

Arnieville

and the Fight for Disability Rights

by Marg Hall

photos by Arnieville organizers

There's no mistaking it: I'm getting yelled at as I ride my bike across two lanes of traffic. Bob watches and wildly gestures, expressing his disapproval of my maneuver. He's deaf, so his "yelling" is non-verbal. This is my introduction to Arnieville.

It is the summer of 2010, and a small group of disability rights activists, their caregivers and allies, have chosen my neighborhood to set up a disabled rights protest. They've erected tents, a porta-potty, banners, literature tables, signs, and have food to share. A small group of hardy souls are camped out in the public median strip on a very busy street in South Berkeley.

"Our Homes, Not Nursing Homes" is what the sign says. I think to myself, "This could be interesting!" Parking my bike, I walk up to the table where several women my age, in scooters and wheelchairs, are welcoming the public. I know about nursing homes, and how dreadful, even life threatening, they can be. I helped take care of my mother-in-law who resided in a number of these homes. But I'm not so familiar with the home care safety

net, threatened by state budget cuts that seem to motivate this camp out.

One of the women explains that IHSS (In Home Support Services) is a state-run program that keeps poor and disabled persons in their homes and communities. It provides basic assistance to individuals unable to perform self-care activities in their homes. As disabilities vary, the number of hours per month allotted to each individual to hire an attendant depends on the level of need.



The proposed cuts would destabilize people's fragile ability to survive independently. The disabled, many of whom are still quite young, will be forced to leave their homes and communities and become imprisoned in nursing homes.

Some will resist and join the many disabled homeless on the streets. Others will stay at home with less care and increased suffering. Preventable health problems can quickly escalate because of inattention, poor nutrition or hygiene, leading to medical crises and emergency room visits. No doubt some will die. Repeated cuts to these safety nets are not only cruel but costly, as emergency rooms and nursing homes are comparatively expensive options.

To protest this threat, Jean explains to me, organizers decided to take inspiration from the tent cities named "Hoovervilles" which sprang up during the Great Depression of the 1930s. They call this encampment "Arnieville," named for then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, presided over several years of budget cuts during our own Great Recession.

Jean explains to me the nature of her disability. She has been disabled for many years as a result of an occupational injury (pesticide exposure). She suffers with chronic pain and mobility

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limitations. I volunteer the information that I too am disabled. It surprises me how easily I utter these words to a complete stranger: "I have an invisible disability." This is a first for me. I feel a little like I'm coming out.

I explain I'm in a hurry to get back to my coven for a meeting, but will return. One of the others, Iris, with flowing grey hair and travelling on a scooter, tells me she's a Witch, too. Well, I'm definitely coming back to visit these women!

Later that day, I return with a large banner to hang up at the camp, and decide to join in their protest, which quickly becomes my protest.

Even though at this point in my life I don't need to rely upon In Home Support Services or the other state safety net programs, I know that these are important lifelines. Unless we're rich, any of us at any time could need help. For the most part, all of us are only temporarily "able bodied," and once disabled, it's a downward spiral. One major illness or disability can push us out over the abyss.

For seven years I have been coming to terms with huge personal changes in my health and the growing realization that I was disabled. I am no

longer able to work, rarely able to socialize or travel, struggled with isolation and felt growing anger about the prejudice and social stigmatization I felt. My disability is not apparent. There are good days and bad days. (I have chronic pain and environmental injury).

I needed to connect with the disabled community, but didn't know how.

How lucky I am! Almost immediately I recognized that these folks with disabilities, these street activists, are my people. I need their help, and think I can help them, too. Every day I stop by, if only for a few hours. Neighbors bring food, supplies, and equipment. Others donate money and stop to lend a hand. Drivers honk their horns in support. Homeless people, many with disabilities, find a safe home at our encampment. Word spreads. More folk with disabilities stop by to share food, visit, attend workshops, network for support, and strategize on how to fight back. Sign-up sheets multiply, a Facebook page is created, and public



space is transformed into an open-air center of organizing.

