction in Surrey, Sussex and the Isle of Wight.



In the South East, we celebrated the victory at PNR with the fullest hearts, whilst the industry trundled on down our leafy lanes. We cheered the nebulous Fracking moratorium, disappointed that it doesn't cover sites down here, nor West Newton, Wressle or Ellesmere Port.

From deep in early summer's heady hedgerow delights we peer at the oil sites, looking first at the UKOG site in **Horse Hill**. Planning permission is in place for five new wells at Horse Hill, including a wastewater reinjection well (known to cause earthquakes). This permission would make Horse Hill the second largest onshore oil site in the UK, and allows for 20 years of production.

Hard work has resulted in a couple of clauses being dropped from the injunction against protesters: targeting suppliers, loitering and gathering at the gates. Creativity welcome. We fondly remember the Earth First! crew who came to play two years ago. Do come again!



The battle for Horsehill - 2018

There's still a hedgerow camp; support, visits & donations always appreciated. Get in touch via fuckbook: HorseHillPG or backoffhh@gmail.com. A shout-out to the local groups who pulled off a successful occupation at the beginning of June!

UKOG also submitted a planning application for three years of exploration at the Surrey village of **Dunsfold**, in picturesque farmland, being decided on 29th June. They are also sniffing around to find land at **Leith Hill** in the Surrey Hills AONB. That went well last time! ;) Other UKOG sites include **Broadford Bridge, Sussex**, and **Arreton and Godshill, Isle of Wight**.

Angus Energy operate the three remaining southern sites. At **Brockham, Surrey**, they are applying for a waste injection well. These shambolic cowboys have let the cat out of the bag by publicly stating that it will need fracking to extract the oil! Oil dribbles out at their other site in Lidsey, Sussex, but production stopped during lockdown. Finally, there's the mighty **Balcombe, Sussex**. **Angus** have withdrawn an application for a three-year flow-test, but will reapply for a 6-month test. Huge thanks to local campaigners' relentless scrutiny & opposition since the iconic Summer of '13. Watch this space; we will never forget the invitingly large verges by that drill site!

ALSO ONGOING:

- Continuing to challenge the Horse Hill injunction
- Requesting a Judicial Review of Surrey CC approval of Horse Hill just months after they declared a climate emergency

For info on all updates of the sites and the local campaigns keep an eye on www.wealdactiongroup.org.uk

Like the good folk at PNR, we are here until this industry is gone and the meadows, farms and ancient woodland are restored. We've seen a glimpse of that restoration during lockdown, of nature sighing with relief, nature joyous, nature flourishing. It was a sight of such inspiring & enchanting beauty & potential that we will hang onto. This industry, already on its knees, has taken a huge hit during the pandemic, set for \$1 trillion in revenue losses this year. Help us finish it off.



COALESCE, CRYSTALLISE, EGRESS: PALMARITO TURTLE CAMP

The sky paints a different blazoned picture every dusk. No wonder mother turtles, heavy with soft-shelled pearls containing their young, return here to their imprinted birthplace, breaching shallow surf onto terrestrial realms, devoted to replenishing the waters.

Worldwide web with no weaver, nourished by her kin, vast and dynamic as oceanic gyres, extends to meet humankind.

These wise and sensitive ancient ocean dwellers whose ancestors survived the asteroid event are in grave danger.

15 years ago, Palmarito beach on Mexico's Oaxacan Pacific coast became a sea turtle cemetery. Through sustained effort by three veterinarians protecting mature turtles and eggs against bycatch and poaching, installing necessary infrastructure to shelter incubating nests, alongside community engagement on sustainable practice, Palmarito Turtle Camp was founded!

Palmarito has coalesced into a hub for ecologists, oceans apart, to connect. Today, the biologist responsible for the independent volunteer-run camp is Alison Raymundo. Alison invokes resistance alongside passionate colleagues; recommending to listen to new ideas, and execute them without fear.

