

Ron, I heard some jumped-up toerags are selling shooters on our manor - I think we should go down and pay 'em a little visit...

Disarm DSEi
13-14th Sept 2005
Excel Centre,
Docklands,
East London
www.dsei.org



BOMBS AWAY

"September 13-16 will see all elements of the supply chain come together at DSEi in London - from the smallest subcontractor to the largest prime. Together they will comprise the largest international showcase for defence & military aerospace technology. DSEi is the largest showcase for new and future defence technology and it is the largest exhibition for the world's defence companies to display their land, sea and air capabilities at a single exhibition." - DSEi brochure

SchNEWS reckons that this PR puff should be slightly more honest - How about "Do you want to gun down a few unarmed civilian protesters - then we've got machine guns by the armful. Or maybe you've got a province that wants independence - hey they're your resources, not their resources you're mining - bomb a few villages; that should keep the uppity locals in check. Have you invaded another country and are having problems with 'terrorists'? We'll supply all your needs, including armoured bulldozers to knock their houses down."

This is what the weapons sold at the world's biggest arms fair are ultimately used for - to kill, rape and torture. Welcome to the wonderful world of DSEi. This bunch of sick scumbags are in the business of selling weapons to all and sundry - or as they like to say "We recognise that DSEi fulfils an important role within the selling process for defence companies and we make every effort to ensure the business environment at DSEi meets and exceeds exhibitors' needs."

DSEi is the showcase of the British "defence industry". Occurring every two years it is "the largest tri-service exhibition in the world." In other words if you want to kill someone from the land, sea or air - they've got it. The last DSEi was in 2003 and this year it is supposed to be 30% bigger with more emphasis on "Products and services related to Homeland Security, anti-terrorism, access control, and personal security" - in other words - more internal repression and erosion of liberties and human rights.

At the 2003 exhibition there were visitors from 65 countries buying wares from 973 companies from 28 countries enjoying a "customer-rich environment". This is all promoted by the government and directly subsidised to the tune of £400,000. Oh and there was a police bill of £4.5 million just to keep the public out - with 3000 police making sure it was business as usual for the merchants of death. That figure is likely to be dwarfed by the policing of this year's event, which will include the imposition of an extensive exclusion zone around the venue.

HALL OF SHAME

Every two minutes, someone somewhere dies as a result of armed conflict. Most of the 13 million people worldwide who were internally displaced or forced to become refugees last year are in that situation as a result of war. Britain is world's 2nd largest arms exporter and DSEi is the privately run showroom for the wares of the government's arms industry. In 1999, it asked the private sector to start organising an equivalent to the long-running Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition. Ever

CRAP LABEL OF THE WEEK

For Telling the Truth...

On August 2nd the Manado District Court, Indonesia, ruled that Rignolda Djamaluddin, an environmental campaigner, had defamed the mining company (and the world's biggest gold producer) PT Newmont Minahasa Raya after he accused them of pollution - namely dumping toxins like mercury, arsenic and cyanide into Buyat Bay. Rignolda was ordered to publicly apologise and pay the equivalent of US\$750,000 in damages. This sum will increase by Rp 5,000,000 for each day that the damages are not paid.

Angry Buyat Pante residents and local university students who attended the court in support of Rignolda pelted the judges with eggs, stones and plastic bottles following the judgement. They must've been annoyed because they know damn well that there has been pollution (and a sharp rise in associated health problems locally) - as do the Indonesian government who are now prosecuting PT Newmont for... pollution! The company deny everything but coincidentally closed the mine on Aug 30th. Rignolda's case is now awaiting appeal. www.globalresponse.org/gra.php?i=3/04.

since, Spearhead Exhibitions, now a subsidiary of information and education giant Reed Elsevier, has been making a tidy profit on what has become the world's biggest arms fair. More than 1,000 exhibitors and 20,000 pre-approved visitors are expected at this year's event.