We are a quirky bunch — everyone has both special needs and valuable talents. Sheela, who is blind, is also a Pagan with inner vision and is a great singer. The homeless men, attuned to night threats, stand guard. We ask Ramona, whose first language is ASL (American Sign Language), to emcee one of our rallies. Those of us with chronic mental and physical conditions disappear and return seamlessly, depending on what kind of day we're having. The crips need lots of space for their chairs, and when a messenger is needed, they can move really fast!

It's all so chaotic yet somehow it works. I no longer feel so out of place with my own special needs. No elaborate explanation is necessary — they get it. I feel understood, welcomed, valued. My heart expands and I feel more alive than I've felt in a long time. It is nothing less than magical. The change within me is thrilling, but the work of political change is unfinished and daunting. The budget axe still hangs over our heads.

After a month (we were now officially the longest disability rights

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protest in US history), we decided to change tactics. Our last day at Arnieville we held a closing ritual of sorts — not explicitly pagan but pretty close.

The group then traveled to Sacramento, where the budget was being debated and our fate decided. In one protest, we blocked the major intersection outside the State Capitol Building by setting up tents and using wheelchairs and gurneys. We donned hospital gowns. These actions were designed to demonstrate the effects of budget cuts on our lives. Twenty-two of us were arrested. The day before the budget passed, we returned and more of us were arrested at a sit-in inside the Capitol Building.

In 2010, we succeeded in holding back the worst of the cuts, although there were some. What appears to others to be relatively small cuts can have devastating impact on the poor and disabled. This is especially true since we're starting to feel the cumulative effect of past cuts. In 2011, the fight will be even harder as state budgets all around the country are in crisis because of the Great Recession. The situation in California is dire. The only way out, unless we are to suffer

death from a thousand cuts, is to tax the rich. But the political will is weak for this.

California has a new governor, Jerry Brown. The Arnieville protest encampment is no longer, but the organization responsible for its creation, CUIDO, lives on. CUIDO stands for Communities United in Defense of Olmstead. Olmstead was a court case decision by the US Supreme Court in 1999 that outlawed the systematic segregation of our people into nursing homes and institutions. The historical ableist approach has been to get the crips out of sight so everyone else can feel better: to remove us from our homes and communities. This practice is offensive to the disabled. It is discrimination. That's why IHSS (In Home Support Services) is essential to independent living, and to the protection of our civil rights.



We will use our bodies to defend these rights. We'll do whatever it takes! We will stand up, roll forward, sit in, and lie down. We will go into the streets, around barricades, cross thresholds and into buildings where the rich and powerful gather and speak directly, proudly, and if needed, rudely, this simple truth: our lives are precious. The greed and enormous wealth of the rich in the midst of such widespread pain is disgusting. We demand justice and will need allies. There's not much time to lose, as these cuts are deadly and lives are at stake.

Martin Luther King Jr. warned us that a nation that spends more on its military than on programs to help people, approached spiritual death. We refuse to participate in spiritual death. We will fight for our lives and for our souls. Most likely wherever you live, this fight is happening. Join us.

Marg Hall is a Bay Area Reclaiming Witch, a political activist, and is also a person living with an invisible disability.

For more information on CUIDO, visit cuido.org



RITUAL IN PLACES OF POWER

by **Rebecca Heartwell**

In October 2010, Rebecca Heartwell spoke at a session of Parliament on behalf of her local transition initiative. This is her account.

Today I feel I have arrived. Today I pierced through a barrier that traversed all my barriers of gender, class, and invisible disabilities. Today I went into the Houses of Parliament and spoke up.

Last time I went there was on the anniversary of the suffragettes entering parliament. We sang and chanted but had to remain outside. Doing nothing more than that, I and many others were forcibly grappled and threatened.

Today I went inside, but more inside than I imagined. I found parts of me that I'd left behind along with my ancestors.

I went there as a member of my local transition initiative. I arrived an hour before my scheduled time to seek a place to do ritual: a ritual to help me be in my power and dissolve barriers to a "power-with" process for those within and outside of the walls.

The "right" place came quickly, a central place with four main corridors, over which lay plaques and tributes to Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales.

