

CATERRORPILLAR

Burying Human Rights

Protests by Munich activists against the company Caterpillar
The company Caterpillar not only produces gigantic driving machinery for moving soil in road construction, the compression of landfill-sites and for digging foundations in the building industry their logo can be found on cool shoes, clothes and bags in post-proletarian look. Besides Caterpillar exports the specially adapted bulldozers D9 and D10 to Israel, armoured monsters which already destroyed 12000 Palestinian buildings, thus rendering tens of thousands homeless. On occasion people do not make it out of their houses in time, consequently being buried under the rubble by those monstrous machines.

Something similar happened to Rachel Corrie, American peace activist from the International Solidarity Movement, who got run over in full view of the driver by a „cater killer“ as she tried to prevent the demolition of a house in Rajah by her sheer presence at the site. On account of the anniversary of her death and the AGM of Caterpillar Inc. in Chicago, the international campaign against Caterpillar has stepped up their efforts. They demand that in accordance with their own company doctrine and the „UN Resolution on the responsibilities of trans-national companies for the protection of human rights“, Caterpillar cease to supply machinery which can be used as weapons and is directly involved in the violation of human rights and abuses of international law in the occupied Palestinian Territory.

Of course the Munich Trade Fair for Waste Recycling is not an arms exhibition and the neat Caterpillars exhibited by Cat-representative Zeppelin are a far cry from the devastating machinery used to demolish houses on the West Bank and in Gaza and, as part of the „fight against terror“, to destroy olive groves, sewage plants and roads. The D9 and D10 bulldozers are not manufactured in Germany, a fact a Zeppelin representative hastens to stress when confronted by three activists distributing flyers and posters with the message „Caterpillar is Destroying Palestine“.

A different representative of the company even agrees that „putting the finger in the wound“ might be a good thing.

The public reaction is mostly one of reluctance and embarrassment, maybe people were confused by the confrontation of the neat, rational environment of the exhibition with political and emotional arguments. Only two Spanish ladies showed real interest, saw the connections between Cat and Palestine and appreciated our actions. Our flyers were soon picked up and amazingly it took Cat/Zepplin quite a while to eventually alert the management of the fair. A slightly irate gentleman accompanied by security staff declared that „THIS“ went against their security regulations and that cameras were not allowed anyway. The results were blanking of our video tape, taking of our personal data by police and a barring order. The managements of the fair and of Cat/Zepplin will consider legal action.

Infos to the campaign:

www.catdestroyshomes.org

www.icahd.org

www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

Sophia Deeg, 26.4.2005