



# Hambacher Forst occupation

- a struggle against lignite mining  
and domination

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## Preface

This zine tries to give a short overview over the struggle against the lignite mining in the Rhineland in Germany. It is a compilation of texts that were written by people who also participated the occupation.

One thing that is important to understand is that it is an open struggle which means that there are somehow agreements against hierarchy and domination, sexism, racism and specism but there is no exact collective opinion. People who participate the struggle in the Hambacher Forst participate as individuals who organize together but not as platformist slaves.

This means also that opinions and analysis stated in the following texts do not necessarily revlect on a common point of view. Rather there are as many opinions as people involved. Surely there are also many things to criticize (such as victimisation or using terms and logics of the state like "guilty", "illegal" or „injustice“ for example). And this criticism is necessary and welcome.

So this compilation of texts does not even reflect on the opinion of the people who put it together. But surely the ones who read this zine will be smart enough to make up their own conclusions.

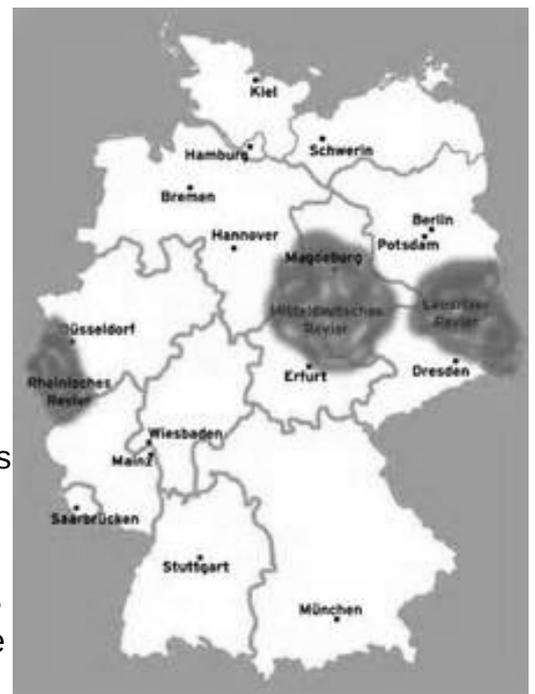
## Short facts about the lignite mining in Rhineland (Germany)

In the Rhineland in Germany, the company RWE is running 3 lignite mines where they extract around 100 Mio. t of lignite each year. Furthermore they run 5 power plants where the coal is being burned in order to produce energy. This industry causes around 100 Mio. t CO<sup>2</sup> per year, sets free a lot of fine dust as well as heavy metals, radioactive elements and other pollutants.

To preserve the mines from flooding with water the ground water level of the region is being lowered to a depth of around 500m, which brings heavy consequences for the nature.

In addition many villages are being „relocated“ which means that the people there are forced to move and the land is being destroyed and contaminated.

For the biggest nowadays running mine there - the mine 'Hambach' – the forest 'Hambacher Forst' is being cut since 1978. The plan of the company is to completely clearcut the forest until 2018.



*Areas of lignite mining in Germany – the Rhenish, the middle-german and the Lausitzer mining area (from west to east)*

## The Hambacher Forst occupation

In Aril 2012 the forest was squatted in order to prevent it from being cut and by this trying to prohibit the growing of the mine. Since then the occupations have been evicted several times but every time shortly afterwards re-occupations took place. The struggle still goes on.

# The first declaration of the Hambacher Forst occupation in 2012

## First Declaration of the Hambach Jungle

### The Forest is now squatted!

A part of the Hambach forest has been squatted in order to save it from the excavators sent by the gigantic energy corporation RWE to dig up brown-coal.

During a cultural festival in the woods, under the slogan „Forest not Coal“, activists pulled up platforms in the trees. At the festival people from different groups met up, forming a broad coalition to get active in saving the Hambach Forest and stopping the extraction as well as the combustion of the coal beneath it.

According to the plans of RWE, the Hambach forest, near Cologne, shall be completely destroyed to make space for the largest open-cast mine in Europe in the next few years.

During the festivity people got the chance of taking responsibility by godfathering their special tree and protecting it their way(s).

By squatting we are also taking over responsibility godfathering our trees, protecting them our own way.



### Why squatting?

We have decided to squat knowing that it is surpassing the small path of legal protest.

Nevertheless two final reasons lead us to that conclusion:

First: The gap between what is legal and what is regarded as justified by us is too big.



*one of five power plants in the region*

Even though RWE is, by destroying the forest in order to dig out the brown coal for burning it, also destroying the regional basis of living, as well as endangering peoples' health in the area, not speaking of the world climate, they are legally allowed to do so.

However we cannot find any „real“ justification for RWEs doing.

By squatting this forest we're not acting legal according to the current laws.

But the squat is justified by the aim of trying to stop RWEs wood and world destruction course.

Second: We believe that the gap between what is legal and what is just will always exist, due to the simple reason that a neutral point of view cannot exist.

Just and legal remain different because everybody has a different definition in mind of what is just and what is not.

Therefore establishing a free and lively discussion about what is just and reasonable, is a must;

rather than having the definition derivated from ancient laws which, for the most, are only protecting the interests of the ruling elites.

