



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ALWAYS BLACK & WIGHT...

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BLOWING IN THE WIND

DESPITE COURT ORDER, VESTAS ACTION GOES NATIONWIDE...

The campaign against the closure of the wind turbine manufacturer Vestas' site in the Isle of Wight, instigated by sacked workers occupying the factory two weeks ago (see SchNEWS 685), has continued this week with a broad coalition of activists and locals assembling to show solidarity with the workers.

The six workers that currently remain in the factory are being supported by a multitude of campaigners from climate action groups, trade unions and socialist networks, as well as concerned locals, who have all gathered (accompanied by a thumping bicycle sound system) to oppose the loss of hundreds of jobs, damage to the local economy and the loss of an opportunity to develop a key green industry.

Vestas successfully applied for a re-possession order on Tuesday (4th) and, despite saying that they were in no hurry to turf out the barricaded workers, served them with an eviction notice which will be carried out with the help of bailiffs at some time after 12pm today (7th). However, campers on the roundabout outside the factory have stressed that

no matter what the outcome, the protest will continue and are calling for people to grab 'a bag of tricks' and camping gear and get over to the protest site by midday today.

Along with demonstrators on the 'Magic Roundabout' on the St Cross industrial estate, a second site has been established in Cowes, much to the delight of the amazingly supportive locals. Protesters scaled the 30m walls of Vestas-owned workshops on Tuesday 4th, and have been on the roof ever since. They have been displaying pro-worker solidarity banners to the passing yachters attending the Cowes Regatta and anyone entering the busy port. Police have, with no sense of irony, been barricading these campaigners in with anti-vandal paint and massive fences, although with solar showers being set up and a huge stock of supplies, the protesters have no intention of going anywhere.

Representatives from the transport union RMT, who are supporting the ex-employees, have met with government officials who have agreed to work towards reinstating the

redundancy packages previously taken away from the demonstrators inside the factory. These same officials have also reported that they have been in talks with Vestas to try and either encourage them to sell the facility or re-open, ideas which have been flatly rejected by the company. However, Vestas' compliance is not required if the business were to be nationalised, and this is now the primary focus of all campaign efforts.

Two of the ex-Vestas operatives who left the stand-off earlier this week have since embarked on a tour, meeting with interested parties and giving talks. Those still at the camp remain upbeat and determined to continue in their campaign, retaining at its heart the plight of hundreds of workers who now find themselves unemployed in an island economy devastated by the economic crisis.

* A rally is to be held in Newport town centre on Saturday 8th, all available support is needed. A national day of solidarity is also scheduled for next Wednesday (12th), for details see <http://savevestas.wordpress.com>

RABBITING ON

Animal rights activists have been camping it up this week outside animal breeders, Highgate Farm, near Market Rasen, Lincolnshire. Highgate Farm, owned by Geoffrey Douglas, supplies ferrets and rabbits to the vivisection industry.

Twenty-five activists occupied the road side next to the farms main entrance in what they say is "only the beginning of a major campaign". The camp lasted seven days and was apparently 'a pretty fluffy affair'. According to one camper we spoke to "It was really good - the farmer was furious and police seemed to be pretty reasonable. We think they're worried it's gonna be the next Newchurch" (See SchNEWS 509). The mood was slightly dampened after one Deliverance style inbred threw a dead rabbit onto site.

Our camper said "There will be more camps - the only reason this one was packed up was to prevent the council from getting a legal order to clear the road-side".

Highgate Farm has seen plenty of previous action. See SchNEWS 677 'Slipping the Net' for how Netcu failed in their prosecution of activists.

For more on this and and innumerable other AR actions check out www.shac.net and www.directaction.info

PLUGGING INTO THE MAINSHILL

The first instalment of the UK climate camp trilogy of low-impact living and high-impact direct action opened this week with the **Scottish Camp For Climate Action**. The Mainhill Solidarity Camp, on a planned open-cast coal site in Lanarkshire near Glasgow, is the venue - and though the camp goes from 3rd-10th August, the protest site will of course continue afterwards. This new woodland protest occupation was taken in mid-June after Scottish Coal were given permission to mine despite the opposition of the local district (See SchNEWS 681) and has since become a sustainable community.

Some local residents live at the site, which contains tree houses and tunnels, whilst others have been campaigning against Scottish Coal's applications to expand its coal-mining operations in the Douglas Valley for years. However, their objections to the trashing of their local environment have been consistently ignored by the authorities, and owner of the land - Lord Home - who is being investigated for a £150m money laundering fraud. Just three weeks ago they learned of another proposal for open-cast coal mining in the valley.

