



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER MISGUIDED FRINGE...

SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 5th October 2012

Free/Donation

Issue 829

BATTLE OF THE BYPASS BEGINS

AS CAMPAIGNERS AND GOVERNMENT FACE-OFF OVER NEW ROAD BUILDING

What is it with Tories and roads? The anti-road protests of the nineties resulted in the abandonment of flagship road plans under a wave of negative publicity and the birth of a concerted direct action movement which fought the establishment 'til the bitter end. Fast forward 20 years and the fight is back on.

As SchNEWS reported earlier in the year, while councils have cuts jobs, essential services and more pointedly public transport infrastructure, road building plans capitalising on central government development funds, along with local authority funding, are being forced through. Several of the forthcoming multi-million projects, such as the Bexhill bypass in Sussex and Devon's Kingskerswell bypass have been bitterly opposed by local communities for years.

Last weekend (September 29-30th), campaigners pledging to resist the first and most destructive of the new roads programme, in Bexhill, set up camp. Around 200 protesters descended on one of the most tranquil, beautiful – and now endangered – tracts of land in the South East, the Combe Haven Valley. Veteran road protesters from M11, Twyford and Newbury campaigns mixed with Friends of the Earth/CPRE supporters, anti-badger cull activists, redundant Occupy-ers, and those opposing the squat ban.

John Stewart, nineties roads protester and anti-Heathrow third runway campaigner said: "It's the eleventh hour. This is our chance to put a line in the sand by stopping this road. It's a pointless road, George Osborne's expensive toy. The Dept of Transport have given it a low profile [they recently refused to release parts of a report critical of the scheme]. It's the Treasury and Osborne saying – 'let's build infrastructure no matter the environmental cost'."

Now that the £120m scheme has been green-lighted, excavations and archaeological exploratory work has begun, via an access track north east of Glovers Lane. East Sussex County Council hope the proper work can begin in January 2013, on higher ground away from the county's largest reed bed and nearby water meadows.

The council claims the 3-mile bypass would take traffic away from the bottlenecked A259 and reduce journey times by five minutes. What they don't mention is that the car-happy plans will increase overall traffic in the area by 14% at a time when Arctic ice is melting quicker than a Cornetto. They're also aiming to promote the building of between

1-4,000 homes and an industrial park. Tory to the core for over a decade, councillors have been browbeating residents and campaigners over this for even longer. The current Bexhill MP, and Minister for Climate Change (you couldn't make it up), Greg Barker is backing them to the hilt.

UNHOLY TRINITY

If it goes ahead the winners in all this will include Trinity College Cambridge, which owns land on part of the route, as well as privately-owned Glovers and Worsham Farms which are set to make a mint. Bidwells Housing developers, also based in Cams, is behind the proposed housing developments. A local resident at the camp reckoned the road was merely an access road for "a new town with a new reservoir planned and executed using EU development grants, which will benefit landowners".

Campaigners are saying loud and clear that brownfield sites should be used 11% and 16% of business sites, in Hastings and Bexhill respectively, lie empty – and not pristine landscape which the council even states on its own website is 'probably the finest medium sized valley in East Sussex'. Er, why are you building on it then? Campaigners also point out that the £120m could be spent on public transport options which haven't been fully considered – a new station at Glynde Gap has been recommended but ignored twice now, in 2002 and 2004.

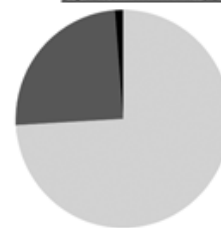
Derrick Coffee of Hastings Alliance said: "The number of jobs to be created by the road has been exaggerated and many of these would be taken by people outside Hastings anyway, or just be existing jobs moving out of town damaging the town centre economy. This valley is being put needlessly under threat. For 4,000 years, since the Bronze Age, nature and the landscape has been respected, now we face 30,000 vehicles coming through here per day. The £120m price tag is 500% more than the 2002 £24m estimate. What else can we do with £120m? – well the NHS, schools..."

He and others in the Alliance are in the High Court at the time of writing (Friday 5th) to see if their call for a Judicial review – the last chance for a legal delay – has been granted. If it is then that could put a spanner in the works for road builders looking to start construction in January, delaying them by up to a year. Currently the Transport Secretary has confirmed the orders for compulsory purchase

Manchester Police Deaths - In SchNumbers

Deaths in GMP Custody 98-08	20
Gun Crime Deaths in S.Mancs 99-09	52
Murders of GMP Officers 05-12	2

Column Inches by Subject



- Victims of Police
- Dead Cops
- Shock at Royal Breasts

of the land, with just a six-week consultation period in place.

