

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Published on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
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EXTINCTION REBELLION (ER) ANNOUNCES NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO CEASE "DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES".

In a statement, issued on January 1st under the title, "We Quit", ER said that instead of disruptive activities it would in future "prioritise attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks".

Just Stop Oil (JSO) and *Insulate Britain*, on the other hand, subsequently reaffirmed their commitment to disruptive climate action. JSO issued a statement saying, "We must move from disobedience to civil resistance – this is what the nurses and paramedics are doing..."

10 days later, on January 11th, ER announced its new campaign with a banner drop over Westminster Bridge. A group of activists marched from Jubilee Gardens to the bridge where they formed a human chain over it. The banner read: "21 April ♥ Unite to Survive"



The banner drop with ER supporters on the bridge

This action, ER said, constituted the launch of its "100 days campaign", intended to become the biggest mobilisation campaign XR has ever undertaken. The primary aim is to achieve a mass 100,000 strong assembly outside Parliament on April 21st, the spring equinox, 100 days after January 11th. To this end ER is launching a Crowdfunder with the aim of raising £1 million by April 21st to fund mobilisation and

organisation for the event and subsequent campaigning.

See: <https://extinctionrebellion.uk>

PALESTINE ACTION CAMPAIGN WIDENS

Palestine Action (PA), founded July 2020, has been organising an intense direct action campaign against Israeli company *Elbit's* arms factories and offices in the UK, with three of them shut down in that period. Elbit supplies military drones to Israel for use against Palestinians. PA has recently broadened its campaign to include other targets – see below.

Actions

On December 9th, four PA activists allegedly dismantled approximately £1 million worth of Israel-destined military equipment at the US-owned Welsh factory, *Teledyne Labtech*. The four were remanded in custody until trial on charges of criminal damage. They were still in prison on 16th January.

On 19th January, PA Scotland targeted *Leonardo UK's* factory in Edinburgh, occupying the roof, dismantling equipment and using red paint to paint walls inside and out, including "Stop Apartheid" on one wall. Leonardo supplies Israel with trainer/combat jets and laser-targeting systems for aircraft.

On 2nd February, Israeli forces raided a refugee camp on the West Bank, killing 10 Palestinians. That evening PA activists gate-crashed an engineering awards ceremony in the posh East Wintergarden in Canary Wharf, London - one of the activists described the ceremony as "celebrating the worst of Britain's military-industrial-colonial complex".

One got onto the stage and grabbed the microphone to tell attendees that "This morning, 10 Palestinians were murdered by the occupation forces...using Elbit's

Between 9th and 12th January, five PA activists who took direct action at Elbit's Leicester factory were on trial at Leicester Magistrates' Court charged with going equipped to commit criminal damage. Two of these had their cases dismissed on the first day of trial and on the 12th, of the three others, two were found guilty and sentenced to community service and a third was found not guilty.

On January 10th-13th, four people, appearing at at Highbury Magistrates' Court, were found guilty of criminal damage to Elbit's since closed-down London HQ and given conditional discharges.

Two PA activists, who appeared on January 17th at Manchester Crown Court charged with criminal damage at Elbit Ferranti's factory in Oldham (now also closed down), had their trial postponed to November 27th. A supporting demonstration was held outside the court anyway.

Many other trials of PA activists are due to be heard later in 2023. Many of these will be jury trials at Crown Courts. You can find information on Twitter: @pal_action

weapons... Arms companies are responsible for millions dead around the world – are you happy to profit from murder?" Activists also let off stink bombs before being escorted out by private security.

In court

On January 4th, two activists appeared at Southwark Crown Court charged with criminal damage on November 12th by squirting tomato ketchup over Balfour's statue in Parliament.

This was in protest at the 1917 Balfour Declaration which stated that a Jewish homeland should be created in Palestine. One activist commented: "105 years ago Balfour gave away the land of Palestine, a land that wasn't his to give."