Drilling at Mainhill had been carried out by Welsh-based contractor Apex. Preparatory work for the mine by Apex such as tree-felling and bore sample drilling had already breached seven conditions of the planning approval, with

regards to studies to ascertain the presence of certain endangered species such as badgers and bats, which the occupiers know to be present on site. Open-cast mines have been operational in the area for the last four years, and pulmonary illnesses have risen by 60% in the same time.

Direct action is already underway though, with anonymous activists disabling a conveyor belt on Wednesday night (5th) at Scottish Coal's Glentagart site. This belt carries coal from the mine to Drax power station in Yorkshire (the site of the first Climate Camp 2006 - see SchNEWS 558).

Over 100 campers are already at the location expanding the camp and police presence has been low-key so far with cameras set up on the perimeters, although word was leaked last night of all police leave in the central section of Scotland suspended, with forces on high alert. So far, however, there has been none of the harassment of Kingsnorth last summer. In the next week there will be workshops, discussions and opportunities to link up with other people, groups and campaigns.

* See <http://climatecampscotland.org.uk> and <http://coalactionedinburgh.noflag.org.uk>

* When this camp finishes, it's off to Pembrokeshire for the **Welsh Camp For Climate Action**, August 13th-16th - see <http://climatecampcymru.org>, then the **London** camp August 27th-Sept 2nd - see <http://climatecamp.org.uk>

ROTTEN TO THE CAUCASUS

The murder of Russian human rights activist Natalia Estemirova in Chechnya on July 15th was the latest blow in the campaign against those trying to hold the authorities to account for a decade of atrocities in North Caucasus. SchNEWS looks at the brutal repression in Chechnya by the Russian-backed despot. Read the full story online at www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news686.php

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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THE GARDA THEY COME

A recent spate of court cases stemming from protests at the Rosspoint Solidarity Camp (See SchNEWS 683) has seen mixed results for Shell to Sea activists. Iollain O'Mongain, Eoin O'Leidhin and Niall Harnett all had Section 6 'breach of the peace' charges dismissed, while the Section 11 trespassing case against Eoin Lawless was also dismissed due to lack of evidence.

Harnett and Lawless however, were convicted on other charges. Along with another activist, Maura Harrington - who has already done two stints in Mountjoy Prison this year for actions against Shell (SchNEWS 668) - they were all convicted under Section 8 public order charges: failure to obey the directions of a Garda. Harnett and Harrington both received four month sentences - in Harrington's case after refusing to sign a 'good behaviour bond' which would have prevented her from taking part in further protests. (The ironically named) Lawless was also offered the chance to sign a bond and reluctantly accepted in order to avoid a jail term.

While Harrington is currently out on bail pending appeal, Harnett is currently in Castlereagh prison in County Roscommon; letters are much appreciated. His address is: Niall Harnett, Castlereagh Prison, Harristown, Castlereagh, Co. Roscommon. If you cannot send post, please sent messages of support to rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com * See also www.corribos.com

DOWN UNDER FIRE

Desert war games involving 30,000 US and Australian troops rehearsing Afghanistan manoeuvres in the Australian bush was interrupted last week after seven activists occupied the land - with two lasting for the full eleven days - stopping the live fire phase of the exercise. It was similar to the action by Ofog in June in Sweden (See SchNEWS 680).

The Talisman-Saber '09 military exercise at the Shoalwater Military Exercise Area in central Queensland is a biennial event - in 2007 it was also interrupted by protests and a rare white humpback whale (See SchNEWS 594). This year again there was a range of protests including community events, leafleting the troops, conducting a hokey cokey at the perimeter of the military zone, stopping army trucks and occupying the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area.

On the last day of the exercise the final two activists - Yulanji Bardon and Emily Nielsen - handed themselves into military police and were arrested for trespassing. Of the other five, three were also arrested, and two not, having voluntarily walked off the site. Emily said "These exercises are not just a ten-day long game of laser tag as Brigadier Bob Brown and the media would have us believe. They represent Australia joining the United States in the illegal invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan where thousands of civilians have been killed."

Groups stayed in camps dotted around the range, forcing the limit of live fire. In a parody of the US coalition's inability to find al Qaeda in the Afghan hills, again, despite helicopters, military dogs, and thousands of soldiers patrolling the land, they still couldn't find protesters living in tents in the bush! In a separate action earlier in Talisman-Saber '09, four Christian peace campaigners were discovered - by soldiers playing insurgents.

* See www.peaceconvergence.com

JUNGLE MISSIVE

While the threatened destruction of migrant camps and mass deportations in Calais has yet to materialise, No Borders activists are continuing in their struggle against increased police harassment of the thousands of migrants currently in Calais (See SchNEWS 682, 684, 685).

Aside from continued raids on the 'jungle' - makeshift camps in scrub-land surrounding Calais - and migrant squats, in which migrants have been arrested, beaten and photographed, the police have also resorted to such lowdown tactics as spraying water hydrants used in camps with tear gas, preventing access to water in 35° heat.

