

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER NOT SO FOOLISH...



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EIRE WE GO AGAIN

THE LATEST FROM THE ANTI-SHELL PROTESTS IN ROSSPORT...

The Irish state's determined persecution of protesters against Shell's experimental pipeline started to unravel last week as 25 of the 27 standing trial had their cases withdrawn or dismissed.

They did however manage to stitch up campaigner Niall Harnett, who received three five-month sentences after being roughed up by Gardai in a court building. In a farcical turn of events, after failing in the prosecution of a Gardai for assault, they then prosecuted Niall.

The prosecution managed to convince the judge that Niall assaulted three Gardai at once, including an inspector and a sergeant and that no less than seven Gardai managed to cram into the space between the doors with Niall to witness this extraordinary event. Niall stated in court, "I am not prepared to apologise for standing up to them, because they are bullies." Niall has lodged an appeal, but if unsuccessful he will serve five months as the sentences run concurrently.

This legal farce follows a year of sinister Rossport related incidents with elements worthy of the most gratuitously paranoid potboiler (see SchNEWS 673). First news arrived that one of the security guards who worked for Shell had been shot dead in Bolivia and that he was part of a terrorist group that aimed to start a civil war there. Within weeks it became clear that he was

not alone, that in fact several security guards from the Shell compound had travelled to Bolivia with him where some were arrested and others are wanted for questioning.

The environmental prize winner Willie Corduff was beaten by masked men while conducting a peaceful overnight sit in at the Shell compound. Then Pat O'Donnell's boat was boarded and sunk by more masked men, an event the Gardai failed to investigate for weeks. Finally, as Shell's pipe laying ship the *Solitaire* arrived off the coast two Irish Navy gun boats were deployed alongside a Air Force spotter plane, 300 Gardai and 200 Shell private security. All to watch, surround and repress no more than one hundred Shell to Sea campaigners. Rumours abounded of unmarked military jeeps and the place was crawling with secret police men. A huge media smear campaign swung into action seeking to paint the Shell to Sea campaigners as crazed terrorists despite the facts showing such types were on the other side.

Following the court victories over 100 supporters showed up outside the gates of Castlerea Prison to protest the continuing imprisonment of Shell to Sea colleague Pat O'Donnell, serving seven months in prison on trumped-up charges following months of state-sponsored harassment (see SchNEWS 710). Pat's ordeal has continued in prison. He has been refused a transfer to Loughan House, where a more open regime applies and visiting Pat at Castlerea Prison has been difficult for his family.

Despite the scale of official repression of the campaign, it has achieved major victories with the experimental pipeline delayed by 10 years from 2003 to 2013. In what has become known as the Great Oil & Gas Giveaway, the terms of energy exploration licenses have been changed so that energy companies now pay no royalties and very little tax.

Millions have been spent on a huge PR offensive to win hearts and minds of key opinion makers. Paid hacks have poured out slanders about those who continue to resist Shell, while the few journalists who have dared question such stories have been targeted for abuse.

* See www.shelltosea.com and www.indymedia.ie/article/96167

beyond being beyond petroleum

SANDS STORM AS BP GETS INTO TAR SANDS OIL

Grassroots groups from across the world will take part in a fortnight of protests against BP's plans to move into Canada's tar sands, home to indigenous First Nations people. Until now BP have been the only major oil company to have eschewed tar sands extraction. With profits at risk, BP have been ditching the 'Beyond Petroleum' sham, and have acquired a half share in the tar sands development in Alberta. Already, millions of barrels of tar sands oil are being extracted every day there, producing three to five times as many greenhouse gas emissions as conventional oil and causing the mass deforestation of desperately needed carbon sinks.

The immediate human impact is catastrophic for local First Nations communities, with toxic tailing ponds leaking poisons into the local water supply and disturbingly high rates of rare forms of cancer and auto-immune diseases.

The BP Fortnight of Shame, called by the UK Tar Sands Network, Rising Tide and the Camp for Climate Action, kicked off on the annual Fossil Fools day on April 1st with a convergence at the Huntington Lane protest site against an open-cast coal mine (see SchNEWS 714, www.defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com).