By squatting we're trying to generate such a process of vivid negotiating, furthermore thematizing the topic of how climate and enviromental destruction shall be dealt with.

Loudly we're shouting „No!“ at anybody whom's solution it is to go on just like used to be, AND who are -just like RWE- even speeding up in the old fashioned way by building new coal-fired power-stations.

If we are to be evicted by police force then we are facing the answer of a repressive state which is tring to supress any horizontal and vivid process of self-organization.

That is the ideolgy of the state, as well as of the capitalist cooperations, who are far too inflexible, not mentioning their wrong maxim of action, to give reasonable answers to the problems of our time.

They will eventually perish just like the dinosaurs who were also unable to cope with the changing conditions.

In fact the solution is not to modify the existing system of exploitation and oppression into something more flexible, but to overcome that system!

### **Against coal energy – Here and Everywhere**

This squat is opposing coal energy in general as it is the most CO2 intensive form of gaining energy. The „Rheinish brown-coal-region“ is Europe's climate killer no. 1. But we also stand in solidarity with communities in other parts of the world e.g. Columbia where the extraction coincidences with brutal human right violations.

Worldwide the conflicts arising alongside coal extraction and burning are getting worse.

Especially in Southeast Asia where in the last few years resisting activists have been murdered.

We want to create awareness of these struggles to help the people fighting.

Therefore we'll include more informations about the on-goings in these areas in our further declarations, letting those acivists speak.

Furthermore we declare our

solidarity towards the radical anti-coal-campaign like the coal-action-network in the U.K., rising-tide-groups in Australia and North-America, or the „wij stoppen steenkool“ campaign in the Netherlands. With their direct form of action, these groups gave an us inspiration, and we hope that these actions will inspire other groups world-wide as well.



*Building barricades and trenches*

### **The forest is for everyone!**

Squatting the forest shall be an act of re-empowerment by the locals. The „Occupying Force“

RWE shall lose their „right“ of determining the future of the region, unscrupulously destroying



*relocation*

the local and global fundamentals of life. People should decide of what will happen to the forest in a cooperative manner instead. This space should be open to all on the basis of equal treatment of each other. Therefore it is necessary that the people question the role-models and ways of acting they reproduce and how they perform acts of dominance or support them. We think that it is important that we all act together to fight, prevent and intervene discriminating acts of any kind.

### **Space for preparing the change**

Squatting the Hambach Forest is an action directly confronting the injustice.

But we want to go on further: It'll also be a place for people of different backgrounds to meet up and network. People that used to have only the fight against brown coal in common shall come together exchanging ideas and experiences of the ongoing suppression.

Through this exchange a network and organisation shall emerge – for the furthermore resistance, but also beyond that.

We need spaces where people are able to plan how a climate-just future should and can look like.

Firstly because the current politics totally failed and keep on failing in answering the pressing matter of climate change!

Secondly because organizing ourselves from below is much more fun anyway!

Maybe this squat might become such a place.

The offshoot of a new world amidst the heart of fossil-nuclear capitalism.

### **Why „Declaration of the Hambach jungle“?**

The name of this text came up following the tradition of the Zapatistas in Mexico and their „Declarations of the Lacandon jungle“. The Zapatistas achieved their aim of living in dignity in the borders of the poorest Mexican state through a strong direct and determined push back of the repressive police and para-military of Mexico.

We are not that bold of claiming our action to be comparable to the things happening in Mexico but nevertheless our aim is the same. Fighting for a self-determined life in dignity amidst a system of destruction and oppression.

We believe that successful fights as in Chiapas all over the world are possible and necessary.

We want to make the first steps in this direction.

That form of a declaration was also chosen because we are tired of corrupting and shortening the contents only to make them fitting into a standard press format, whereafter they're still totally corrupted by the press.

Instead we're optimistic that this and the following declarations will reach -hopefully many – people directly.

We call that forest Hambach jungle knowing that this term is not correct. But the Hambach

Jungle is, in its structure, one of the oldest forests in Western Europe. Rare habitats are found here. Unlike RWE, wanting to destroy the forest in total, we plead in favour of another solution, an experiment whereby that very natural forest will, in a few decades, turn into jungle-like wood. Then, we would leave the Hambach Jungle deliberately!

## **About the relationship between domination and environmental destruction**

*In parallel to the climate camp in 2011 (and as part of it) activists in Hambacher Forst called for the installation of a barrio (span. For quarter) which is critical to domination. Here is an excerpt from their call:*

Environmental destruction and domination are directly linked. Therefore the best way to "save the climate" is to uncover relations of power and to attack them: discursively and in the form of direct action.

This we try to achieve on the occupation of the forest in a conscious environment (free/open space).

The kitchen is vegan, we try to deal respectfully with each other and to respect the needs of others.

Here in the Rhenish mining area, between Düsseldorf, Cologne and Aachen, the energy giant RWE is digging the largest holes of Europe - to extract lignite, the dirtiest fossil energy source currently used. This is then conveyed by the coal railway to the five surrounding power plants where it is burnt. Together, these power plants constitute Europe's largest CO<sup>2</sup> emitter, and thus the 'climate killer # 1'. The fact that such a massive intervention in our common habitat prevail solely through domination, appears

most directly in the expulsion and destruction of forests, villages, people and animals here in the area that must give way to the growing hole.

