

TAR-MAGEDDON

AS ACTIVISTS TARGET BP'S REACH FOR THE TARS....

After two weeks of direct action, the "BP Fortnight of Shame" concluded yesterday (15th) with protests outside the oil giant's AGM and a rooftop occupation in Brighton. Throughout the country, activists targeted BP over its plans to extract oil from the Alberta tar sands in Canada (see SchNEWS 716) in protests which peaked last Saturday (10th) when hundreds of climate activists in London, Brighton, Oxford and Cambridge descended on BP garages for the "Party at the Pumps".

Described by campaigners as 'the most destructive project on earth', the Alberta tar sands extractions are already the world's largest industrial operation. Millions of barrels of tar sands oil are being extracted every day, producing three to five times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventional oil extraction - committing eco-trocity across vast areas of ancient forest whilst producing lakes of toxic waste. By 2020, the tar sands are expected to have released over 141 megatonnes of greenhouse gases - twice that produced by all the cars and trucks in Canada combined.

Oil prices are now at around \$90 a barrel - but in the long term prices simply have to rise as peak oil nears. The decline in availability of easily refinable oil means that the carbon and labour intensive process of getting refined oil from the tar sands is economically viable. BP claims that the reserves in the area are second only to Saudi Arabia's alleged oil stock and there are many greedy mouths waiting to suck the tar sands dry.

After purchasing a stake in the 'Sunrise Project' (the wonderfully fluffy name for this last ditch attempt to feed the developed world's oil-guzzling lifestyle) in 2007, BP have since announced its potential involvement in two other tar sands developments.

The 'Party at the Pumps' campaign, organised by the UK Tar Sands Network, Rising Tide, the Camp for Climate Action and the Indigenous Environmental Network, has been hailed a huge success in bringing these issues to light.

On Saturday (10th), amidst sunshine and soundsystems, party ready activists took part in simultaneous demonstrations, including forecourt invasions, which shut down three BP petrol stations in London and Brighton.

Spokesperson Sheila Laughlin said, "Today we did exactly what we set out to do - we hit BP's profits by shutting down their petrol stations, and we hit their brand by informing thousands of people about their destructive tar sands

plans. Nearly everyone we spoke to was shocked and outraged by the horrific climate, ecological and human impacts of tar sands extraction. If BP want to completely alienate the UK public, they're going about it in exactly the right way."

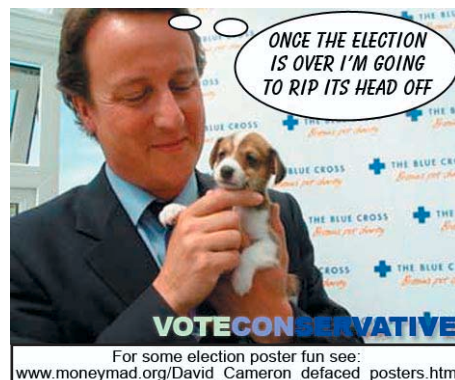
The oil giant didn't get off lightly inside their own AGM either. Lobbyists, environmental groups and shareholders called on BP to take a vote on a resolution at their AGM on Thursday (15th) that would force the corporation to review its investment in the tar sands project. BP shareholders however proved their commitment to the systematic destruction of the planet by voting with a 93.9% majority to sweep the issues under the carpet and not review the ecological and economical viability of the scheme. With BP's 'strategic move' into the tar sands hailed as "a good example of how we aim to tackle the challenges facing us" by chairman Carl-Henrik Svanberg (who trousers £4m quid a year) there seems to be, more than ever, a need for those with a slightly less biased viewpoint to take action to ensure projects like this are not accepted as a solution to the world's energy crisis.

ACTION ROUNDUP:

Brighton: Activists successfully invaded and shut down two separate BP petrol stations (Lewes Rd and Ditchling Rd) for the afternoon by camping out in tents in the forecourt. They brought with them soundsystems and a jovial attitude. Several banners were dropped in the vicinity and lots of leaflets went out. There were no arrests, police reportedly taking a very hands-off approach, much to the annoyance of the BP garage management. The Lewes Rd garage saw more protest on Thursday (15th) as activists occupied the roof and shut the station down for the day, police only turning up to discuss the results of the AGM before wandering off. As SchNEWS goes to press they've been up there for 7 hours and counting...

London: Around 150 people invaded BP's Shepherd's Bush petrol station and held a ceildh in the forecourt. They climbed on the pumps, hung banners from the roof and stopped operations for the remainder of the day. There was a heavy police presence, but no arrests.

Oxford: About 25 people from the Thames Valley Climate Action group reconstructed a model of the tar sands on Oxford's central shopping parade, including a pipeline and a 'toxic' tailings pond complete with toy ducks. They played music and made speech-



es to thousands of Saturday shoppers using a cycle-powered sound system. Around 5,000 anti-BP leaflets were given out and video messages were collected from the public to send to BP's AGM.

