



SchNEWS

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Bloody hell Sarge, it looks like a bomb's hit the place!

DECOMMISSION ACCOMPLISHED

**AS EDO GETS SMASHED.
REALLY, REALLY SMASHED...**

"Great Britain... will do everything we can to prevent arms trafficking which is at the root of some of the problems... I believe that will help get a solution to this crisis." - *Gordon Brown*
 "I don't feel I'm going to do anything illegal tonight, but I'm going to go into an arms factory and smash it up to the best of my ability so that it cannot actually work or produce munitions... [which] have been provided to the Israeli army so that they can kill children." - *Elijah Smith, one of the EDO 9.*

After five years of campaigning, die-ins, lock-ons, rooftop occupations, noise demos and the odd riot, it turns out that the Smash EDO campaign had been taking a fairly indirect route. In the early hours of last Saturday morning six activists turned up at the factory with a ladder and some hammers, and spent a night thoroughly 'decommissioning' the arms factory from top to bottom.

Outraged by the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the UK and US's involvement in high-tech killing around the world, they explained in a pre-recorded video that the time for talking was over. In the pre-recorded words of Bob; "The Israeli Defence Forces are guilty of war crimes in Gaza. EDO and many other arms manufacturers around the UK are aiding and abetting these humanitarian crimes and war crimes. The action we've taken is intended to hamper or delay the commission of war crimes and prevent this greater crime. The glorification of war and the mass production of arms and weapons is a sickness in the heart of those involved."

DCI Graham Pratt of Sussex Plod paid them the best compliment they could have got: "Windows had been smashed and offices turned over in what I would describe as wanton vandalism, but with machinery and equipment so targeted that it could have been done with a view to bringing business to a standstill. The damage is significant and the value substantial."

Coherence and logic aren't taught at cop school, so we'll leave out the fact that targeting machinery and equipment in an arms factory by anti-arms protesters cannot be 'wanton vandalism', but we'll let that one go. More to the point, 'significant and substantial damage' has been caused to an arms company that's been busy selling arms to Israel and ignoring public disgust at the genocide that's been carried out in Gaza.

This isn't your run of the mill symbolic act of solidarity. The six decommissioners threw themselves in the path of the US-UK-Israeli juggernaut, and in doing so slowed it down by a measurable amount. The protesters are being charged with criminal damage to the tune of £250,000, but this is almost definitely an understatement. After all the Raytheon 9 (See SchNEWS 635) were charged with £350,000 for chucking some computers out of an office window.

But if you want to reduce their actions to numbers, consider these: a Hellfire missile costs around £25,000, and if you take EDO/police at

face value that would mean 10 less Hellfires. But in reality the figure's likely to be much higher, as the six were in there for over an hour. Of course, if EDO can't get their kit back in working order quick enough to complete their contracts on time, their losses could be hefty indeed. According to local eyewitnesses, the protesters did it in some style. They stuck the factory's sound system on and blasted out tunes whilst they worked. Apparently a missile or bomb shaped object was seen flying out of one factory window. The jury's out on whether that counts as collateral damage.

Eventually 30 police accompanied by a specialist forced entry unit broke through the barricades and were able to corner and arrest the decommissioners.

Alongside the six that broke in to the factory, another three protesters are being held in connection with the action. Initially eight of the nine were held on remand, but as of Thursday all but two are now out on strict bail conditions.

The six had recorded 'martyr-videos' of themselves explaining why they were prepared to decommission the factory. View it at www.indymedia.org.uk/media/2009/01//418836.mpg

* See also www.smashedo.org.uk

* The **Raytheon 9** - During the Lebanon War in August 2006 nine protesters occupied Raytheon offices in Derry, Northern Ireland and smashed their way through an alleged £350,000 worth

of computer gear. Their defence was that they were attempting to prevent war crimes, and in June 2008 were found unanimously not guilty on three counts of criminal damage by a jury in a Belfast court. www.raytheon9.org

* **PRISONER SUPPORT:** Sent letters of support to **Robert Altford** (aka Tintin). Prisoner no. VP7552 and **Elijah James Smith**. Prisoner no. VP7551 - HMP Lewes, Brighton Rd, Lewes, BN7 1EA.