Because of the global "climate roulette" the consequences, however, are no longer limited to the local level. Millions of people are forced to be refugees through the devastation of entire regions.

To examine the social, systemic and economic causes of environmental destruction, as well as the effects of the destruction on them is a discipline of the environmental movement, whose tradition has been broken at some point during the 90s and which preserved since then somehow only in form of the anti-castor resistance (resistance against nuclear power and its waist). At least in the German-speaking area. Elsewhere - especially in English-speaking areas - since the turn of the millennium exactly this tradition is visible inside the climate movement, from which emerged the first climate camps in England.

The division between environmental and emancipatory movements in the German-speaking area has its reasons both the tendency of large parts of the environmental movement (with the big organizations and the Green Party at the top) towards the role of advising institutional



*the open cast pit*

bodies or individual consumption (and a new extreme: being extremely in favor of avoiding conflicts), but also in the fact that emancipatory groups largely withdrew from the entire field of struggles for environmental issues and with this somehow willingly left the field for these associations. Due to the lack of emancipatory counter-models after the turn of the millennium the bourgeois protection of the environment as a "lifestyle of health and sustainability" became mainstream. Tries of recuperating this topic out of an emancipatory perspective were made since then only very sporadically. Instead, the "citizens' positions" are often used as an occasion to attribute the field of environmental protection as a whole as part of middle-class citizenship instead of recognizing the lack of an emancipatory analysis and way of acting as own weakness.

### **Domination and destruction of the nature**

The availability and control over land and raw materials - in addition to those over people and their minds – is an indispensable part of the execution of power. The destruction of the environment and local livelihoods often accompanies this (usually because there are also concepts of "sustainable exploitation" which are still a part of power and controlling others, however). The special thing about the destruction of livelihoods shaped by power and domination is that they also undermine perspectives of emancipation. By destroying the ability to self-sufficient and

subsistent lifestyles people fall into greater dependence. Even if non-hierarchical forms of life don't necessarily need to be subsistent there should be at least always the possible of subsistence to allow at any time to terminate agreements. If this possibility is not given those involved aren't free. The exploitation of the environment shaped by domination therefore somehow paves itself the way for power relationships in the future as well. All of this massively escalates with the climate crisis that is



*60-hours excavator blockade June 2015*

destructive not only at local level but globally destroys resources of life. Nowadays in many parts of the world there is already by fact (as opposed to artificial, capitalist scarcity) a shortage of vital resources such as water, fertile soil and space because of which the effects of climate change are already one of the the biggest causes of flight. An actual situation of shortage increases the probability of competitive behavior rather than solidarity although in such a situation acting in solidarity is the most essential.

The human caused climate change leads by the rise of the sea level, water shortages and destruction caused by natural disasters to a loss of their previous home for many people. Because of this flight and migration is already a direct consequence of the climate change caused by the global north for millions of people. A logical consequence - and a minimum of solidarity dealing with this situation - would be to open the borders for all these people. But the existing nation states however are based on the concept of exclusion. They could not cope with the challenges associated with the opening of the borders because of which the exclusion of refugees at the borders is being put forward by all means and violence. The fact



*the kitchen of the meadow occupation*

that because of all this thousands of people die each year is therefore a necessity for enforcing and maintaining privileges and domination.

### **Perspectives for an emancipatory climate movement - in the Rhenish lignite mining area?**

As mentioned above, we are currently regarding the anti-Castor-resistance as some kind of last oasis in Germany where anti-hierarchical movements inside the issue of protection of the environment were able to maintain (movements here in contrast to individual crowds that focus also on other environmental issues out of an emancipatory vision).

Certainly during the last years repeatedly there have been tries to build up such kind of climate movement but it had never managed to gain a foothold which might be also because of to much focusing on the mobilization to some single major events – such as the climate camp in Hamburg or to the climate conference in Copenhagen – which caused a difference between organizing structures and action groups.

In the latest developments inside the anti-coal-resistance in the Rhineland, we see great potential for the renewed attempt to establish a radical environmental movement because the resistance is being broadly established - what is important for effects of synergy like in the Wendland. There are campaign-oriented structures such *ausgeco2hlt*, eco-anarchist structures at the forest occupation in Hambach forest and there is a spectrum of citizens' initiatives. The relations between the different spectra is respectful and productive and supported by the principle of allowing diversity in resistance and to let it become a larger overall picture. With this we have good conditions to build up long-term structures like in the Wendland. In addition, right now there is a kind of explosion of the resistance – while it is not clear yet where the limits might be.

This call to get involved in the resistance in the Rhenish lignite mining area or to discuss whether there is a perspective in doing this is aimed at all emancipatory activists and groups. It also appeals for all participants of the climate camp to use the frame of the camp for a debate on the link between domination and environmental destruction. With the domination-critical *Barrio* we want to carry this aspect inside the climate camp and we look forward to participation. With this call we refer in the first instance to the participation of the climate camp but is important for us also to emphasize that it is more important for a long-term resistance to think inside action groups with which activities and actions it is possible to resist also beyond this frame. One possibility for this may be the forest occupation which is under eviction threat from autumn. But the most valuable are always one's own ideas so that the resistance is broad and unpredictable.

