

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER STILL PUMPING IT OUT...

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\$HELLS ANGELS

AS ROSSPORT CAMPAIGNERS FIGHT THE GAS REFINERY IN WEST IRELAND

Major construction is scheduled to begin on the controversial Shell onshore gas refinery in County Mayo, Ireland within the next month. The planned refinery and the high pressure pipeline, which would supply it with unprocessed gas from the offshore Corrib gas field, have been bitterly opposed by local residents and their many national and international supporters since it was first proposed in 2000.

Shell and their partners Statoil and Marathon had hoped to have the facility in operation by 2003, but massive local resistance has meant that, four years on, the development is still in its infancy. An impressive feat considering the odds; the Irish state has backed the multinationals all the way, changing and ignoring planning and environmental protection laws (See SchNEWS 549) and transferring huge numbers of police to the area to suppress the protesters (see SchNEWS 564 and 585). With the resistance camp having already celebrated their two-year anniversary, this weekend marked two years since the imprisonment of the Rosspport Five (see SchNEWS 505). It also saw the end of the preparatory phase of the development process as peat extraction from the site was completed.

SACS MANIACS

The Corrib gas project seeks to pipe volatile unprocessed gas dangerously close to dwellings and through several SACs' (special areas of conservation), supposedly under the protection of EU law. The gas would then be processed at a refinery built on unstable bogland, situated within the catchment area of Carrowmore lake which provides the drinking water for 10,000 people. Even before construction, preparatory work for the development has seen consistent breaches of World Health Organisation recommended maximum amounts of aluminium in discharges that flow into the lake.

The refinery would be a huge source of

SITES FOR SORE EYES

At the Hill Of Tara, where they are fighting the building of a motorway near important archaeological sites in Ireland (see SchNEWS 585), the battle became more intense after a huge ancient monument near Baronstown was razed to the ground by machinery this week. The site, which had been recommended for National Monument status by archaeologists, is one of over 30 important known historic sites in the path of the road (and more are being discovered during the roadworks). There is a permanent protest camp at the frontline of the destruction. See www.savetara.com & www.tarawatch.org

air and water pollution. It would use both flaring and cold venting procedures (the release of gas into the atmosphere without burning). Cold venting would annually release between 200,000 and 300,000 kg of methane, a major greenhouse gas, with the risk of vapor cloud explosions and acid rain. The site would hold over 5,000 tonnes of dangerous chemicals. Among these would be the highly toxic methanol, over 1,500 tonnes of which are expected to be lost each year. It is presumed that this will be emitted along with the waste water due to be pumped into Broadhaven bay, "an important area for a number of marine mammal species and for other marine life" according to a report commissioned by Shell (and subsequently swiftly suppressed by them). The waste water would also contain heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury and cadmium. Any waste not pumped into the bay will drain instead into the reservoir, Carrowmore Lake.

GAS PRESSURE

Immediately prior to the imprisonment of the Rosspport Five, a picket of all Shell sites in the area was established. The campaigners managed to prevent any work on the pipeline or refinery taking place for 18 months. In October 2006, the government approved a massive and costly police operation to allow work on the refinery to recommence (see SchNEWS 564). Since October, resistance has continued unabated with daily protests outside the proposed refinery site. Despite regular beatings and harassment by cops, campaigners have stuck to non-violent means of protest such as sit downs, blockades of vehicles, site invasions and more recently, quite a successful lock-on which had the Irish police scratching their heads for some time. There are currently ten separate court hearings related to the campaign waiting to be heard in the next week or so.

CABIN FEVER

On June 12th, Shell contractors, aided by police, arrived unannounced to install a portacabin on to private land in Pollathomais. When landowner Paddy McGrath denied access to his property, in a typically overt display of their allegiance to corporate power, the police cut open the lock on the gate to allow Shell access to the land. Around sixty friends and neighbours of Mr McGrath attempted to prevent Shell's entry. Some climbed on top of the digger while others stood together to hold the gate shut. The police acted swiftly and violently to facilitate entry to the land. People were pulled from the digger and the

senior officer, Supt. Joe Gannon, instructed the driver to use the machine to force the gate open, trapping people between the gate and an embankment. A large number of people sustained injuries.

The next day, following the threat of an injunction if they failed to remove the cabin from the land, Shell agreed it had been sited illegally and promised to remove it. Unfortunately, the removal of the cabin was not the end of the McGraths interaction with Shell's boys in blue and over the following weeks the McGraths were subject to regular harassment and intimidation by the local police. Last week Paddy suffered a stroke and is now in intensive care. It was almost certainly stress related.

In the final days of peat haulage, scenes at the morning picket became increasingly heated as the community responded to Mr McGrath's hospitalization. There were repeated attempts to block the road, met with typical police brutality. In general, the policing approach seems to focus on violent removal of protesters rather than detention. An exception was a local lad who forced the police to carry out a muddy eviction after he had blocked the road by occupying one of the peat lorries.

