

NEWSLETTER CLIMATE-ANTIREPRESSION #14 - January 2021

Hello everyone,

over the past few months, a lot has been going on in the “Danni“, the Dannenröder Forest. Yet another forest has been cleared, this time for a highway. Although many people know that climate protection and highways don’t really go together well, but that’s also precisely why the resistance that is being put up against the highway is countered so vigorously by those who worship cars as this quintessential German thing. As a result, safety ropes in the forest are cut by the police, causing potentially life-threatening situations, and courts decide to put people who participated in highway blockades in detention while they await a trial. But there are also some news apart from Danni-related issues. This time, we also put a special focus on the so-called Office for the Protection of the Constitution, an institution that oftentimes inflicts its repression more or less indirectly.

Rhineland

- Review of Ende Gelaende actions
- Custody according to Lex Hambi met with hunger strike
- Verdict of ‘not guilty‘ for RePlace coal
- People affected by mass trials fight back
- Court dates

Lusatia/Leipziger Land

- No incident of trespassing in coal mine

Hesse

- Police violence in Danni
- Pretrial detention due to highway blockade

North

- Tönnies demands compensation payments from activists

Focus: Office for the Protection of the Constitution

- What is the “Office for the Protection of the Constitution“?
- Critical review of the “Office for the Protection of the Constitution“
- Ende Gelaende appearing in a report
- Pressured into an exit-scheme?

An now - enjoy the read!

RHINELAND

Review of Ende Gelaende Actions

In late September 2020, Ende Gelaende took place in the rhenish lignite mining region once more, even though in the face of Covid, the conditions of such actions were a bit more tricky than usual. First, there were some disagreements about whether and how lists of names and contacts were supposed to be kept, especially in camps. Then, the actions themselves were once again met with excessive police violence. The cops made a lasting impression when they decided to attack people of colour, and then went on to pick out the so-called colourful finger to threaten with police dogs, a finger in which also wheelchair-users took part. One thing we hadn't seen before this year was that not all of the activists were taken to one of the three detention centres available in the area – instead, hundreds of people were put on busses and taken up to 200km in all different kinds of directions. Police probably wanted to cause all the activists the trouble of having to organise a pick-up, and use this as a sort of stand-in punishment. That this sort of treatment of detainees most likely wasn't legal obviously didn't bother the police. Just like some cops who couldn't be bothered with safety protocols, and explicitly prohibited people in group holding cells from wearing face masks to protect one another in there.

Custody according to Lex Hambi met with hunger strike

In Northrhine-Westphalia, a regulation makes it possible to detain someone for up to seven days if they want to not disclose their identity and remain anonymous. The regulation's application is still arbitrary, though: in June, 80 people who occupied all of the excavators in the Garzweiler mine, were let go after 12 to 24 hours (even though legally a court hearing would have had to take place after 12 hours at the latest – which it didn't). Only a few months later, a different batch of people who occupied an excavator was locked up for almost six days. The ten of them were distributed over seven different detention centres/jails to make it more difficult for them and everybody else to show acts of solidarity. Eight of them entered into a hunger strike to protest this treatment among other circumstances.

<https://verheizte-heimat.de/2020/09/01/garzweiler-baggerbesetzung-gefangene-klimaaktivistinnen-treten-in-den-hungerstreik/> (press release about the hunger strike, in German)

Verdict of 'not guilty' for RePlace coal

In the summer of 2019, RePlace Coal! blocked a number of access roads to the Garzweiler mine in the Rhineland. About 20 people were facing criminal procedures due to alleged accounts of coercion. The very first court date took place on the 10th of December, and it resulted in a verdict of not guilty (only in first instance, though, since unfortunately the state prosecution decided to appeal the verdict, so a re-trial at a different court will follow). That date as well as others that were supposed to take place soon are currently being postponed indefinitely, with e.g. Covid given as a reason. Hence, it seems quite likely that the next date, scheduled for the 14th of January at 9a.m. at the local court in Grevenbroich, will also be postponed. Still, a pattern of most dates taking place on Thursday mornings is becoming apparent.

More info: <https://kohleersetzen.noblogs.org/>

If you have received letters from the police and/or a court due to this or any other RePlace Coal action, please contact this address immediately:

jura-selbsthilfe-2019@kohle-ersetzen.de

People affected by mass trials fight back

After the 2019 Rhineland Ende Gelaende action, RWE and the state prosecution tried to prosecute people who they accuse of entering the coal mine on account of trespassing. They did so mostly by sending people so-called penalty orders, which, if you accept them, basically mean that you accept a verdict of guilty without a trial. But if instead you lodge an appeal, the case has to go to court. Obviously, it isn't too easy to have that many procedures going on at the same time at a small local court like the one in Grevenbroich. Thus, many of the people who lodged appeals are now being offered to have their cases discontinued, under the condition that they pay certain fines. That's a first step, but people continue to fight. The activists will not be intimidated and are putting up a fight together against being prosecuted. If you received any letters (by the police or the courts) in connection to any of the Ende Gelaende actions, you can contact [legal team fuer alle@posteo.de](mailto:legal_team_fuer_alle@posteo.de)