The two were the first to be charged with "criminal damage to a memorial" under the new *Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill*.



PA supporters outside Manchester Court, January 17th



Supporters outside Southwark Crown Court

SEVEN WOMEN SENTENCED FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

On January 27th, seven women climate activists were sentenced at Southwark Crown Court to suspended sentences of from six months to two years, plus £500 prosecution costs each, after being found guilty after a two-week trial of causing nearly £1,000K of criminal damage to Barclays HQ. They had cracked the windows of the Barclays building in Canary Wharf to draw attention to the bank's financing of fossil fuel

extraction and to call on the bank to stop accelerating the climate emergency. Helen Pankhurst, the great-granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, attended the trial as a supporter, and was quoted as commenting: “It takes courage to challenge the *status quo*, to

risk prison for a cause and to speak truth to power. I’m here in support of the Climate Activists being sentenced today, and in memory of my grandmother and great-grandmother and all the suffragettes who did likewise, over a century ago.”

SIX HS2 ACTIVISTS FACE RETRIAL

Seven HS2 protesters on trial for aggravated trespass, and one for criminal damage, at Highbury Magistrates’ Court on 6th October 2021 had their cases dismissed after it was judged that they had no case to answer. The charges had been laid after the seven had been removed by police in February 2021 from a 100-foot tunnel they’d dug under an

anti-HS2 camp by Euston Station during the eviction of the camp.

However, on 16th December the High Court, upheld an appeal against the earlier verdict, and ordered a new trial for six of those originally charged.

THE MET ADMIT GANGS MATRIX NEEDS “ADJUSTMENT”

The “Gangs Matrix” is a secretive database of people the police consider as “gang members”. In February 2022 *Liberty* lawyers representing Awate Suleiman and *Unjust UK* brought a legal action against the Met, arguing that the Matrix discriminates against Black people, breaches human rights and is unlawful. (75% of those on the matrix were found to be under 25 and 80% black according to a report in the *Guardian*)

Awate is a musician who spent four years fearing he was on the matrix because of the police harassment he was suffering, but was continually refused requests to be told whether he was on the matrix or not until he brought the case, when he was at last informed he wasn’t.

Nearly a year later, four days before the case was due to be heard, the Met backed down, admitting the Matrix needed an overhaul and agreed to remove from the Matrix anyone considered low risk of being involved in gang violence - 65% of the people then on it - and that no-one deemed low risk would be added in future.

Within 28 days of removing someone from the matrix, the police will inform all other bodies they share the data with of the removal. And anyone has the right to ask the Met if they were or are on the matrix and find out what data was or is held on them, unless data protection laws apply. *Liberty* is encouraging anybody subject to repeated stop and search to make a “subject access request” under the Data Protection Act asking whether they are on the matrix, and if it is, what data is held on them.

POLICE PAY DAMAGES TO PROTESTERS



Kill the Bill march through Bristol March 2023

On 18th November it was reported that Avon & Somerset police had paid undisclosed sums of damages to five people who claimed they had been assaulted by officers breaking up a “Kill the Bill” demonstration in Bristol on 23rd March. The police did not admit liability, claiming their actions were

lawful under the then current Covid-19 restrictions, which they claimed they were acting to enforce. Presumably they just paid the damages out of the kindness of their hearts!

One of the protesters claimed an officer struck him in the face with a shield, leaving scars; another that she struggled to breathe when she was crushed beneath two police shields and the defendants also claimed they saw another protester being dragged along by his hair by an officer.

The incidents took place on College Green after a day of peaceful protest claiming that the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, was discriminatory against the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller communities.

One of the five, Flora Sidebottom (23), a youth worker, told a *Guardian* reporter that “The day unfolded peacefully. There were songs and people

were doing circus skills...It was gentle and intimate.” But at about 10pm the protesters were surrounded by police in body armour and carrying

shields and batons. “We sat down and shouted ‘peaceful protest’. But they started battering everybody.”

