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Historically Massive Anti-Motorway Protest.

According to the calculations made by the Local Police in Eivissa & the Ultima Hora Newspaper, 22.500 residents took to the streets of Eivissa Town last Friday at 20h to protest against the motorway constructions on the island. These motorway projects are being carried out by the PP Conservative Balearic Government, supported by the PP Conservative Consell Island Government but the protestors claim they are out of proportion with the island causing a negative environmental impact as well as destroying the image of the island & the quality of life of the residents.

This time the protest was led by 4 youngsters dressed as "cats", in reference to the first anti-motorway lobby protest last summer when 14.000 persons took part. However, at the time, a spokesman for the PP Conservative Consell apparently said that there were only "cuatro gatos" (4 cats) at the demonstration so this time the anti-motorway lobby put 4 cats at the front of the massively attended march to take the "mickey" of what they see as deliberate misinformation by the Consell.

Our reporters amongst the marchers can personally testify that there appeared to be thousands more on this protest march than on any other rally they had reported on in Ibiza & seemingly the Local police got their figures right by saying that there were 22.500 taking part on the march who appeared to The Ibiza Sun to be normal residents from all walks of life & political persuasion. Even so, once again the day after the protest the Consell Island Government claimed they had unofficial police figures which seemingly suggested the low figure of 6.000 residents taking part in last Friday's protest! According to the actual anti-motorway lobby they had monitored video footage of the march & calculated the figure as being more likely around 25.000.

Putting to one side the seeming futility of the numbers debate about how many protestors took part in the protest, our reporters took nearly 2 hours to walk the 1.5 kilometres of the route taken by the anti-motorway march. The protest was peaceful throughout its duration except for some youngsters who, before the march started seemingly caused problems on the fringes of the protest as it was waiting to move off by throwing a bottle of sulfuman cleaning agent into the public waiting in the Parque de Paz. This led to three persons needing hospital first aid treatment for injuries caused by being splashed by the cleaning substance when it apparently hit the ground & the bottle burst open.

During the march there were supposedly a few eggs thrown at buildings with strong PP Conservative connections such as the Consell Island Government building whilst at the offices of an influential family on the island, who support the PP Conservatives, the shouts, whistles & cat calls increased to a deafening volume. Throughout the protest there were lots of chants, some quite abusive & personal, against lots of the PP conservative Politicians on the island & their some of their powerful & influential supporters who many of the anti-motorway lobby seemingly suspect will in some way benefit from the building of the motorways. Our reporting team were "flabbergasted" by how much Ibicenco was spoken between the residents taking part on the march. It has to be remembered that 22.500 protestors of all ages, nationalities & political colours represents over 20% of the island's population. This is an incredible turn out on a cold night in the middle of winter especially as it is not supposedly part of the Ibicencan culture to protest in this fashion but it appeared that thousands of well known local Ibicencan faces were surprisingly there standing up & being counted. The speeches at the end of the protest reminded everyone that the fight against the motorways must go on & that everyone against the motorway projects need to defend the properties, which the anti-motorway lobby claim are being compulsory purchased, incorrectly. Lots of the speakers apparently claimed that the motorways never appeared in the PP Conservative election manifesto at the last elections whilst other supposed that all the roads on the island could be improved & the accident black spots made safe at a fraction of the cost of these 3 motorways. Others said that a tiny percentage of the investment in motorways could solve all the educational & health service needs on the islands & many pointed out that in their opinion motorways, along with all the other construction, which is going on all over Ibiza, will drive away the quality tourism the island needs.

Attending the protest, Francesc Antich, the President of the PSOE Socialists throughout the Balears, suggested that the Madrid PSOE Socialist National Government are prepared to sign a new road building agreement with the PP Conservative Balearic Government as long as they

propose projects which are accepted by all of the society & which are sustainable & in keeping with the islands. With this offer on the table, Antich said that it was a good time to stop the present motorway projects, which Madrid are supposedly not prepared to help finance, & reconsider the road plans & financing for Ibiza.

