



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER BIT OF ARMLESS FUN

# SchNEWS

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## Guns 'R' Us

*'We obviously don't talk about burnt bodies and smashed bones. It tends to put the clients off their vol-au-vents'*  
- missile salesman

**Inside:** decked in pinstripes or uniforms and shiny regalia, 20,000 or so arms-industry delegates, beating the Christmas rush. Not a place to take yer mum shopping - and an invite a tad harder to obtain than a copy of the Argos catalogue.

**Outside:** the characteristic peace movement mixed-bag of Quakers, troskyst paper sellers, direct action types, and the odd backbench MP. And more than a few police. At least as many combat fatigues as were inside the exhibition, and more running around and scrambling across obstacles than on the Krypton Factor assault course.

### SUPERSTAR DSEi - HERE WE GO!

Welcome to Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEi) - the UK's biggest bombs n' guns emporium. Taking place simultaneously in on MoD land near Chertsey, Surrey and at London's Docklands, don't shop around for your military-industrial hardware - just come to and peruse our exhibition.

And so thousands of participants came from across the globe, representing regimes as far apart as Algeria, China and Saudi Arabia. They rolled up to Chertsey into a grey expanse that looked as muddy as the car parks at a wet Glastonbury - and just as miserable - before herding into the field of marquees. But the projectiles advertised on these stalls would be dangerous to juggle with, the pipes here too full of high-grade aircraft fuel to try to smoke, and the chemicals unlikely to make anyone feel the rush come. The hippies weren't invited to this one.

Still, they rushed there anyway and things kicked off at the exhibition, where several hundred activists flanked the main entrance, at intervals flinging themselves in front of the oncoming coachloads. The tailbacks quickly built up as the anti-arms trade boys and girls crawled beneath the vehicles or sat in the road; chanting Buddhists all the while banging out a rhythmic backdrop to the fun and games. Meanwhile, on the river in East London, amphibious activists harried the six or more state-of-the-art warships, their in-something-of-a-state dinghy tearing along only slightly faster than it let in the Thames. (The ropy old motor, though, shall stall no more: butter-fingered police, after confiscating the vessel, let the engine slip into the bosom of the water. A replacement is coming courtesy of an apologetic constabulary - oops).

Back in rainy Chertsey, police had had to close the main approach route to traffic, giving throngs of dripping wet arms dealers a chance to get to know the lovely Chobham road. Traipsing on

foot the mile or more stretch down to the fair's entrance, many apparently suffered collateral damage\* to their dignity. One delegate, displaying an IQ similar to that of the average subscriber to *Guns n' Ammo* magazine, took a moment to lunge at a protester with a poorly-aimed umbrella. Some who arrived by train had a better time; not, however, those on the Tuesday morning service held up for the best part of an hour, after a female activist locked on to a carriage at the last station but one from the exhibition site. Chatting on the platform was a pleasure, as the extended stop provided unrivalled access to the considerable number of arms buyers and sellers aboard the train. As too, were the catering staff contracted by the exhibition. *'We'll spit in their food!* they promised, expressing the same dim view of their arms-trading carriage-fellows as most of the other passengers.

**Dear Murderous Bastard,**  
You Are Cordially Invited to An Opportunity to Purchase Some of the World's Finest Instruments of Torture & Death.  
Set in the Heart of the Beautiful Surrey Countryside, the Defence Systems and Equipment International Offers you the chance to choose from a wide range of Missiles, Attack Aircraft and Internal Repression Equipment, all in the Unrivalled Peace and Security that only the Ministry of Defence can offer. RSVP MoD

Then there were those who got inside.... stowing away in one of the delegates' coaches, one power-dressed woman protester passed unnoticed in the exhibition for several minutes before getting kicked out with some of the industry literature she'd managed to glean. Others ran the gauntlet of forest terrain and barbed perimeter fence, creeping through the undergrowth like soldiers before scaling the double-fencing of the inner-compound.

Then yesterday evening, the target was a Park Lane hotel (don't flash your YHA membership card in this place) where many of the arms industry movers and shakers went to enjoy a banquet. There, one hotel security guard went and punched a guy who had climbed the hotel gate to drape a banner, giving him, nonetheless, rather less injury than, say, the Kurds in eastern Turkey, trade unionists in Kenya, or any of those lucky others at the receiving end of some of that shiny new military hardware.