From anti-hierarchical perspective against domination the thematic linking between the energy production in the Rhenish mining area and the production of weapons in West Germany (with this electricity) is interesting as it is also the link between climate change and flight (see anti-racist call to the Climate Camp).

## **Other parts of resistance in the area**

Of course the resistance against the extraction of lignite by RWE doesn't only consist of the forest occupation. In the following text we will try to give a short overview over other resisting groups and events. Partially some parts of the self-portrayal of the groups will be quoted. This overview focussed on a selection of groups that are active primarily against the lignite mining in and around the Rhineland.

### **Climate camps („Klimacamp“) in the Rhineland**

organised by climate activists who are active in the Rhenish mining area already since some years and support also the protest by citizens' initiatives.

For more information: <http://www.klimacamp-im-rheinland.de/>

### **Workshop for Actions and Alternatives (short: WAA) in Düren close to Cologne**

The WAA is a project house and an open space where all people who want to use collectively maintained infrastructure for political work should feel invited. For several years now this house is being renovated and converted in a DIY-way and considerate to resources and partly by using recycled materials and as much ecologically sustainable than possible. At the moment inside the house – amongst the obligatory standard room like kitchen, sleeping rooms, bath rooms and living room – there is a small library, a café, a music room, a bicycle workshop, a free shop and an office with computers. Right next to the house there is a terrain of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> with a community garden, a small kind of trailer park and a meadow for camps and other things. Everybody can just come, read books of the library, write something, layouting stuff, repair bikes, organize events or participate them, spend time in the garden, exchange ideas and thoughts with others ... It is also possible to use the WAA for seminars. Here there are self-organization and critique of domination instead bosses or employees!

For further information: <http://waa.blogspot.de/>

### **Ausgeco2hlt**

Ausgeco2hlt is a campaign founded in 2011 that speaks for the immediate exit of lignite mining. "Our campaign understands itself as an open platform where different groups and individuals can network, extend their knowledge and become active together. Our goal is to organize a broad protest movement against RWE and for the immediate closure of the open-cast mines in the Rhenish mining area. We also support the resistance in the mining areas in the Lausitz and in the area of Leipzig." On the website of Ausgeco2hlt you will find interesting and well-researched background information on the topic of lignite mining in Germany and especially in the Rhenish mining area.

Further information here: <http://www.ausgeco2hlt.de>

### **Citizens' initiative "Buirer für Buir "**

The citizens' initiative "Buirer für Buir" exist since mid-2006 as a union of committed citizens and was founded on 21<sup>st</sup> of december 2007 as an association with its statutes corresponding to its goals. Buir is a village near the open-cast mine 'Hambach' in the Rhenish lignite mining area. The initiative provides amongst other things information about the Hambach mine and its strain on health and quality of life. One current fight of the initiative is about restricting the noise emissions of the highway A4 which was moved because of the growing mine right next to the village and to push through a speed limit.

For more information: <http://www.buirerfuerbuir.de/>

### **Netzwerk Bergbaugeschädigter e.V. (Network of people damaged by the mining)**

The network is an independent and (regarding parties) politically neutral association of people

potentially damaged by the mining (for example by cracks of the walls of the houses caused by the mining-related water lowering). It was founded in July 2009 and sees its own field of activity in all affected villages in the Rhenish lignite mining area.

The aim of the network is to improve the so far only in the hands of RWE Power AG located examination, detection and regulation of mining damage in the affected regions. The processing and regulatory practices of RWE are regarded as arbitrary and the little transparent dealing with geological data and results of measurements and tests.

For further information: <http://www.netzbege.de>

## **A few thoughts about solidarity and violence**

*The following text was published on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 at 'hambacherforst.blogspot.de'.*

*After an incident where the police came into the forest with a century to evict some tents and at the same time one of their cars lost the windows. After this happened there was a lot of mass media shit were - without evidence – the “terrorists” of the occupation were blamed to act in a really violent well. Followed by this many citizens put pressure on the occupation to dissociate from such acts or they would cut the solidarity. This text is what followed all this happenings.*



Recently, some voices came up that - built up from several newspaper articles – question the camp (the occupation of the meadow next to the forest). Above all the alleged aggressiveness of activists and the demolishing of a police car which is being attributed to the occupation were criticized. That is why we came together some days ago to talk about this topic.

These first two points in advance:

On the one hand there is no collective "We". The constellation of people at the occupation is constantly changing and the entire movement is fortunately very diverse and will not and can not be unified.

On the other hand it is very difficult to define the term and the concept of violence – about this there exist already many different ideas.

Therefore, this text does not claim to be to universally applicable for the entire movement but rather tries to contribute to the discussion.

First of all, we want to share what opinions and questions have been raised in our meeting.

Is, for example, violence against things generally violence?

Can't it even be irresponsible to refrain from violence if by using it worse could be prevented? Is a person automatically nonviolent if he\_she doesn't take any weapons or doesn't fight with the own hands?