* **Mayday Reclaim the Streets Against EDO MBM/ITT**, May 4th - Reclaim The Streets style demo/carnival on Mayday - against Brighton's bomb factory. www.smashedo.org.uk

ALSO UP IN ARMS

BAE is another company playing its part in Israel's Gaza massacre, as well as many other war crimes. This Thursday (22nd) six protesters blocked the entrance to BAE's Newcastle premises for more than an hour by staging a 'die-in'.

Meanwhile in Warwick, last week a group of university students disrupted a BAE recruitment event by shouting down the speakers and distributing an alternative BAE careers guide.

Despite being subsidised by the British government, BAE makes more than £1 million per day from its weapons peddling - so much in fact that it can even afford to slip the odd billion to Saudi princes.

* www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2009/01/419750.html
 * <http://weaponsoutofwarwick.wordpress.com>

SENTENCED FOR LIFE

AS LONG PRISON TERMS ARE HANDED DOWN TO THE SHAC 7

"**Gregg Avery, Natasha Avery, Dan Amos, Heather Nicholson, Gerrah Selby, Gavin Medd-Hall, Dan Wadham and all others accused in this politically motivated witch hunt are guilty of the highest level of compassion. They have given their all to save the lives of others and expose the inbuilt failings of animal experimentation. Prison and the threat of prison will not stop decent people from doing what is right.**" - *SHAC spokesperson.*

Vicious sentences have been handed down in the SHAC conspiracy to blackmail trial (see SchNEWS 661). Heather Nicholson was jailed for 11 years, Gregg and Natasha Avery for nine years each, Gavin Medd-Hall for eight years, Daniel Wadham for five years and Dan Amos and Gerrah Selby were both sentenced to four years. Greg and Natasha had earlier pleaded guilty; their sentencing was left until the end of the trial. At no point did the prosecution allege that any of the defendants were involved in home visits, paint-stripping cars or in fact any illegal activity. All they had to prove, it seemed, was that the campaign against HLS influenced 'persons unknown' into taking illegal direct action. Not that you'd have guessed that from browsing the mainstream media - which is united in saying that the defendants themselves

were 'extremists' guilty of the actions.

Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS) are in the business of poisoning healthy animals to death. Far from being the pioneers of life-saving medical research depicted by the media, they are a commercial contract testing company that tests artificial colourings, flavourings and sweeteners, herbicides, GM food, plastics, industrial chemicals, "health foods", dietary supplements and a small amount of drugs for other commercial companies. They are the largest company of this kind in Europe. Five hundred animals are put to death every day by HLS.

The world's media, prompted by police press officers, have been quick to condemn activists by pointing to harassment against the employees of HLS and their customers, shareholders and investors. What is never examined is the ongoing cruelty, scientific fraud and the development of repressive new laws targeted at the animal rights movement.

SHAC's activities have been lawful; the campaign publishes information about animal abuse inside HLS labs, reports campaigning activities and issues contact alerts calling on supporters to write polite letters to companies working with

Continued overleaf...

PARTY & PROTEST For listings updated weekly see
 * www.schnews.org.uk/pap *

SENTENCED FOR LIFE *continued...*

HLS and ask them to desist. If those companies continue to do business with HLS, protests would usually follow. All material on the SHAC website and newsletters is checked by a barrister. Even the judge at Winchester has said that SHAC is a legal campaign. Other pressure groups such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International and Friends of the Earth all use email alerts and website campaigns to highlight protests and campaigns.

Putting these campaigners on trial for 'conspiracy to blackmail' was clearly a political decision. A £4 million inquiry - involving five police forces - targeted SHAC despite admitting that campaigners "rarely caused physical harm". This is due to the effectiveness of the A.R. movement in confronting and challenging the power of corporations involved in animal abuse. The demonisation of animal rights campaigners in the media has made it easier for the state to repress them without public outcry. The conviction and sentencing of the SHAC 7 in Winchester is another nail in the coffin of the public's right to voice their anger and dissent against corporate greed.

