

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER MOSTLY ARMLESS...



SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 11th September 2009

Free/Donation

Issue 690

DISSIN' THE DSEi

Disarm DSEi Vs The City – As Anti-Arms Trade Campaigners Confront The Suits...

This week, between the 8th and 11th of September the Defence Services Equipment International Exhibition, the world's largest arms fair, was held at East London's ExCel Centre (see SchNEWS 689). There have been mass mobilisations against DSEi at the ExCel Centre since 1999, the largest being in 2003, and infamously in 2001 on the same day as 9-11. Over the years the Met have rolled out ever more repressive tactics – kettling, dodgy searches under the Terrorism Act and the usual Met favourite of trumped up arrests. Many oft nicked activists had vowed never to return to a DSEi mobilisation again, however this time round energies were spent in The City - against investors in the international arms trade rather than the usual pig fest at the ExCel Centre.

Fears of a continuation of the repressive policing of previous years meant that numbers were down. About 200 people met on Tuesday outside the RBS building in Aldgate and marched into The City - RBS are the biggest financier of the global arms trade. Next stop was Barclays, largest UK arms trade investor, where a banner was hung above London Wall proclaiming that "Barclay Invests in the Arms Trade", and shoes were hurled Iraqi style at the building in disgust at their complicity in murder. More banner drops followed with HSBC and Legal and General exposed as arms trade investors.

As the march carried on folks started to feel something was missing - being constantly penned in and prevented from doing what they wanted. A handful of police were present but

they were not intervening in the demo and were not filming overtly. This seemed, at first, to leave people feeling uncertain, but not for long.

When the crowd reached Legal and General, another large investor, messages were pasted to the building, more shoes were thrown and windows rattled. The demo moved to Gresham Street where Lloyds staff, disturbed while eating sandwiches on the steps of the Head Office, were besieged by protesters calling for an end to arms trade investment.

BT Head office was then invaded by scores of activists carrying megaphones, and a reinforced banner carrying the tell-it-like-it-is message "Bomb Makers and Bankers, Murdering Wankers" - along with a sound system - as they poured through the revolving doors. BT hold £59 million worth of shares in the arms trade. Last stop was AXA, one of the largest institutional investors, which had its door kicked in, windows broken and was pelted with paint bombs.

Throughout all this the FIT were present. One FIT officer said at the beginning that they planned to 'do nothing' to interfere with the demo. They became increasingly twitchy as windows were smashed and buildings invaded but not a single arrest was made. Something about being at a demo en masse just a few hundred metres away from where their colleagues had publicly beaten to death Ian Tomlinson a few months back must've spooked them.

The police have since been on their PR-directed best behaviour of late, part of a media

BLADES OUT

Tension at the Vestas protest camp on the Isle Of Wight (See SchNEWS 688) has been ratcheted up this week after activists established a blockade to prevent the company from removing the remaining turbine blades and moulds used to make the blades, and shipping them over to the USA where they will continue production.

The police responded by storming into the camp on Wednesday (9th) and removing a concrete-filled tent being used to obstruct part of the exit route from the factory and confiscating a tripod that was nearly set up and ready to go. In the ensuing meleé one man was removed with a dispersal order while in a separate incident another activist was arrested after being harassed by security.

After this frustrating setback members from the campaign immediately went on the hunt for more materials to construct another tripod (and had a chance two-ships-in-the-night meeting with a police unit, who were luckily on another

mission so gave them no trouble). The tripod was finally erected and occupied at dawn on Thursday (10th).

Taking the first shift was one of the original occupiers, who racked up 13 hours on his perch before handing over (in the process winning a bet with one of the security guards who had started a book on how long he would last – his evening's beer money). When SchNEWS spoke to the protester yesterday afternoon he declared that he and the remaining nine ex-Vestas employees were "full of fight" and not going anywhere. When asked about the Vestas response he said "All we've had from Vestas is our P45s".

Activists at the camp are still calling out for people to get down and support the blockade or just to attend one of their daily 'High Tide Picnics' (hosted by the infamous Jacky Wellies). A day of action, on the island and nationwide, has been scheduled for September 17th.