Court dates in the Rhineland

28th January 2021, 9a.m., local court in Erkelenz. Manifestation in front of the court building!
People on trial due to alleged trespassing in June 2019, during Ende Gelaende

LUSATIA / LEIPZIGER LAND

No incident of trespassing in a coal mine

Good news from Borna: two people who supposedly entered a coal mine during the Ende Gelaende actions in November of 2019 received a verdict of "not guilty" by a local court. They couldn't be found guilty because the matter revolved around an area of the mine that isn't properly enclosed – and proper enclosure of an area that large is virtually impossible. Another setback for LEAG as well as the state we can be happy about! More trials are about to come, but we feel optimistic, considering the outcome of the first one.

HESSE

Police violence in Danni

The eviction of Dannenroeder Forest was characterised by massive acts of police violence, and by situations in which cops knowingly endangered the lives of several activists by cutting ropes, some of which even had a sign saying "risk of death". As a result, several people suffered dangerous falls that left them severely injured. Two people who were holding on to one another high up in the air were attacked with a taser, in order to inflict pain on them and get them to let go. When the taser was first introduced to the police force, it was presented as an alternative to firearms, but these instances show how uninhibitedly the electroshock gun, essentially a torture device, is actually being used. Police management keeps justifying the deployment of tasers during the eviction or outright denying it, and in some cases the state prosecution is joining them in this mockery. This blog article (in German) analyses the police's behaviour in these situations: <https://hambacherforst.org/blog/2020/11/17/polizeigewalt-und-legitimation-durch-falschmeldungen/>

Pretrial detention due to highway blockade

In order to show their solidarity with the protectors of the Dannenroeder Forest, several abseiling actions were carried out with which different highways were blocked. In late October 2020, people

involved in coordinated blockades in three different locations were arrested and subsequently taken into pretrial detention – despite the fact that Gießen’s state prosecution views the action as nothing but an act of misdemeanour. Probably people were supposed to be scared off from doing any more actions. Which obviously did not work out: in late November, highways were blocked in seven different places at once. After the Danni evictions, several people still remain in pretrial detention. Don’t leave them alone, write to them and show them your solidarity by carrying out your own actions!

<https://freethemall.blackblogs.org/>

NORTH

Tönnies demands compensation payments from activists

30 people who are part of the animal rights and climate action group “Tear down Tönnies“ occupied/blocked the company’s slaughterhouse in Kellinghusen (Schleswig-Holstein) in October 2019 for almost eleven hours. Now, Tönnies is demanding them to pay 40.000€ compensation for damages and is threatening to judicially enforce the payment. The activists are getting ready to be put on trial and are asking those who would like to support them for donations.

Several local and national media outlets were quite critical of Tönnies’ rude claims. We want to support the activists in their endeavour to collect donations as well as to communicate their side of the story to the public.

Tear Down Tönnies’ call for donations says: "We are supposed to pay damages to a company that profits from the exploitation of humans, animals and the environment? Not from our point of view. If anyone is to pay damages, it’s the companies responsible for climate change, land grabbing, the extinction of species, the destruction of everyone’s livelihoods. Not the people who get active against all of that!"

Your donations are welcome on this bank account:

Account holder: VusEumUmseP e.V.

IBAN: DE30 8306 5408 0004 0613 81

BIC: GENODEF1SLR

Purpose: TDT2110 [Do not forget to name the purpose! IMPORTANT!]

Bitcoin-address: 1HRszUVJGwzuC5oGhaCQutF9Fk1548e7iX

More info: <https://teardowntoennies.noblogs.org> (in German)

FOCUS: OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

What is the „Office for the Protection of the Constitution“?

In Germany, there isn’t only one “Office for the Protection of the Constitution“, instead there is one authority on the national level and one for every of the 16 federal states. They make up the German national Secret Service, meaning: an authority that’s defined purpose is to spy on the country’s citizens. Methods include general research on the internet, but also secret service approaches like bugging phones or infiltrating groups etc. - either with undercover spies that work for the police anyway, or with the help of activists they recrute and pay to be police informants.