Marcelino is one of the founders and arrives for night patrol even whilst working as a vet. The principal incentive of the project remains "the protection and conservation of marine turtles through investigation, environmental education and ecotourism". However, as the Covid-19 pandemic has stifled the flow of school pupils and visitors eager to save endangered sea turtles, Alison's team and support network must bridge the gap to maintain constant care, particularly for the Olive Ridley species who come ashore to lay their eggs in all seasons of the year.

The lifesource that all beings share - water - interconnects, sometimes tangles us, so mutual aid is vital to achieve healing. Previous to the pandemic outbreak, Palmarito Turtle Camp cooperated with four organisations, NGO & non-profit, and the Universidad del Mar (University of the Sea); all sharing the drive and wish for conservation of turtles and the environment. Due to these collaborations, the camp is supported with materials for Leatherback and Black Turtle tagging programs, tools to construct nest incubation zones, weatherproof uniforms, thermometers for nest temperature data collection, and maintenance for the quad bike that runs the 21km extension of beach during night time nest-laying.

The relationship with non-profit Tierra Verde A.C., Chiapas, connecting Palmarito as an additional training centre, allows the camp to register for a government youth sponsorship program, welcoming three young biologists to train in techniques for turtle conservation. Two app developers who are working towards registration and analysis of all fieldwork data are also part of the collaborative community. A lawyer observes elements of damage and impact on the beach and lagoons. Alison emphasises the importance of transparency and sharing information generated with the organisations, as the data equally pertains to them. Tangible results and reflections are imperative for quality and longevity of collaborations.

Online platforms (Workaway, Instagram) are used to unite helpers and projects. We must reach out to include all others to participate in a myriad of ways, such as the the Adopt-a-nest campaign published on Facebook. Those wanting to contribute but unable to visit due to the pandemic restrictions, can donate remotely and receive news when the hatchlings surface.

Whether it's time, creativity or economic resources offered, it all adds up, permitting as many as possible to cooperate, from whatever position they find themselves in. The project is built collaboratively by everyone who is involved. Nature tourism activities are an important source of support and interaction. Fortunately, through strong partnerships, Palmarito camp has an uninterrupted monitoring strategy without needing to spend on equipment or staff. Low resources, more allies!

(Written by Kirstie Foss, in conversation with Alison Raymundo - Campamento Tortuguero Palmarito, Oaxaca, <https://campamentopalmarito.com>)



Next to Nowhere

Liverpool's do-it-yourself social centre

Solidarity from Liverpool!



Next To Nowhere, Liverpool's DIY social centre, as with other social spaces, is closed for the time being. We will reopen as soon as we judge it safe to do so, and hope this will happen soon. **Food Not Bombs** continue operating out of the space, as there are still many hungry desperate people on the streets of the city centre, and their number is increasing as we are entering a massive economic crisis.

In these times we stand in solidarity with all workers who risk their health and lives every day providing essential services for us all, and with those whose employment situations don't allow them to stay at home and who are forced to take risks they might not choose to take. We oppose those who only want to get the economy running again, no matter what the cost in human lives. We stand with those whose age or health conditions give them every reason to feel afraid, and those whose mental health makes being stuck alone at home unbearable and to whom our café usually provides some refuge. We miss you, and we look forward to seeing you again! We recognise that the lives of many in our community have long been marked by social isolation and will continue to reach out to them. We value and cherish all lives equally.

We urge people not to give in to 'stranger danger' – this will only divide us, cause pain, lead to hasty and ill-considered decisions, and encourage xenophobia. We reject the rhetoric of the 'war on Coronavirus', just as we reject the war on women and the war on the poor. We will never think in terms of war on whatever and whoever those in power pick as the 'Other'. We choose love and the revolutionary notions of solidarity, care and support. We look at how this situation is affecting people all over the globe and stand in solidarity with our siblings near and far. We bear in mind that many people have no access to soap and water, a home to sit tight in, food, medical care, a hug or a smile.

We are aware that most so-called political leaders and corporate power-holders will take advantage of a public health emergency and use it to curtail criticism and distract us from the struggles that take place under global capitalism. But they will fail.