LEGAL CHALLENGE TO PROPOSED CUMBRIAN MINE

In a press release dated 4th January, Friends of the Earth (FOE) announced it was to launch legal action against the construction of a new coal mine in Cumbria. This followed the Levelling-Up secretary, Michael Gove, granting planning permission for the mine in early December. Significantly, this was announced *after* the Prime Minister returned from attending the recent UN climate talks in Egypt!

FOE said it would file its claim against the project later in January. Their lawyer, Niall Toru, said, “By giving the go-ahead to this polluting and totally unnecessary coal mine the government has not only made the wrong decision for our economy and the climate, we believe it has also acted unlawfully.

“Michael Gove has failed to account for the significant climate impacts of this mine, or how the much-needed move to green steel-making will be impacted by its approval.

“The steel industry is under no illusion that it must decarbonise if we’re to meet our climate goals,

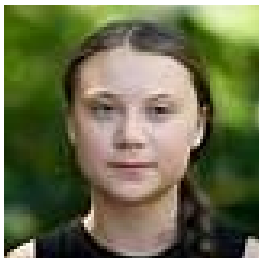
which calls into doubt the long-term viability of the mine and the jobs used to justify it.

“Just as many jobs could be created locally through a programme to guarantee every home in the area is properly insulated. This would bring a myriad of benefits the mine simply can’t offer, such as lower energy bills, warmer homes and fewer carbon emissions released into our atmosphere.

“With the world facing a climate emergency, we shouldn’t have to take this challenge to court. Any sensible government should be choosing to leave coal in the ground, and accelerating the transition to a safe, clean and sustainable future.”

On 18th January XR activists were reported to have targeted the Home Office building in Whitehall in protest against plans for a new coal mine in Cumbria. They poured black paint on nearby walls and across the ground outside the building. Two people locked-on in front of the entrance while others danced around them. This seems a little out of kilter with XR's new "no disruption" policy!

GRETA THUNBERG DETAINED AT GERMAN COAL MINE PROTEST



On January 11th it was reported that eviction orders have been issued against some 700 climate activists occupying a two and half year-old protest camp in the village of Lützerath in the Rhineland after the villagers had been removed to make way for a new open-cast coal mine.

The camp was set up to try to stop the construction of the mine. The campers said they intended to resist the eviction orders.

On 17th January, however, police began the eviction. Among those detained was during the eviction was activist Greta Thunberg (pictured). Police reported that she was part of a group rushing towards the edge of the nearby operating Garzweiler 2 open-cast coal mine, but “she was stopped and carried by us with this group out of the immediate danger area to establish their identity”. One protester jumped into the mine. Police reported that after identity checks all those detained were released without charge.

Over the previous weekend riot police backed by bulldozers had removed activists from buildings in the village, leaving a few still in trees and an underground tunnel (sounds familiar?)

AMERICAN PEACE ACTIVIST JAILED IN GERMANY

On January 10th, 2023 John LaForge (pictured), co-director of Nukewatch (US), entered a German prison to serve a 50-day sentence imposed on him for trespassing on Germany’s Büchel Air Force Base in two protests in 2018 against US nuclear weapons being stored there. One of the actions involved entering the base and climbing onto a bunker that likely housed the some twenty US B61 thermonuclear gravity bombs stationed at the base.

The sentence was imposed on him after he refused to pay a 600 euro fine for the offence. He has appealed against the conviction. He is the first American



ever imprisoned for a nuclear weapons protest in Germany.

ARREST OF FOUR JOURNALISTS “POTENTIALLY UNLAWFUL”

On 23rd November a review of police action in arresting four journalists covering climate protests on the M25 on 7-8th November found the action was “potentially unlawful”.

The review found that the arrests were not simply an overreaction or a mistake by the police officers concerned. Instead the arrests were directed by more senior officers, who had formulated a policing plan that failed to take into account the

likelihood that journalists might be on the scene. The review concluded that “the [policing] plan almost exclusively endorsed arrest as the only intervention available to officers” and that “Police powers were not used appropriately.”