History of HLS

HLS hit the headlines in 1997 when they were exposed by an undercover worker with a hidden camera. This exposé was screened on national TV and showed HLS workers screaming abuse at terrified beagle dogs. One is filmed punching a puppy in the face in anger! The outcry that followed rocked the foundations of this once profitable company as the public made their objections felt. HLS shares were devastated and never recovered. Today HLS are unable to trade in more than 10% of their shares. This is a very sick company.

Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) is a public pressure campaign that grew out of the prime time exposure of HLS into a global initiative. Using a variety of tactics intended to draw public attention and hamper operations such as mass protests, small demonstrations, leaflet drops, lock-ons, blockades and email alerts, SHAC has brought HLS to its knees. The informed public finds the business of HLS repulsive and will not allow them to regain their feet.

HLS have been exposed to the public time and time again. On each occasion a very familiar story comes out. It is in the public domain that HLS workers have falsified test results and been found guilty of animal cruelty. From 1995 to 2000 HLS broke the Good Laboratory Guidelines no less than 520 times in just one experiment! In 2004 *The Observer* exposed HLS for gassing beagle dogs to test a CFC chemical which was banned 15 years earlier.

Government legislation and public money has come thick and fast to ensure this distasteful, scientifically unproven commercial concern continues unhindered by the progress of public opinion. High Court injunctions restrict public protest to a few hours a week at the gates of HLS. The company no longer owns its property but has been reduced to leasing it back from those it sold out to. HLS has the Bank of England to sign its cheques because none of the High Street banks will provide banking services. The UK state is also funding HLS's insurance and for the police to spend vast resources on imprisoning those who speak out against this abhorrent business.

* See www.shac.net or call 0845 458 0630

PRISONER SUPPORT: Write letters of support to **Natasha Avery** NR8987 and **Heather Nicholson** VM4859 at HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx, TW15 3JZ. **Dan Amos** VN7818, **Gregg Avery** TA7450, **Gavin Medd-Hall** WV9475 and **Dan Wadham** WV9474 at HMP Winchester, Romsey Road, Winchester, SO22 5DF.

SHAC 7 Solidarity Actions

CAMBRIDGSHIRE: On Monday (19th), activists paid an early morning visit to HLS's beagle breeding operation at Harlan (SchNEWS 466) before moving onto the main HLS lab at Wooley. The front gates were blocked by the protests and a megaphone used to name and shame the workers inside. Tuesday saw a repeat performance at Harlan, where police were led on a merry dance round the perimeter fence before the roving protest moved again to HLS Occuld in Suffolk. There was a good turnout - including an 'intelligence' gathering camera cop. Noisy demos continued all day, whilst new faces attempted to avoid being served injunctions by the stony faced security.

HEREFORD: Wednesday saw similar visits to HLS suppliers **Sequani** (see SchNEWS 646), and cage-makers **Arrowmight Biosciences** (see SchNEWS 638).

SOUTHAMPTON: On Monday one of HLS's newest suppliers, **Promega**, received a visit from SHAC supporters welcoming them to the HLS family and let their neighbours at the Southampton Science Park know just what the company is up to.

BIRMINGHAM: Tuesday saw a **Barclay's** branch targeted as SHAC activists went on a public information demo - to let customers know about the 500 animals a day suffering at the hands of HLS - and how their bank helps fund it all.

HORSHAM: Tuesday also a demo at HLS client **Novartis** (See SchNEW 643) - a regular target for protests. Noisy demos took place outside all day, despite the injunction in place which allows only 12 people to protest at once and limits megaphone time to a mere five minutes.

* For more details see www.shac.net

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

An Indymedia server was seized by police in Manchester yesterday (22nd). This comes after somebody had posted the address of the judge in the SHAC trial on Indymedia, leading to Kent Police requesting that the relevant posts be removed, and the IP address of their author be divulged (eg the unique number given to each internet connection, which can be used to trace the user). The posts had already been pulled, in line with IMC UK policy protecting privacy, but because Indymedia don't log the IP addresses of people publishing on it, they couldn't help police with their enquiries.