For their part, the PP Conservative Balearic Government & Consell Island Government the next day made several statements relating to the protest march. Apart from highlighting the abusive chants against their leaders & other prominent supporters as well as the cleaning agent incident & appearing to play down the level of attendance, the Consell supposedly maintained that there would be no changes in the motorway plans & there would be no changes in either government or their policies. They appear to believe that the population will accept the motorways as a good thing when they are finished & appreciate, once the motorways are finished, how the PP Conservatives have improved the population's quality of life. The Consell spokesman seemingly accused the protestors of having been manipulated by the left wing parties on the island who had failed to win votes at the last elections & were using public protests as a form of opposition to make up for their lack of political power. Jaime Matas, President of the Balearic Government supposedly said that the motorways were respectful of the environment, would improve road safety as building motorways in Palma had done & by building the motorways on Ibiza his Government was at last addressing the long standing issue of a lack of investment in roads & other infrastructures on the island

Anti-Motorway Protests.

The anti-motorway lobby continued early last week to stop more land being cleared in preparation for the motorways between the airport & Eivissa & Sant Antoni & Eivissa to be built. 20 or so protestors held up work on a farm called Can Pere den Xicu near Sant Rafael whilst the owner of the land, Catalina Cardona, publicly claimed that the authorities had seemingly forged her signature on the compulsory purchase documents. Catalina claimed she had never been presented with any such documents & the signature on the ones she saw when the machines turned up was definitely not hers! She said that she would be reporting the matter to the relevant authorities. The Police didn't intervene but did take the names of those stopping the machines working. After a few hours the machines left the area.

In Sant Jordi the police helped the machines restart work on an area of land owned by Motonautica after the Balearic Courts had supposedly said, once again, that there were faults in the compulsory purchase system but that these were not reason enough for them to stop the road building until these faults were rectified or a normal court heard the case. The anti-motorway lobby were appalled by the court's decision as it seems to them that the court had not studied the case in depth & had sent back a verdict, compiled from the resolutions made in 2 other cases they had heard so far over the compulsory purchase of the land needed to build the motorway, which, according to the anti-motorway lobby, didn't fit with the details of each new case. They were now hoping to appeal under the normal judicial system & would continue to submit cases to the Supreme Court, supposedly to try & get them to consider each one individually on its own merits.

After being asked to act by the Balearic Government, the police cut off the land owned by Motonautica very early in the morning with a cordon of 50 officers, most in riot gear, whilst the machines worked & the anti-motorway lobby protestors looked on from across the road on the land known as Can Palleva, where 4 houses are under threat to be knocked down in the next few days. One arrest was made as young women stopped traffic to put black funeral laces on passing cars & refused to stop when asked to by the police. Also there was, allegedly, a confrontation between an archaeological expert & the director of the motorway project when the machines turned up remains, which the expert wanted to stop the work & check for their historic & cultural value.

It appears that the Supreme Court has also ruled against holding up the motorway plan whilst appeals are heard over the compulsory purchase system of 3 of these 4 houses on the Can Palleva site & surrounding land. The other is owned by an aunty of the family who has supposedly agreed to the compensation for the loss of her property. Whilst the Balearic government asked for police action to move the anti-motorway lobby protestors off the Can Palleva site as well, it was agreed to wait until after last weekend's protest march against the motorways. This appeared to be an attempt to not enflame the passions of the anti-motorway lobby even more, just before the march, as they had allegedly threatened to stop the machines working on the Can Palleva site no matter what the court verdict was! Sr Bar, the Political Head

of the Guardia Civil who have to carry out these difficult orders, supposedly also reminded the Balearic Government that his men could not evict people from their homes unless they had a court order saying they were to do so.