In these days our hearts are with those who have had a loved one ripped from their lives by racist police officers serving a systemically racist institution. We stand with those who have been choked, hurt, beaten, tasered, humiliated, tear gassed, pepper sprayed, arrested. We reach out to those protesting in the US, and we welcome those across the world who join their voices with theirs. From a city that has been deeply involved in the slave trade we express the deepest regret about these horrific attitudes and deeds, and the consequences.

From this city we kneel down in recognition of those whose dignity has been violated on account of their race. We kneel so that they may rise.

It has been much too much for much too long. Change is long overdue, and we will have it now.

We pledge to continue holding the actions of the State up to scrutiny and treat the sudden declared concern of the Tory government for our well-being with the contempt it so richly deserves. We can keep ourselves and each other safer than they can. The government has contributed to this crisis by dismantling health services, leaving them ill-prepared to cope with any emergency. They use health workers as cannon fodder whilst proclaiming them heroes. Why did the government not stock up on protective equipment when there was time to do so? Why were the working conditions in the NHS made to deteriorate, raising stress levels which damage the immune system? Why did they implement the policies that led to the deportation of the Windrush nurses, and why are they implementing policies that deter health workers from coming to this country? While they try to whitewash their disastrous legacy and their disastrous policies, their long record of failings shows how far their concern for our safety extends. We will not forget the government's lack of concern for so very many lives – the victims of Grenfell, those whose lives were shortened by austerity politics, those who die on the roads, victims of police brutality, to name just a few – and we hope that those who re-elected the Tories will come out of this experience with more compassion for others.

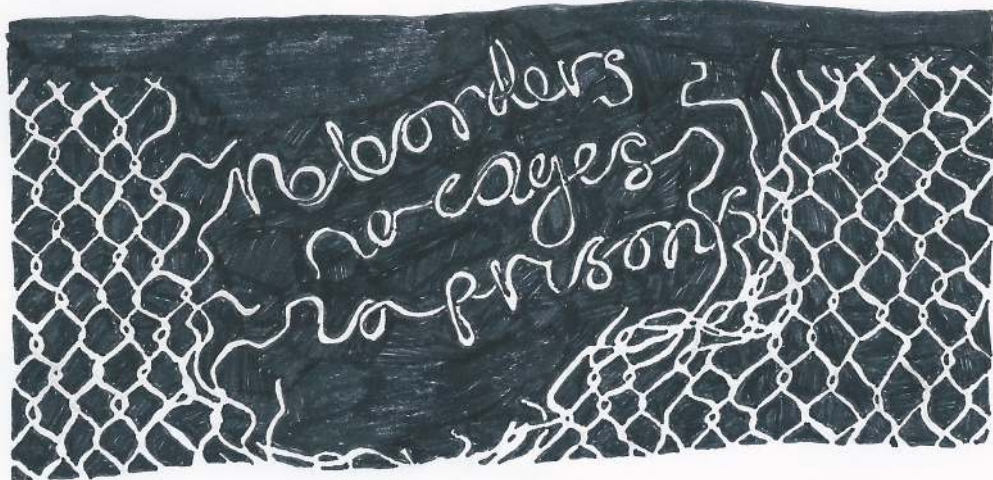
★ This Space is Based ★
Upon the Values of:
Co-operation
Resistance
Anti-Capitalism
Non-hierarchy
Solidarity
Liberation
Anti-oppression
Autonomy
Direct Action
★ Freedom ★

We will not let the State extend the extra powers they currently have beyond a brief period. We will defend our rights with all we have. We will keep our eyes and ears open, we will not switch off and we will not go numb as we are well aware of what the State is capable of doing when it thinks no-one is paying attention. We will not internalise repression, or allow ourselves to be intimidated when we critique the State's narrative and acts that they tell us are 'in our best interests'. Neither will we let our critique and our opposition be appropriated by those on the extreme right. We stand against racism, sexism and fascism in all its forms, and will not tolerate xenophobia, exclusion, jingoism or chauvinism. Those are expressed in the everyday hostility against fellow citizens, calls for racist exclusions and purges, and the public celebration of the traditional couple, heteronormativity, and the nuclear family at the expense of other forms of emotional attachment and relationality.