Activists have continued to monitor police actions and stage regular patrols, which they maintain have kept the police in check. On Wednesday, activists at the scene reported how police threatened migrants with gas and flash-balls (plastic bullets) but retreated after being confronted by a patrol.

Although it now looks like the destruction of the camps is no longer imminent, the French Immigration Minister, Eric Besson, has reasserted that the 'jungle' would be dismantled "before the end of the year" and activists are still calling out for volunteers to get themselves to Calais and show their support.

* See www.calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

YEAH YEAH YEAH

The new Yes Men film is coming this week. *The Yes Men Fix the World* features more of their high-level pranks as they expose corporations to ridicule. This film features their stunt where - speaking as Dow Chemical - they promised to compensate and clean up the toxic mess in Bhopal following the 1984 disaster. Also, they pose as Exxon execs and tell an energy conference about plans to combat climate change by using the victims of climate change as a source of energy.

The Yes Men will be at the preview screenings at the Odeon Panton St, London, 7th-10th August, and the film will go on release in 20 cinemas across the UK on 11th August, including an 8.30pm screening at Brighton's Duke Of York's cinema. For more see www.theyesmenfixtheworld.com/screenings.htm

* This week the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Bhopal ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation to arrest Union Carbide CEO Warren Anderson and produce him before the court without delay. UC and Anderson are charged with culpable homicide. Anderson absconded from a 1992 court case despite a summons, refusing to take responsibility for the Bhopal chemical disaster, pay adequate compensation or clean the site, which continues to be toxic (See SchNEWS 684). www.bhopal.net

PARTY & PROTEST

AUGUST 12 - Smash EDO anti-drone demo - Demonstration against EDO's Complicity in Drone attacks in Pakistan - Bring Kites, EDO ITT, Home Farm Road, Brighton, 4pm www.smashedo.org.uk ** **15 - Mobilisation against BNP's Red, White and Blue festival.** Meet at 9am Market Pl Codnor, Ripley, Derbs, followed by rally 1pm, <http://nobnppfestival.wordpress.com> ** **18-24 - Earth First! Summer Gathering** somewhere in Cumbria - 5 days of workshops, skill sharing and planning action, plus low-impact living without leaders. Meet people, learn skills, take action. www.earthfirst.org.uk ** For the rest of the listings see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

AFGHAN HOUNDING

As the situation in Afghanistan escalates, with mounting casualties on both sides, court martial proceedings have begun against a British soldier who refused to fight a second tour of duty in protest against the war.

Joe Glenton went AWOL in 2007 but handed himself in to the authorities earlier this year. During a preliminary hearing on Monday (3rd), Glenton's lawyer told the court that he planned to fight the desertion charges, using in his defence expert testimony questioning the legality of the war. Glenton faces up to two years in prison if he is convicted.

Last week Glenton delivered a letter to Gordon Brown in which he condemned the war and the actions of the government. "The war in Afghanistan is not reducing the terrorist risk, far from improving Afghan lives it is bringing death and devastation to their country," Glenton wrote. "...the courage and tenacity of my fellow soldiers has become a tool of American foreign policy."

While the military is prosecuting Glenton for refusing to participate in the destruction of a country, the government is now looking into refusing citizenship to any prospective Brits who choose to protest against it. In the latest citizenship scheme, people applying for British passport could face penalties or even a refusal for anything that could be constituted an "active disregard for British values" which the Home Office have refused to deny could include protesting against a war that recent polls suggest a majority of Brits are against.

* See <http://stopwar.org.uk/content/view/1400/1/>

...and finally...

Chill out everyone - climate change is about to meet a higher power. Residents of the Swiss Alpine villages of Fieschertal and Fiesch have asked for blessings from the Pope to stop their glacier from melting. Why didn't we think of that?

Now the idea that the God of the Catholic Church (which only got around to apologising in 1992 for burning folks with the insolence to say that the world was round) is gonna intervene in global warming and rising sea levels makes about as much sense as, well, their whole religion. But then these Swiss villagers have got history on their side...

You see back in the heady days of the late 17th century (1678 to be exact), the villagers asked the then Pope to stop their glacier from growing; promising in return that they would all live virtuously. And lo! - the evil glacier did indeed stop growing and eventually started to recede, proving God's existence beyond doubt.

So having got what they wanted, a mere 331 years later, the fickle faithful have now changed their minds and asked for their glacier to grow back.

But instead of risking appearing so indecisive to God, perhaps they should just blow out the previous deal by loosening up, indulging in the seven deadlies and partying more, thus causing God to default on the original 1678 bargain...

As for their ambition to get his eminence to stick his neck out, SchNEWS reckons they haven't got a pope in hell...

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SchNEWS warns all readers, the winds of spare change are blowing through this unfair land. Honest!

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