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Renewed by Starhawk's "Holding the Vision" course a couple of weeks before, I anchored myself and cast a circle around the HOP whilst holding my vision on the central axis. North... Responsibility, East... Communication,



South... Power, West... Connection.

Above me, in the centre, was an amazing mandala web. I was able to utilise the points as dynamic accumulators to draw the sunlight energy and fertilise the seeds in the good dark earth under my feet. As I lifted my arm to spin and draw the circle I noticed the guards. I felt them register me and

I silently asked for their support with my heart, eyes, and mind. They became Guardians of the Directions.

I stated my intentions and sang for peace and justice. All seemed to be still around me and to exhale and inhale with me. I asked for the Guardians to hold the circle for the next few hours with Time as my ally to facilitate the main body of the ritual in the work I needed to do. In the next few hours I was warmly welcomed by all of the officials I encountered.

I continued my spirals of energy work in the House of Lords and House of Commons. I talked with some of them about their work and was shown jewels they carry on uniforms worth £70,000.

In the midst of it all there was some confusion over where my debate was to be held. One of the Sargeant in Arms said my hosting MP, who would know the answer, was in session in the Commons. I thought I'd have to wait until he finished.

But the Sargeant in Arms affirmed and reconnected me to my power as he said, "You have every right to 'Green Card' him" — that is, get

him to come out and speak to me.

Finally the time came for my session, "Food Security after Peak Oil." The main speakers were from Friends of the Earth (FOE), a scientist from a GM research lab, along with the hosting MP.

The respondents (including myself) were ordered and listed, and though I

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RITUAL

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wanted to go first to get it done with, the Goddess had other plans. I was put towards the end of the thirteen speakers.

I am not an academic and can confess to getting lost at times in the commons debate as I waited my turn to speak. I wondered whether any words would come out of my mouth by the time they got to me.

I found myself hoping that others would say what I needed to say so I wouldn't have to speak. I kept repeating the messages from Starhawk and the Sergeant in Arms — that I had a right to take my place, a right to speak.

Suddenly it was my turn. As a member of my local transition initiative, I agreed that oil has peaked or will do in the next few years. I also said that it could be possible to feed ourselves by 2050 in a sustainable way, but only if we act now. We all need to be part of the so-



lution and reconnect to the Earth.

How do we do that? I talked about our various initiatives: growing food behind a library, health centre, community centre, and nursery school, as well as growing forest gardens and community orchards in an urban London borough.

I described how we have started up a Community-Supported Agriculture Program (CSA), working with a farm just fifteen minutes by train to meet food needs of our community. I stressed that the need to be

sustainable was the need to “get local” and build resilience with a capacity to respond quickly, to foster diversity, and rebuild community.

The immediate response from the speakers, particularly FOE, after the session closed was overwhelmingly positive...

“Thank you... excellent... very important... vital... we need to replicate what you're doing... need to find out exactly what you're doing, how you're doing it and provide funding and support...etc.” People came up to me requesting details and I was congratulated again by the speakers.

Afterward, I returned to my ritual space, going up to the literal guardians of the directions, thanking them and shaking their hands. I anchored again in the central axis point and with the high energy of my whole being sent the central vision to spiral around our Earth and the solar system.

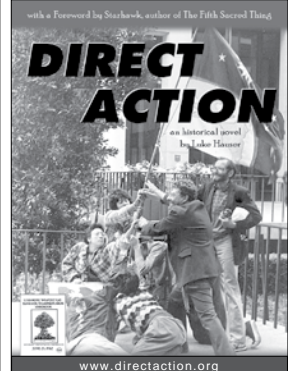
Finally I closed the circle. I rang my parents as I left and trusted that my ancestors were on the line too.

Rebecca Heartwell, is an urban community gardener and earth activist. She initiates community building events involving seasonal earth-based rituals, spirals of resilience and off grid camping. She lives in a housing co-op community in London.

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Wisconsin Unions defend workers' rights

In one of the largest direct actions since Seattle 1999, tens of thousands of demonstrators took over the streets and occupied the state capitol in Madison in February.

