

Lappersfort Woodmovement visits Flanders new ministers

Bruges-Brussels. Last monday 14 september 2009 a delegation of woodowner GDF SUEZ Fabricom, Lappersfortwoodoccupiers and the Green Belt Movement visited the new Flemish ministers responsible for environment & space ordering Joke Schauvliege and Philippe Muyters. They talked about woodsaving after they had reached a 'friendly woodcompromis' that Lappersfortwood is safe until the week of the wood (www.weekvanhetbos.be) midst october.

The ministers appreciated the work of the Bruges woodmovement and said that Flanders will do something about his 40.000 hectares illegal woods. That's written in the Flemish government new agreement thanks to the Bruges woodmovement of direct action and silent poetic diplomacy.

Unfortunately the ministers could not help endangered Lappersfort (still 3,5 ha of the European most wanted wood is illegal). This is not a wood. This is industryterrain. This is surrealism in the land of Magritte.

As next Friday in Flanders the peaceweek (www.vredesweek.be) starts the woodmovement will do a last call to the Flemish government and the industrial world. The peacemovement Pax Christi Flanders and the Post Kyoto Pigeon (*) will visit endangered Lappersfortwood for a poetrywalk and a sleep in a treehut. The last call for a Lappersfort Peacewood sounds like this : **'make a saving woodtrust for illegal forests'**. The government can in a pps (public - private coöperation) work together with the (illegal) woodowners. In the interest of our common futur they must accept that their ground is public space for the oxygen and the children. The government can compensate them with maintenance and a sustainable label : **'this is a sustainable company that loves the futur of our childrens woods...'**

The fellowship of the wood in Bruges is at the end of its long 8 years journey into hope (woodoccupation started before nine eleven). Will it be smashed by a lack of fantasy ? Or will the lord of the trees and god of the woods open a window where others closed a door ? The sound of the woods is whispering through Flanders fields. Herne protect us, as robin of Sherwood should say....As in Tolkiens 'the lord of the rings' Gandalf says to Frodo 'there was never much hope' but keeps believing in individual responsibility of brave people... also in Bruges the little flame of hope is kept alive. In Bruges live believers that at the end one never knows...if the mazes of the wood will still inspire the Christian Democrats to look into the face of the Lappersfortwood and say at last : **yes, we can !**

www.ggf.be www.lappersfort.tk www.vbv.be/netwerk

(*) Dear Forrestoccupiers, dear Lapperforters, dear people of the Green Belt Front (GGF) ,

You might know the story of Ovid in which the goddess Latona with her newly born twins in her arms asked some farmers for water. But the Lycian peasants refused to give her the water of the little lake in the valey. This infuriated the goddess. So she bewitched them and transformed them into frogs that would forever quack in the mud of the pond.

The goddess Latona knew that the water belongs to everybody and certainly to her thirsty kids. While she casts her magic on the farmers, she shouted at them: "Do I have to ask your permission to breathe the air? Or to walk in the sun? Is all of that your personal belonging?"

Nobody owns the air, nobody owns the sun, nobody owns the water in the world. And yet, some people take hold of it as if it is theirs. It does not only bring lots of tension and unrest, in certain cases it even leads to war.

Forrest is a right as well. The green of the trees produces the purity of everybody's air. The shadow gives coolness to all and everything which grows between its roots gives rise to the diversity of life which we should all respect. Forests therefore also can not be owned by anybody for any reason.

Like a famous Indian proverb says: "Only when the last tree has been cut down, will we realise that money cannot be eaten."

If we do not show respect for water, air, life and forest, then we will become fat frogs on the inside and we will eventually only quack in the mode of an exhausted, depleted and ruined world.

It is important that we deal appropriately with our natural resources. Sometimes we need to make choices, but those choices should not be only determined by economic goals. When the nature that surrounds gets threatened, our society is also threatened to a certain degree. Climate change is an obvious and mondial example thereof.