The review was carried out at the request of Hertfordshire constabulary after accusations that the arrests were a threat to press freedom.

TEAR GAS FIRED AT PROTESTERS IN MASAFER YATTA



Woman sitting on the ruins of her demolished home in Masafer Yatta, January 2023

It was reported on January 14th that Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers had that day attacked Palestinians protesting against the stealing of Palestinian land in Masafer Yatta by a settler.

Protesters said the soldiers fired tear gas at them and at their homes, suffocating dozens of people. The soldiers then set up checkpoints on the roads to prevent supporters and residents of other nearby communities from joining the protests and detained a journalist for several hours.

Such incidents are common in the area, a rural area in the South Hebron Hills, inhabited mostly by Palestinian herders.

In the 1980s the area was designated as a military training zone by the IDF. This has led to years of legal battles and harassment of inhabitants, including the destruction of water cisterns, solar panels, roads and buildings by IDF soldiers and Israeli settlers. There are increasing incidents involving settlers, singly or in groups taking over large patches of Palestinian land and setting up a structure on it to claim it for themselves, under the protection of Israeli soldiers and government.

In April last year the Israeli Supreme Court refused to overturn the designation of Masafer Yatta as a military training zone, accepting the IDF argument that the residents are illegal occupants of the land since they couldn't “prove” they were citizens of the land before the training zone was established.

ICJ ASKED TO GIVE AN OPINION ON ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION

On 31st December 2022 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to give an opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. (The General Assembly has found the occupation illegal in the past.)

The General Assembly voted 87 to 26 with 53 abstentions on the resolution. Israel, the US, the UK, Germany and 22 other members voted against the resolution, while France was among the 53 nations that abstained.

Palestinian leaders welcomed the vote, with senior official Hussein al-Sheikh saying it “reflects the victory of Palestinian diplomacy”. Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said: “The time has come for Israel to be a state subject to law, and to be held accountable for its ongoing crimes against our people.”

FUTURE EVENTS

(London unless said)

February 10th, 8am-10am: “Nurses not Nukes” vigil outside Ministry of Defence in Whitehall. Org. by Peace Pledge Union.

Info: mail@ppu.org.uk; 020-7424 9444,

February 10th, Bradford, 7pm: Bradford CND fundraising gig, with music, fun & vegan food. At 1 in 12 club, 21-23 Albion Street BD1 2LY. Tickets from info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk or 01274-730 795.

February 10th, Wolverhampton, 7pm: “A Nice Hot Day in Palestine.” Talk by PSC member reports on her travels in the West Bank. At Friends’ Meeting House, 8B, Summerfield Road WV1 4PR. Org. Wolverhampton PSC. Info: www.tinyurl.com/peacenews3997.

February 10-12th, Manchester, from 4pm Friday: Earth First Winter Moot. Workshops, vegan food, music, dancing, kids’ space. Info: www.earthfirst.uk

February 11th, 8pm: “Just Stop Oil.” Talk by Alfie Beswick on the genocidal policy of new oil and gas exploitation and *Just Stop Oil’s* campaign to prevent it. Preceded at 7.30pm by a buffet. (Bring a vegetarian item if you can) followed by Free (donation welcome) At *News from Nowhere* club, St. John’s Church Hall, High Road E11 1HH.

