

Fight to save the Blue Book at Capenhurst!



Today's protest by construction workers outside the Urenco Capenhurst construction site near Chester is the beginning of a campaign to protect the hard won NAECI / Blue Book agreements which have operated successfully on the site for the last 25 years.

The Unite and GMB unions are rightly concerned about the decision of the major contractor, Jacobs Engineering to replace its HR Manager by one who tried to break the NAECI on the Lindsey Oil Refinery (LOR) in 2009. The suspicion is that the intention is to bypass the NJC and therefore not employ workers on the NAECI.

The reason is the same as on LOR 4 years ago and Saltend 2 years ago as well as failed attempt by the electrical

contractors to impose the BESNA last year – to boost profits by avoiding paying the proper agreed rate for the job and honouring the terms & conditions. The employers also want to avoid the NJC because they don't want union involvement in how labour is employed and in disciplinary procedures.

This is absolutely crucial at a time when the blacklist has been exposed in the construction industry, which victimised workers who wanted union organisation on the sites and just proper health & safety protection. 49 building workers were killed on the job in the 12 months up to March 2012 and many more injured.

The figures back up the companies bypassing the NAECI.

Text JOIN with your name & postcode to 07761 818206

E-mail join@socialistparty.org.uk; phone 020 8988 8777; write to Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London, E11 1YD

July 2010 - 6834 workers employed on categorised jobs covered by the NAECI - 3731 on major projects and 3103 on repair & maintenance projects
January 2013 - 4255 workers employed on categorised jobs covered by the NAECI - 972 on major projects and 3283 on repair & maintenance projects.

Yet there are about 60 new jobs underway or in the pipeline such as 'Waste to Energy' projects. But these are outside the NJC.

It's clear what is at stake. But construction workers can win, if they are prepared to take action. Walkouts on a national scale protected the NAECI on LOR, and while the hundreds of locked-out Saltend workers couldn't get their jobs back, they were able to win enhanced redundancy through fighting.

Similarly, the Sparks defeated the BESNA - which would have cut wages by up to 35% - through 6 months of protests, walkouts and the threat of official strike action against the biggest company Balfour Beatty that would have stopped Grangemouth Oil Refinery and costing £millions daily.

Last year, 1600 workers walked out at Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station to defend a suspended health & safety steward.

And just last month, workers in Runcorn TPS walked off the job for a week to secure better facilities.

Protests in Cheshire and around the country will send a clear message to the employers that workers will fight to defend NAECI. The possibility of a dispute with an employer should be investigated which construction workers nationally can group around.

This has to be based on building the union organisation

on all sites inside and outside the NJC, with democratic elections of stewards.

The battles of the last 4 years show that the bosses want to maximise profits on the backs of workers by renegeing on hard-won agreements. But the fightback, which has included the victories of LOR and BESNA show that workers can defend themselves.



One of the Sparks' protests which beat the BESNA photo Paul Mattsson



The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation. It involves the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA and the Socialist Party.
www.tusc.org.uk



**nationalshop
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Seven national unions now officially support or are affiliated to the NSSN – RMT, PCS, CWU, POA, NUM, NUJ, and now BFAWU. This is alongside countless union branches, shop stewards committees and trades councils as well as a number of anti-cuts organisations.

**The 7th annual conference of the NSSN will take place on 29 June 2013 11am - 5pm
in the Camden Centre in London.**

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