DELAYS EXPECTED

The department was planning on having all the legal permissions done and dusted by December, and any delaying tactics are expected to pay off – as they did in previous anti-road campaigns. One Brighton veteran of the Birmingham Toll Road campaign explained the long view: "There aren't just simple victories and defeats there are degrees of success and failure which includes delays which rack up costs – with Birmingham Toll Road (2002) it was built but there have been no toll roads built since then."

Lessons from the old school also include the fact roads have been stopped in critical last moments, as the destruction was set to begin. Oxleas Wood in Shooters Hill, south London was saved in July 1993 just before the bulldozers were due, after two public inquiries went in favour of the six-lane proposals. This was mainly because the government didn't have the stomach for another direct action roads campaign following on from the protracted Twyford Down débâcle.

Stewart talked of the overall success of Nineties anti-roads campaigns: "In 1989 there were 600 road schemes on the government's books; by 1997 only 150 had been built, the rest stopped by various forms of local and national campaigning."

Workshops at the Bexhill weekend reached the consensus that the best way to spook the government and stop the road programme dead would be to get localised protest to go national. Look out Osborne, Swampy II's coming...

For info, Better Transport's map of the new tranche of roads planned for the UK:

<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/roads-to-nowhere/map>

Combe Haven Defenders: <http://combehavendefenders.wordpress.com/>

For action:

On Tuesday 16th October at 9.30am there'll be a demo outside County Hall, Lewes, E.Sussex. On November 3rd, Better Transport are holding a national conference for road protesters in Birmingham:

<http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/campaigns/roads-to-nowhere/conference2012>

PARTY & PROTEST

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

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

Copyright Published in Brighton since 1994

SONS OF ANTIFASCISM

On Sunday (30th) night anti-fascists clashed with police during an anti-fascist patrol which resulted in 15 people injured and 23 arrested.

Around 9pm the easy riders crossed paths with far-right members of Golden Dawn in the Athens neighbourhood of Agios Pantalaïmonos. Unsurprisingly a heated political debate ensued with two fascists requiring hospital treatment as their oratory skills were found lacking. The Greek mainstream media reports residents being present during the incident and one local producing a gun but not using it. Afterwards the anti-fascist motor division was followed and ambushed by Greek police motorcycle units.

On Monday (2nd) an anti-fascist demonstration was called for outside the courthouse. Around 300 people attended the solidarity demo. As the anti-fascists exited the courthouse to be escorted back to the police vehicles and driven to the cells the police attacked the demo dispersing those gathered to the nearby streets. This led to another 20 people being detained with four arrests who were promptly taken to court next day.

The anti-fascist motorbike chapter has come about in response to relentless attacks by fascist groups on foreign minorities. Last month there were several reports posted on Athens Indymedia of anti-fascist patrols burning rubber on Athenian

streets. These patrols have mirrored the increase in racist attacks in Athens and across Greece in general. Last week a Tanzanian community centre was attacked by members of Golden Dawn who damaged the building and shops in the area belonging to non-Greek citizens. In a separate attack two people were assaulted with knives after attending an anti-fascist demo, both needing hospital treatment. Earlier during September racist factions stormed foreign stall holders at open air markets. The fascists destroyed their stalls and filmed the event as they were doing it. As if to dispel any doubts of the links between far-right groups and police in Greece on one of these occasions a police man was caught on camera joining in during the attack on the stall holders. The 44 year old officer (whose name has been withheld by the justice system) was playing personal body guard to Golden Dawn MP, Kostas Barbarousis. The officer took an active rôle in the attack. He has been suspended and is facing dismissal from the police force.

In the words of one local anti-fascist, *"People are getting organised, the police and the fascists here are the same. We need to protect ourselves and others from racist attacks. If we don't, who will?"*

PARTY & PROTEST

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

HEAVY WATERS

AS ANTI-NUCLEAR FISHERMEN BLOCKADE INDIAN POWER PLANT

On 22nd September 3,000 fishermen and anti-nuclear activists aboard 500 boats attempted to blockade a port to prevent the unloading of nuclear fuel into the recently constructed Kudankulam nuclear power plant located on the Tamil Nadu coast in southern India.

This massive power plant is a joint venture between India and Russia and houses two nuclear pressurized water reactors (PWR) reactors, with future plans to construct four additional reactors at the site.

This has resulted in a period of sustained direct action by local residents, strongly opposed to the plant's construction. Over a million people live within 30 km of the proposed plant. Over the last year demonstrators have endured severe repression as over 10,000 police and paramilitary forces have been deployed in the area. Villagers have been beaten, hundreds have been arrested and some activists face charges of sedition and even of waging war against the government. In April the police cut off the water, food and power-supply to protesting villagers and imposed a curfew in the villages at the heart of the resistance.