The arms fair is opposed by both Ken Livingstone, the mayor of London, and the local council. But central government support for DSEi is hardly surprising. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) calculates that the government spends £888 million annually subsidising arms exports. This includes 'export credit' - the underwriting of arms sales to *continued overleaf...*

EXCEL YOURSELVES

Sat 10th Street Party. meet 1pm at Royal Albert DLR station East London, www.disarm-trade.org 07903812190

Sun 11th Counter Conference with workshops and films. Organised by CAAT. Free, Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, London E1.

Tues 13th: Opening Day of DSEi.

- **Diaper DSEi Baby Bloc**, meet 11am Custom House Station, this is a call for parents and children to take part in a baby/kids bloc demo.

- **Demonstration against the arms fair**, 12 noon, East Ham Central Park, High Street, procession ends outside the ExCeL Centre.

Weds 14th: Destroy the Arms Trade Day of Action.

- **Critical Mass**, assemble 8.30am outside Bank tube station.

- **Blockade the ExCeL Centre** by road and rail.

www.dsei.org



WIND UP MERCHANTS

While the focus this week is on the DSEi weapon sellers, don't forget phase two of any military operation - dishing out the loot.

In Iraq this job has been made easier by the helpful guys at Windrush Communications. Run by Docklands-dwelling (handy for the ExCeL Centre) John Lumb, they organise 'Iraq Procurement Conferences' where, for a reasonable fee of course, corporate contractors can meet, plan and bid for the asset-stripping privatisation opportunities on offer in the newly 'liberated' country. Unfortunately they haven't been left alone to carry out their good work - misguided loony activists keep trying to spoil the party, ranting on about 'pillage' and some 'rules' or other they call the Geneva Convention and Hague Regulations. When will these people learn?

Not yet it seems. On the 14th of September four people go on trial, accused of disrupting the activities of Windrush by refusing to leave their offices when asked to by Police. Should be an open and shut case then?
Er, except the defendants will cite the Hague

Regulations (1907) in their defence - as did Pennie Quinton and Ewa Jasiewicz over their disruption of Windrush's 'Iraq Procurement Conference' in London, April 2004 - following which Windrush dropped the case. Surely this time Windrush want to get this annoying appeal to international law tested and thrown out in a court of law, so they can get on with the job of 'liberating' Iraq's future economic assets unharassed? We will see...

* Support those in court 9.30am Thames Magistrates Court, Bow Road, E3

* Meanwhile **Hiatts** in Birmingham make the leg shackles used on prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. In protest, campaigners (including Mark Thomas and brother of Guantanamo inmate Omar Deghayes) turned up at the factory with band *Seize the Day* who performed their ditty "Do the shackle shuffle at Camp X-Ray". Many wore orange boiler suits and special "Made-in-England by Hiatts Corporation" handcuffs for the occasion to highlight the ongoing human rights abuse. Pictures and more at www.indymedia.org.uk/en/200509/322784.html

BOMBS AWAY *continued...*

ensure that companies don't lose out should a country default on its payments. Military goods make up only 2 per cent of UK exports but receive 25 per cent of the export credit budget (see www.eca-watch.org for more). Government subsidies also contribute to research and development, the use of military and diplomatic personnel and the cost of maintaining the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), the MoD's arms marketing department which employs 600 civil servants across 18 countries with the sole purpose of helping to sell UK arms abroad.

DESO works very closely with Spearhead for DSEi and has a special role in deciding who is invited. At the last fair in 2003, these included the governments involved in 12 of the 18 major armed conflicts raging at the time. They took their place alongside regimes with clear records of human rights abuses, such as Colombia, China, Algeria, Nigeria and Israel (UK and US also guilty of human rights abuses). Both India and Pakistan were invited despite standing on the brink of war. This year, as the world postures on making poverty history in Africa, impoverished countries such as Angola and Tanzania look set to be invited again and encouraged to increase their foreign debt to line the pockets of the western military industry that dominates the international arms trade.