When the destruction of nature by some parties takes on too large a scale, and threatens the life quality of others, then economic rights lose their strength. Life is everybody's human right and this moral right still stands high above the juridical property-right. He who owns the ground, does not own the life of those who live on that ground. So those who happen to own the ground, cannot pollute the water just like that. He who owns the ground cannot pollute the air just like that. He who owns the ground cannot cut down the trees just like that.

In the peace movements we know that conflict arises out of different interests, but we also know that there is always a way to end a conflict in a peaceful manner by respecting everybody's interest and by looking for a solution which we can all support.

Different interests can find agreement. Peace is always an option. It is imperative that we keep on believing that.

But what we also have to keep believing is that fundamental rights of every human should not be violated.

You, the Lappersforters, the new forest occupiers and the people of the GGF, have always believed in these two principles and it makes you into a beautiful example of active non-violence. Because of that, your struggle was fought in the spirit of great people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Their non-violent struggle was a struggle for the social rights of man, your non-violent struggle is a struggle for the ecological rights of man.

To give the forests over to the coincidental choices and desires of a few people is as absurd as denying an Indian the access to the salt of his own seawater or denying a coloured person access to public transport. Natural resources belong to us all, their division and usage should therefore be just and equitable.

In a time where the Amazon forest is massively burned down to turn it into soy-fields, we do not only destroy our surroundings and the health and sustenance of the local communities in the forest, but we also destroy the 'green lungs' of our planet, and ruin the air of every child, wherever it is born in the world.

A struggle for the preservation of forest is therefore a struggle for the sustainability of our planet. Whether we deal with huge forests somewhere else or our own local woods, that does not matter, for life is connected with it and therefore we should deal with them wisely.

Let therefore no-one deny how important it was that you took on this non-violent struggle. Even if it went with ups and downs, an agreement with the forest-owner was reached. The agreement tries to balance all rights: the social, the economic as well as the ecological. It is a beautiful event that can serve an example not only to our political leaders, but to every citizen. So even if some thunderclouds might threaten the lappersfortbos a bit, I hope you will see the change you have already made, and I'm confident you will be able to maintain the same non-violent spirit to see it all through.

With this letter I thus take the opportunity to offer you a very sincere congratulations. This congratulating I do not do because of the result alone, but even more so because you have become 'forest' yourselves. You grew deep roots in the collective realisation that the purity of our natural surroundings is everybody's right. You had a solid trunk that did not bow to the whims and caprices of the world, but that held the truth straight. You had a full leafage that held justice up high. And you gave your surroundings the pure air of peace and non-violence. It is this pure air which is so much needed today.

With my sincerest regards,

The Post Kyoto Pigeon,
- Flemish Peace Week 2009
www.vredesweek.be

This song of Luka Bloom always inspired the Bruges woodmovement www.ggf.be

Rainbow Warrior

Luka Bloom

Warriors of the rainbow
Are answering the call
They go to where the dust will rise again
Dust will rise again and fall

Leave Polynesia alone
Polynesia, leave her alone
Leave Polynesia alone

Mon ami Francais
Ecout s'il vous plait
J'apprend a parlez Francais pour dire
Votre bomb non merci
Votre poison non merci
Ecout s'il vous plait

Warriors of the rainbow
Are answering the call
They go to where the dust will rise again
Dust will rise again and fall

Polynesia, leave her alone

Fernando Perreira gave his life to the sea
His spirit is calling out to you
To you and to me

Polynesia, leave her alone ...

Lappersfort Poem

Green
deep green
as if Lorca saw and named you
as if all of the green of the world came to here
in shades and tints that call aloud
the beauty of this place

Briwn
deep brown
as if Ritos sough to bless this place
that showed the deeper hues of the world -
hues I walked amidst and knew
this was the origin of the world

Lappersfort
more than your beauty invades my mind
as i sit at dawn in the cool of the world
to make my unfashionable prayer
that you be preserved and be strong

Strong as you are to the seeking mind
strong as you are to the loving heart
strong as you are in a too busy world
which does not pause to greet you

Martin Burke, Lappersfort Poets Society
<http://www.regiobrugge.be/lappersfortpoets.php>