



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DON'T MENTION THE LAW...

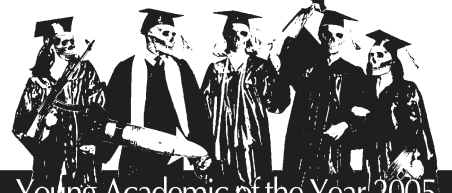
# SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 18th November 2005

Free/Donation Issue 521

BE ON THE WINNING TEAM!



Young Academic of the Year 2005

SPONSORED BY **BAE SYSTEMS**  
TAKING THE TORTURE OUT OF LEARNING

# VIOLENCE IN COURT

## WAR CRIMES ISSUE DODGED IN EDO COURT CASE

Round Three in the ongoing court battle between anti-arms trade activists and Brighton bomb-builders EDO MBM (see SchNEWS 492), which saw the Attorney General's office launching into the battle like a laser-guided legal missile, as a top barrister was dispatched to pull EDO MBM's fat out of the fire. In the three day court hearing November 2-4th, activists attempted to include in their defence evidence of EDO MBM's complicity in war crimes. The court was shown graphic images and eyewitness statements of atrocities caused by air strikes in Palestine and Iraq.

EDO MBM manufacture guidance systems for the Paveway series of laser-guided bombs, which were the most used weapon in Operation 'Shock and Awe', the forty-eight hour bombardment which kicked off the invasion. They also manufacture parts for the Hellfire air-to-ground missile, a favourite for both US and Israeli forces to carry out targeted assassinations.

The defendants argued that their actions in protesting outside the factory had been to 'prevent or detect' crime. They did this by arguing that not only was the Iraq war illegal, but that war crimes and breaches of the Geneva Convention occurred during the aerial bombardment of the civilian population. Evidence of war crimes by the Israeli armed forces using EDO MBM equipment was also brought in.

Funnily enough the government didn't really want there to be a full and fair investigation into the legality of the war ("Why do people keep banging on about it, can't they just accept it and move on?" - TB) and the judiciary, in the shape of Judge Wallace, were only too happy to oblige.

The Attorney-General's office applied to 'advise' the proceedings. It's always in the details; by becoming a 'party' to proceedings they might have had to disclose some of what they knew about the war, but in an 'advisory' and supposedly neutral capacity they could freely intervene in the case with the sole purpose of ensuring that the legality of the Iraq invasion is never questioned in the UK courts.

At an earlier hearing they convinced the judge that they should be able to frame the hearing, i.e. they get to decide what questions the court should ask! And strangely they had all the right answers. Unsurprisingly, the Judge took the opportunity to kick the whole question of war crimes into touch (not much chance of a mention on the honours list if he held that hot potato too long). One excuse was that while waging an aggressive war is a crime, it is not a crime in 'domestic' law - so while the British state is quite happy to put the likes of Milosevic and Hussein on trial, it cannot tolerate having

those standards of behaviour applied to their own actions. Anti-EDO activists hit the conceptual brick wall of trying to argue that our own leaders might be war criminals. How can Tony Blair be a criminal? - he's a friend of Bono's!

Yet another reason for throwing out the defence was that protesters' actions had not been direct enough! That if the protesters had genuinely believed a war crime was imminent they'd have taken more militant action. And if that's not incitement then what is? One logic-stretching trick was comparing the defendants to a schizophrenic who was stalking someone to prevent a crime. The judge accepted that evidence of involvement in war crimes is hard to come by, but claimed that action to prevent crime could only occur in the context of knowing when and how the crime was to be committed. In other words activists could not merely know that EDO have supplied weapons used in air strikes - they would have to identify which specific bomb, sold on which particular

...continued overleaf

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

### For Making Medicine

Geordie grandmother Patricia Tabram faces up to 14 years in jail for production of cannabis that she uses to ease the symptoms of her arthritis. She was arrested after police found four cannabis plants in her house. Two years ago Mrs Tabram was in a neck brace, used two walking sticks and was on a cocktail of prescription drugs, but since she started using cannabis, the sticks and neck brace have gone, and she no longer uses any prescription drugs, and she has been able to sleep soundly for the first time in years. The prosecution would like to see the cannabis eating granny "tucked up by Christmas". So much for the festive spirit! [www.newsoftheweed.com](http://www.newsoftheweed.com)