Isn't it also violence to pay others to hurt people? Or to oppress people? What does it mean then to buy clothes which were produced by children or sick people under pressure? Or to buy meat for which living beings are all their lives tortured and then murdered? Is it illegitimate to prevent greater violence even if this means that you have to use a certain extent of violence yourself? Is it illegitimate to defend somebody so that this person doesn't suffer violence even if this means that this protecting requires violence? What is self-defense? Who decides about this? How much power have those who decide about it?

On the other hand was also stated that actions such as the demolishing of police cars can be counterproductive because it negatively reflects on the occupation and creates more waste. And we asked ourselves as well whether we can achieve anything with violence. Because finally the police is superior in numbers, has more resources and power and does also have the jurisdiction on their side. Some of us are also afraid that any defensive violence could lead to more violence of the other side.

However, it can also be very hard not to fight back when the police beats you up and / or you are daily confronted with the destruction caused by RW€ . It is useful and important for the emotional well-being not to be defenseless in a violent situation. Post-traumatic stress reactions can occur when you impotently have face an attack (f.e. when fight or flight is not possible) -



and often activists are struggling with this after a contact with the police. Thus, it can have long and serious consequences if man does not fight back. Or does it really just lead to more police brutality? Many were angry or sad about the fact that the responses to an alleged attack by squatters at a thing are so negative whilst police violence is often hardly even noticed. Even though police violence often means brutal beatings, imprisonment and torture.

It is also repeatedly shocking how one-sided the press

*waiting for people outside the police station*

reports: It has not been proved who smashed the windows of the car. Apparently none of the journalist thought that it would be necessary to go to the occupation in order to get a second opinion. Nevertheless the articles are considered by many to be "the truth". This is even more astonishing if one considers the fact that directly next to one of these articles some RW€ advertisement was published: Who gets money apparently has no interest in building up an opinion as open and as objective as possible. Somehow it is also not surprising that the violence carried out by RW€ is often ignored: An (apparently) 82km<sup>2</sup> big hole is being dredged, a beautiful old forest is being destroyed forever, people are being relocated and noone gives a damn about the heavy consequences for the humans but also for the nature as a whole. Nevertheless, those who try to resist all this with the few resources they have are being criminalized or apparently even feared. Too bad ...

With all this of cause I don't want to say that it is not understandable if people for example feel intimidated by persons wearing masks. Nevertheless, unfortunately this is often necessary because of self-protection. It happens that the police uses pictures to identify person. And this can mean that the person concerned ha to face charges even if the only "crime" consists in having made a walk in the woods. The imagination of the police is great in this respect and in terms of credibility in front of the mass media and a court the police is also privileged. Activists don't just wear masks for fun and certainly also not to intimidate people – least of all with these temperatures! (This text was composed in bright sunshine and more than 20 degrees)

In one newspaper article it was also mentioned that squatters had set up traps inside the forest. Such cases are not known. This allegation we hold rather for another strategy to criminalize protest. If we build barricades or trenches we always make sure that they are clearly marked and pedestrians can unhindered enjoy the forest.

We are not on this camp to use violence but to do something about it. We are committed to the preservation of nature and villages. The destruction emanates from others.

The occupation is meant to be a place of solidarity with humans and the nature - and we hope that it will also be seen as such the future.

More criticism, suggestions and opinions are of course still welcome and we would also be very happy to continue this discussion with you here on the meadow.

## **Small lexicon of forms of action**

The fight for the preservation of the Hambacher Forst is a combination of diverse forms of action and events. From black masked up to colorful disguised and small, clandestine groups up to stunning crowds, and more. Legitimate and yet often criminalized. This text is only providing a view inside and must not be seen as a tutorial. What people do with this information is solely their cause and the writer of this text can not take any responsibility for it. That an action form is listed here is only because of that it had been used during the anti-lignite resistance in the Rhineland - it does not mean necessarily that this action is related to the occupation nor that all people there would be in favor of it. On the occupation there are as many opinions as people.

### **A special farewell present**

In December 2012 a group that calls itself „clearing squad“ visited the house of the outgoing management boss of RWE Mr Lambertz and made him a special present. Because many trees had been standing in the way of his carrier, the „clearing squad“ decided to help him also with his own plants. They unceremoniously removed box trees, bushes, roses and other plants from his front garden and left a farewell greeting on his outside wall.

### **Climbing**

The basis for each tree occupation. But Beware! Climbing must be learned properly, otherwise there is a risk of accidents which should not be underestimated. Many people participate in five-day so-called "Action-climbing trainings". This trainings are offered in Germany several times a year by experienced climbing activists. Climbing is useful for various actions, such as blockades or banner-drops.

### **Clowns**

Sometimes some colourful clowns that you used to know only from circus appear also in the Hambacher Forst. Clowns can calm down tensed situations, easily question (state) authority and give a good picture in the media.



*blockade: chained to the railway tracks*

### **Direct action**

Direct action is an umbrella term for many forms of political action. It is about intervening directly in political events. Those concerned act themselves without giving power to representatives. Best example of direct action in the conventional sense is the occupation of the Hambach forest. But you don't have to squat an entire forest for acting directly. Direct action can also be integrated in our own everyday lives, for example if one uses "Guerilla Gardening" – the wild and clandestine laying out of gardens - to turn the sad grey city environment a bit more colorful.

