

## IN PROTEST AT THIS MADNESS

*As we face the worst financial crisis since the Depression; as people get poorer by the day and families lose their homes and the breadwinners lose their jobs; as we pour money into the bottomless pit of the unwinnable wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; Gordon Brown seems hell-bent on spending an estimated £38 billion to give us thousands more nuclear warheads on top of the obscene pile we have already. Now he and other European leaders are embarking on a new breed of nuclear power stations.*

*On 27 October, with over 300 peace protesters, I helped blockade the Aldermaston bomb factory in protest at this madness. I lay on the road, on my back in below-freezing temperatures, locked on with handcuffs and steel arm tubes... I could not help thinking: if the flood water from global warming starts to lap the eaves of our houses, or if the unthinkable happens and the planet is left a desert by a mad lunatic leader of one of the many countries possessing nuclear weapons, what good will be the trillions of pounds amassed by the world's capitalists?*

*I am proud to be a member of CND, and am even more proud of the hundreds of people who sat down with me and were prepared to give up their freedom in order to save our planet from Armageddon.*

**Ray Davies**, Vice-Chair, CND Cymru, in a letter to the press

*Hundreds of anti-nuclear activists took part in blockades at AWE Aldermaston on 27 October during UN Disarmament Week.*

Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment is involved in the design, production, maintenance and decommissioning of Britain's nuclear warheads. New research facilities are currently being built at Aldermaston to develop a new generation of nuclear weapons.

The number of participants actively blockading on 27 October appeared to take the police by surprise as they struggled to deal with lock-on tubes, tripods and superglued 'angels'. Protesters managed to completely blockade the base for over two hours, with a partial blockade continuing for several more. 33 arrests were made. Two activists who took part in the blockade, Ray Davies and Irene Willis, explain their actions: left and below.



*'Angels' from the Christian Peacemaker Team*

## GUILTY OF HAVING A DREAM

*I am guilty... of wanting a world where my children and indeed the children of the whole world can live safe, secure and healthy lives, free to follow their own paths in peace without the threat of violence, of which the ultimate is nuclear weapons. I've tried every legal method to get my voice heard: I've stood in Parliamentary and local elections, sat in council meetings as the token Green, co-ordinated meetings, attended demos, leafleted the public; yet nothing ever seems to change.*

*We are facing a crisis such as this planet has never faced. The world is in chaos. We have the dangers of climate change; resources are running out after we have raped this Earth for so many years, and now the economy is collapsing. Our so-called leaders are blinkered; they can and will not lead us out of this mess. Meanwhile, at Aldermaston they go on producing these weapons of unspeakable violence. I dread the day, as everything goes pear-shaped with this so-called civilisation of ours, that someone somewhere will actually use these weapons again.*

*Aldermaston is key to the development of the new Trident – a total waste of money as far as I'm concerned; money which could instead be used to create a new and better world instead of developing weapons of mass destruction. It has come to the point where all I can do to try and end this madness is sit my old body in front of the gates where this evil carries on and try to physically stop it.*

*So, yes, I plead guilty of having a dream: that of a peaceful world where there are no weapons; where people take responsibility for their actions; and where I no longer have to spend my time protesting and stand before the Court as a "criminal".*

**Irene Willis**, in a statement made during her trial for blockading the gates at Aldermaston on 27 October

# ...old or new

In response to a government white paper inviting local authorities to volunteer to have nuclear waste dumped, or rather buried, in their areas in return for extra money for local services, the Labour-controlled county council in Cumbria has expressed its interest in the scheme. Politicians are notorious for making decisions with disastrous long-term effects for short-term gain; after all, they'll be long gone by the time things start to go wrong and presumably they don't care enough about their children to want to protect the planet for future generations. Others are not so blasé. The government's own chief nuclear inspector has said that there is no safe place in Britain to bury nuclear waste, while expert on radioactivity, Dr Ian Fairlie, has pointed to studies which show increased incidences of cancer around nuclear sites and has criticised the government for failing to commission independent reports from scientists before issuing the white paper. In a letter to her local paper, below, anti-nuclear campaigner Ruth Wallis expresses her concerns:

## **NUCLEAR POWER IS NOT CLEAN OR GREEN**

*When nuclear generation of power was first approved for Britain in the 1950s, we were assured that it was clean and green. As the years have passed we have found that this is far from true. Cumbria has learnt of its dangers the hard way; a serious fire at Windscale, leaks of radioactive material at Sellafield, clusters of cancers in the local people, and radioactive fallout (from Chernobyl) over the fells, making the local meat and milk unfit for human consumption for years.*

*So I am rather surprised to read that the County Council is expressing interest in hosting a deep repository for some of the most dangerous nuclear waste, now in temporary store. There is a reward (or bribe) offered in return, of course - 'community support packages'.*

*It is alarming for the plan to be considered at all. [At] a lecture in Newcastle... Neil Blundell, the government's principal nuclear*

*inspector, ... Mentioned that Cumbria might volunteer to house this waste. He categorically stated that there is nowhere in the UK where it can be buried safely. Because our rocks are full of fissures and water channels developed over millions of years, there simply are no stable locations in Cumbria or elsewhere.*

*This immediate proposal concerns not Cumbria alone. Were it to go ahead and if at any future stage radioactive particles should escape, wind and rain could shower them over Northumberland [and elsewhere]. Decisions taken now will affect the area for generations to come, when the current councillors are long departed.*

*Can the County Council assure us all that it will consult widely both experts and the population at large before such a momentous decision is made?*

Ruth Wallis, Newcastle upon Tyne

## **NPOWER IN THE NEWS**

Plans by RWE Npower to fill Thrupp Lake, at Radley Lakes in Oxfordshire, with fuel ash from Didcot (coal and gas fired) power station have faced fierce resistance from local people and other environmental activists since 2005. Early in 2007, Npower employed thugs to carry out a reckless and dangerous eviction of an occupied house at the Lakes, and then felled mature trees under cover of a wide-ranging injunction designed to restrict media coverage. The ruse proved counter-productive and led instead to the campaign to save the lakes being widely and sympathetically reported in national mainstream media, which was a public relations disaster for Npower.

Happily, in December, Npower announced that it would no longer need Thrupp Lake for ash disposal at any time in the future, and would be giving the Lake to the community for nature conservation.

Meanwhile the company has been turning its attention to Anglesey, where it has announced that it has secured an option to buy farmland next to the existing Wylfa nuclear power station, along with permission to feed up to 3.6 gigawatts of electricity into the national grid. All this is in anticipation of the government's commitment to new nuclear power stations, but there might be more trouble ahead for Npower. Presumably this is the same land which French nuclear company EDF decided to offload, probably with good reason. Any plans for new nuclear build in Wales will face fierce resistance from anti-nuclear activists.

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