## Stop the Arms Trade - Defend the Right to Protest - MASS DEMO

10th December, 12pm  
Churchill Square, Brighton  
[www.smashedo.org.uk](http://www.smashedo.org.uk)

# LOSING THEIR FACULTIES?

## EXCLUSIVE: NEW TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS DISCOVERED IN UK

Ever thought about the morality of Universities' investments? Well, it's time we should, because as the purse-strings on government funding for universities have become tighter they are increasingly turning to the corporate sector, including the arms industry, to sustain themselves financially. The fact that 67 UK universities currently hold significant investments in arms companies is glaring evidence of the growing connection between academia and the arms trade. These diversifying universities include Oxford, Cambridge, Sheffield, Manchester, Southampton, Swansea, Birmingham, Leeds, York and University College, London. Such bastions of learning, supposedly renowned for their commitment to internationalism and human progress, are in fact making big bucks from sustaining international terror and perpetuating human suffering.

This relationship has also meant that arms companies are investing in universities, which involves the sponsoring of departments and research: the friendly weapon-lovers are increasing the role they play in our education system. For example, according to People and Planet, GKN, an arms company that supplied water cannon and armoured vehicles to the brutal Indonesian Suharto dictatorship, paid Cambridge University £750,000 in 2000 for a ten-year 'GKN professorship'. Universities are also helping the arms industry with recruitment; for example, last year BAE Systems, the UK's largest arms exporter, tried to recruit 900 graduates from UK universities. So, while once they were concerned about educating

students to high ideals and then lamented when they went off to become disillusioned and dashed on the corporate rocks, some universities now feel it entirely acceptable to train them to go straight off to collaborate with companies who contribute to the production of weapons designed to cause death and suffering. Arms companies are subsidised by public money to the tune of £890m annually - just short of the £950m which will be raised each year by top-up fees, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies. It seems that public money can be found for weapons, but not for education. 'Education for all' Blair recites, but education by whom and for what ends?

The investment links between our teachers and the state-sponsored terrorists brings into question the undemocratic nature of universities, as the decision to invest directly in an arms company rests predominantly with the financial officer of the university. The students and staff at most universities have no knowledge of these investments and have no say in these important decisions. Some faculties have taken action against immoral investments, such as the University of East Anglia who, backed by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, secured an ethical investment policy for the university's charitable funds which excluded arms companies.

\*To discover if your local university has connections with the arms trade, and to get involved in a campaign against it, then look up CAAT's new 'University Clean Investment campaign': [www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/clean-investment/universities](http://www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/clean-investment/universities)

## VIOLENCE IN COURT *continued...*

date was going to be used in which targeted assassination or air strike... mmm, tricky!

The issue of war crimes committed in Palestine with EDO MBM's products was brushed over. This is despite repeated international condemnation of Israel's policy of targeted assassination, which has repeatedly caused civilian deaths as Israel uses Hellfire missiles and guided bombs to kill its enemies in the West Bank and Gaza.

In an extravaganza of weasel words the Attorney General claimed that civilian casualties were allowed under the terms of the Geneva Convention provided they were not part of a systematic policy and occurred in pursuit of a military objective. He then went on to argue that as 'military objectives' were state secrets, protesters could not realistically form a view of whether war crimes were being committed - another brilliant Catch 22. According to the A-G, civilian casualties were 'regrettable' and maybe on occasion 'tragic' but never war crimes.

Activists will soon be back in court over the issue of whether or not the use of Protection of Harassment act to shut down protests is legally valid. [www.smashedo.org.uk](http://www.smashedo.org.uk)

## UP THE Tooting Popular Front

Charles Clarke has ordered the extradition of Babar Ahmad to the US to face trial on alleged terrorism offences. Babar Ahmad is a British citizen from Tooting, South London. In December 2003 he was arrested by Anti-Terrorist Police who broke into his house in a pre-dawn raid. He was brutally assaulted in front of his wife and sustained over 50 injuries to his body, two of which were life-threatening (See Schnews 474). After six days of intensive investigation he was released without charge, only to be later rearrested after he attempted to claim damages from the police for their abuse.