\*collateral damage, a Gulf War euphemism meaning human casualties, as used by many of the 'peacekeeping enthusiasts' attending DSEi. - SchNEWS VocabWatch

### "WHAT IF WE HAD AN ARMS FAIR & EVERYONE CAME?"

Among the MoD's guests are the following delightful governments.... **Saudi Arabia:** A savagely repressive fundamentalist regime, that according to Amnesty, *'collects arms like others collect Rolls Royces.'* **Israel:** Subject of innumerable UN condemnations for the occupation of Lebanon, ethnic cleansing in the Occupied Territories, including 20 unlawful killings this year, and recently found guilty by its own high court of torturing prisoners. **Syria:** Systematic human rights abuse and repression of political opponents. **Algeria:** Military dictatorship responsible for 100,000 deaths since cancelling the 1992 elections.

Such is the generosity of Britain, we even help such states pay for their weapons, thanks to the Export Credit Guarantees Dept. ECGD has the British tax payer cough up for recipient country that spend more than they can afford, so allowing exporters to trade with 'high-risk' states that no true capitalist would touch. Naturally, this is used largely for UK ple's favourite export, arms - meaning that we pay for dodgy regimes to get nasty weaponry for free, and the merchants of death to make a killing. And the best bit is that it all gets counted as 'aid'.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) admitted in Parliament this year that export credits were covering the sale of arms to Indonesia worth £691 million. The DTI has also rescheduled £200 million in debt repayments from the beleaguered Indonesian economy so that arms deals could continue.

Sadly, due to a few domestic problems (*not 'cos the UK govt withdrew their invitation, which still stands*), Indonesia was unable to attend the DSEi. Fortunately though, the Defence Export Services Organisation, has a permanent bargain-basement store in Jakarta their stated aim: to raise Britain's arms sales to Indonesia tenfold, to £3bn by 2007. Don't forget - even when countries are officiously banned from importing British arms, UK companies can still arrange arms transfers as long as they don't pass directly through Britain. And helpfully, the govt trains military officers from foreign armies - including the Indonesian special forces.

### You missed the DSEi arms fair?

No-one goes away empty-handed. Two more: Armed Forces Communication and Electronics Association (AFCEA) This one's already been driven out of Belgium, (*politically and ethically undesirable* said their parliament) but is coming to the Renaissance Hotel near Heathrow airport, from October 27-29.

Soon after, the notorious Contingency and Operational Procurement Exhibition (COPI:X) takes place at Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey, November 2-4.

Both these snappily-titled events provide plenty of opportunity to go play with the bastards. Campaign Against Arms Trade: 0171 281 0297

## Inside SchNEWS

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an African-American journalist, awarded the prestigious Peabody Award for Radio Journalism at 26, elected president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists, who has been on death row for the past sixteen years charged with the murder of a cop. As a teenager Mumia was a member of the Black Panther Party and his work found him on the 'key agitators index' of the FBI. Because of his outspoken views Mumia was finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet supporting his wife and children and so took a job driving a taxi. Whilst cabbying he saw a cop beating a black man with his torch. He was shot running to the scene by an officer while another lay mortally wounded nearby. After being beaten by police he underwent intensive surgery, before being charged with murder. Meanwhile, he'd also been highlighting the states escalating harassment of the radical black ecological group MOVE, and its attempts to crush it, eventually leading to the bombing of their homes and the imprisonment and death of most of its members. As one magazine states "It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the authorities considered eliminating Mumias reportage an urgent priority."

There isn't space to go into the details of the trial but in December '97 an international tribunal of 23 prominent jurists convened in Philadelphia, to consider testimony by 'selected witnesses' and look into the evidence. The panel took just 2 hours to return a unanimous verdict that the US government had violated four human rights conventions during and after the trial.