Early on Monday morning over 200 protestors waited for the earth moving machines to appear at the Can Palleva site with a many having been there since 04.30h in the morning & 15 or so protestors staying on guard over night on the site! When the machines did arrive with an escort of 15 police officers the protestors apparently easily stopped them from entering the land by blocking on mass the entrance with their bodies. Later the machines withdrew & there were supposedly no further attempts during last Monday to enter the Can Palleva site by the motorway constructors.

Also on Monday other machines did try to enter another site near Can Palleva but were also repelled by anti-motorway protestors. It was reported that during this incident there were confrontations with the police & arrests made before the machines finally gave up trying to work & left the site. Radio reports suggested that Sr Bar, the Political Head of the Guardia Civil, had supposedly decided that his men would cause a more socially alarming & dangerous situation than they would solve if they acted upon the request of the PP Conservative Balearic Government to clear the anti-motorway demonstrators out of the way on these sites. Early Tuesday morning the situation apparently changed drastically as the around 80 Guardia Civil cut the traffic along the Eivissa to Airport road seemingly so that no one could reach a farm called Can Malalt. Reportedly the motorway constructors machines moved in & started work under police protection whilst the anti-motorway protestors tried to reach the site & stop them. There were 2 arrests but it appears that, despite the pressure of the 150 protestors, this time the machines could not be stopped from working. The news made some sections of the national media & was reported for most of the morning.

Ironically this strong police action comes just as the PP Conservative Balearic Government supposedly said that the motorway projects could be changed completely if the PP Conservative Consell Island Government asked for these changes. As however, the Consell Island Government apparently kept saying that the motorways were needed & should go ahead as they had been planned, then the Balearic Government was seemingly going to carry on building the motorways as planned.

Earth Mounds Are Not To Raise The Motorway level.

In Sant Jordi, the Balearic Government refuted claims that the earth being built up near the hippodrome was to be used to raise the level of the motorway near the village, rather than lower it to reduce the visual impact & noise, as well as supposedly facilitate accesses, as the original plans had suggested. Though admitting that there were technical difficulties in lowering the motorway & that the constructor had suggested raising it as an alternative solution which was also hypothetically as a way of possibly saving 1 million€ in construction costs, the Balearic Government were sticking to the original concept & looking for technical solutions to the problems as they arose. As far as the earth mounds were concerned, this was seemingly a temporary storage point until they found some one to sell the earth to for a good price! The Consell Island Government also announced that they were going to pass the bill for the hours & equipment used by the fire service to try & clean up the Sant Jordi road 10 days ago, after the lorries, transporting earth from the outer ring road motorway to the hippodrome area, had made such a mess. The bill will be for just under 1800€!

Pere Casetas Says Motorway Plan Was Changed.

The first ever land owner to take action in the courts against the motorway plans, Pere Casetas of Sant Jordi claims that he has proof that the Balearic Government has not told the whole truth & has changed the motorway plans from the original design he was shown. Pere claims that under the original plan he lost his entire house plus 3000m² of land. However, when the project was started, according to Pere, changes had been made & these saved his house but took the motorway virtually by his front door, meaning he, supposedly, had no room to even park a car. Pere also lost 4000m² of land under the new route taken by the motorway instead of 3.000m² under the original plans. He alleges that his neighbours who are influential supporters of the PP Conservatives & the motorway plans are not going to lose at least 1.000m² of land that under the original plans for the motorway they were destined to have compulsorily purchased by the Balearic Government. Pere is still supposedly taking his case through the courts claiming that the land was never compulsorily purchased correctly by the Balearic Government & is

demanding that if they win the case against him then the Balearic Government should also buy his house as it is so negatively affected by being left standing so close to what he says is the changed motorway route. Tourism will be affected by the Motorways.

Tourist industry representatives met with the Consell Island Government & the Balearic Government to see how the motorway building projects will affect the island this summer. It seems that the outer ring road around Eivissa will only be partially open & the plan is to open up alternative routes along minor roads to divert traffic around areas where the motorway work is most intense & causing the most traffic flow problems.