



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE...

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BALCOMBE ROCK

MARCHES, BLOCKADES, ARRESTED MPS AND ONE HELLUVA LOT OF COPS...THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BALCOMBE FRACKETEERS STEPPED UP THIS WEEKEND WITH THE ARRIVAL OF RECLAIM THE POWER.

The campaign against the Balcombe fracketeers stepped up this weekend with 2000-strong marches, innovative blockading and the arrival of Reclaim the Power – a crack squad of direct activists connected with No Dash for Gas (of West Burton occupation fame).

Although the RtP camp itself (about a mile and a half from Cuadrilla's Frackden) received cursory police attention, the actual drill-site - which had already been reinforced with extra fencing and razor-wire - was surrounded by ever-growing legions of them, from as far as Oxford, London and Southampton.

On Saturday many cops moved into the site itself and started patrolling the inside of the perimeter fence. At one stage about twenty cops moved into the field of Christmas trees next to the site, now home to a dissident splinter group of tree-dwellers and chaoto-nihilists. They diligently searched the ground to a chorus of mockery. Despite their best efforts they didn't find a single trace of Santa.

Sunday was the day of the big inclusive march from Balcombe village to the site. It began camp-side with raised tensions, after a man was nicked exiting a portaloos, and vans arrived marked 'Police Dogs'. Two-hundred or so campers, led by the inevitable samba band, marched to Balcombe station at around 2pm.

The crowd there exceeded expectations: a massive two thousand people. A noisy demo then blocked the normally quiet country road before a substantial part of the crowd surrounded the drilling rig, with some holding hands and others rattling the outer fence. With the fracketers secure in the razor wire compound the police didn't get too excited and did little to disperse the mob.

CLUSTERFRACK

Monday morning was Reclaim the Power's "day of action". As cops congregated at the main gate, the news broke that the HQ of Cuadrilla in Lichfield and their PR agency Bell Pottinger in London had been occupied. Described by one protester as a "clusterfuck", the day began with the blockade of Cuadrilla's equally evil right hand men, Bell Pottinger, who revel in the grotesque business of painting the likes of Syria, Big Tobacco, and oil bad boys Trafigura in a good light. They call themselves 'sans frontiere' – activists call them 'sans morale'.

A series of pipes held the blockade strong while a loudspeaker played real-life excerpts from a 'community engagement' announcement made by Cuadrilla at Balcombe, on a loop: "I know everything that comes out of my mouth sounds like total fucking bullshit... I know that everything that..." Well, you said it.

Meanwhile, at Cuadrilla's Litchfield HQ, people glued on at the front while others locked on inside to workstations. The police were forced to climb over the back to gain access. Staff, before evacuation, were heard making indignant claims of "I just can't work in these conditions!"

On the fringes of the action, Lord 'Frack the desolate North-East' Howell had a 'For Shale' sign erected outside his house, and Francis Maude MP was given the gift of a wind turbine blade at his constituency office in Horsham.

BACK TO BALCOMBE

With those tasks accomplished the focus switched back to Balcombe, and cunning use of a critical mass of cyclists as a decoy allowed two groups to lock on in front of the main gates. When more police arrived the bikes formed a handy barricade to stop them getting to the gate and after a lot of pushing and shoving the cops retreated to loud cheers and the usual claims of street ownership.

SchNEWS spoke to one of the self-proclaimed 'shovers': "The cops made another two attempts to push through our line of protesters and failed miserably. Fewer protesters, no bikes and more cops meant that eventually, well after an hour or so and on the fourth attempt the cops finally broke through. They then tried snatching people not always successfully, as a result of some skilful de-arresting."

Once the cops cleared the road they were able to remove and arrest around 30 people, including those locked-on along with a few bystanders such as SchNEWS's local MP Caroline Lucas, but this was after a good six hours. On the whole, we've been told, the police seem to be targeting "effective people or stereotypes".

The resistance at Balcombe is varied, eclectic and inspiring but if the greybeards at SchNEWS have got one tip - we've noticed that the cops are able to film at will with very little intervention from protesters. They are now using that footage to arrest people later on. Some arrests have been made for FIT watching, it's true, but it isn't compulsory to comply with being filmed! People should do all they can to distract the police filming, even just standing in front of the camera asking why they are filming. You never know, you might just stop you or your mate getting nicked the next day. **For rolling coverage: www.frack-off.org**

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For a previously-cop-sanctioned wee

The cops aren't exactly playing by their own rules at Balcombe (do they ever?) but this really takes the piss. One protector found herself caught short away from the compost loos and politely asked nearby police if she could relieve herself on what she knew was railway land. They agreed.

No sooner had she found a secluded space to squat when another group of the boys in flouro swept in to arrest her and bundle her into a van. The desperate defender could only empty her bladder when she finally arrived at the copshop, where she was held for two hours.

That's one time-consuming pee.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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TOWER HAMLETS - ROUND TWO

"THE EDL DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO 'MARCH ON' AREAS. THIS IS NOT ABOUT EXPRESSING FREEDOM OF SPEECH, IT'S ABOUT CAUSING FEAR AND DIVISION. THAT'S WHY THEY MUST BE OPPOSED" - ANTI FASCIST NETWORK

The EDL's leadership have a peculiar obsession with this borough of London – this'll be the third time they've tried (and failed) to demonstrate en masse in the area. That's without counting leadership Tommy and Kev's ill-fated effort at a charity walk through the area back in June.