STILL BOGGED DOWN

On Friday (29th) peat extraction from the site was completed. However, this only marks the beginning of the construction process and the battle is far from over. The community are as determined as ever to prevent the refinery's development. Their experience of the past two years has seen faith in the democratic process tested to its limits and increasingly there is an acceptance of the need for a diversity of tactics if the development is to be stopped. As the construction phase begins it seems likely that direct action will increase. As a local resident told me, "We've had enough and I'd welcome anyone who wants to support us in preventing this development from going ahead."

Winters in Rosspport are long and tough and continuing construction work in the depths of winter will be difficult. Consequently, it is vital for Shell to complete as much work as possible over the summer months. So, if supporting a community-led campaign to protect a pristine area, combined with digger diving and blockading fun'n'games reminiscent of the 90s all set in a beautiful remote seaside location sounds appealing... the Rosspport Solidarity camp welcomes visitors and is an excellent 'busmans holiday' destination this summer. Train fares from the UK to Ireland start at around £25 return....

* For more information contact Rosspport Solidarity Camp - web www.struggle.ws/rsc - tel (from UK) 00353 851141170 - email rossportsolidaritycamp@gmail.com

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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Published in Brighton since 1994

PARTY & PROTEST

JULY: 6-8 - Antiworld Outdoor Festival Experience - Over 21 different types of music from techno and house all the way to trance. At a secret location near London. www.antiworld070707.com ** **13 - 2nd International Day of Solidarity with John Bowden.** Join an international show of strength against the attempt to terrorize both John Bowden and the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) (See SchNEWS 584). Actions organised: London - Solidarity Picket of the Parole Board HQ, Grenadier House, 99-105 Horseferry Road, SW1P 2DD. 12.30-2pm. Bring placards and banners. Edinburgh - Solidarity Picket of the Scottish Parliament from 3pm. Brighton - card-signing, letter-writing and access to a phone provided by Brighton ABC. 12-5.30pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road. Leeds - Solidarity actions from noon at The Common Place. www.myspace.com/friendsofjohnbowden ** **13-15 - Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival** - Annual trade union festival. This year Tony Benn and Billy Bragg will be joined by Chumbawamba, the Men They Couldn't Hang, Mark Thomas, the Badgaddies and more... Tolpuddle, Dorset. Free - charge for parking and camping. 0117 947 0521 southwest@tuc.org.uk www.tuc.org.uk/tolpuddle ** **13-15 - Godiva Festival**, Coventry memorial park. Free music festival with bands from the local area dubbed as: "The Midlands' Biggest and Best Free Festival." but then every festival is the biggest or best something or other. 024 7622 7264 www.godivafestival.co.uk ** **14 - Kelvedon Free Music Festival** - Essex bands playing pop/rock. Innit! kelvedonfreemusicfestival.co.uk ** **18-22 - Earth First Summer Gathering.** Five days of low-impact eco-living. Playing, planning and plotting to avert the destruction of the planet. Somewhere in East Anglia. £15 per adult. www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk email efgathering@aktivix.org ** **21 - Uncaged, the anti-vivisection campaign,** will be holding stalls and rattling tins across London. There will be other similar days around the country - for details, or if you can help in London, email max@uncaged.co.uk for more see www.uncaged.co.uk ** **AUGUST: 14-21 - Camp for Climate Action.** After the success of last year's at the Drax Power Station, this summer the camp will take place at a location near Heathrow airport to highlight airport expansion and the role of the aviation industry in carbon emissions and climate change. For more see www.climatecamp.org.uk ** **27-30 - Smash EDO Summer Action Camp** - Direct Action against the War machine. The Protest Camp will be a chance to work together to close down the arms factory in Brighton. We will have workshops on effective campaigning, actions against EDO MBM and lots of fun together. Call 07875708873 or see www.smashedo.org.uk

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

ALIVE & KICKING

This weekend, the TVs will be alive to the sound of second-rate popstars jetting in from around the globe in an attempt to save their flagging careers as well as the flagging state of the planet. But the big commercial souled-out Live Earth concerts aren't the only available way to enjoy music and concentrate the mind on eco-issues.

A grassroots alternative way of holding a concert has been organised by charity COIN, the Climate Outreach Information Network, who have set up an open web site where artists can submit their more genuine anti-ecogedden material. Acts signed up so far include Seize the Day, David Rovics and a range of punk / folk / ska-ists and various satire-istas all venting their spleen at climate chaotic behaviour.

To check it out, turn up the volume and see www.aliveearth.org

SUMMER OF 69

Following the eviction of the Youth House (Ungdomshuset) in Copenhagen which lead to much rioting but not much success for the residents (see Schnews 579), the anarcho-squatters have decided to make the whole city their home - with an open invite for EVERYBODY to join them! How's that for thinking outside the box?