### **Lock-Ons/ Chain yourself**

This type of action is also being used to block something or to make an eviction last longer. One or more persons chain themselves according to the circumstances to trees, buildings, other things or simply to themselves. Really simple lock-ons can only consist of a bike lock. More complex ones can be build out of several layers of beton, metal, carpets, and everything else that makes it harder for the police to cut it.

## Nets

In one of the first tree occupations in the forest a large net was used. This was in about 20 m height suspended between several trees. In such a net, several people can sit and crawl around like spiders. It is hard to evict because the police can't just cut it somewhere without putting people in danger and the people in the net can also move quite fast.

## Orchestra "Lebenslaute"

The nationwide action orchestra "Lebenslaute" combines classical music with civil disobedience and expresses its political convictions by concerts in unusual places. In October 2012, the orchestra blocked with a classical concert for around two hours a coal excavator. Amongst others they played a romantic song of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy "O valleys wide, O heights, O beautiful green forest". The police first listened until the end of the concert before responding. The next concert in the coal mine is going to be held in August 2015. For more information: [www.lebenslaute.net](http://www.lebenslaute.net)



*Orchestra "Lebenslaute" – October 2012*

## "Rhythms of Resistance" – samba group

RoR is a global network of political drumming groups and Samba bands, that often dressed in pink and silver support demonstrations or direct actions. Also in the forest some samba drumming people popped up. At the very first day of occupation they took the sponsorship for a "SamBaum" (word mixture of Samba and Baum – tree in German) and during the Climate camp they made some beginner workshops and participated blockades of excavators and the coal train. More information here: [www.rhythms-of-resistance.org](http://www.rhythms-of-resistance.org)



## Sabotage

The well-aimed destruction of tools, machines and infrastructure with the aim of preventing the daily destruction of the environment by RWE. RWE offers a lot of targets: Starting from the extraction itself (smaller excavators and water pipes) up to the transport (the coal railway) and the machines for the clearcutting of the forest. Because sabotage is one of the most criminalized forms of action it is really important to leave no traces like fingerprints for example.

## Street theater

During the annual general meeting of RWE in 2013 the theme park of the 'Gruga' hall, in which RWE was presenting all their techniques and visions, was enlarged with a small play. On the forecourt of the building a grimly looking woodsman sewed into pieces the homes of the protesting animals of the forest.

## Tree Spiking

Trees that are going to be cut or were already cut are spiked with big nails or pottery rods at the height of the saw. This makes the saws go blunt or can even break the saw blades.

## Tree sponsorships

During a cultural festival, in the frame of which the forest was occupied for the first time, there was a call-out for groups or single persons to sponsor some trees. This was done in various ways: trees were decorated, one person promised to give water to the tree every day and some dozens of people started to build platforms in the trees and declared them as „occupied“.

## Tunnels

The name should be self-explanatory: You dig a tunnel and then you entrench yourself inside to make an eviction harder. Originally this form of action comes from England, where it was practiced first in 1993. Some of the local tunnel evictions took some months. The tunnel eviction in the Hambacher Forest took only four days but with this it was already the longest eviction of the german-speaking area.



*entrance to the tunnel at the first occupation*

## Chronicle 2012-2014

*This chronicle can only give a short overview of what happened. It is surely not complete. One reason for this is that many actions are carried out by small clandestine groups. As long as these things are not made public (f.e. in some police files they wrote about a material damage of more than 1 million in one year because of sabotage) they will not be written down here. Also it would burst the frame to write down everything that happens.*

*Furthermore, the chronicle is until now just written down until mid December 2014. Many things happened afterwards.*

*For more information check the blog: [hambacherforst.blogspot.de / hambachforest.blogspot.de](http://hambacherforst.blogspot.de/) (english)*

### 2012

**14.04.** During the „forest-instead-of-coal“-festival which is attended by more than 200 persons people start pulling up platforms into the trees. „Occupied“.

**28.04.** First walk through the forest: More than 50 interested persons of the region come to build up together their own view of what is happening in the forest

**29.06.-08.07.** Skill Sharing Camp No.1: talks, workshops and extension of the infrastructure and devices for blockades

**03.08.-14.08.** The second Climate Camp takes place in Manheim. During this the anti-hierarchical barrio takes place as well (Barrio span. For quarter)

**07.08.** several activists chain themselves to the tracks of the Hambach coal railway.

**26.-28.10.** UnEvictable-festival

**13.-16.11.** The forest occupation is evicted by 500 police“men“ as well as climbing squads. Various activists are locked-on (chained) to cubes of concrete



*the occupied meadow*

on the ground and in the trees. In addition, one activist is inside a tunnel system. It takes four days to evict it.  
**17.11.** A meadow directly next to the forest is being occupied. It belongs to a resident with an attitude against RWE who tolerates the occupation. Some days later, there is a police operation in which several people were arrested including the owner.

Furthermore, a cabin under construction is torn down by police with the argument that the material would come from the forest and this would be theft of property of RWE.

Solidarity supporters bring timber and build up the kitchen and another cabin.

**01.10.12-01.03.13:** grubbing season: grubbing operations are disrupted by sabotage of machines and direct intervention in the work.

