



“Power to the People!”

Pull the Plug of the Energy Giants!

The campaign „Power to the People!“ is a campaign for a corporate-free, ecological, democratic and social power-supply. Initiated in January 2008 by Attac Germany, it aims to disband the German energy giants, EON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall and to reorganize the power business in democratically controlled smaller units. Attac, a network connecting groups and citizens who are critical of neo-liberal globalization, puts the question of concentration and ownership on the table and demands the democratic control of public utilities. State-ownership is not the solution, as is clearly demonstrated by the French nuclear – and energy giant EdF and the Swedish Vattenfall group.

Corporation-free

The campaign does not focus on changing the energy giants, since their unilateral interests in profits and their huge power structure are incompatible with our goals. They are opposed to decentralization and essential changes in energy policy. Their policies promote the redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich, as is characteristic for the neoliberal system.

The campaign criticizes the complicit role of politics in the energy question. Even the European Commission criticizes the lack of real competition through oligopoly. But apart from that the individual states as well as the European Union use the energy giants for their own worldwide “energy security” politics.

Ecological

The seventeen nuclear power stations in Germany are a kind of money machine for their owners. It is not surprising that they evade and play down the question of risks and the unsolved problem of atomic waste.

Despite the threat of climate change the energy giants plan to build more than twenty new coal power stations in Germany. The German government supports these plans and also the emissions-trading law, which provides more leeway for greenhouse gas emissions.

The campaign demands a phase-out of nuclear and fossil energy production and a turnabout to decentralized production with the help of wind, water and solar energy.

Democratic

Democratic control of the power supply is not possible in the current system. With lobbyists and politicians on supervisory boards, and managers of energy companies working for the government, political influence is well organized in favor of the system. The suggestions of corporations can be found word for word in energy laws. Local governments lose, through privatization, their constitutional right to control public utilities.

Therefore “Power to the People!” suggests small units of energy suppliers: public utility companies need to be re-municipalized and the citizens enabled to participate in decision processes. Lobbyists have to be unmasked and dismissed.

Social

About 840.000 people have their electricity turned off every year in Germany because they cannot pay the bill. The electricity rates have risen about fifty percent since 2000, while power companies delight their stockholders with owner's equity returns up to thirty-one percent (RWE 2006).

That is why the campaign calls for a social tariff with a free basic amount for everyone and progressively higher rates for additional consumption. This will also encourage sustainable energy use.

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Therefore the campaign “Power to the People!” takes to the streets with colorful protests and extensive demands, as well as attending stockholder's meetings and wide use of the Internet.

Today it seems utopian to postulate the end of the energy giants. But it is clearly impossible to achieve a social, ecological and democratic power supply with them. “Power to the People!” is slogan and vision in one. Besides the “No way” to the great power companies, there is the invitation to everyone to participate in a concerted effort to restructure our future energy supply.

More Information:

“Power to the People!” www.attac.de/stromkonzerne

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