Protesters opposed a sweeping anti-union measure nearing passage in the state legislature and supported by the governor.

The bill was delayed by a technicality that involved opposition senators going underground to deny a quorum. The tactic was eventually defeated by a parliamentary maneuver — hardly a banner day for democracy on any count.

Many schools in Wisconsin closed as teachers joined the protests. Governor Walker responded by threatening to call in the National Guard.

Unions from across the country poured resources into Wisconsin while facing similar struggles in a number of other states trying to solve budget crises by de-unioning public services.

“Plans are being put into place to silence workers, lower their wages, cut their benefits and increase the likelihood that they will suffer injuries and fatalities at work,” said Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, which has 1.6 million members. “It is happening at a breakneck pace.”

The Wisconsin legislation would remove workers' rights, recognized since 1959, to negotiate collectively over pensions and health insurance, both of which are being cut. They will

be allowed to continue bargaining over wages.

To follow this story, contact Wisconsin public sector unions, or contact the First Unitarian Society of Madison, which was involved in the capitol protests (see next page).

Quote from UK Guardian reports.

Coverage of Wisconsin protests continues on next page.

Madison, Wisconsin
— February 2011

Photos by Melissa Ryan



Madison UUs protest for workers' rights

By Donald E. Skinner

This article was written in March 2011, just after the Wisconsin governor signed the contested legislation.

Unitarian Universalists are among the thousands of people deeply involved in protests against an effort in Wisconsin to do away with collective bargaining rights for nearly all of the state's public employees.

Members of the First Unitarian Society of Madison have been at the Capitol every day since the protests began on February 12.

"We're up to our eyeballs in this controversy," said the Rev. Michael A. Schuler, parish minister at First Unitarian. This is very much of a piece

photos by Melissa Ryan

with our own Unitarian Universalist purposes and principles."

He said many members of his congregation have been at the capitol daily and continue to be involved, even after Governor Scott Walker officially signed away collective bargaining rights on March 11 as part of a plan to reduce a budget deficit. Several weeks ago, when it appeared that protesters might be arrested, Schuler himself joined a small clergy group that planned to offer themselves for arrest to ensure a peaceful protest. "Fortunately it didn't come to that," he said.

The issue of workers' rights is personal for many members of the congregation, he noted. "We have a lot of public employees in the congregation — teachers, university personnel, a police officer." Now that the bill has

been signed by the governor, the goal has shifted, he said, from preventing its passage to how to recover worker rights. "We have been supporting besieged workers in their struggle to retain collective bargaining rights. Now we move on to how to restore these rights. We will continue to be involved."

First Unitarian member Abigail Swetz has been at the capitol most days since the first week. "At first I went because I was scared and shocked and needed to do something, and it felt good to be together with other struggling people," she said. "And now (after the bill signing) I feel sad and bewildered, so I go to find my community so I can help decide what to do next. When you've been attacked, community is the only place to turn. We are becoming a movement. And I am a part of it."

She said that in the past month she has often recalled a sermon by the Rev. Marlin Lavanhar of All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she formerly attended church. "He referenced a Native American tribe's tradition of healing the sick by placing them at the center of the community so everyone could tend to them. In Wisconsin we've placed democracy

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**Madison, Wisconsin
— February 2011**

Photos by Melissa Ryan



Wisconsin UUs

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in the middle of our community, and now we are all participating in healing it.”

She said that since protests began in Wisconsin there have always been many UUs present. “There are so many of us out here, carrying signs, leading chants and songs, carrying our Standing on the Side of Love banner, that I can’t count them all. We’re everywhere.”

Swetz is a teacher. Her wife, Lauri

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Wisconsin UUs

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Schwartz, is a police officer, so both could eventually be affected by the loss of bargaining rights, even though police are not affected by the new legislation. In a post to the UUs' Standing on the Side of Love website in late February, she wrote, "Last week, my wife worked a 12-hour shift, took off her weapon, put on her union shirt, and marched for another 2 hours around and inside the capitol. She did that two days in a row. This entire protest is a labor of love, and if her actions don't prove that, I don't know what will."

