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Transport minister pied for support of Heathrow expansion lobby

25.05.2005

Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Transport, was pied on Tuesday at the launch event of a powerful new industry coalition, 'Future Heathrow', formed to ensure expansion of Heathrow goes ahead.

A climate change activist gained access to the high security event and as the first speaker welcomed all the suits to their exclusive little back slapping event, she sprang up and planted the carrot and cream cake firmly in the face of the Minister. As she did so, she said "Future Heathrow stinks, your bogus economics stink, Alistair Darling being here stinks, and your vision for this planet stinks". She ejected by security guards but not arrested.

Meanwhile over 100 local residents took time off work to demonstrate outside the CBI HQ launch event, with a huge banner reading 'Future Heathrow Stinks', and a new report that concludes that Heathrow contributes little to the national or local economy, but simply lines the pockets of the aviation industry.



'precarity'. The Euromayday events have been happening over the last few years in Europe, and getting bigger every year, with parades of causalised workers, temps, part-timers, immigrants and unemployed marching through Europe's capitals to demand

new social rights for the most marginalised.

In London, the location of the euroMAYDAY/Flexmob action was texted to people's mobile phones at the last minute. Several hundred turned up at the Hackney Tesco, including Sambistas and a banner saying "All we have to loose is our chainstores". They stayed for some time before a huge police presence moved them out, making several violent arrests. There was also a TUC Trade Union March formed at 12pm, and the Spacehijackers cricket match in Parliament Square.

London Critical Mass celebrated their 11th year of monthly bike rides with a huge event on Friday 29th April, as well as a G8 bike ride benefit in the evening of May 1st. Other Critical Mass rides took place around the country for Mayday weekend.

In Glasgow, there was a reclaim The Streets Party, and the Camcorder Guerillas screened their new G8 film "Why Close the G8". There was also the usual STUC Mayday Rally in George Square. On Friday there was also a Critical Mass bike ride.

In Birmingham there was a march through the Bullring in support of workers' rights in response to the

asset-stripping and demise of Rover which clashed with a pro-capitalist bloc extolling the virtues of unfettered capitalism, ending with a picnic in Pigeon park by the cathedral.

In Bradford the first Critial Mass for some time went ahead successfully.

In Lancaster there was a Mayday Picnic on the Priors field as part of the Reclaiming International Workers' Day festival.

In Sedgefield (Blair's constituency) there was a

pre-election Mayday WMD Festival running May 1st-2nd with music, comedy and a peace camp.

Liverpool saw a critical mass on the Friday followed by a Trade Union march and then a gig on the first.

Manchester held a party on Plattlands Park with a critical mass leading off to it. There was also a Trade Union march, and the Radical Bookfair.

Oxford's International Workers' Day activities included Pensions not War and Oxford samba Mayday madness

In Ireland, the scene of last year's major Against Fortress Europe Mayday demonstrations, there was an Anti-G8 Reclaim The Streets Party on Monday 2nd, as well as a Euromayday Precarity Block on the usual Trade Unions march on Saturday 30th April.

Mayday 2005: Euromayday and More

features 01.05.2005

This years Mayday events saw Euromayday protests and actions happening in 20 cities around Europe, all based around the theme of

Argentina: Workers Defend Zanon Occupied Factory

Grupo Alavío 23.04.2005

Neuquen: The workers of Zanon and other social organizations mobilized in front of the central courthouse on April

21 to defend their factory against mounting attacks. At a moment when the courts and government must make a "political and legal decision" concerning the ceramics factory that has been producing under worker control since 2001 – legal attacks, death threats and physical attacks against the workers have increased.

A delegation of 30 workers traveled some 1,200 kilometers to manifest their determination to defend the factory at all costs. Inside the courthouse a small delegation of workers presented a petition with thousands of signatures from all over the world in support of the workers of Zanon who have set an example that workers can produce and manage even better without a boss or owner.

"With these actions we are marking a playing ground for the judge," said Raul Godoy, Zanon worker and General Secretary of the Ceramists' Union. This week the courts opened up the legal door for a "clamp down" on the part of corporate speculators trying to usurp the plant, profiting from the courts' precarious legal and financial treatment of the workers legal fight for the plant.



Voices from Smithy Fen

mertle 02.05.2005

On the 27th April a meeting was held in Cambridge, allowing members of the traveller community at Smithy Fen to describe their experiences for themselves. A member of the London

based Traveller Support Network also spoke about their work with communities across the UK.

The event, organised by Cambridge Action Network (CAN), was well attended by approximately 40-50 people, including Cambridge based activists, local journalists, and members of the community and University who previously had not attended such events, possibly attracted by not only the usual posters but also a fairly balanced interview given on local BBC radio that morning with a CAN member.

Starting with a graphic film documenting the eviction of Woodside, near Bedford, the audience was introduced to a depiction of the realities of life for travellers. The three speakers from Smith Fen elaborated on the frustrations and harassment they live with everyday, from the constant fear of being homeless to the inability to access basic social facilities such as a GP or schooling, from bailiff brutality to being unable to vote. The speaker from Traveller Support described their work with communities, including resisting or witnessing evictions.

The practical realities of living without an address, with the constant threat of homelessness, the target of harassment by everyone from politicians to publicans, were discussed in detail, bringing to light the systematic victimisation of these members of our society. Those in the audience who had previously deplored the rising tide of hatred against travellers were introduced to the people who were its targets, and were able to hear from them what effect it was having on their day to day lives.

The last part of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of what can be done by both those in the travelling communities and those outside who wished to help them. Establishing contacts between groups like CAN and members of the community, it is

hoped, will lead to more successful collaborative action.

World Leaders Run Out of Control in Oxford

sociétélibre 16.05.2005

Leaders of the powerful G8 countries ran wild in Oxford on Saturday, shaking hands, waving and dancing to samba rhythms. The performance drew cheerful crowds and called for more power to be given to multinational corporations. Oxford residents were warmly invited to join the leaders at their next summit in July near Edinburgh. Vladimir Putin and George Bush cried out for people's support in practical terms, particularly by continuing to "work your boring jobs and do what you're told".

The oligarchal octet and its samba entourage also took in the army recruitment event in Gloucester Green, where the G8 leaders gave thanks for the help of the armed forces in controlling the world and opening new markets for corporate ownership. War was also praised as a great way to keep down the population of poor people, thus helping to reduce world poverty. Omitted were the ways in which military spending contribute to the global economy and create opportunities for governments to invest heavily in technical research while leaving the corporations in control of the final products.



Coming up

- 11 June: Smash EDO National Demonstration, Brighton.
- 15-17 June: G8 Justice and Home Affairs ministers' meeting, Sheffield
- 18 June: Direct action training workshop, Erasmus Room, Queens College, Cambridge.
- 1-8 July: G8 Summit Protests, Gleneagles, Scotland.

Links

- HACAN Clearskies: <http://www.hacan.org.uk/>
- NOTRAG: <http://www.notrag.org.uk/>
- Grupo Alavío: <http://www.alavio.org/>
- Traveller Support: <http://www.travellersupport.org.uk/>
- Dissent! Network: <http://www.dissent.org.uk/>