

END THE LOCK-OUT NOW!

SOLIDARITY STRIKE ACTION NEEDED TO DEFEND THE BLUE BOOK AGREEMENT

In talks with the trade union officials, Redhalls made an offer of a financial pay-off which was put to a mass meeting on Monday 21st March. Four hundred locked-out Redhalls workers unanimously rejected this pay-off of up to £3,000 each. It was not seen as satisfactory in compensating for loss of earnings and severance. Crucially, it does not ensure any TUPE rights or future employment on this contract.

The dispute will now be escalated and the mass meeting agreed to call for national strike action throughout the industry to begin on Tuesday March 22nd in solidarity with these workers and to defend the national agreement. We are also calling for a national mobilisation for a demonstration at BP Saltend next Monday March 28th.

This lock-out represents a tearing up of the NAECI agreement and if not resisted, will give the green light to other employers to do the same on other sites and jobs. Then the Blue Book would be a worthless bit of paper. Therefore our fight is for every construction worker in the country. Solidarity strike action defeated the employers at LOR in 2009, we can achieve that again!

Keith Gibson, Lock-Out committee (pc)

Four-hundred engineering construction workers have been locked out from work since 14 March at BP Saltend near Hull. Arriving for work on Monday, they were told by managers that their company Redhalls had had their contract terminated by Vivergo who run the new bio-ethanol plant.

Two weeks ago, these same workers took unofficial strike action and blockaded the BP site gates to win a victory forcing Redhalls to abide

by the national industry agreement over redundancy procedures.

This time police were there in force which means that the company must have tipped them off. And a prepared letter handed to workers urged them to "go home peacefully ... and return the next day ready for work."

Workers returned on Tuesday to be told they were locked out. Electricians and scaffolders working

for two other contractors have been stood down and will be paid 38 hours this week as per the Blue Book. But Redhalls workers were been promised nothing and told they would only be paid 38 hours for last weeks 46 hours of work!

Vivergo, which is majority owned by BP, issued a statement saying they had cancelled the mechanical and piping works contract because the works "should have been completed by February 2011".

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The statement went on to say those works were “only 69% complete” and the construction site at Saltend had been closed for a period of assessment. It is not clear whether they want to mothball the project or get in new contractors.

But either way this is a lock-out and tearing up the national agreement. If the bosses can get away with this here, then they will try it everywhere.

This dispute is as important as the Lindsey Oil Refinery (LOR) strikes in 2009.

Redhalls’ workers have set up a strike committee including LOR strike leader Keith Gibson. Plans have been made to protest against Vivergo and Redhalls and if the workers are not quickly re-instated with all monies owing, then a call will be made for a national walk-out by NAECI construction workers.

Send messages of support to Keith Gibson: geminis@geminis.karoo.co.uk or 07743135183

Messages of support from across the Trade Union movement:

“This is a fundamental attack on trade union rights, where the employer has sought to drive down conditions by attacking agreements and members who are prepared to fight for their rights. PCS gives its full support to these GMB and Unite members.”

- John McNally, PCS National Vice President

“On behalf of my General Secretary and the Executive Committee of my union please make your fellow trade union members and the workers taking action at the BP Saltend bio-ethanol plant near Hull aware of our full support for the action you are taking to defend your jobs and futures.”

- Alex Gordon, RMT President

“Defend jobs, defend national agreements. Stand firm together!”

- Martin Powell-Davies, NUT National Executive Committee

Protests outside Redhall and Vivergo offices

The protests against the lock-out have spread beyond the gate pickets at Saltend. Wednesday saw over 100 workers protesting outside of Vivergo’s head office in Hessle, while on Friday morning similar numbers targeted Redhall’s offices in Middlesbrough. These contractors need to know that we won’t go away and we won’t be treated like dirt. Defend jobs and conditions! Defend the Blue Book agreement!



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