We remember the many millions of animals in captivity who will never see freedom again. We stand in solidarity with those who are kept in prisons and who are not transferred to safer places because of their political commitments and actions: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, political prisoners in Turkey, and many others. We call for their release. We encourage everyone to use this time wisely. Read, educate yourself, reflect, consider how best to make this world a better and more just place for all. Find the comrades and compañerxs you have not talked to in a while. Forge alliances. We will have to stand in the way of countless preventable deaths in the future, many of them due to the climate catastrophe. We won't return to normality, because normality was the problem.

Love to you all. We will return! Stronger and wiser than before <3

<http://www.liverpoolsocialcentre.org/>



GROWTH

I will learn to be a tree,
a sapling
with its roots hidden
in the shadows of the past

i will lay my clocks aside

and measure my growth in seasons

deepening in the darkness,

drinking tears

so that one day

one year,

far from now,

i may soak up the sun
and with a smile

spread my wizened old branches wide

to shelter those in need of shade.



Together · Unity · Solidarity ·

Calling All young
People, Children and
their Grown Ups!

We have put together
Action Packs for children +
Young people. To support
them to make a difference
and to educate them in
ecological issues and how
we can all take action.

Did you know?

• 108 Ancient
Woodlands are
in danger because
of H52's
• The first Pride
march was a
protest!

Packs Available
children > 6
young people 6-16
Adult support -
including your
small people
in making a
difference!

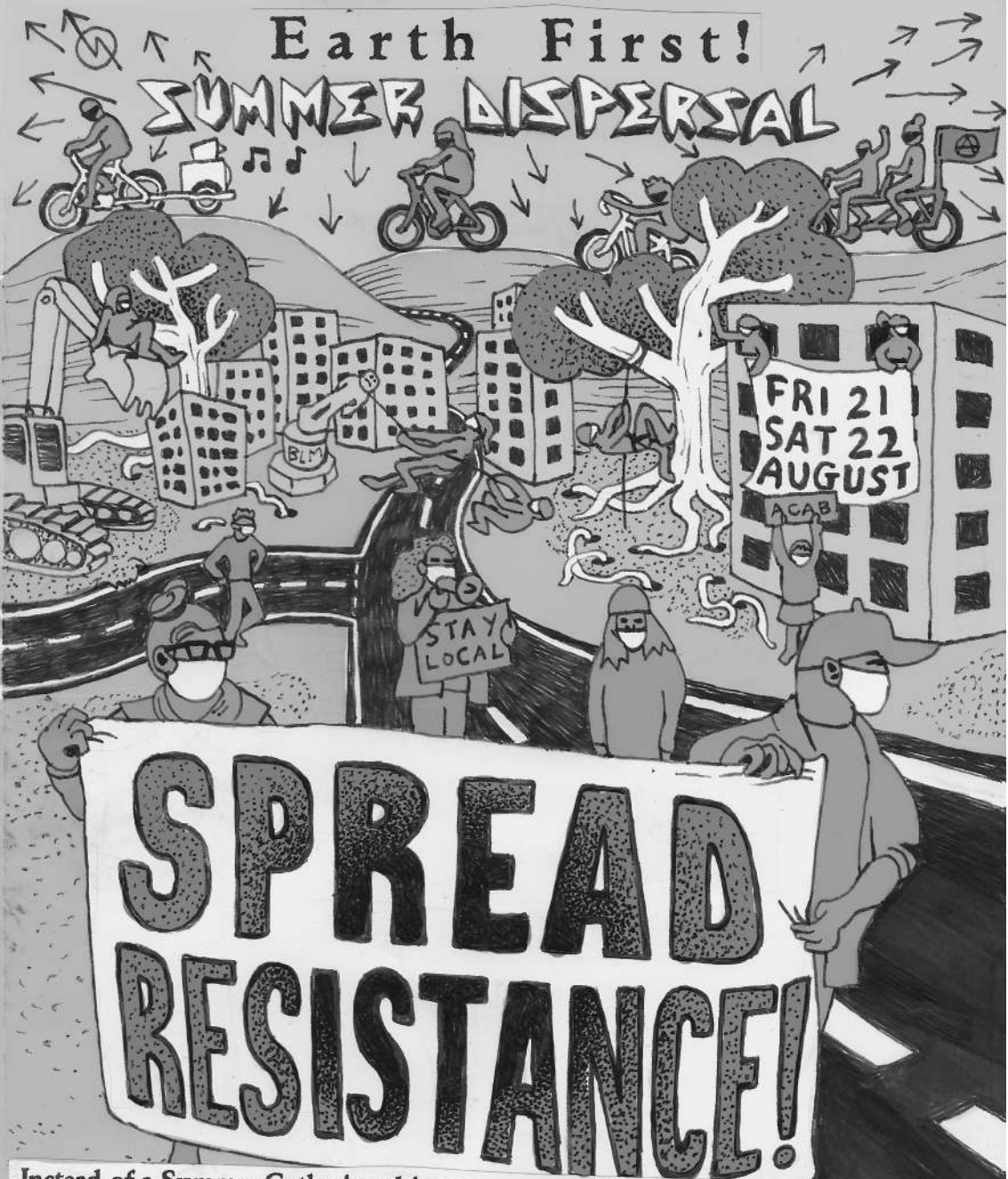
Why? Children are the future!
giving them knowledge and
tools is super important! LT = power!
How? Print at home or via snail
mail - 20 pages of activities,
challenges, ideas and information.

