



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DIRTY BRIEFS

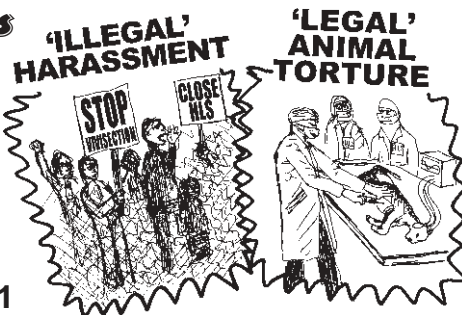
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HARASSMENT LIFE SCIENCES

'Protection From Harassment Act' used to screw Animal Rights Protester

"This is serious as it means that any multinational can claim to be 'harassed' by peaceful protests, throw money at a greedy lawyer, get an injunction and then cripple people with costs. This affects all of us."

—Lynn Sawyer.

Lynn Sawyer, a midwife and animal rights activist has been landed with a bill for over £200,000 and faces losing her home. Her crime? Not defending a court case!

This comes from an injunction under terms of the Protection from Harassment Act against Lynn and other people and groups to stop them protesting against the vivisectioners Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). Because Lynn did not attend the court case in person to defend herself, the judge automatically imposed a "default judgement" against her. As a result she is liable to pay the court costs if sued by HLS – she also has to pick up court costs of anybody else named on the injunction!

She has been landed with a legal bill for £205,551.23 by Lawson-Cruttenden Solicitors who are acting on behalf of HLS. This bunch of greedy solicitors specialise in the Harassment Act and charge ridiculous amounts of money – they charge £400 an hour for solicitors fees, this includes time when they aren't even working. For example, for attending one court hearing, they charged £500 for 1 hour 15 minutes for travel and waiting – £500 for going to and from work and hanging about doing fuck all! That's more than most people earn in a 40 hour week! (A total of £7316.67 was charged by the solicitors for travel and waiting). They also charge £100 per hour for an office junior, even though they probably pay them £50 a day. When you count up numerous court appearances charging £400 an hour, plus interest, it comes to a nearly a quarter of a million pounds.

This extortionate bill she has been given is for everyone named on the injunction – twelve people and groups in total. She isn't just being billed for the costs of one twelfth of the case – which you might expect to be fair and reasonable. No, the liability is deemed "joint and several" meaning that they don't need to divide up the costs between the defendants – they can just pursue one person. But, it gets even worse, Lynn didn't contest the injunction – she just accepted that it would limit her right to protest against HLS. Other people decided to fight the injunction in court and are taking it to full trial. The totally bonkers situation, which shows that the legal system is completely deranged and has nothing to do

with justice, is that Lynn is also liable to pay the costs of these cases! You did read that right – something that Lynn had absolutely nothing to do with (the appeal hearing) and she has to foot the bill for!

Lynn now faces losing her home, as she may be forced to sell it, to cover the costs incurred by Huntingdon Life Sciences' attempts to curb peaceful, lawful protest not only by her but also other people.

Animal Treatment

The Protection from Harassment Act was originally touted in the media as being designed to protect women from stalkers, but it was so widely drafted (with the help of Lawson-Cruttenden Solicitors, who boast about helping to draft the bill) that companies have been able to use it to harass protesters! In fact the first use of the Act was against animal rights protesters (see SchNEWS 126).

The Act is used to silence and stifle a whole load of peaceful law abiding activities by creating exclusion zones around premises. The way the Act is drafted means that all a solicitor needs to do is present some "evidence" before a judge – without any of the defendants being present and they usually grant the injunction. At a later date the defendants may attend court and fight the injunction, but the injunction has already been granted and it appears that it's up to the defendants to overturn the injunction rather than the company to prove the injunction case. The injunction in the case of HLS was also made against the Animal Liberation Front, an organisation that doesn't really exist! The original injunction placed against the people referred to a number of actions, such as criminal damage to employees' properties, which have never been proved to be linked to anyone, but have been reported on the SHAC website. The Harassment Act is using guilt by association as a legal means for stifling protest.

Lynn has lost all faith in the legal process: "I believe that in the current climate there is no point in even trying to campaign legally as the goal posts move on a daily basis and that the most peaceful, innocuous gesture is interpreted as violent and threatening by the law... Writing letters has met with similar accusations, as an elderly Quaker gentleman who wrote the most excruciatingly polite letters to drug companies was threatened with arrest and intimidated by the police."