In order to justify DSEi against the backdrop of growing international opposition, the Defence Manufacturers Association has resorted to the

claim that DSEi is not an arms fair, just an exhibition. Yet DSEi's own 2005 brochure states clearly that it "fulfils an important role within the selling process for defence companies". The reality is that by organising and facilitating DSEi, Reed Elsevier and the British government are enabling international big business to profit financially from the death and suffering of millions and directly fuelling war and conflict around the world.

* For more see Campaign Against Arms Trade www.caat.org.uk

BITE THE BULLET

This will be the third DSEi at the Docklands and this year follows 2001 where the main day of action was shunted off the front pages by the events of 9-11 which happened the same afternoon, and 2003 which was more promising. Just to give you an idea here are some of the actions which happened that year... (see also SchNEWS 422)

Several days before the arms fair started thirty aquatic blockaders d-locked onto the tidal gates stopping two out of four war ships from going up the Thames to be displayed at DSEi. On the same day the offices of Spearhead were occupied. During the actual event there were two days of organised protest, including a 'non-violent' day with 2000 playing cat-and-mouse with the police and blocking entrances to the Excel Centre, plus a more adventurous 'no rules direct action day'.

Many of the delegates going to DSEi commuted in on the Docklands Light Rail which proved to be a weak link which activists exploited for

interrupting the unhappy shopping. Some protesters got suited up and mingled with the real suits to confront delegates on the trains, while on one day a string of people climbed onto trains and d-locked on, causing no end of delay. With entry by rail disrupted, others managed to block road entrances for several hours by pushing a car onto the road backed up by sit-down protests. Another approach was to protest at other related venues - such as the London office of Israeli weapons-maker Rafael by the Palestinian Solidarity group ISM.

But taking the biscuit was the group from Oxford who formed their own 'arms company' - the 'Affinity Group' - with website and business cards - and waltzed into DSEi as accredited delegates. Once in they disrupted the fun by standing on a tank and unfurling a banner, and locking onto an armoured personnel carrier, before being bundled out by security. (See SchNEWS 422)

This year will build on the experiences of previous Disarm DSEi events - as well as the recent successes of the G8 protests in July. In 2003 we avoided being corralled in (kettled) by police (as happened in 2001 - which petered out anyway as news of the 9-11 events filtered through) with people keeping mobile in groups, blockading streets and running round the estate to the north of the Excel centre, using a diversity of ways to stop the weapon selling shenanigans. Dealing with an exclusion zone this year will require clever new tricks to get around, but as Disarm DSEi say "**DSEi 2003 was just a warm up. This time we will shut them down.**"

Inside SchNEWS

Two women have been taken to Bedford Hospital as fears grow for the health of the Ugandan hunger strikers in their fifth week. Four women remain on strike in Yarl's Wood protesting against their deportation and the conditions in detention. One very ill and weak woman was taken on a 12-hour journey to Dungal Detention Centre in Scotland, where she continues to refuse food. Due to their protest, others, including spokeswoman Harriet Anyangokolo, have been released having at last secured legal help and the opportunity to get their cases reconsidered. But at least two women have been deported, one of whom was stopped by corrupt immigration officials in Uganda who demanded she give them all her money or they would hand her over to the police. She is now in hiding. There has been no contact with the other woman. The Home Office refuses to take any responsibility for monitoring the safety of those it returns. For info contact: Legal Action for Women, Crossroads Women's Centre, PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU. Tel: 020 7482 2496 / E-mail: law@crossroadswomen.net

GREEK TRAGEDY

* A series of demonstrations, under the banner of "**Actions against the Borders**", took place in the Greek cities of Xanthi and Komotini, followed by a march to the "refugees' reception center" near the border in Vena. The "reception centre" is actually a prison camp where illegal aliens are imprisoned until they're deported. On return some of them may be facing long term imprisonment or execution (e.g. Kurds going back to Turkey). The facility is supposed to house 100 refugees but up to 1000 have been crammed in at times, forced together in disgraceful living conditions.