## **2013**

**19.03.** The forest is being occupied for the second time and evicted already two days later

**June** the public prosecutor in Cologne drops the cases against the activists because of the eviction in November 2012. Reason: "legitimate passive resistance".

The countless injunctive claims by the lawyers of RWE against activists arrive. For some it comes to civil processes.

**August** national party headquarters of the Alliance 90 / DieGrünen in Dusseldorf is occupied. The Green party of NRW (district of Germany where the Rhineland is located) shows once again that they are in favor of coal-fired power and agree on the construction of new coal power plant with BoA technology. The Green party brings charges against activists.

**23.08.-06.09.** Climate and Reclaim the Field Camp takes place in Mannheim: workshops, railway blockades, occupations of gardens and houses.

**03.09.** The forest is being occupied for the third time.

**09.09.** Police and RWE come with heavy machinery into the forest. A platform that is not occupied is being removed, the tunnel under construction is destroyed as well as the kitchen and barricades.

In the coming months there will be 12 police operations. The aim is support for RWE. During the operations barricades are removed so that the directors of the city Kerpen and the Forest Service can have a look at the tree houses.

**19.12.** Police / RWE evicts for the seventh time the barricades. In a "minefield" restricted area a metallic object is found which calls the bomb disposal squad into action. After several tried blastings and shooting on the object it is considered "disarmed". In the police press release it later is described as a "dummy" that originated no danger.

**25.12.** Arrest of an activist who was riding a bike. To take his fingerprints the cops hurt him and discriminate him. In the meantime other people gather outside the police station with drums. In the night he is released.

**25.12.** Sabotage on the Hambach coal railway . LKA (crime department) in action. Police helicopter flying closely over forest and meadow occupations.

**27.12.** measuring posts of the mine removed

**28.12.** railway sabotage

**29.12.** hunting sabotage: during the night some raised hides used for hunting are destroyed

**01.10.13 -01.03.14** Officially this period is the „cutting season“ during which RWE goes ahead with the clearcuts. Anyhow they still saw and shred wood until mid May. To prevent actions against this they close all access roads and bridges and put up floodlights, fences and security posts. Anyhow some machines for the cutting are sabotaged and trees are spiked with nails.

The **1st of December** the Hambach railway is moved from the north-route to the south-route.

Several times it comes to "interruptions" of the operation of the coal railway.

The forest occupation already consists of six occupied trees with two-storey tree houses and three simple ones. Most of them are insulated with straw (because of the winter temperatures).



*shortcut of the coal train power line*

## **2014**

**13./15.01.** several climbing ropes at the occupied trees were cut

**14.01.** Police/ RWE evict barricades in the forest (for the 8th time during the actual occupation) and they try to draw attention to themselves with megaphones.

**09.02.** Sunday Coffee: 60 people visit the forest and meadow occupation for tea, coffee and cake

**17.03.** Eviction of the barricades around the forest occupation

**19.03.** police raid of the meadow occupation: seizure of all electronic objects, folders and tools. At the same time the police and the forest department 'visit' the forest occupation, climbing ropes are cut. Around 130 police officers in the area.

**25.03.** House search of a political project and workshop in Saasen and of the house of a local activist. Police takes copies of files concerning the Climate Camp.



**27.03.** Eviction of the 3rd forest occupation:

One person is chained to a block of concrete in one of the tree houses. Two persons are chained with both arms to the trees in a height of more than 20 metres. Two further activists are arrested during the eviction. Finally: 12 hours of eviction and around 210 cops plus fire brigade and first-aiders in action for five persons in the trees. Solidarity actions and greetings from around the world arrive. During the following days after the eviction the situation in Hambach forest is very tense. RWE security patrolling in cars and on foot with dogs through the woods. Many police patrols. Barricades are made and evicted by police.

**30.03.** Supporters come to visit the meadow occupation and to show their solidarity.

*blockade of a small excavator with a lock-on - 23rd April '14*

**05.04.** police/ media reports attacks on a car of RWE security and broken windows

**14.-25.04.** Skill Sharing Camp no. 2 "Build Resistance" takes place. Workshops such as collecting herbs, building with clay, knitting balaclavas and blockade techniques are being shared.

**16.04.** Essen: Blockade and interruptive actions at the annual general meeting of RWE. Some activists chain themselves inside the entrance gates. RWE is financially in a bad condition.

**20.04.** A century of the police runs into the forest to evict some tents. Police car loses windows.

**23.04.** Two centuries of police accompany RWE to remove barricades with the aim to evict the compost toilets of the camp. One of the machines is blocked by people climbing onto it.

Shortly afterwards a second blockade takes place by one person chained to a wheel loader. The technical unit of the police comes and after three hours they manage to remove this person. Activists climb into the trees, dig trenches, build barricades, play music, make fun of the police, ...

One person in the hospital (knocked down with a police helmet) and 12 more taken into custody.

**25.04.** trial against one activist in Kerpen. Decision: a fine



*26th April - the demonstration*

**26.04.** „Day X plus 4 plus X“ - the Saturday four weeks after the eviction. Official and pre-announced re-occupation of the forest.

