



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BRISTOLS AT DAWN...

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MURDERER

SHAFTED!!

AS ANTI-FRACKING ACTIVISTS FOUND GUILTY IN LANCASHIRE OIL RIG TRIAL

On Tuesday three people from Liverpool and Brighton were found guilty of 'disrupting lawful activity' for occupying Cuadrilla Resource's drilling rig in Lancashire for eleven hours last November. See SchNEWS 795

The trial which lasted for four days saw prosecution witnesses from Cuadrilla, the Department of Energy and Climate Change and Lancashire County Council, cross examined on the legality of Cuadrilla's earthquake production operations in Lancashire. Evidence from a number of expert witnesses from the US and UK was presented to demonstrate the massive threat posed to the global climate, local communities and human health by the expansion of fracking for shale gas around the world. Despite admitting that the defence had painted "a picture of an Armageddon that no-one would wish to contemplate" the District Judge sentenced the three defendants to 2 year conditional discharges and £750 costs each.

Initially the DJ was considering curfews and restraining orders to keep the defendants away from Cuadrilla sites. Two of the defendants were also convicted on a spurious charge of common assault stemming from one of them being pushed over a steel beam and pinned by a security guard in the early stages of the action.

The DJ however seemed to consider the £20,000 that Cuadrilla claim to have lost as a result of that action the major concern and didn't tack on any extra sentence as a result of the assault charges. Since the embarrassing earthquake incident at their first site in Lancashire Cuadrilla have drilled 2 further wells but have been holding off fracking while they work with the government to solve their PR problem. It seems likely that they will attempt to start drilling at a fourth site in Lancashire soon and may begin fracking there second well within the next couple of months. Their eventual plan is to frack 400-800 wells in Lancashire alone.

RIGGED JUDGEMENT

Despite the self-righteous air of the judgement, the trial showed up the fact that in some ways fracking in the UK is even more of a wild west activity than in the US. The back to back testimony from DECC and local council bureaucrats demonstrated a staggering level of buck passing with no one willing to take responsibility for regulating the industry. In the US the notorious 'Halliburton Loophole' passed in 2005 exempted the industry from the majority of environmental laws. In the UK, rather than change the law to fit in with this new technology, the government

seems to have adopted the strategy of studiously ignoring any issues that this new practice raises. Given the poor reputation of fracking it is perhaps not surprising that they are not particularly keen to expose the issue to the sort of public debate. The general PR strategy appears to be obstinately deny that fracking is fundamentally different from traditional extraction methods.

Fracking for shale gas is part of a tidalwave of much more extreme methods of energy extraction that are threatening to become widespread as a result of the increasing scarcity and rising prices of fossil fuels. Over 25,000 shale gas wells have been drilled in the US during the last decade,

particularly in western states such as Texas. More recently as these practices have moved into higher population density states such as Pennsylvania it has resulted in a backlash as much larger numbers of people have been affected. In the UK, in addition to shale gas, coal bed methane (natural gas extracted from coal seams) and the even more insane underground coal gasification (setting fire to coal seams and piping the resulting gases to the surface) are also serious threats. All these methods involve much more effort and environmental destruction than conventional fossil fuels. Since we cannot afford to burn half the remaining conventional fossils fuels and avoid catastrophic climate change exploitation of these unconventional fuels is suicidal.

For more on the fight against extreme energy abuse www.frack-off.org.uk

BRISTOL FASHION

AS EDL OUTNUMBERED IN THE WILD SOUTH WEST.

How low can the English Defence League's (EDL's) fortunes plummet? "*We won't be coming back to Bristol any time soon*" said Michael Bayliss, the up 'til now unheard of South West regional organiser for the EDL. That comment followed a dismal turn-out of around 300 to what had been billed by the League as a national demo.

By the time the day had even begun anti-fascists had scored the victory of having the route of the EDL's march diverted. Originally the plan had been for the far-right to start their parade at Bristol's main train station Temple Meads. By the 14th this had been changed to Redcliffe Way and the whole demo route was to take place inside a cordoned off area. By the same token the authorities made a huge effort to persuade the city's Muslim population to stay at home.

We are Bristol, the UAF umbrella group and the more autonomous Bristol Anti-Fascists had organised different meet-up points. Police put pressure on the We are Bristol coalition to change their meet up point from the Fountain's area to the more distant and controllable Castle Park. Arrests at the Fountains (including that of UAF top bod Martin Smith) were made to enforce the policy.