When the State moved in and took the House after two days of fighting in March, they thought they had stamped out the bugs for good. Little did they realise they only turned the whole city into a "free zone", with activists spread out and popping up everywhere.

The plan is to hit the city where it hurts and demand a new Free Space. Tourism is a big part of the city's economy and is also very sensitive to disruption. A spanking new hostel is being built in Christiania - the long established squat town on the city outskirts (see SchNEWS 513) - to house people arriving to join in the (good natured) chaos during the newly christened 'Summer of 69'. Their general invite reads "Let's show them that tourism is not about money, but about visiting our European neighbours and having a blast". Indeed.

* See <http://permalink.gmane.org/gmane.culture.internet.rekombinant/2163> & www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2007/03/364161.html

* No, they're not Bryan Adams fans - 69 refers to the street number of the evicted Youth House

VEGGING OUT

While most green-friendly people already run themselves on vegetables, from July 1st it's now become easier to also run their vehicles on veg power too (for essential journeys only of course). Tax on using vegetable or plant oil as motor fuel has been slashed and those using less than 2,500 litres per year (good for over 20,000 miles in yer average motor) are exempt all together. The news was tucked away unheralded on Her Majesty's Revenue and Custom's website (where does she get the time to keep it updated?), where the innocuous notice detailing the changes was released with little fanfare.

You might think the government would have been falling over themselves to big up over such a shift in policy, playing up to the greenwash-a-tunity of encouraging people to use cleaner, re-cycled fuel sources but no - the thing is they didn't actually really want to do it but were forced to by a deliberate campaign by veggie oil users. The wheeze was to clog up the bureaucratic system on purpose by registering as a vegetable oil user and then filing such small returns (which had to be filed in paper, monthly) that the cost of processing the claim far outweighed the amount of tax collected. In the end this deluge of paperwork forced the government to concede defeat and change the rules to allow small users to get on with it unhassled.

While large scale use of agro-fuels - where potentially cars are competing with humans for farm produce - is not the answer, this is a way to get away from the big corporations and for old cooking oil to be re-used. Many diesel cars, especially older models, are easily converted for a few hundred quid (see www.veggiepower.co.uk and <http://bloomingfutures.com>). It soon pays for itself, while you get dirt cheap, less planet harming motoring, and a van emitting the smell of a chip shop.

* One lot planning to use specially adapted generators to power their entire event by veggie power are **The Festival of Life** (Sept 1-2nd) promoting sustainability, permaculture, raw food & holistic health at the Steiner School (St Pauls Church), 1 St Pauls Road, London N1 2QH - £8 / £5 conc. under 16's free - for more details see www.festivaloflife.net

Positive SchNEWS

Not making too much of song and a dance about it, one bunch of resourceful squatters have been busy recording their own compilation of home grown music. The Squat Breaks crew have got a small but reasonable studio in East London, which they are using to cut out the middle men and become masters of their own masters. All profits from the CD go back into the project and they're currently looking to drum up more musicians / poets / artists from a squatting / penniless background to contribute to further compilations...If you're interested in getting involved, or just want to support them by checking out their offerings, see www.myspace.com/squatbreaks

...and finally...

A recent Home Office review considered the distress children suffer in a deportation, recommending that kids shouldn't be removed during school exams. It says "Consideration of proximity to key educational exams is 'a factor which may be taken into consideration' when determining the most appropriate timing for removal, but will not preclude removal. Removals can be extremely stressful to children and we are open to considering anything that would alleviate that." Anything for the kids it seems - short of leaving them alone altogether.

The same review also tackled the real reason people feel so aggrieved when forcibly removed from their country of residence with the intention of sending them back to be imprisoned, tortured or live in poverty in an oppressive regime - it's the uniforms immigration officers wear!

Throwing out the rule book, built on intimidatory principles developed by various militaries down the years, they are now seeking tips from fashion designers when it comes to designing enforcement officer uniforms. Out are dark navy suits, in is something, er, softer, and 'less intimidating to children', like pastels. Several fashion designers in the uniform game give an insight into the state-of-the-art police state: Designer Susanne Malim, manager of a design company claims, "I equate deportation officers with traffic wardens, who have gone for a softer image now and look more like post office or delivery men, particularly in Kensington and Chelsea, where they've gone from navy to a soft khaki colour and Italian blouson. They look more approachable. Extreme tailoring depicts authority and aggression but soft lines and fabrics which move as you move is immediately more restful on the eye. While I can't imagine many deportation officers wearing pink with the training they've had, grey, khaki, sand colour, or a washed out blue would be nice. Perhaps smiley badges too."

It seems that when the knock on the door finally comes, you'll be so enchanted by the stylish cuts, complimentary shades and beautiful textures of the state goons that you'll be more than happy to round up the kids and let them escort you to the nearest airport, giving you tips on grooming and deportment...



Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - whatever soft hue they come in, we'll still see the world in black and white. Honest!

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