* See <http://savevestas.wordpress.com>



game aimed at keeping the reigns off the police. The result, however, was one of the most successful DSEi mobilisations ever.

So what next? This year it was clearly the right decision to mobilise in the City but maybe in 2011 a revitalised movement can pose a serious challenge to the delegates at DSEi?

BATTLE THE BANKS

Tuesday's demo was the second mass demo this year to focus on companies investing in the arms trade. Smash EDO's Mayday! Mayday! action saw thousands of people squaring up to Barclays and McDonalds, both investors in EDO-ITT (See SchNEWS 675). Since then anonymous pixies have glued up cash machines and smashed windows of banks investing in the arms trade on dozens of occasions in Brighton,

Continued overleaf...

SENT TO COVENTRY

Combining the oafish violence of football hooligans with the nutty, bent right-wing views of the BNP, beer gut aficionados the English Defence League once again returned to the streets of Birmingham last Saturday (5th) and were, once again, met by groups of local Asians, supported by anti-fascists. What followed was an afternoon of chanting, scuffling and missile throwing which ended in 90 arrests.

Having been banned from protesting in central shopping area the Bull Ring by the home secretary following last month's confrontation (See SchNEWS 687), the action instead took place around New Street Station. As the anti-fascists confronted the EDL at every turn the afternoon unfolded in the style of an away game at Millwall with lots of posturing, grunted threats and minor violence before police blocked a majority of the EDL in a pub until buses arrived to move them to a new site to continue their 'protest'.

In typically dimwitted fash-fashion, the thugs of the EDL were displaying exactly what kind of English values they stood for with a bit of mindless hooliganism - smashing up the seats and pissing on the buses they'd boarded. Meanwhile unbeknownst to the EDL, these buses were redirected to Coventry where they were held until after midnight. Having missed the last trains and buses they were then stuck there until the following morning.

A freelance journo on the scene told SchNEWS that there was a heavy police presence throughout the day, co-ordinated by FIT teams shipped in from London, but that they spent most of their time documenting the press instead of monitoring the action.

* For an eye witness account see www.revleft.com/vb/anti-fascism-f42/index.html

Somerset and London. After Tuesday's demo Sophie Williams, from Disarm DSEi said "Any damage caused pales into insignificance in comparison with the destruction UK weapons have caused worldwide. The only way to make these companies divest from the arms trade is to hit them economically, and today's action is part of a growing movement of direct action against the dealers in death and the money behind them."

DSEI 2009 TIMELINE

Monday 7th September – Our friends from ITT Corporation organised a warm up conference to DSEi at the QE2 conference centre near Victoria. Before the conference started a campaigner from Catholic Worker daubed "Build Peace, Not War Machines" across the front door. A handful of protesters turned up and staged an angry and noisy demo outside the centre. Police made a half hearted attempt to move them into a protest pen and made empty threats of arrests under SOCPA. One lone activist shackled himself inside the pen and began a hunger strike for the duration of the fair. ** Meanwhile, on the fourth plinth at Trafalgar square an installation called "Never mind art - disarm the arms trade!" was set up and activists made speeches in support of the EDO decommissioners (See SchNEWS 663).

Tuesday 8th September – Disarm DSEi held mass demo in The City (*see previous report*) ** Two were arrested when Catholic Worker poured red paint over the sign for ExCel and

unfurled a banner saying "Forgive them father for they know not what they do". ** Critical Mass from the ExCel Centre. ** Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) held demos at the ExCel Centre and UK Trade and Industry.

Wednesday 9th September – Activists held a noise demo at Custom House station just outside DSEi and disrupted the DLR. ** CAAT held a walking tour around arms dealers in the City of London. ** Noise demonstration held outside DSEi delegate's hotels.

Thursday 10th September – An angry noise demo was held outside the doors of the Hilton Hotel in Park Lane where inside the DSEi delegates' dinner was being held. Police issued a Section 14 order; people were moved away from the hotel and 10 arrests made for breach of Section 14. Looks like the police had had enough of their softly softly tactics.