Cambridge: Local activists from the Cambridge Tar Sands Network led an unconventional tour group through the city, visiting RBS Branches and University Facilities funded by BP, all of which are linked to tar sands investment. The event caught public interest and was hailed as a successful public expose of Cambridge's Tar Sand affiliations.

14 DAYS LATER...

Since the annual Fossil Fools Day on April 1 kicked off the "Fortnight of Shame" the UK has seen actions springing up all over the place • 22,000 "rebranded" BP logos were delivered to BP HQ - see the video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNLzN3zld7o>

- A BP petrol station was blockaded in Plymouth, with protesters chaining themselves to petrol pumps. The station was closed for an hour and a half, and there were two arrests: <http://www.thisisplymouth.co.uk/news/Greens-protest-closes-petrol-station/article-1992261-detail/article.html>

- A demonstration by Youth Against Climate Change in St. Albans, targeting RBS, who are one of BP's key funders in the tar sands: http://www.stalbansreview.co.uk/news/6646160.St_Alban_demo_targets_RBS/

- RBS cash machines were rendered temporarily out of order by Brighton Against Tar Sands (BATS): <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2010/04/448446.html>

- A walking tree from Alberta, Canada, turned up at BP HQ (and other key London locations) to complain about tar sands deforestation - video here: <http://vimeo.com/10630598>

- "Free money" stained with oil was given out at a Natwest (owned by RBS) branch in Norwich: <http://felixinnorwich.wordpress.com/2010/04/01/fossil-fools-day-in-norwich-tar-sand-protest-at-natwest/>

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being chalking back...

When a Banksy wannabe tried to scrawl his message of dissent on the wall of the Olympia in Kensington during the Counter Terror Expo on Wednesday (14th) he was promptly jumped by police and arrested for criminal damage. Strange, given that all evidence of damage, criminal or otherwise, was quickly erased when plod wiped the offending words - written only in chalk - clean off the wall. When a handful of protesters tried to intervene in the man's arrest, three police cars, a riot van and a swarm of undercover cops swooped down on the scene. Well if a carton of orange juice (See SchNEWS 715) can be a weapon you can't muck around when it comes to chalk...

FOR PETE'S SAKE

Banged up Sea Shepherd campaigner Pete Bethune is facing a long prison sentence after boarding a Japanese whaling ship during protests in the Southern Ocean in February. Operation Waltzing Matilda was the most successful Sea Shepherd campaign yet against illegal Japanese whaling (see SchNEWS 713), but it wasn't without a cost for Sea Shepherd after their £2 million boat the *Ady Gil* was rammed and sunk by a whaler on January 6th.

Bethune was captain of the *Ady Gil* at the time. He later undertook a one-man mission to board the offending whaler - *Shonan Maru No. 2* - to confront and make a citizen's arrest of its captain and to hand him a bill for £2 million. The captain of the Whaler is not even being investigated by Japanese authorities after ramming and sinking another vessel at sea, putting six lives in danger.

After Bethune boarded the boat, it set a course for Japan to turn him in to the authorities. He is now up on charges of assault, illegal possession of a knife, destruction of property, obstruction of business and trespassing. The charges could land him a prison sentence of up to fifteen years plus fines. Sea Shepherd are calling him a political prisoner.

Figures just back on this year's whaling season show how successful Operation Matilda was. Over half of the 1035 whales which the Japanese government permitted to be killed were saved. Of the 935 protected minke whales earmarked for death, only 506 were killed. The whalers failed to bag any of the 50 allotted endangered humpback whales and only one of the 50 endangered fin whales.

The Japanese whalers will have lost a lot of money as they need to kill 700 whales to break even - and that's not including the additional expenses of the security, surveillance flights, extra fuel used while being chased, public relations and paying workers on ships as they did nothing. Following this year's low catch, the Japanese Fisheries Agency Takashi Mori laughably said, "The lack of samples could affect the accuracy of our research." www.seashepherd.org/news-and-media/news-100412-1.html

*Send Pete emails to supportpete@seashepherd.org or donate money to the legal campaign

*see www.seashepherd.org/matilda/support-captain-bethune.html

CAMP HILL RACES

Dan Wadham, long term AR prisoner was punished this week for daring to raise money for Sea Shepherd. Dan is serving five years for activities relating to SHAC (see SchNEWS 663) and is currently at HMP Camp Hill on the Isle of Wight. Having access to a small prison running track, he hit on the idea of doing a sponsored marathon. He completed the well publicised run on 15th April - without any interference from the prison authorities. However this week he found his prisoner status had been dropped from 'enhanced', meaning a significant loss of privileges. The prison's security advisor had apparently retrospectively decided that this charitable act counted as a 'political action'.

*To write to Dan Wadham (A5705AA) HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5PB

PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

COUNTER PUNCH

Over 30 protesters showed up to voice their discontent at the warmongering parasites assembled for the Counter Terror Expo 2010 in London's Olympia in Kensington on Wednesday (14th).