Having already stopped felling on the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for a month, this weekend's plan is to help establish a permanent base on site, including a ramble over the proposed surface mine site, banner drops, and campaign planning.

Actions on Fossil Fools Day included the disabling of RBS cashpoints in Brighton with stickers reading 'Investing in tar sands is OUT OF ORDER' and the delivery of a hoax BP ad campaign to their HQ. Posing as representatives of a PR company, climate campaigners delivered 22,000 new logos – one for every BP logo in the UK – of a 'Back to Black' ad campaign. Boxes of 'Back to Black' were planted on their doorstep and a matching sign was d-locked onto the building in protest at the Canadian tar sands project.

On April 10th there is to be a Party at the Pumps protest with events culminating at the BPAGM on April 15th. Other actions are to take place from Brighton to Scotland.
* For local events visit www.climatecamp.org.uk/get-involved/local-groups and see www.risingtide.org.uk

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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Published in Brighton since 1994

OUT TO LAUNCH

The Free Gaza Movement (FGM) has bought 1200 tonne cargo ship to add to its siege-breaking fleet. The boat was bought at auction after it had been impounded when an International Transport Federation (ITF) inspection found the owners had been exploiting their Lithuanian crew – not paying their wages and humiliating them.

ITF Inspector and union organiser Ken Fleming said, ‘We are pleased to announce that this vessel which was used to subject workers to modern day slavery, will now be used to promote human rights for the people of Palestine.’

The FGM have renamed the boat “*The Rachel Corrie*” after the Palestinian solidarity activist killed by an Israeli bulldozer in 2003 as she tried to prevent it from demolishing Palestinian homes (see SchNEWS 397). A civil action case against the state of Israel over Corrie’s death, brought about by her parents, opened last month (See <http://reider.wordpress.com>)

“*The Rachel Corrie*” will join three other ships in taking humanitarian aid to Gaza in a flotilla setting off in May. The new ship will carry 500 tons of cement, as well as medicines, medical equipment and educational materials.

* See www.freegaza.org

** April 20th: A Night of Comedy Music and Magic for Palestine. Ivor Dembina, Jeremy Hardy, Ian Saville, Maureen Younger & Music by The Amigas. At the Dogstar, 389 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton SW9 8LQ. Doors open 7pm, show at 8pm. £6/£8, with all proceeds to The International Solidarity Movement, The Russell Tribunal on Palestine and The Lajee Centre in Bethlehem.

NO EXPENSE BARED

In the first trial of the MP expense scandal scapegoats, the swindlers tossed to the public by Director of Public Prosecutions Keir Starmer were able to avoid the embarrassment of appearing at Southwark Crown Court this Tuesday.

With their legal fees covered by legal aid (though they could be asked to pay it back in part if they are eventually tried and found guilty), their top-dollar silks argued with judge Geoffrey Rivlin that their criminal embezzlements are exempt from scrutiny in the courts under the terms of the Bill of Rights of 1689, which says, “The freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament.”

The legal shenanigans will now take place in the High Court from May 4th-6th, meaning the swindling pond scum could be sitting in the dock on Election Day, May 6th.

Outside a Peoples Court launched a creative audio-visual protest with banners, placards, costumes, street theatre, sing-a-longs, and a 70W radio mic sound system. See http://meltdown.uk.net/election/Peoples_Court.html

MORE THAN FAIR

After police conniving led to the cancellation of Strawberry Fair (see SchNEWS 715), fuming Cambridgeshire party lovers are planning to push ahead with plans for a fightback festival. There is a call out for people to assemble on Midsummer Common on June 5th with “instruments, sound systems, your family, mates and a fuck off attitude.”

* See SchNEWS Party and Protest for more.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

HARD COPY FROM HONDURAS

Honduras has been a deadly country for journalists this year (see SchNEWS 712) with two more slain last week. Local radio journalists Bayardo Mairena and Manuel Juarez were ambushed and shot dead in cold-blood from close range in eastern Honduras.

Five journalists were gunned down in the last month, making it the second most dangerous place for journos in the Western Hemisphere, after Mexico. Although some of these murders have been attributed to organised crime, others targeted those reporting on opposition to the government of Porfirio Lobo.