Mr Ahmad is accused of running websites that supported terrorists and urged Muslims to fight a holy war, but the Home Office refuses to give this British citizen, allegedly committing crimes whilst in Britain, a trial in er, Britain, preferring to hand him over to the US under the 2003 Extradition Treaty - under which the US government does not have to prove to the UK that there is a prima facie case to answer. Nice, no wonder the posting on his website says, "This decision should only come as a surprise to those who thought that there was still justice for Muslims in Britain".

The Muslim Council of Britain said it was "very disappointed" in the ruling and his family said they would appeal the extradition order in the High Court. A family spokesman said, "In effect, this sends a message to British Muslims that there is no legal and democratic means to air your concerns. We held protests, wrote letters, lobbied MPs and compiled petitions of over 15,000 signatures... If the floodgates for extradition are allowed to be opened, it will be British Muslims that will be targeted - the very people the British government was hoping to win support from in the fight against terrorism." See [www.freebabarahmad.com](http://www.freebabarahmad.com)

## Inside SchNEWS

Milan Rai was sentenced on Wednesday to 28 days imprisonment for refusing to pay £2000 "compensation" to the British Government for spray-painting the Foreign Office with the words "Don't Attack Fallujah. Black Watch Out" on November 3rd 2004, just days before last year's devastating US assault on the city

\* Send letters of support to him at: Milan Rai, HMP Lewes, Brighton Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1EA

\* See [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org) for more.

**Subscribe!** Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 0EF. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email [schnews@brighton.co.uk](mailto:schnews@brighton.co.uk) Web [www.schnews.org.uk](http://www.schnews.org.uk)

## BOWLING FOR COLOMBIA

**Indigenous people on squatted farms in Colombia came under government attack on 9th November.** Over 500 police with ten armoured personnel carriers tried to forcibly remove hundreds of protesters occupying the 2,000-acre Jabo farm near Caldono, 200 miles south west of the capital, Bogota. The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca have squatted the farm as part of their campaign to reclaim land. Guambianos, Kokonuko and Nasa indigenous people, some of Colombia's 800,000 poorly treated tribespeople, as well as thousands of peasants demanding land, have occupied haciendas (areas of rural property) in several parts of Cauca since the 12th of October under the slogan "Freedom for Mother Earth" aimed at forcing the government to comply with various long standing yet so far unfulfilled commitments to deal with land ownership.

Starved of resources and largely subsisting on a diet of little more than potatoes and rice and caught in a war not of their making they have vowed to occupy the farms until the government creates the funds and legal powers to give them land. They are demanding a national agrarian reform program to make more lands available to poor farmers. The government, however, have other ideas.

"The repression started yesterday and intensified today," said one of the Indian leaders,

Feliciano Valencia. He said at least 35 Indians were wounded. Following clashes the Nasa communities burned the riot police shields and other war gear they had recovered from government forces in a ceremonial fire.

The situation appears to be approaching a stand-off as Colombia's hardline administration, rejected talks unless the Indians leave the farms. The police have not yet launched an all out attack and there are hopes that a compromise can still be reached. Three more farms in Cauca state have been re occupied in the past few days.

The families on the land are calling for solidarity letters, phone calls and emails to the Colombian Embassy to make it politically more difficult for the government to allow the police and army to attack the settlements. Communications can be addressed to: The Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0LR. Tel: 0171 5899177. Email: [mail@colombianembassy.co.uk](mailto:mail@colombianembassy.co.uk)

\* **Colombian trade unionist and Coca-Cola worker Euripides Yance** will be speaking at a protest to highlight Coke's complicity in the murder of trade unionists in Colombia. It's at Coke's bottling plant in East Kilbride, Glasgow, on Sunday 20th November. Assemble at Hairmyers train station at 12.30pm.