So what has Lynn actually done that is so threatening to HLS that it can be termed

harassment? She has climbed a fence and, according to the solicitor presenting the case "sat on top of it for 20 minutes before being coaxed down by the police". Other actions have included trespass, abstracting a fraction of a pence of electricity by making a phone call in HLS's offices (she sent a cheque to HLS to reimburse them for the cost, but this was refused) and drinking a bottle of beer from the HLS hospitality suite in Brighton. She also blocked the A1 with a tripod and was attacked by an off duty police officer, sustaining a smashed femur, a severe laceration to her face and the loss of over a litre of blood. Surgeons spent five hours putting her face and leg back together. Of this she says "The really perverse, sick and twisted thing is that HLS through their lawyer Timothy Lawson-Cruttenden are actually claiming that an incident in which I was the subject of a vicious unprovoked attack which nearly cost me my life caused them, a multinational corporation, 'harassment'!"

The use of the Protection from Harassment Act has been used extensively against people campaigning for animal rights. However, it has done nothing whatsoever to limit the amount of 'harassment' caused – after all, if you are engaged in activities for which you may get sent to prison, having an injunction against you is hardly going to stop you, especially if you've never been caught. What the Act has done is to target vocal campaigners. The act has also been used against anti-GM crops campaigns (see SchNEWS 436).

Lynn says "I envisage a situation where bailiffs are 'harassed' by protesters trying to save trees, a worker is 'harassed' by a striker holding up a banner, the meat industry is 'harassed' by someone campaigning for veganism, a homophobe is 'harassed' by a gay rights demo and a travel company claim 'harassment' after a visitation by the Disabled Action Network."

* For legal information regarding the Harassment Act and a whole host of other useful legal information see the excellent www.freebeagles.org

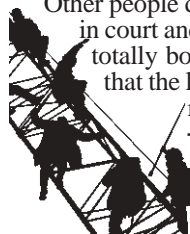
* SHAC – the campaign against HLS continues despite legal harassment. www.shac.net 0845 458 0630

* If you feel you are being harassed and can afford £400 per hour, contact Lawson-Cruttenden Solicitors timlc@lawson-cruttenden.co.uk (the gent who handled the case) 020 7405 0833

* Check on www.indymedia.org.uk for updates

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A DECADE OF PARTY & PROTEST * ANTI-COPYRIGHT * INFORMATION FOR ACTION



'CONTRICK'

Workers employed by construction giant Laing O'Rourke are refusing the company's new pay and conditions deal. The company, with a turnover of £1.74 billion in 2003, claims that they "employ qualified, talented and motivated staff who have the 'can do' attitude and are innovative in their thinking."

But the new contract or 'contrick' as it has been renamed by workers includes features such as slashing workers' pay in half. Pay will be subsidised by bonuses but only at the company's discretion! Holiday pay can be cut by £20 a day and workers who are off sick will have to provide a medical certificate, even for one day's absence.

Employees describe having been split into small groups and asked to sign the contract, without seeing it first, and have been told that they have six weeks to sign or face the sack. Construction Union UCATT has sided with management, urging workers to sign the contract. It has made no attempt to ballot its members on it.

On Wednesday, workers attended a meeting called by RMT member and Joint Sites Committee activist Steve Hedley. Workers from several Laing O'Rourke sites attended and expressed their dissent against the contract. Workers who have already signed the contract are withdrawing from it. Hedley blasted the contract for its focus on 'discretionary bonuses' decided at the whim of management.

He said "What the hell is a discretionary bonus? How can your union sign up to something that your boss may decide whether or not he is going to pay? If we're strong and act together we can stop this. We are the ones who are doing the job".

Recently workers at the Channel Tunnel Rail Link site at Kings Cross requested the presence of GMB (major general workers union) representative Steve Kelly, but when he tried to discuss the contract with the managers he was thrown off the site. This makes a mockery of national agreements in the construction industry as well as laws which allows workers access to, and the freedom to choose, their own representatives. The GMB has advised its members not to sign the contract until they have been allowed to see it in full.

At the Kings Cross site 100 have already walked off the job in support of trade union activist Steve Hedley, sacked earlier this month, and pickets halt all traffic onto the site. Workers at the site have elected themselves a shop stewards committee - independent of any union - to organise resistance to the contrick, and are urging all other building workers to refuse to sign it. Laing O'Rourke can expect coordinated walk-outs, wildcat strikes and other actions if anyone gets sacked for refusing to sign.

'Neutral' people are needed to help with leafleting, banner hanging, or other actions as workers are vulnerable to retaliation from their employers. Awareness raising is a priority now, as Laing O'Rourke are sensitive to bad publicity which will jeopardise their chances of getting big public contracts in the future. More support of picket-lines and strikes may be needed when/if they start springing up. For more contact - Steve Hedley, 07985 438 301

* Tesco, Sainsbury's, and British Airways are leading the corporate fight against sick pay. Tesco propose to cut sick pay for the first three days staff are off work. Sainsbury's and BA have been quick to follow, and if the proposals go through other businesses will surely follow to stay 'competitive'. Trade Union USDAW are tamely going along with the scheme. www.workersliberty.org/node/view/2252

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Remember, remember

"If we in the media were less willing to play the terrorists' game, we could make an important contribution to the war against them... If we are really serious about being at war, the media needs to do some soul-searching about our role in that war." - Columnist Helle Dale.