The Honduran media continue to be on the end of post-coup repression. There is concern about recent threats against the staff of Radio Uno, a privately-owned opposition station in San Pedro Sula. Despite being in the army’s sights since last June’s coup d’état, it continues to take risks by covering human rights violations.

The Lobo government has signalled where its loyalties lie, appointing retired army general Romeo Vásquez Velásquez as head of the national telecommunications company Hondutel. This man played a key role in last year’s coup which saw repeated attacks on opposition media by the military.

* See www.rsf.org/en-pays182-Honduras.html

UKBA GO CHANNEL HOPPING

Protesters staged a demo outside the Brighton UK Border Agency in solidarity with Calais migrants on Wednesday (31st March). The protest highlighted the Agency’s collusion with the French authorities in the harassment of migrants sleeping rough in Calais (see SchNEWS 712).

The UKBA has in the past year stepped up pressure on the French to make Calais a migrant free zone and has set up shop in the port. Migrants are routinely arrested, have their squats raided and possessions destroyed to this end.

The demo also protested the collusion of authorities either side of the channel in joint charter flights, which deport large numbers of Afghan migrants, many of whom haven’t had a chance to complete the asylum process.

Fifteen protesters stood outside the entrance handing out leaflets, informing passers by on the situation in Calais with requisite banner in tow.

An info day is to be held in the Cowley Club, Brighton on May 15th. Look out for a week of action across Europe coming up in June.

* See calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

ALL'S WELL THAT NZ WELL

With the trial of the EDO Decommissioners rapidly approaching (see <http://decommissioners.co.uk>), activists can take heart from news from New Zealand where a teacher, a farmer and a Dominican friar mounted the first successful “for the greater good” defence in the country’s history.

Adrian Leason, Sam Land and Father Peter Murnane freely admitted cutting their way through the fences of a government spybase near Blenheim and slashing the inflatable plastic dome covering a satellite dish with sickles.

But it took a jury just two hours to acquit the Waihopai Ploughshares three, after they accepted the defence that they believed what they were doing would prevent human suffering. Wellington lawyer John Miller said, “If you believe someone’s in grave danger of suffering and you prick a balloon, that seems quite reasonable.” Well, quite. And if you take a hammer to a factory...

* See <http://ploughshares.org.nz>

STORY TO TELL

This week Brighton-based direct action group Smash EDO went truly international, speaking in Tel Aviv with Bernadine Dohrn, an ex-member of the Weather Underground.

At a public meeting of Israeli anti-occupation activists, the groups discussed actions of active solidarity, particularly the decommissioning of EDO that took place during last year’s Operation Cast Lead attack on Gaza (See SchNEWS 663).

The two groups shared common ground in resistance to US arms giant ITT, talking about anti-arms trade actions spanning several decades - and employing a wide variety of tactics - as well as the future of anti-occupation campaigning.

Smash EDO showed videos of its demos against Brighton’s bomb factory - EDO/ITT - with Tel Aviv activists being particularly struck by the campaign’s strategies for resisting police repression and FIT tactics.

* For an audio recording of the meeting see www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2010/03/448421.html

* For info about ITT and corporate complicity in Palestine see www.corporateoccupation.wordpress.com and www.smashedo.org.uk

UN-IRVING

Brighton doesn’t tolerate fascist rhetoric now or ever (see SchNEWS 454). That was the message David Irving’s ‘unwelcoming committee’ presented to the far-right holocaust denier and his henchmen last Saturday (27th March).

The deluded historian planned to give a talk to the troops in the city but was met by the concerted resistance of around twenty anti-fascists all unwilling to tolerate his warped dogma.

The group informed the owner of the venue where the talk was due to take place about the true nature of Irving’s ramblings. He was genuinely startled by this and immediately asked Irving and his mob to pack up and be gone. They only did this after fearlessly calling the boys in blue and refusing to leave without a police escort.

Having finally sent them packing, the meet-and-greet group patrolled some of Brighton’s hotspots most likely to be potential fallback venues (sounds like a pub crawl then) but were content with the clean air of a job done.

The following day David Irving’s online action report alleged the anti-fascist presence were in fact hired heavies. Now there’s a thought...

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