Beryl Aschenberg is director of religious education at the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee where she said the governor's actions and the protests have affected every aspect of congregational life. Many members have participated in rallies against the governor's move. In addition, State Sen. Chris Larson, one of 14 Democratic senators who left the state in late February for three weeks in an attempt to block approval of the measure by the Senate, is a member of the congregation.

"In the past weeks all of the staff's pastoral radars have been sounding alarms in every interaction we have with members," said Aschenberg. "The prevalent feelings are of frustration, anger, powerlessness, deep sadness, and disbelief, to name a few. The mood permeates all of our meetings, as well as coffee hour after each of our three services."

Aschenberg has also talked about the worker issue in Children's Chapel. "At least a third of [the children] had been to Madison to protest with their families." A room was also set aside after each worship service for those who wanted to speak with others about events in Madison.

On February 27 the Rev. Drew Kennedy, senior minister at the Milwaukee congregation, scrapped his planned sermon and addressed the issue of workers' rights. He told his congregation that, to him, the issue is how to go about restoring morality. "We cannot . . . let our democracy continue to be transformed into a morally bankrupt plutocracy . . . while the middle class and poor work two and three jobs, suffer through bankruptcies, double up with their families and friends. We need to restore the moral center of the universe in this country."



Kennedy said he maintained contact with Sen. Larson's family during the weeks the senators were out of the state, offering any help that might be needed. The senators returned on March 12.

The Rev. Kelly J. Crocker, minister of religious education at the Madison congregation, preached a sermon on February 26 and 27 noting that her mother had benefited from a union. Crocker said that in deciding how to respond to the situation in Wisconsin as a UU, she recalled Unitarian and Universalist historical figures such as abolitionist the Rev. William Henry Furness, suffragist Susan B. Anthony, and the Rev. James Reeb, who was killed in Selma, Alabama.

Madison, Wisconsin
— February 2011

Photos by Melissa Ryan

Noting that religious principles involving the inherent worth and dignity of all people and compassion and justice in human relations were being dismissed or ignored by state leaders in Wisconsin, she observed, "Our religious ancestors lived and died for the conviction that religious beliefs are true if and only if they help you to live a more loving, more just life. In the

coming days may we each take the time to reflect on what we believe, may we take the time to face one another, and together, put those beliefs and principles into action to help each of us live lives that are more just and more loving. Because then we may be able to create a world which is more just and more loving."

Schuler said Crocker's sermon earned a standing ovation, "the first I've seen in 23 years. It was very moving."

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Follow UU organizing and activism at www.uuworld.org

Reflections on Change

Egypt

by *Starhawk*

Just over a year ago, I was in Tahrir Square, in Cairo, demonstrating with other members of the Gaza Freedom March, trying without success to pressure Mubarak's government to let us continue on our humanitarian peace mission to Gaza.

In these last weeks, I've often thought about that day on the square — the heady few moments when we blocked traffic, the adrenaline as the police rushed in to beat us back, the long, grueling day on the edge of the square. We took those risks knowing we had some measure of protection, as internationals, from the torture, imprisonment, and potential loss of life faced by our Egyptian friends should they take the same kinds of actions.

As I've followed reports of the protests, I've been awed by the spirit, the courage, and the stamina of all the people who have come out to take those risks. Mubarak finally yielded to the people's will and stepped down.

Moments of political euphoria don't come often in a lifetime, and when they do, they are sweet. I wish I could have been back in Tahrir Square to share that celebration, and to honor the sacrifices that so many have made.

As the drama has unfolded, I've been working on a book about power and group process in collaborative groups — with a deadline so tight that, with all my other commitments,

it leaves little time for blogging. I've been writing this book because I believe we are entering a new era in which the top-down organizations of governments, corporations, and military are more and more being challenged by emergent, collaborative, and co-creative movements without traditional

nonviolence, they were able to deter the army from extreme reprisals and win over world public opinion.

I wish I knew more about how they made decisions on Tahrir Square, how they communicated in the absence of the internet and those cell-phones we'd come to depend on. I hope that in

succeeding days, we'll hear more reports from inside the protestors' camps. I have a deep, professional curiosity about what kind of meetings they had, and how they were facilitated.