Meanwhile by 11 am, a couple of hundred had arrived to answer Bristol Anti-Fascists' call out to gather in the Temple Meads area to the south. Some scuffling with the EDL's early arrivals ensued but as over 1000 cops were deployed on the day to keep two sides apart the excitement was short lived. Anti-fascists in groups were kettled and

moved on to Castle Park, meaning that by 1pm the EDL were able to stagger in a mobile cordon around their tiny march route with over a thousand counter-demonstrators confined to jeering at them from Bristol Bridge. Due to the low turn-out the EDL only occupied a quarter of the space allotted.

After a two hour stalemate, it came time for the police to bring the EDL back through town. By now anti-fascists had succeeded in gathering the clans, including a Pink&Black bloc from the ongoing Bristol Pride festival, and a vibrant and feisty counter demo clashed with police. A banner was used to repel a charge by mounted cops, bricks were thrown and bins were set on fire but ultimately weight of numbers told and police were able to clear a path back to the station. A visibly demoralised EDL were then paraded through the handful of antis armed only with the obligatory drummenbass soundsystem.

CIDER HOUSE RULES

With the main demo over, knots of EDL and anti-fascists evaded cops to attempt to resolve their issues more, er, independently. According to eyewitnesses this eventually lead to a splendidly frank exchange of views outside the Cider House on Old Market St.

SchNEWS spoke to the Anti-Fascist Network who told us "Bristol hopefully marks the turning point of the process started in Brighton. There are still hundreds of police at EDL demos but they're there now to protect the EDL from the public."

The EDL's next outing will be in Walthamstow on 18th August. Anti-fascists will, as ever, be counter-mobilising.

WALL CAPER

CORDON BENNET! POLICE ROBO-KETTLE BLOCKADED DURING SMASH EDO WEAPONS INSPECTION DEMO

Wall Caper It was quite fitting that the police brought a barrier designed for use during chemical, biological and nuclear threats to a Weapons Inspection. Unfortunately it was facing the wrong way- the police had identified the 70 odd white-clad citizens' weapons inspection team as the clear and present danger, rather than the factory facilitating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

After the No Iran War demo in town last month, this was Smash EDO's "big one" aimed squarely at the infamous arms factory for the Summer of Resistance (or Downpour of Defiance as it's been unofficially renamed).

Around seventy people gathered at Brighton's Level to march up to EDO-MBM (now owned by evil mega-corp ITT-Excellis) to demand, Hans Blix style, that the factory open its gates and allow the inspectors in.

Sussex Police had drafted in re-inforcements from Kent Constabulary. As well as the usual overkill of riot cops and horses, they had also brought along their latest weapon in the War on Peace – the Cobham CBRN Tactical Communications and Surveillance Integrated Solutions©. With the words "Police Cordon" euphemistically emblazoned on the front, the 'Cobham Solutions' is a high tech sounding name for what's essentially a steel wall on wheels with cctv and antennae, and, as Wikileaks revealed, was marketed back in 2010 as an crowd control device to be used during domestic WMD threats.

As *Privacy International* explain, "Tools and technology created and purchased for one purpose are often ultimately used for another; this kind of "mission creep" is particularly pervasive in the surveillance context, where technologies that are initially intended for use only in the most serious national security cases gradually enter regular policing."

This wasn't the first outing for the CBRN Solutions. It was "unveiled" by the Met at last year's N30 strike, but before that had been used by Leicestershire Police for separating the EDL and anti-fascist protesters, by South Wales Police to separate Cardiff and Swansea football fans and by Greater Manchester Police at the Tory conference.

The CBRN Solutions has been described by a police operator as "a Transformer" and it in fact morphs from a semi-trailer into a general purpose Kettle-Bot (Coptimus Prime?). Judging by this clip here, it's invention may have been inspired by the cult classic Soylent Green. According to both the company's own literature, as well as Privacy International, it comes equipped with an "IMSI catcher" that can intercept and monitor mobile phone calls. This task can be performed at the same time as kettling a crowd, freeing up officers to randomly beat up and murder protesters and passers-by (or, just as likely in these austere times, free up officers for the sack in the next round of public service cuts).

But as any evil mastermind will tell you, futuristic gadgetry is only as good as its operators, and in this case the CBRN Solutions had the misfortune to be operated by the consistently halfwitted, bumbling plods at Sussex Police. Sussex Plod suffered a major intelligence failure on the day. Under the noses and all seeing electronic eyes of the police, activists snuck lock on tubes disguised as missiles and bombs to the front of the demo where five of them locked onto the barrier itself, turning Robo-Cop into Robo-Block. Traffic to and from the arms factory was stopped dead for as long as the activists wanted.