Police tried to prevent anyone attempting to enter the centre and violent clashes broke out. Some protesters managed to push the police away, sending a few to the local hospital, and finally got through. Once inside they tried to write down the names of the refugees in order to submit asylum requests for them, and filmed the appalling state of the place. For footage of the clashes see http://athens.indymedia.org/media_file.php?id=190&type=video

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SchNEWS in brief

The first public meeting with the family of murdered **Jean Charles de Menezes** is at Brighthelm Centre, North Road, Brighton, Mon 12th 6pm. Speakers include family members, solicitor, Newham Monitoring Project and Bob Crowe (of RMT) ... following at 7.30pm '**Living in the Shadow of an Israeli Settlement**' - talk by mayor of a Palestinian village ** '**We are all terror suspects**' public meeting Weds 14th, 7pm Sussex Arts Club, 7 Ship St Brighton www.smashedo.org.uk ** Celebrate 25 years of **City Farms at Mudchute Park and Farm**, London, 8th-12th www.farmgarden.org.uk ** SchNEWS will be at the (free!) **Hastings Green Fair**, Alexandra Park, Sun 11th, 1-7pm ** 8-year-old **Bristle magazine** is celebrating its 20th issue, with a massive **ResisDANCE!** benefit party, Sat 17th, 9pm-3am £5, Malcolm X Centre, City Rd, St Pauls, Bristol, BS2. www.bristle.org.uk

Fights, Camera, Court Action

This week police gained court orders to seize footage of the protests at the G8. They have seized 15 tapes from BBC Scotland and 10 from Scottish Television. They also have a warrant to seize footage from Sky. Since the Bradford riots the police have been steadily turning mainstream media organisations into glorified evidence gatherers. Journalists fear that this will make them targets for rioters in the future. NUJ spokesman Paul Holleran said "It needs to be seen that the press is at arms-length from the state and shouldn't be seen as a body that hands over material for information to the police just willy-nilly." So when you see the BBC filming think: prison sentence.

Positive SchNEWS

Animal rights activists won another victory against animal abusers Huntingdon Life Sciences after the company's planned New York Stock Exchange listing was cancelled. The NYSE pulled the plug after receiving calls from members of the New York financial community saying that the security of the exchange could be threatened by animal rights activists. A US group called Win Animal Rights (WAR) had sent out an email alert to 10,000 people saying that the exchange was now "a primary focal point for this campaign". One HLS investor told the *Torgraph*, "We are astonished that the NYSE would knuckle-under to a load of English hippies."

...and finally...

As any good hippy capitalist will tell you, the best way to show your solidarity with the rebellious peasantry of Latin America is, erm, buy coffee off them. There's Zapatista coffee for the anarchists, fair trade for the *Guardian* readers - but what about right-wingers? Where d'ya get a brew that tells the world you're so far right you can't see the centre with binoculars?

Look no further than **Contra Café**, a new US company that's trading coffee grown exclusively by former members of the contras - the CIA-backed rightwing militias who opposed the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua in the 80s.

Among the favourite tactics of the Honduras-based contras were cross-border raids on irrigation projects, farms, and health centres. The standard treatment for civilians caught in these raids was rape, torture, mutilation, or murder. According to Americas Watch (now part of Human Rights Watch), violent abuses by contras were "so prevalent that they may have been said to be their principal means of waging war".

The Reagan government loved them, and gave them millions of dollars in military aid and covert help and training from the CIA (who even helped them run coke into the US to pay for weapons). But when the Sandinistas lost power in 1990 the US dropped the contras faster than you can say "The Taliban were freedom fighters too".

And now it seems they're down on their luck. Some have even gone into, er, organic farming, but free trade agreements and the collapse of coffee prices have made it hard for them to get by. So Contra Café has stepped in to buy their coffee, at above-fair trade rates, and sell it to Reagan-loving yanks with the slogan "Start Your Day Right".

Just one problem: even in America there's limited numbers of people psychotically rightwing enough to go out of their way to buy Death Squad Coffee, and they're the kind of people who reckon this fair trade business smacks of communism. As yet Contra Café haven't actually made enough money to kick any back to the growers - maybe they should stick to flogging hard drugs.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all arms dealers... get yer shooters in now because this is your last roll of the DiCE. Honest.