

ECOLOGICAL SELF-DEFENSE



Save Majs Hill –
No To Uranium In Nianfors

Agneta Enström Mineralbolaget i Stockholm AB (The Mineral Company in Stockholm) is the name of the company wanting to drill in the rock of the Majs hill, but that has met with surprisingly strong resistance from a countryside in revolt. In Nianfors, the local population has given up resultless symbolical actions for a real resistance, for the simple reason that protection of the bedrock equals self defence ecological self defence.

No-one in Nianfors wants to have anything to do with the test drillings, and even less with having a uranium mine as a future neighbor. This has made the villagers organize themselves with inspiring decisiveness.

We are going to do all that's in our power in order to stop the [assault], says their own press responsible Inge Sylvén. One can see how other communities have been affected by drilling and mining of uranium, and against this background we obviously choose life.

On a summer night's forest walk in 1800, the iron factory patron met a small, dirty woman, and spat after her. After that, his factory went downhill. This is the legend of the curse of Finnmajsa, in Nianfors, a small village southwest of Hudiksvall in the naturally rich Hälsingland. Today the threat of the patrons is again present, but this time, it's uranium they are after, disrespectfully trying to bulldoze over the whole local population.



road blockade
in Nianfors

Ecocide with state support

The inhabitants of Nianfors have reasons for their suspicions. The test drillings conducted by Sveriges Geologiska Undersökningar (Sweden's Geological Surveys) in the 1970-ies, and where multinational corporations continue drilling today, have affected the population gravely. Three Saami villages got deformed reindeer calfs in the years after the drillings, and SGU warned against drinking the water or picking berries in the area. Local medicians also noticed an increase in cancer cases in the region, and according to the surveys of the regional government the radon levels remarkably increased.

The environmental specialist and activist Louise Ågren, who comes from Enånger, one of the neighboring villa-

ges, says that uranium contamination in nature causes problems and health hazards that persist for long time and can aggravate practically infinitely. But despite consequences and risks being known and cold fact, the national mining authority, Bergstaten, has passed over two hundred permits for uranium prospecting in the last two years, and in several places drilling has already been commenced.

It's incomprehensible that the state sanctions and actively participates in a deadly activity such as the uranium industry, says Louise Ågren.

Because of uranium mining causing large-scale, dangerous and serious problems, it has usually happened in regions where people have small opportunities of protesting and defending themselves, such as sparsely populated or indigenous regions. Besides radionuclides, emissions of heavy metals, acid, and other forms of groundwater contamination are big problems. Louise Ågren emphasizes that mining and enriching of uranium also always carries the risk of proliferation, i.e. spreading, of nuclear weapons.

And the test drilling is in itself always the first step in a chain that leads to these potential disaster scenarios, she says. It must never be forgotten that uranium is exclusively used for nuclear power or nuclear weapons.

In Stockholms Fria Tidning (Stockholm's Free Paper), Thomas Toivonen writes that the most remarkable and paradox argument for test drillings, that is used by authorities and drilling companies, is that they do not lead to any mining. But the fact is that the govern-



Majs Hill, the place where the test drillings are planned, is only 600m from the bathing area of Nianfors.