Mumia's work was dubbed "the voice of the voiceless" Now it's our turn to pull out all the stops to make sure he is not executed. Last time, in 1995, worldwide protests stopped his death- let's do it again. The next six months are a critical period in the battle for a new trial because Mumia's certiorari petition is before the U.S. Supreme Court. Unless the Court rules in his favour, which we certainly can't count on - then, by the end of October, Mumia's lawyers must file their habeas corpus appeal in the Federal Courts. This filing for habeas will initiate the final rounds of the legal battle. Remember this is urgent - once the death warrant is signed he has just 30-90 days to live

What's at stake is both Mumia's future- the future of one of the most inspiring and fearless voices of the oppressed today and the future of the disgusting US Penal system. The US government has not dared to carry out the legal execution of a prominent Black revolutionary since the days of slavery. To let them get away with such an act now would send a chilling message to the rest of the world. We must not allow this to happen! Mumia's case underscores "the criminalization of Black men, the suppression of dissent, the expanded death penalty, the gutting of defendants' rights, and the whole political atmosphere that is based on blame and repression".

September 19-25 is Mumia awareness week.

Contact Mumia Must Live! BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX email [mumia@coolnetuk.com](mailto:mumia@coolnetuk.com), [www.mumia.org](http://www.mumia.org)

Send protest letters to: Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capital Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120, fax +001 717 783 4429.

Letters of support, Mumia Abu-Jamal, S.C.I. Greene, 1040 East R Fuman Highway, Waynesburg, PA, Philadelphia 15370-8090.

There's a meeting at the Brighton Unemployed Workers Centre, 4 Crestway Parade, The Crestway, Hollingdean this Sunday (19<sup>th</sup>) 7pm to organise local support.

## Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

Tel/Autofax: +44 (0)1273 685913 GET IT EVERY WEEK BY E-MAIL: [schnews@brighton.co.uk](mailto:schnews@brighton.co.uk)

## SchNEWS in brief

Get along to the Free The World Bike Ride on September 22nd DAY, for a pedal powered tour of London. "Along with reclaiming London streets on this 'car free day', we will be visiting various dodgy institutions and businesses to express opposition to the destructive system of global capitalism." Meet 12 noon at Speakers Corner. The tour will end with a picnic held somewhere inappropriate - so bring food and drink. Contact London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Road, N1 9DX. Tel: 0171 713 1269 \*\* Did you witness any arrests at the last Manchester Reclaim the Streets or the squatted Hacienda Party in June? (See SchNEWS 215) Tel 0161 226 6814 \*\* "We are of the united opinion that the loss of these antiquities would constitute little less than a national disaster." Letter to the Times 1975. Planning permissions granted nearly half a century ago allowing the obliteration of a large part of south-west Dartmoor to make way for a "super-quarry" and huge waste tips could soon become reality. Much of the ground has yet to be systematically surveyed and it is likely that the monuments currently recorded represent only a fraction of the existing archaeological remains. <http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/aburnham/pers/dquarry.htm> Contact Dartmoor Preservation Association, China Clay Campaign, Old Duchy hotel, FREEPOST (PY687), Yelverton, PL20 6ZZ. \*\* "We are at a turning point in our history. We are on the verge of a new adventure in planetary consciousness". So writes one of the contributors to 'Creating Harmony: Conflict Resolution in Community' (ed. Hildur Jackson). After a long summer of partying (oh yeah, and protesting), SchNEWS isn't too sure that consciousness is necessary, but for those who do this book might take 'em to a higher level. The book is a varied manual of co-operative living in community experiments written by participants from the 60's onwards. Available from Permanent Publications, Tel: 01730-823311 email: [hello@permaculture.co.uk](mailto:hello@permaculture.co.uk)\*\*

The South African cabinet approved a £3.2 billion deal with major European arms manufacturers to buy ships, submarines, fighters and helicopters, money that is needed to help the country's crumbling public & social services. Meanwhile, whilst the government is busy challenging allegations of corruption, the country has just endured it's biggest ever strike. The President is accused of using hard line tactics against his public sector workers, to impress foreign governments and investors about his "Tight(Assed) Fiscal Policy"! Although they dont seem so tight when buying arms!

## From our Finnish Correspondent

"We had a demonstration in 3-motorwaybuilding-site...Engineers were aggressive, they shouted how "stupid" we are. The top road builder screamed to workers that "machines must move to the other place and you can drive OVER activists if they are in the front of! We were in the front of and I gripped in the front of machine my legs under the machine and machine went on!"