Critical review of the “Office for the Protection of the Constitution“

The “Office for the Protection of the Constitution“ was founded by old Nazis and has since remained a right-wing and anti-communist organisation. There has never been any sort of re-organisation or disruption that would have swayed the organisation to go any other but that direction. Its last president, Maaßen, had to leave his office in 2018 due to a number of reasons, two of which are: He had falsely claimed that during the infamous Chemnitz protests, there had been no incidents of people literally being hunted down, and he had also secretly advised the leaders of the right party Alternative for Germany on how they could evade observation by the authority under his very own responsibility. The current president, Haldenwang, preferred to make the Hambach Forest protests a topic of discussion in the Bundestag’s committee, rather than address Nazis who hunt and kill people. Everything around the complex of the Nationalist Socialist Underground reeks of failure and cover-ups anyway, but also of the active participation of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and its way of pumping money into groups of the extreme right by way of looking for and then financing informants active in the scene. If any of the information acquired had actually been handed over to the police, some of the attacks of the NSU possibly could have been prevented. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution is downplaying the impact of right-wing networks whenever possible. At the same time, its officers are implicated in neo-nazi networks and right-wing chatgroups themselves, as research on groups such as “Nordkreuz“ or Uniter have shown. Due to all of that, the situation will obviously only become worse if this authority receives even more funding and more power.

For those of you who can read German, we recommend two books on the topic:

1. „Den NSU Komplex analysieren“, publishers: [Juliane Karakayali](#), [Çagri Kahveci](#), [Doris Liebscher](#) and [Carl Melchers](#): <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-3709-0/den-nsu-komplex-analysieren/>

2. „Extrem unbrauchbar. Über Gleichsetzungen von links und rechts“ by Tom David Uhlig / Eva Berendsen / Katharina Rhein; <https://www.verbrecherverlag.de/book/detail/1008>

Ende Gelaende appearing in a report

Instead of investigating right-wing terror networks, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution spends part of its time on looking into climate activists. Ende Gelaende’s activities for example appear in several reports, e.g. in the federal state Northrhine-Westphalia, the actions appeared in reports again and again. In May 2020, the Ende Gelaende group local to Berlin has been explicitly labeled as „leftist extremist“. We want to give more context to that label: the reports by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution basically just assert that officers weren’t just twiddling their thumbs, but that they have been „doing their job“, which also means that the reports are nothing but pure state propaganda. Classifying movements, groups and structures as “extremist“ portrays their arguments as lying outside of democratic discourse and works to delegitimize all of the issues these movements address. The extremism doctrine helps to paint a picture in which adusting, squatting houses or blocking railway tracks is on one level with right-wing groups and networks that hoard weapons, keep lists of names of their enemies, or are training for a day X and have already ordered body bags as a precaution. It might seem easiest to just ignore anything that comes out of this useless authority – if it weren’t for the fact that their reports and classifications do have certain real world implications: They influence whether political groups are being considered for funding opportunities by foundations etc., whether associations that support certain causes are able to acquire a classification as charitable or not, whether people associated with certain groups or actions will be able to be appointed to work in public service (relevant in some careers, such as teaching). Even though the shadiness of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution is not

exactly a secret, the general public as well as the media all too often simply accept the authority's assessments and reports as true and spread the ideas portrayed in them further without thinking twice. By the way – the authority is not obliged to provide any evidence for its assessments, but instead those that are being dragged through the mud have to prove that they are “loyal to the constitution“. One current example of that is the VVN-BdA (Union of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime/Federation of Antifascists) being stripped of its classification as a charitable organisation by the tax authorities that now has to pay huge amounts of taxes – all because the Bavarian Office for the Protection of the Constitution has classified the organisation as “extremist“. You have to savor that one: In post-national socialist Germany, an organisation of anti-fascists and people affected by the war have to prove to the state that they are charitable, otherwise an authority that was founded by Nazis and considers the anti-fascist organisation extremist is simply taken at their word.

For more details, we recommend listening to episode 16 of the Ende Gelaende Podcast, which critically examines Ende Gelaende being classified as “leftist extremist“ some more: <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/podcast/> (for those of you who understand German)

We advise you not to enter/use the official websites of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution. If you would like to read some of their reports yourself, rather use this independent archive: <https://verfassungsschutzberichte.de/>

Pressured into an exit-scheme?

Dealing with the Office for the Protection of the Constitution is often quite abstract, as in the form of said assessments and reports. The confrontation is much more direct when the authorities try to pressure people, especially young people, into entering their exit-scheme to make them quit “leftist extremism“. They find all sorts of different ways to turn up the pressure: the cops keep the authorities in the loop about ongoing criminal proceedings against climate activists, then they offer to pay people's legal costs, or they promise to put in a good word with the judges. Here you can find an interesting review of the way the secret services work and a bit more on their back story: <http://antirrr.nirgendwo.info/2020/05/19/jugendamt-und-verfassungsschutz-vereint-mit-dem-aussteigerinnenprogramm-fuer-linksextremismus-wegen-teilnahme-an-ende-gelaende-aktion/> (in German, article details how child protective services and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution have joined forces to try and pressure someone who had participated in an Ende Gelaende action into an exit-scheme.)

You can find all previous newsletters (in German) on this website:

<http://antirrr.nirgendwo.info/newsletter/>

Or contact us for the English versions of the previous newsletters!

We'll see you in the streets, the trees, or in court if we have to!

AntiRRR