FORTHCOMING ANTI-MILITARIST EVENTS

* **Support the EDO Decommissioners Week of Events** – Brighton - 16th-26th October – see www.smashedo.org.uk

* **Launch of Target Brimar Campaign** – October 17th - Brimar is a Manchester based arms company – see www.targetbrimar.org.uk

* **Stop the NATO Parliamentary Assembly** – Edinburgh – November 13th-17th See <http://natowc.noflag.org.uk>

* For more info on the **Anti-Militarist movement** see www.antimilitaristnetwork.org.uk

NUKE KIDS ON THE BLOCK

An anti-nuclear base camp has sprung up in the forests of Ranua in Finland where Areva, a multinational uranium mining corporation, has already started drilling. Despite Areva's assurances to local people that they will not survey the area until they receive a claim permit from the Ministry of Work and Livelihood, two pipes have been discovered drilled into the ground which experts believe may be deep drilling holes. Due to the scant protection offered by Finnish Environmental Law, Areva can effectively legally start drilling with only the landowner's permission which has already been secured.

The camp's main purpose therefore is to monitor, report back and disrupt work while they wait for the Ministry's official decision. In order to establish an effective public outreach programme and ensure the survival of the camp, more numbers are needed, right now. There is a call-out for people to join the Ranua Rescue Areva Mining Monitors (RRAMM) to help monitor the activities of Areva and provide a physical presence. Due to the location of the camp, which is situated near a lake within a forest on the edge of Areva's huge prospecting claim area, use of a vehicle, preferably a van or a pick-up, is the most desperately sought item on their wish list. If you can help them please get in contact.

You can phone the camp on +358 40 365 2041 and book yourself on their calendar poll at <http://doodle.com/mr3m86qgdpsab94x>. A press conference has been scheduled and a public meeting called for October 12-14. Contact the camp at camp@nuclearfreefinland.org. Check out www.nuclearfreefinland.org and www.ranuarescue.blogspot.com

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

ROOM SERVERS

The case has been dropped against a Sheffield IT worker who was raided, arrested and had a computer server confiscated in January this year (See SchNEWS 663). The server was apparently being used by Indymedia, and the police warrant was to track down the poster of a comment on Manchester Indymedia giving the home address of the judge involved in jailing some SHAC animal rights defendants (See also SchNEWS 663).

Despite being told that Indymedia does not log the IP addresses of any of its contributors, the cops nonetheless targeted this particular, albeit arbitrary, server. The man running it didn't even have the passwords to access the server, but yet he was arrested under suspicion of offences including the rather Orwellian "encouraging or assisting an offence believing it will be committed". It marked the first recorded use of broad new powers granted by the Serious Crime Act 2007. See www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2009/09/437512.html

* **Operation Liberation** – National demonstration outside Highgate Farm in Lincolnshire, who breed rabbits and ferrets for HLS and other labs. Saturday 26th September, starts 12 noon, see www.shac.net

DRAXTIC ACTION

The Drax 29 (See SchNEWS 683) were sentenced last week (Friday 4th) with 21 of the original group being given a 12 month conditional discharge, five being given 60 hours community service, and three ordered to pay legal costs and £1,500 compensation. The campaigners were hoping to be acquitted under the same conditions as the Kingsnorth 6 (See SchNEWS 646), but the judge was less sympathetic, refusing to allow arguments based on the fact they were preventing the greater crime of carbon pollution. See <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=123128030015>

...and finally...

The police got in a flap recently in Dover when a woman was pulled over for driving with a giant parrot on her shoulder. After they discovered she was in fact banned from driving she was arrested, and a junior policeman was given the job of driving her van to the depot with the three foot long blue and gold macaw for company. However this particular copper found out just how low on the pecking order he was on the force, having been given a big bird to babysit. Clearly pissed off that his keeper (and favourite shoulder) had been nicked, the macaw - who the police now know to be called Chip - spent the journey violently attacking him and sitting on the steering wheel biting chips out of his fingers.

As it turns out, once Chip was back at the station, the police discovered they were brushing with stardom, 'cos he'd starred alongside Johnny Depp in the 2003 film Pirates Of The Caribbean (Chips agent probably gets him a lot of pirate work). Chief Superintendent Steve Masters of Kent police said "It was a bit of surprise I must admit to end up with a celebrity on our hands."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, don't _____ or _____ and then we'll save the world from _____ (make up your own disclaimer this week). Honest.