This was the first time the demonstration wasn't told to police before and it was illegal. After forcing machines we went to the top office of 3-roadbuilding site in Iittala to shout to the leaders. They came out and went away with their big cars, but I called to the leader of this project and he said that he's ready to speak with us. He was ready also before but I hated him so much that I refused to speak with him. Now the engineers said in newspapers that every motorway-resisters in Finland are invited to come to the Iittala to drink coffee, hah hah. And they said that they'll explain us that environment has been taken into consideration in motorwaybuilding, hah!!!! Of course we'll go there but we discuss only that the WHOLE motorwaybuilding must STOP!!"

Contact Aronitunkatu 5A8, 13500 Hdmeenlinna, Finland. Tel +358-40-7452057. e-mail: [pajuojaa@hmlto.hamkk.fi](mailto:pajuojaa@hmlto.hamkk.fi)

## BURMESE YEARS!

17 years imprisonment for possessing pro-democracy fliers was justice Burmese style for James Mawdsley last week. Access to the British Consul was refused, causing suspicion of torture. On the 9/9/99 Pro-democracy demonstrators in Pegu City and Thatone handed out leaflets. Londoner Rachel Godwyn was among 500 demonstrators arrested (for singing a revolutionary song) last week. She now faces 7 years in prison. Demos in solidarity around the world included the Burmese Embassy in London being redecorated, losing its military flag and gaining butterflies and flowers. The Burmese embassy in Australia being stormed by several hundred students and there were large demo's in front of the Burmese Embassy's in Bangkok, Thailand, and in the USA outside the UN Building. In Nottingham action was taken against electronics firm GEC (sprayed GET OUT OF BURMA), Midland Bank & Daewoo car showrooms (glued up) and Total petrol stations (padlocked during rush hour). Nottingham Earth First! also picketed several Travel Agencies to highlight our ability to directly boycott Burma as ethical tourists. Before Rachel Godwyn left, she made a plea to Tony Blair to end investment in Burma which is ruled by a military dictatorship guilty of ethnic cleansing, forced labour and the disappearances and torture of pro-democracy activists.

Meanwhile 3 year old, Thaint Winna Khin has become the world's youngest prisoner of conscience, after being arrested by Military Intelligence for helping to plan a march earlier this year! Amnesty International said "Locking up a young child - effectively holding her hostage to force her father out of hiding - exposes the extent of the Burmese government's ruthlessness in trying to stamp out political dissent."

Burma Action Group, Bickerton House, 25-27 Bickerton Rd, London N19 5JT. [www.freeburmacoalition.org](http://www.freeburmacoalition.org)

## PARTNERS IN CRIME

'Partnership' was Prime Minister Tony Blair's buzzword at the TUC Conference in Brighton this week. (mentioned nine times).

"Business and employees...are not two nations divided. That's old style thinking. That's the thinking of the past." According to Blair "The partnership message is spreading" so here's a few examples:

270 workers at LUFTHANSA SKYCHIEF sacked for going on a one day strike over flexible working practices.

Workers at KRUPP CAMFORD PRESSING in Llanelli, Wales threatened with redundancies unless they accept pay cuts of up to £60 a week. Last year the company made a profit of £1.7 million.

New Labour's buddies GRANADA are still refusing to re-employ the Hillingdon Hospital workers who were sacked four years ago for refusing to accept worse pay and conditions. An industrial tribunal told Granada to pull their finger out, so far the company have refused.

## ...and finally..

SchNEWS had to laugh about Sir Ken Jackson, General Secretary of the AEFU union, who told the TUC it should scrap its annual Conference and hold a joint gathering every other year with the bosses union, the Confederation of British Industry. The man also came up with the cunning plan of a strike-free Britain. "Workers want to work, they don't want to strike" he rattled. Maybe he should have said it a bit louder. The very next day hundreds of Ford workers staged a 24 hour strike over pay allowances. A free copy of SchNEWS to any reader who correctly guesses what union the Ford workers are members off.

## disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to have candy floss arms fayres in the back garden, as loads of dodgy dealers will only turn up and you'll have to dodgem like the bullets.