CHAIN REACTION

At this point the Peoples Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) called off their protests hoping for some respite for the people. They filed a public interest litigation against the governments civil nuclear program complaining that the plant itself was unsafe, that there has not been a public hearing and thus it is an authoritarian project imposed upon the people. Unfortunately their pleas were ignored and when the Indian government announced that the loading of fuel into the plant would begin on or around 11th September the people immediately sprung into action.

On 10th September thousands of anti-nuclear protesters marched towards the power plant, many were injured by the police who lobbed tear-gas shells into the crowd, while at Manappadu

police fired into the crowd and a fisherman was shot and killed. On the 13th hundreds of protesters formed a human chain in the sea to protest at the loading of the fuel, staying in for two hour intervals in shifts. They demanded the release of all arrestees, compensation for those injured by the police and an end to the police repression.

One major fact is that there are more than one million people living within a 30km radius of the plant, which in the event of a disaster would make the evacuation of the population impossible. This far exceeds the recommendations of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board and so the plant should never have been built there. Not that this will worry the Russian firm that supplied and built the reactor as the Indian government agreed that they will have zero liability in the event of an accident. (Similar conditions apply to power companies responsible for major civic emergencies in the UK)

Beyond their legitimate safety concerns, villagers have other reasons to be angry. The government has invested millions on a new hospital and other facilities exclusively for plant employees, meanwhile the rest of the locals live in squalor lacking even basic facilities such as running water.

The Indian government has attempted to discredit the movement complaining that foreign organisations are agitating the local people and that this should not be allowed. Despite all of this further demonstrations are planned for the coming weeks and they are not giving up.

HINKLEY POINTLESS

Closer to home activists are taking action against the unnecessary and destructive construction of a new nuclear power plant at Hinkley Point, Somerset.

For more info check SchNEWS.org.uk or stopnewnuclear.org.uk

FIGHT FOR SITES

The Department for Communities and Local Government received a visit last week by members of the travelling community and were handed a 28 days notice to leave their London base. The department have until 1pm on 19th October to vacate their building near Victoria Station.

The 'eviction' proceedings were in response to the behaviour of the Government department which has been a little less than welcoming to the travelling community. A short video of the action can be seen here.

The department, led by Eric Pickles the secretary of state for Communities and Local Government, is responsible for the localism bill of 2011. The act supposedly devolves more power to local authorities though in reality only the richer areas (and those that adhere to tough Tory measures) see any real benefit – leaving those poorer, struggling communities out on a limb. Unsurprisingly the act is also designed to attack traveller communities – restricting planning permission and allowing nimbys to vote them out of an area.

Families from the Dale Farm site are still struggling after being made homeless during last year's forceful eviction. They have nowhere to go and have been left by the road side, living in abysmal conditions with no running water, limited electricity and sewage problems. They are still living on the Dale Farm site but with all the plots they occupied before destroyed during the eviction they are parked bumper to bumper along the farm road in tight conditions. Basildon council are again trying to evict them from this land they have permission to park on. The families are challenging this in court.

19th October coincides with the first anniversary of the Dale Farm eviction. A mass action has been called for on the same day in support of Travellers Rights by the Fight for Sites campaign. The assembly point is at Victoria Train station, London at 1pm. Those wishing to get involved can visit travellersolidarity.org

...and finally...

Local MP and all round fuckbugle Mike Weatherley was once again sticking his oar into local issues this week.

Not content with attacking the homeless (Mike is already campaigning for the extension of squatting criminalisation) he's also found time to "condemn" local campaigners who have been picketing EcoStram in Brighton as "misguided fringe groups".

Showing his trademark disregard for anything more complex than a soundbite, Mikey completely ignored the reasons for the protests (EcoStreams products are manufactured in the Occupied Territories) he instead focused on complaints from "a number of constituents who were alarmed by the... protesters". Could these "constituents" possibly be the Christian Zionist loons who turn up every week to hurl abuse at the picket?

Fortunately such details don't concern Mike as he leapt into action writing to the police and council, issuing a press release and even getting together with ex-copper turned Tory councillor Graham Cox to knock out a graphic on the non-issue. Given that the shop isn't even in his constituency SchNEWS recommends Mike keeps his malformed 'opinions' to himself or, better yet, looks into the legality of settlement goods to see if he actually agrees with "misguided fringe groups" like the United Nations or the International Court of Justice.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS advises all readers, act in Hastings repent at leisure. Honest.

Subscribe! Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG - (01273) 685913 - mail@schnews.org.uk - www.schnews.org.uk - find us on Facebook & Twitter (whatever they are)