And I know that the work of transformation is not completed, by any means. Amorphous, emergent movements can be unstoppable — but building a new structure requires some sort of organization. Structures can be washed away by the tides of

spontaneous outrage, but to govern a country over time, new structures must be built on a new foundation. The Egyptian people will continue to need our support to make sure the transition is a real one, not just a removal of one face while the infrastructure of oppression remains.

In the meantime, we have much to learn from their experience, and that of the Tunisians and all the other movements arising in the Middle East. Let us all savor this sweet moment, with gratitude to those who bravely, sacrifices, and unfagging determination have challenged repression and brought liberation.

Read more of Starhawk's writings and add your comments: www.starhawkblog.org

"...fascinating and affirming — to see a loosely organized movement led by young people rise up, almost without warning, and sweep away the tight control of dictatorship."

lines of authority. I've been working in those kinds of groups for thirty years, and believe I know something of their strengths and pitfalls — if only through the many, many mistakes I've made.

So I've found the unfolding events in Egypt fascinating and affirming — to see a loosely organized movement led by young people rise up, almost without warning, and sweep away the tight control of dictatorship. Because the movement had no Great Leader nor central control, the government had no one whose death or imprisonment could stop the uprising. Because people were voluntarily choosing to participate, they took enormous risks and suffered hardships without faltering. Because they remained committed to

APPALACHIA IS RISING

by the Appalachia Rising Organizing Team

“This is only the beginning. There’s no going back. The pressure will continue.”

Kentucky Rising issued these words at the conclusion of their four-day occupation of the Kentucky Governor’s office in February 2011.

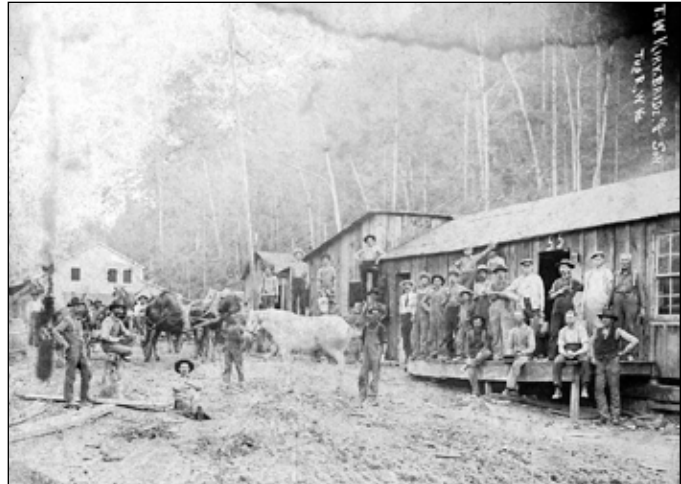
From June 5 to 11, 2011 Appalachia will rise again for the March on Blair Mountain. We will march to preserve Blair Mountain, abolish mountaintop removal, strengthen labor rights, and demand sustainable job creation for all Appalachian communities.

The March on Blair Mountain commemorates the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, when ten thousand coal miners marched against the coal operators and fought for the right to live and work in decent conditions.

Today, Blair Mountain is threatened with obliteration by mountaintop removal. During the March on Blair Mountain, we will make a determined non-violent stand for economic and environmental justice in the 21st century.

The five-day march travels from Marmet (near Charleston) to Blair Mountain in Logan County. Music, speakers, and workshops will be held at camp grounds in the evening. June 11 will be a rally in the town of Blair and Day of Action on Blair Mountain.

All communities and people need good jobs, clean air, and clean water. In the spirit of the 1921 march – which consisted of moun-



tain folk, African Americans, and immigrants from all over Europe – we call on all those who seek justice to march in solidarity with the workers, communities, and mountains of Appalachia.

Learn more about Blair Mountain and the June March on Blair Mountain at www.friendsofblairmountain.org

Photos courtesy of Kenneth King / FoBM
Top: Logging camp, Tug River by T.W. Kirkbride
Middle: First train up Coal River
Bottom: Route 17 near Blair Gap

Nuclear Power ~ Solution to Global Warming?