Eventually of course the police cutting teams arrived and by the end of the day there were ten arrests- one for suspected breach of bail, four for breach of section 14 and five for obstructing a public highway.

Andrew Beckett, long-time spokesperson for the campaign (who unfortunately could not attend the demo due to an attack of the vapours) had this to say, "Even though we announced what we were going to do and where we were going to march we still managed to outwit the police. As we couldn't search the factory for illegal weapons we did the next best thing and blockaded it. The police conveniently provided us with a barrier to help us delay these weapons from leaving EDO and making their way into the hands of terrorist regimes such as our own."

OPPOR-TUNA-TY

The Black Fish ('like Sea Shepherd but fish...') liberated over a thousand endangered bluefin tuna fish from a farm near the island of Ugljan, Croatia on Sunday 8th July.

The activist divers evaded security as night fell to aid the fish to freedom. Until then their home had been an overcrowded death trap euphemistically known as a 'caged habitat'. The crew had been patrolling the area and had become aware of the slaughter of the endangered species (give it 10-15 years at the current rate and they'll be gone the same way as the dodo), prompting the water ninja antics.

The Black Fish, an international marine conservation organisation, have been doing the groundwork for weeks now to prepare to kick off a new campaign to bring to the public eye the sickening realities of the bluefin tuna trade. The species is but one of the many casualties of

overfishing in the Med.

Bluefin tuna are some of the largest and fastest fish of the oceans. In recent decades industrial overfishing, not to mention the global appetite for sushi, have decreased their numbers to near extinction. ICCAT, an international organisation given the task of conserving the fish, have managed to do little to ensure their survival. In 2010 new measures legislated that only fish over 30kg could be caught, thereby allowing the fish one spawning cycle before premature death. Yet in a bizarre loophole ICCAT allowed countries carte blanche to catch bluefin tuna in the Adriatic Sea, whatever their size or age.

For more information on the Black Fish and upcoming actions keep checking theblackfish.org

Spread the word, before bluefin tuna only exist in museums and pretty pictures.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For obstructing a blocked road...

One person arrested at the Smash EDO weapons inspection was nicked for "obstructing a public highway", despite the fact that at the time of his arrest the highway in question was pretty effectively obstructed by the metal barrier that the police had installed across the same road earlier that day. As if that wasn't secure enough, the barrier was kept in place by four activists who'd locked on to it (who were also nicked for obstruction). With no suggestion that he'd locked himself to anything, the police plucked him out from the crowd and whisked him away from the demo. When questioning the logic of his arrest he was heard to say "Are you aware of the giant steel wall in the road?" before he was stuffed into the back of a van for an a brief 10 hour stint at Hollingbury nick.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

...and finally...

While the quasi-Stalinist preparations for London's Olympics already make the Beijing Olympics look like a hippy love festival, it's hard to explain the own goal committed by the British Transport Police, who have embarked on a campaign of mass arrests of ex-graffiti artists. Presumably because the they have no idea of the identity of the scurrilous ne'er-do-wells who are who are currently spraying and stencilling up Dalston, Hackney or where ever, around thirty fully legit artists who stopped graffin' London's mean streets years ago (if they ever had) were rounded up on very tenuous grounds- one arrestee had done nothing more than register a web domain with pictures of graffiti on it a few years back.

One of the arrested, Darren Cullen, never sprayed a wall covertly in his fifteen year graf artist career. Instead, his modestly-named company Graffiti Kings is commissioned to create that "edgy" look for big corporate clients like Microsoft and Red Bull. He was planning some Olympic-related spraying – via Olympic sponsor Adidas, for a prop for an ITV Olympics programme, and was even approached to paint in the Athletes' Village.

Nevertheless, the Transport Police hammered on his mum's door at the crack of dawn, who helpfully directed them to his correct address (thanks Mum). He was hauled in to the station where he met another 29 confused faces, mainly middle-aged street art retirees. As he told Vice, "That's when it became clear that the police were arresting people with some affiliation to the graffiti scene, wholesale. I'm sure it was all about keeping the city under control during the Olympics".

The arrested were given highly restrictive bail conditions, including not using London trains, not going within a mile of any Olympic sites (most of London, then) and had to deal with the inconvenience of having phones and personal computers seized. What kind of message the cops are trying to send out with this is perplexing... "Dissent will not be tolerated – we don't know what this means, or who might do it, but it won't, even if it's legal and paid for by Olympic sponsors."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, don't read the writing on the wall, it might be a Section 14. Honest.

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