The last time the league put in an appearance in the borough, in September 2011, a thirty day ban on all parades in the area was enforced by the Home Secretary. On the day, an army of cops enforced separation between them and the thousands of locals and anti-fascists waiting for them just up the road.

So why Tower Hamlets? According to the EDL it's because the area is already under Sharia law. In fact they go so far as to claim that there is "No beer allowed, this is a Muslim area", which will come as news to regulars of the White Hart and Blind Beggar.

In reality there probably are a handful of nutters who want to establish a global caliphate and Taliban-style social mores in the East End but they're a tiny, tiny minority. Despite EDL assertions, local government is probably no more corrupt there than in any major city. Scare stories about 'ghettoes' and 'no-go zones' are just there to whip up hate and get boots on the street.

Last time, the EDL mobilised around 800 of their footsoldiers for their venture into darkest Muslamic country. When they announced Tower Hamlets 2013 they were at the height of their post-Lee Rigby bounce. Recent outings in Hull and Portsmouth have not seen anything like the numbers turning out in the immediate aftermath of the soldier's death but the threat to the area is still substantial

There's every likelihood that there will be a state ban on demos and parades again but anti-fascist opposition on the streets is what counts. The Anti-Fascist Network is calling for autonomous anti-fascists to meet in Altab Ali park at 11 a.m on September 7th saying, "We are calling a mass opposition, the more people, the safer and more empowering it will be for all of us. On the day we aim to be mobile and fluid in order to disrupt the EDLs plans".

Look out for the Anti Fascist Network (AFN) banners and flags and join us on the streets. Follow @THStopEDL for updates now and on the day ...Continued



NO BORDER CAMP ROTTERDAM 2013

The NO BORDERS CAMP took place in Rotterdam between the 2nd and 10th August this year.

Around 250 people attended per day the series of workshops and discussions. Each day had its own theme, touching on topics such as: Travel (flee) and arrival – day of the refugees, Frontex and border control – crossing the sea – stowaways, Repression, Deportation & detention profiteers / blacklisting, Stop deportations!, Day against the services DT&V (Service to force return), IND (Immigration), IOM (International Organization 'for' immigration), immigration police Anti-capitalism / cause of refugee movements / climate change. The camp ended on Saturday (10th) with a large demonstration through Rotterdam.

SchNEWS spoke to someone on the ground, "Police repression was very low, the municipality backed off as soon as the camp was there (in advance, they had repeatedly threatened with evicting the camp), the location was awesome (in the heart of capitalist Rotterdam and very visible) and we even had very nice weather! Of course nothing goes 100% perfect but I think we did a good job with establishing a firm, visible week of border resistance with a nice balance between fluffy and radical approach, both in the program as well during the actions. Some actions were somewhat chaotic, as we biked with 50 people through a city that isn't used to bikes and designed for 'big traffic'. At the first action day, Sunday, this went wrong. One of us got arrested after having a small confrontation with an angry car driver who got blocked by the group of bikers. The ending demo was nice as well. There were about 500 people, and the atmosphere was really lively and militant. There was a lot of tension in advance, because fascists had announced a counter-demo and the cops seemed to have let go of their "non-repressive" attitude they had shown during the week. They really provoked us by arresting a person who had on her t-shirt "fuck the police", and by letting a line of excited police horses push the people in the back. One of the horses actually bit a person as they came too close to the back line. The fascists were with only 20 people or so and they got sent away by the cops pretty soon, so in the end there was no confrontation with them. Anyways, all was fine in the end. We didn't respond to the police provocations and the arrested person had been released after 15 minutes already. All in all it was a good demo."

BADGER CULL IMMINENT Activists gear up for Somerset and Gloucestershire cull, as do the NFU... with an injunction.

The badger cull in Somerset and Gloucestershire is starting on Tuesday 27th September. Eagle-eyed activists had seen DNA hair traps near setts - a sure sign of imminent shooting. Now official announcements have confirmed the date.

Not unpredictably, the National Farmers Union (NFU) have applied for a injunction - for 'Protection from Harassment' - to stop people stopping the slaughter, the details of which are yet to be published. This is a good thing: If it can be proved that you were aware of the contents, it will probably apply to you. Even if you have no history of involvement, and you won't have a chance to put your side across in court.

This Protection from Harassment injunction follows in a long line of repressive court orders portraying peaceful protest as harassment. They have mainly been used against animal rights campaigns and failed when arms company EDO MBM tried to use one to stop protests outside their factory. (See Schnews 492, 531 and plenty more). The gist of injunctions under the Protection from Harassment Act are usually to ban all protest and filming within certain areas - but the full extent of the PHA on circumventing civil liberties is worth a read up on if you're not familiar.

Don't be put off stopping the cull on the ground, wangle yourself some time to get to the cull zones for the 27th. This won't be a slow burner - the shooting teams expect to kill 80% of their quota in the first 3 days. That's thousands of badgers.

There is are some very helpful maps up at <http://badger-killers.co.uk/cull-to-start-on-the-27th/>, where the whole of the UK has been divided into regions, and each region given a piece of the cull zone to go to. If possible get in touch with your local sab group (find them here: <http://hsa.enviroweb.org/index.php/get-involved/localgroups>).

The general plan seems to be to look out for suspect looking vehicles, then walk near to the shooting teams with bright lights and noisy stuff so you don't get shot.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, to keep calm and carry on. is a fool's errand

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