After several decades in the doghouse, nuclear power has recently emerged as an “alternate” source to carbon-based fuels. The governments of Britain and France have agreed to collaborate in promoting nuclear power around the globe, and voices in the U.S. — where no new plant has been licensed since the 1970s — are clamoring for increased investment in this “clean” energy source.

But nuclear power is not clean. It produces both low and high-level radioactive waste that remains dangerous for several hundred thousand years. No country in the world has found a solution for this waste. Building new nuclear plants would mean the production of much more of radioactive waste with nowhere for it to go.

The vast majority of public interest and environmental groups are opposed to nuclear power because it creates dangerous waste, brings unnecessary risks, and cannot rescue us from climate change.

Nuclear power is too slow, expensive, and inflexible a technology to address climate change, and would entail the building of thousands of new nuclear reactors. These reactors would result in intensified proliferation, waste, and safety problems.

New reactors would also drain investment away from renewable technologies. According to a new analysis by Public Citizen based on the work of governments, universities, and other organizations in the United States, Europe and Japan, it is technically and economically feasible for a diverse mix of existing renewable technologies to completely meet U.S. energy needs over the coming decades.

Clean, safe renewable energy sources — such as wind, solar, advanced hydroelectric and some types of biomass and geothermal energy — can reliably generate as much energy as conventional fuels without significant carbon emissions, destructive mining, or the production of radioactive waste.

FATAL FLAWS

Public Citizen has produced a paper called “Five Fatal Flaws of Nuclear Power.” Here’s a synopsis:

Cost — nuclear power is viable only with billions of dollars of government subsidies. Subsidies for wind, solar, and other renewable sources are only a fraction of that for nukes.

Safety — the danger of toxic leaks and emissions, groundwater contamination, and adverse health impacts on workers at the facility are all substantially higher than alternate sources.

Security — a nuclear plant, particularly one located near a population center, would be one of the most devastating sites possible for a terrorist attack. Increased security means increased cost, with no guarantee of success.

Waste — nuclear power produces radioactive waste for which no safe disposal method has ever been devised. This material will be radioactive for tens or even hundreds of thousands of years — a lethal legacy to all future species. Proponents of nuclear power don’t like to mention the waste issue, apparently assuming that someone else will have to deal with that problem.

Proliferation — Nuclear power also increases the risks of nuclear weapons proliferation. As more reactors are built around the world, nuclear material becomes more vulnerable to theft and diversion. Power reactors have led directly to nuclear weapons programs in some countries.

Adding up the risk, the cost, and the overwhelming opposition of non-corporate environmental groups, we say, in the words of the 1980s: “Nuclear Power? Nein Danke!”

The full version of “Five Fatal Flaws of Nuclear Power” is available at www.publiccitizen.org, along with other resources and contacts.



UK UnCut targets corporations, banks

London welcomed 2011 with a wave of grassroots protests against banks and corporations accused of evading their fair shares of taxes. The protests, which came as banks revealed huge executive bonus packages, involved a range of peaceful and creative direct actions.

“It was greed and reckless banking that caused the financial crisis,” said Daniel Garvin of UK UnCut. “Now the government is making the political choice to cut public services that will hit the poorest hardest rather than force the banks to change how they operate.”

“We wanted to give people the chance to have their say on what is going on, as the government seems incapable of taking any meaningful action.”

UK UnCut began in late 2010 when a group of friends targeted Vodafone, claiming that the mobile phone company had avoided billions of pounds in tax.

The protest, organised through Twitter, went viral and over the next several months hundreds of protests were organised against companies alleged to have avoided taxes.

The campaign has helped forced the issue of corporate tax avoidance into the mainstream political debate in the UK.

Quotes courtesy UK Guardian. Visit www.ukuncut.org.uk/

LET IT BEGIN ~ WITH YOU!

RQ welcomes news tips and short articles for our Let It Begin pages, as well as photos and full-length feature articles on grassroots activism. Send items to quarterly@reclaiming.org