A demonstration of 80 people passes through Buir and close to the railway tracks of the Hambach coal railway. Final rally in Morschenich a place that is going to be wiped out for the open pit. One century 'accompanies' the demonstration. In the early morning hours, 30 activists start to block the forest roads with barricades. At the same time platforms and hammocks and banners are put into the trees. The fourth forest occupation is made (at four different spots in the forest).

**28.04.** Polices takes a look on the occupations, one of the occupations they don't manage to find.

**29.04.** first day of trial because of a squatted house during the Climate Camp 2013

**11.05.** hike with 30 people through the forest. Concert in the night on the meadow.

**14.05.** first day of trial because of 'resistance against police officers'

**18.06.** Police and RWE burst into the forest with heavy machinery to evict barricades and destroy buildings on the ground

**June/July/August:** exhibitions, presentations and discussions about the Hambacher Forst occupation and the lignite extraction take place in Germany, Spain, Italy, England, Netherlands, Turkey, Georgia and Greece.

**26.07.-03.08.** Climate Camp in Erkelenz close to the open pit 'Garzweiler'

**01.08.** International action day

Open pit Garzweiler: 3 excavators occupied, 15 personen locked-on, blockade of the entrance gate, demonstraton, samba and clownery actions

Open pit Hambach: railway blockade – 2 persons chained to the tracks, 2 persons hanging from a bridge to block the railway, barricades and smaller skirmish with RWE and police.

**07.08.** walk through the forest with 40 persons

**28.08.** house search at the flat of an activist in

Wuppertal. Investigations in connection with direct actions against RWE



*activists hanging from a bridge above the railway tracks*

**23.09.** prelude for autumn (cutting season) and start of the campain „Kein-Baum-fällt“ ('No-tree-falls'): excavator blockade and collaborating companies made public

**23.09.** Blockade No 1 of the company „Kaisers“ close to the open pit

**26.09.-06.10.** Skillsharing Camp No 3 „Build-Resistance“

Several workshops take place such as building barricades, Lock Ons (chaining yourself to sth.), dealing with fingerprints and DNA traces, accessing internet with TOR and PGP email encryption. Presentations and talks about tar sand mining in Canada, lignite mining in Germany, Gold mining in Greece and climate change

**01.10.** second blockade of “Kaisers“ close to the open pit. Workers violently attack the activists. Trees squatted inside the cutting area of this season

**02.10.** third blockade of “Kaisers“ at the main entrance road of the open pit Hambach, barricades in that area, fences removed to enable free access to the cutting area

**03.10.** a hunter discovers the tree occupation in the cutting area and calls the police. Police and RWE-security comes to take a look.

**05.10.** police and RWE can hardly move in the area around the open pit because their roads are continuously blocked with barricades

**15.10.** accident: an activist falls from a tree/ several days in hospital/ one activist arrested for some hours

- 22./30.10.** trial against 7 activists because of the occupation of the head quarters of the Green party in Düsseldorf
- 25.10.** blockade of machines and work inside the cutting area
- 29.10.** blockade of machines and work inside the cutting area
- 30.10.** blockade of machines and work inside the cutting area

Police comes with 3 centuries, heavy machines and climbing units. Occupations inside the cutting area evicted. Raid on the meadow. 14 people arrested for two days. Violent taking of DNA. One person remains in pretrial detention. People gather in solidarity in front of the prison.

**05.11.** blockade of machines and work inside the cutting area, new tree occupation inside the cutting area

**11.11.** unknown persons demolish the car of the owner of the occupied meadow who uses his car to spread information against RWE



*banner-drop in front of the city hall*

**12.11.** trial in Düren, verdict of "not guilty"

**18.11.** Bergheim - politicians decide in favor of plans for a new lignite power plant  
Some activists protest inside and outside the city hall

blockade of machines and work inside the cutting area, 3 persons arrested, one of them remains in custody because of the 30th of October. Now two comrades are in prison in Aachen awaiting trial.

**25.11.** The occupation "Neuland" inside the cutting area is surrounded, fenced and spotted with floodlights. RWE-security stays there 24/7. They want to prevent contact with the person in the tree, supply with water and food and change of the person up the tree

**28.11.** change of the person in "Neuland": it started with a vigil on the entrance road of the open pit, then people started moving towards the "Neuland"-occupation, they tear down the fences and create a mess during which one person starts climbing up the tree. Seven persons arrested for some hours.

**01.12.** date for a review of a remand in custody: the person in prison since 30th October is released, some activists try to enter the court, two people arrested for some hours

**04.12.** eviction of "Neuland". Two persons tried to block one of the entrance roads by chaining themselves to the gates, the second entrance road is blocked with a tripod. The activist in the tree chained herself to it.

**05.12.** concert of „Mono für alle“ at the meadow occupation

**05.12.** Open letter of the „Bündnisses gegen Braunkohle“ (alliance against lignite) regarding the repression of the 30th of October

**12.12.** regional administration approves the continuation of the Hambach open cast mine until 2030

**16.12.** date for a review of a remand in custody: protest in front of the court with banners, chalk writings and a tree occupation. The comrade who was in prison since the 18th of November is released.





[www.hambachforest.blogspot.de](http://www.hambachforest.blogspot.de)