Contact: 020-8555 5248

<https://newsfromnowhereweb.wordpress.com>

February 11th, 4pm: Night Carnival for Assange. Assemble in Lincoln’s Inn Fields for carnival walk to Parliament (tube; Holborn) Followed by rally in the Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street, Westminster, SW1P 3DW. Speakers include Stella Assange and Jeremy Corbyn. Organised *Don’t Extradite Assange*. www.dontextraditeassange.com

February 11th, 8-10pm: “Just Stop Oil.” Talk by Alfie Beswick, followed by discussion. Preceded by a buffet at 7.30pm (bring vegetarian or vegan item to share). At St John’s Church Hall, High Road, Leytonstone E11 1HH. Free entry. Donation welcome. Info: 020-8555 5248

February 18th, noon, in British Museum (you need to book in advance). Mass creative action to mark end of current BP sponsorship deal and call for it not to be renewed. Organised by *BP or not BP?* <https://bp-or-not-bp.org>

February 18th, York, all day: Yorkshire CND Strategy Meeting and get creative. At The Golden Ball, 2 Cromwell Road YO1 6DU. Contact: info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk or call 01274 730795.

February 25th, noon: “Ukraine – No to Nuclear War.” Assemble noon at Portland Place (tube: Oxford Circus) for march to Trafalgar Square for rally. Called by CND and Stop the War. Info: enquiries@cnd.org ; 020-7700 2393.

February 25th, 2-4pm: “557 Rally” for NHS in Parliament Square. (557 is estimated number of people who have died through part privatisation of NHS.) Organised by *We Own It*; 07521-943 869 info@weownit.org.uk

March 10th, 4-6pm: “No Fukushims Here.” Vigil to mark the 12th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster outside the Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly. Org. Kick Nuclear. Info: davidtrpolden1@gmail.com

March 18th, noon: “March Against Racism.” Organised by Stand Up Against Racism. Info: info@standuptoracism.org.uk

March 18th, Glasgow, 11am: “Resist Racism; Refugees Welcome.” UN Anti-Racism Day event in or starting in George Square. Info: www.tinyurl.com/peacenews3985

March 25th, 11am-6pm: “Resisting Monopoly Capitalism.” *Global Justice Now* Conference with international speakers. Lunch by donation. Venue TBA. Info and to reserve place: 020-7820 4900; www.tinyurl.com@peacenews

April 21st: “The Big One”. Organised by Extinction Rebellion with support of other groups, including CND. It aims at getting 100,000 climate activists around Parliament at the start of a series of protests, actions, vigils and events in central London over following weeks to call for an end to climate change. People are asked to pledge to take part on April 21st by contacting Extinction Rebellion The Big One.

Every Saturday, London, noon-2pm: Vigil and leafletting for Assange outside Belmarsh Prison (244 or 380 buses from Woolwich Arsenal station. Organised *Don’t Extradite Assange*.

www.dontextraditeassange.com

Every Saturday, Edinburgh, 1-2pm: Women in Black vigil outside Register House, East end of Princes Street. Info: wibe@yahoogroups1.co.uk

Every Saturday, Bath, 11.30am: peace vigil outside Bath Abbey.

Second full weekend of every month, Aldermaston . Women’s Peace Camp. Women welcome to camp or visit. Info: 07852-293 386.

1st Saturday of each month, Norwich, noon-12.30pm (November); midnight-12.30am (December): Norwich Vigil for Peace, outside the Church of St. Peter Mancroft, Hay Hill NR2.

1st Saturday of every other month, Menwith Hill, 2-3pm: Quaker meeting at Nesfield Gate on the B645. Bring chair. Contact: barbaraepenny@gmail.com

Every Tuesday, Menwith Hill, 6-7pm: outside main gate of US spy base on A59 road. Org. Menwith Accountability Campaign, <https://www.themhac.uk>. Contact: Sarah Swift, sswift64@gmail.com

Every Wednesday, 6-7pm: Women in Black silent vigil against militarism and war by the Edith Cavell statue in St. Martin’s Place, London WC2. Wear black. www.london.womeninblack.org

Every 2nd and last Friday of each month (but not 10th March – see above): “No Fukushimas Here.” 11am-12.30pm: Vigil outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly; 1-1.30pm: vigil outside Tokyo Electric Power Company, 15-16, Holborn EC1. Org. Kick Nuclear. davidtrpolden1@gmail.com