## GIVEN THE IRAN-AROUND

**A Brighton-based Iranian asylum seeker, wanted by his government, Amir** was

arrested last week and told he would be deported. Amir was involved in the impeachment of an Iranian official and fled the country after arrests and threats to his life. He's already been found guilty whilst absent and faces a two year jail sentence when he returns. A friend who merely assisted him through passport control received a term of imprisonment. At his Immigration Appeal Tribunal, the Judge stated that "I have no hesitation in accepting the core of the Appellant's evidence". Appeals by his MP managed to get the Home Office to stay the removal for three days, but then in direct contradiction of that stay, there was an illegal

attempt to deport Amir - only stopped when a legal representative intervened at the airport.

Amir is currently being held at a Heathrow deportation centre and his future is uncertain. Human rights abuses are common in the Iranian judicial system, and the courts are not, as accepted by UNCHR and other international bodies, independent of the Executive. Amir, if returned to Iran, is in real danger of being tortured and his life will be in danger.

\* Meeting on Friday 18th at the Cowley Club, Brighton at 6pm to build a network for action should a date be set for Amir's deportation.

\* Keep Amir in the UK campaign - 01273 540 717, [brightonunemployedcentre2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brightonunemployedcentre2000@yahoo.co.uk)

## SchNEWS in brief

**Close Down Campsfield - 12 years Too Long!**

Demo against Campsfield Detention Centre, bring Instruments, placards and banners. With speakers including former detainees. Noon at Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre, Langford Lane, Kidlington near Oxford. Also bike ride leaving from Martyr's Memorial, St Giles, Oxford on Nov 26th at 11am sharp. [www.closecampsfield.org.uk/images/CCC12YEARS.pdf](http://www.closecampsfield.org.uk/images/CCC12YEARS.pdf) \*\* A Court in **Nigeria** has ruled that the use of toxic flares that burn off natural gases, a by-product of oil extraction is illegal. This is one of the main complaints of communities living near the oil fields - that their health is affected: see last week's SchNEWS & [www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=12779](http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=12779) \*\* In Brazil the president of the Foundation for the Conservation of Nature, **Francisco Anselmo de Barros**, died after setting fire to himself in protest against alcohol factories that were damaging the Pantanal marshes. \*\* **Eyewitness Fallujah Speaking Tour, US activist Rahul Mahajan** who was in Fallujah during last year's siege is on a tour of the UK 18-28th November. Full dates see [www.rememberfallujah.org](http://www.rememberfallujah.org) or contact **Voices in the Wilderness** on 0845 4582564 \*\* On Monday **Greenpeace** blockaded the entrances to Downing Street with several tonnes of coal to protest at Tony Blair's crap efforts to combat global warming. There are unconfirmed reports that naughty anarchists tried to barbeque a few MPs on the coals later in the day. [www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

## ...and finally...

**GREENWASH AND GO**

**Wanna "get the inside track on the hot topic for today's consumers" or learn "How to get your brand to speak your values"?** Then all good corporate PR flunkies should look no further than the "How To Communicate Your Corporate Values To Consumers" conference taking place at the Marriott Regents Park Hotel in London on 22-23rd November 2005. The brochure includes gems like "Marketers always talk about giving consumers that 'warm feeling', but how does that work in practice when your product sits on the shelf next to all the others?" and worries about "The challenges larger companies face when it comes to 'keeping it real' for consumers".

The usual round up of corporate villains are paying £895 plus VAT to learn how to grab hold of some of that fat "ethical" pound. Some of the lowlights include a session on "The importance of language: how to promote your brand better using a sustainable message" (Top Tip: A white lie never hurt anyone) and a discussion of how 'Brand value' is at risk from climate change (Top Tip: brand awareness among consumers is low when they're underwater). Talking of climate change BP will be on hand to teach "How to market your values better". If anyone fancies going along to discuss how they can be better reached as a consumer, the conference website has all the details [www.ethicalcorp.com/consumer/venue.shtml](http://www.ethicalcorp.com/consumer/venue.shtml)

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - crime doesn't pay but war crimes give you a fat lip on the way out. Honest.