Things got off to a banging start when activists fronting as event organisers and armed with a look of authority, misdirected some of the arms fair participants to Earl's Court, citing security reasons. It is always heart warming to hear how muppets that accept authority without question continue to do so at their own detriment.

A swarm of 15 reporters huddled around the protest, ready to record events as they unfolded. Protesters came armed with banners, flyers and songs of dissent. Old favourites were sung including you can stick your counter terror up your arse, shame on you, we all live in a terrorist regime and other such well loved classics.

After the arrest of a protester for the criminal use of chalk (see Crap Arrest), one eyewitness told SchNEWS, "Police showed they would tolerate a zero tolerance attitude towards the demonstrators quite early. The message was clear, we won't allow any action that undermines our authority. They serve and protect the parasitic capitalist vermin that came to sample the raucous delights of the arms fair."

The rest of the protest rolled on smoothly, with the polite restraint shown on both sides probably due to low numbers. One demonstrator tried pulsing waves of positive energy to the damned inside through the medium of meditation, in the naïve hope of resetting their moral compass. We're not getting our hopes up.

*see www.counterterrorexp.com

LUNAR-TICS AND ASYLUM

A BNP anti-immigration protest outside Lunar House - where asylum seekers sign on - on Thursday (15th) was gate crashed by the anarchist bloc, who managed to land a few punches before being cordoned off and pushed back by the police.

Protesters started gathering at around 12.30. Officers of the law had helpfully allocated two sectioned spaces on either side of the building - one for the BNP and the other for the 100 strong amalgamation of socialists, liberals, anarchists and general immigration supporters that had come to stand up against repression of asylum seekers and the tolerance of fascist ideals.

As the clock struck 2, a small horde of around 25 British Nationalists crawled past the tunnel entrance next to the Home Office to their allocated kennel. They carried banners slurred with "Britain is full up" and "Asylum seekers don't unpack, you're going back". They were counteracted by shouts of "Smash the BNP!" and "Nazi scum off our streets!". The feisty anarchists (15 or so) were the only contingent that voiced any real resistance and ignored police summons to stay in the proposed area. They confronted the fascist minded idiots and managed to give a few a hiding before police rushed in to protect the BNP.

The handful of anarchists were soon surrounded by around 35 riot police, as 8 riot vans descended. The kettled formed and immediately started shoving the protesters behind liberal lines, where the socialists and co had actively been standing by doing nothing. Actually that is a lie, they watched 2 arrests happen. A reckless assault and another for a possession of a legal high. After that police kept the two opposing parties at a safe distances. After an hour of cowardly standing around behind their blue protectors the fascist posse decided to call it a day.

EXPERI-MENTALISTS

On Saturday (24th), animal rights activists will be gathering in London to mark the World Day for Animals in Laboratories. The national rally, which begins at Cavendish Square near Oxford Circus at 11.30am, is an opportunity to re-invigorate the anti-vivisection debate and remember the many million of animals worldwide who are needlessly tormented and killed in experiments each year. There will be speeches, info stalls and vegan food before the march takes off through central London, past Whitehall and Downing St to the Houses of Parliament, calling for an end to animal experiments once and for all. Around 3.30pm there will be a protest and vigil at the site of the proposed huge bio-tech and virus research centre near St Pancras Station. An evening social will follow. Coaches and minibuses will run from all over the country.

*See www.wdail.org.uk for more info.

MAINS-TILL AT IT

The Mainshill Solidarity Camp may have been evicted last February (see SchNEWS 707), but you can't keep a good direct action collective down. In the wee hours of Monday morning, a band of pixies sabotaged two Catapillar D9Ts and 170 tonne earth scrapers at the now active mining site, rendering them inoperable for the day. The autonomous environmentalists behind the raid declared, "The only thing that has changed since the eviction of the Mainshill Solidarity Camp is that the machines on the site are bigger and more expensive."

MILKING IT

A North Kesteven District Council ruling has put the skids on plans for a 8,100 cow dairy farm following strong opposition. While the council raised concerns about slurry management and smell, campaigners have also highlighted the issues of animal welfare, the spread of disease and the effect on smaller scale dairy farmers. The company behind the plan, Nocton Dairies, announced their intention to resubmit its plans.

*See www.veggies.org.uk

...and finally...

A major hotel in Denmark is cranking up the greenwash.

Guests at the The Crowne Plaza Copenhagen Towers (handy for the airport and the centre of town) are to be invited to saddle up for their supper and jump aboard bicycle-powered generators - if they can produce 10 watt hours of power to the hotel they will be given a free meal.

The aim is to get guests matching or beating the return from the hotel's solar panels - although whether that is overstating the potential return from either or both methods compared to the power demands of a 366-room 'international' standard hotel is not dwelt upon.

Perhaps this is a foretaste of the future, this all leaves SchNEWS with a wheelie dark, post-2012 vision of an oil poor future where power companies enslave the world's dispossessed masses to pedal up a non carbon based utopia for a small elite. The ultimate manifestation of working on the chain gang...?

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SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email mail@schnews.org.uk Web www.schnews.org.uk