Action · find the H52
Route · look at
the habitat and homes
at risk · Tell others ·
make posters ·
SPREAD THE WORD!

Contact Riverrain@riseup.net
and don't forget to tell us
which pack you want.

Made by a mother of 4 with
input from her four wild ones
who have been on the frontline.

Education · Support · Information · Fun · Inclusive.



Instead of a Summer Gathering this year we are calling for a Summer Dispersal of
Decentralised Days of Resistance.

We are asking YOU to organise actions locally against the sites of destruction
which do harm to the planet and those who inhabit it.

Get angry, get active, stay safe, stay sane and smash the ecologically destructive
imperialist white supremacist capitalist hetero-patriarchy!

EARTH FIRST SUMMER DISPERSAL - SPREAD RESISTANCE!!!

Instead of a Summer Gathering this year we are calling for a Summer Dispersal of Decentralised Days of Resistance.

Concerns around the spread of the virus mean we feel it's safest not to organise a mass gathering this year but the need to actively resist capitalism and ecological destruction has never been greater. Covid-19, climate change, racial inequality, poverty: These are all symptoms of a broken system that sees the earth's resources as infinite, purely for human use and abuse, without a thought for the consequences, and which prioritises profit above all else and oppresses and divides people along racial, gender, class and other lines to maintain its power.

We are asking YOU to organise actions locally against the sites of destruction which do harm to the planet and those who inhabit it. What you do, where you do it and how you do it is up to you but we are keen for you to spread the Earth First spirit of non-hierarchical organisation, anti-capitalism and the use of direct action to confront, stop and reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and all its inhabitants.

The Earth First Summer Gathering hosts workshops from a range of groups about a variety of issues and it is our desire that the Summer Dispersal will reflect the increasing diversity of resistance that finds a home under the Earth First banner and the growing understanding that all oppression is connected: capitalism is a multi-headed hydra, all its ugly heads are part of the same beast - we need to join the dots and topple the whole rotten system to achieve liberation for us all.

We are calling for action against sites of fossil fuel extraction and burning, habitat destruction, animal exploitation, the legacy of colonialism, incarceration, the military-industrial complex and any other sites of environmental, human or animal harm; and those organisations that also have direct responsibility through financing them. [feel free to add to list!]

The days of action are Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd of August and you can do as much or as little as you like over these two days, and beyond!

We are also actively supporting the direct action camps campaigning against HS2, across Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire protecting ancient woodlands against the most destructive government infrastructure project since WW1.

<http://stophs2.org/tag/protection-camp>

An Earth First! Seed camp will be running on the route for skilshares and active resistance building starting 9th Sept to 15th.

Get angry, get active, stay safe, stay sane and smash the ecologically destructive imperialist white supremacist capitalist hetero-patriarchy!