

# Nuclear Waste Shipment Meets **Massive Resistance** in Germany

BY SKYLER SIMMONS

Protesters across Germany and France disrupted a nuclear waste shipment destined for the small German village of Gorleben for three consecutive days in early November. Embracing the principle of a diversity of tactics, the anti-nuclear activists employed everything from locking down to rails to knocking down radio towers.

The 175 tons of nuclear waste were being shipped by rail from a nuclear reprocessing plant in France to a concrete storage building in Germany from November 10 to 12. For several years now, such shipments have met intense resistance from farmers, students, environmentalists and anarchists.

This year, the Castor train, as it is called, was blocked before even

school and took to the streets to protest the nuclear waste traveling through their town. At the end of the demonstration, the youths attempted to force their way through the gates of the barracks that police had retreated into. In towns further along the route, farmers drove their tractors onto the tracks to block the train, while others held sit-ins and erected burning barricades. Activists with the group Robin Wood strung a traverse line high above the tracks and hung from it with banners, effectively blocking the train's route.

The German government responded to the protests by deploying 20,000 police officers along the train's route, many of them to guard the final 12 miles, where the nuclear waste is unloaded and transported by truck to the dump site. In response, many of the protesters put their energy into tying up police by blocking access roads, playing cat and mouse,

and creating diversions in order to allow others to gain access to the tracks.

Scuffles broke out in several towns, with police using pepper spray and batons and

protesters damaging patrol cars and throwing rocks. In one spot, unknown saboteurs cut down a radio tower used by police for communications.

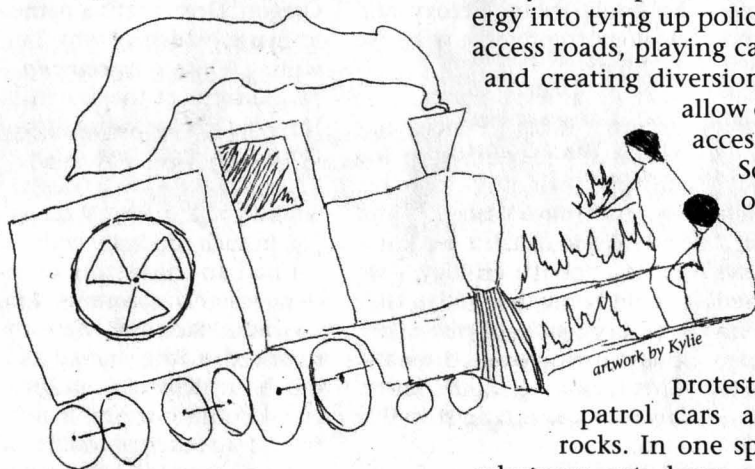
Resistance to the nuke transports was most intense along the final road route. In Metzingen, police attempted to raid one of the largest protest camps but were repelled by a determined counter attack of camp residents. From there, protesters blocked the main route of

the waste transport trucks. When police began to divert traffic, others joined in and shut down the alternate routes with enormous burning barricades made from hay bales provided by local farmers.

Local residents—worried that their town will become a permanent nuke dump—were prepared, mobilizing 5,000 people. Two hundred farmers on tractors clogged the streets of Gorleben, four large concrete pyramid lockdowns were deployed along the shipping route, and hundreds of others engaged in mass sit-ins. Elsewhere in the town, scuffles broke out between cops and protesters and flaming barricades blocked the entrance to the nuclear waste dump. After hours of clearing protesters, often times violently, the police were able to punch a hole through the barricades and deliver the nuclear waste to its temporary holding facility outside of Gorleben.

While the protesters did not stop the transport, they did manage to severely delay its arrival. Many activists, recognizing that they cannot directly overcome the full power of the state, have instead taken the approach of making the nuke transports as costly as possible. Considering that police operations alone cost approximately \$65 million, they did a pretty fair job. And this figure doesn't even take into account the numerous acts of sabotage carried out!

This year's anti-nuke action is being viewed as a warm-up for the 2007 Group of Eight meetings being held in Germany, next Summer. Activists have been doing intensive organizing and hope to put their experiences and battle-tested tactics to use in disrupting the meetings of the world's most powerful leaders.



reaching the German border by residents of the French town of Serquex. From there, it was nothing but trouble for the Castor train and German police as activists set up numerous blockades along the route.

One of the first spots of German resistance was the town of Luchow, where 600 students walked out of