Indymedia is one of the few websites in the land of blogs and open posting that doesn't log IP addresses, which puts it in contravention of the 2006 EU Directive about the retention of data, obliging sites to log who's visiting and posting. Nearly all other sites do retain this data - something to think about when you blaze away in the comments section on sites by blogspot, wordpress, facebook and nearly all others.

The police gained a warrant to take this one server, presumably to sift through it to find IP addresses, but Indymedia already knew the police wouldn't find what they're looking for as they watched it go out the door. This EU Directive has never been tested in Britain, and it remains to be seen if this will be the first time. But it would be a major own-goal for the police to do so considering the publicity it would generate for Indymedia.

The seizure hasn't affected the running of Indymedia as the server was one of several mirrors. It's just an inconvenience and has been taken as a general attempt by police to attack IMC infrastructure. Several sites were temporarily affected including London Indy, and sites for an anti-GM group plus a Canadian campaign against the 2010 Olympics.

Indymedia continues to be a place to publish and read news which protects your online privacy - visit www.indymedia.org.uk

SCHOOL OF LIFE

Students from Kings College London, LSE, SOAS, Birmingham, Oxford, Essex, Leeds, Nottingham, Manchester Metropolitan, Sussex and Newcastle have all occupied University buildings in response to Israel's assault on Gaza this week, showing their solidarity with Palestine, and demanding that their universities boycott and divest from Israel.

Since Tuesday a group of around 80 students have occupied the main lecture theatre at Sussex Uni. With mobile phones presumably on silent they have insisted that lectures proceed as normal but refuse to leave until their demands have been met - insisting that the ceasefire is by no means the end of University complicity in Israeli actions.

Highlighting both the financial links of the University and the moral implications of its continued silence over the issue, the students have made six demands: That the university issue a statement condemning Israeli military aggression and the occupation; withdraw funding from any company producing arms, supporting the state of Israel or violating human rights; institute a campus wide boycott of Israeli goods; pay for six full scholarships of students from Gaza universities - and - that they send surplus educational material to Gaza with shipping paid by the University. Oh and that the students themselves face no repercussions for the action.

So far 'The Management' have refused to make a statement on the grounds that it's 'too political'. They have agreed to pay for some shipping costs of resources and to er 'market' their foreign scholarships more strongly in the Middle East (that's what the Gazans need - a fresh and dynamic marketing campaign). The University also denies that it's aware that it invests in arms companies in spite of the wealth of student research and even FOI requests that prove otherwise, and have flat out rejected the idea of a boycott. As for repercussions - there will be none... as long as the occupation doesn't go on too long.

The Sussex students have stated that this 'complete failure to even dignify our demands, combined with an implicit threat is not good enough' and have signalled their intention to stay firmly put.

* See www.sussexoccupation.blogspot.com or email sussexoccupation@gmail.com to show support.

UNCERTIFIED

SchMOVIES presents the premiere screenings of films from the forthcoming **Uncertified: SchMOVIES DVD Collection 2008**. Friday 30th 6pm-8pm at the Cowley Club, London Road, free entry. www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies

...and finally...

Wanker Of The Week - Dr Simon Festing
"These [SHAC] sentences signal the end of the long dark era of animal rights extremism," - Dr Simon Festing, January 2009, Research Defence Society
"We have many different cells which work on our own style of tactic. At the moment our main strategy is to take the fight to them as much as possible."
- Dr Simon Festing, January 1996, Friends of the Earth spokesman - Third Battle of Newbury.

Hey we all lose some of that youthful idealism when the grey hair starts to sprout but it takes a special kind of wanker to move from pushing direct action to actively agitating for activists to receive harsh prison sentences. This not-so-good doctor has really pulled an ideological handbrake turn - from defending the natural habitats of animals to promoting caging and torturing them. Maybe he just grew tired of the disapproving looks and snide asides at family dinners - his father, a certain Michael Festing, works for the UK Animal Procedures Committee and is highly involved in the pharmaceutical and animal testing industries.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - peace will not come by words alone. Honest!

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