It should not come as a surprise to SchNEWS readers to learn that this was the conclusion of an article in an American newspaper - in this case the Washington Times of September 30.

What is more disturbing is that the comments were the result of a secretive meeting of "European and American policy-makers" held just ten miles from Brighton at Wilton Park, near Steyning.

Dale also revealed that the Wilton Park discussions had concluded: "We can fight a high-tech war against the terrorists, using all the means of modern technology, from satellites to track cell phones to cyberspace policing to shut down websites. If we in the West are not to hang separately, if we are in a war, surely we should cooperate."

Funnily enough this meeting took place two weeks before Indymedia's servers were removed by FBI agents as part of an international move said to also involve the Italian and Swiss authorities.

This insight into what is on their rather sinister agenda provides yet another good reason for mobilizing against their next gathering in Steyning on November 5-6th.

This conference, entitled 'International Rule Making for Global Capital Markets', is being held in association with The European Financial Forum, Federation of European Securities Exchanges, Paris Europlace and Deutsches Aktieninstitut and includes speakers from big business and the IMF. Details of the conference were bizarrely removed from the Wilton Park website just 24 hours after the protest was advertised online, but not before activists had copied and pasted the lot!

*Meet 2.30pm, Fri. Nov. 5, Playing Fields, Vicarage Lane, Steyning (opp. St Andrew's Church next to Community Centre).

*From Brighton meet 12.30pm War Memorial, Old Steine. 07837 942373 www.freewebs.com/shuttheg8

THAI MASSACRE

"We have never seen this sort of torture in Thai history before. It is just like gassing them. It was a deliberate massacre." - Ahmad Somboon Bualuang, Songkhla University

On Monday, at least seventy-eight demonstrators died in Thailand's strife-torn Muslim-majority southern province of Pattani, which is struggling for autonomy. Six were shot dead by cops during a 2000-strong rally outside a police station; the others suffocated after 1,300 protesters were arrested, beaten, packed into trucks and driven for hours to the provincial capital.

Basic civil rights in 'Buddhist' Thailand are under threat from an increasingly authoritarian government which imposed martial law in January. With an election looming, Prime Minister Thaksin is under pressure to clamp down in an area where his White House bosses think Al Qaeda type militants are hiding away. When asked why so many had died on the journey, Thaksin was dismissive: "This is typical," he replied. "It's about bodies made weak from fasting. Nobody hurt them."

EDOCentric

Brighton arms firm EDO had a nice surprise this week - a load of cement dumped outside their entrance. This follows having their walls smeared with blood and a load of manure dumped outside to remind them that it isn't very nice to make bomb release mechanisms for various warplanes that were used to attack Iraq www.smashedo.bpec.org There's a meeting about EDO next Wednesday (3) at the Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton 7:30 pm

SchNEWS in brief

Corporate Watch will be talking about the new film **The Corporation** (which comes out this Friday) on Sun, 5pm at the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse and 15th Nov, 7pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton ** There's a demonstration outside **Tinsley House asylum seeker Removal Centre**, Gatwick Airport, this Saturday (30) 2pm, 01273 540717 for transport and other details brightonunemployedcentre2000@yahoo.co.uk ** The Brazilian newspaper '**Brasil de Fato**' set up at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2003 is in serious financial trouble. It's one of the countries only independent left newspapers if you can help www.basildefato.com.br ** **Stop the Assault on Fallujah**: demo against the looming invasion next Sun (7) Meet 2pm, Parliament Square 07818 651 124 stoptheattacks@fastmail.fm ** There's an **Anarchist Dayschool** in Glasgow next Sat (6) 12 noon onwards @ the Kinning Park Centre. www.glasgow-autonomy.org ** Last year Worthing anti-war protesters burnt an effigy of George W Bush on the beach. Who will it be this year? Get along **Worthing Bonfire Special** next Sat (6) 7.30pm outside Castle Tavern, Newlands Road (near Co-op supermarket). ** Nov 6 is the **International Day of Action to Ban Uranium Weapons**. The Campaign Against Depleted Uranium are organising a meeting in **Manchester** next Wed (3) 0161 273 8292, www.cadu.org.uk ** '**Beyond Oil: the oil curse and solutions for an oil-free future**' a new booklet dishing the dirt on the oil economy's repressive regimes and its contribution to global resource conflicts and dangerous climate change. Send one quid to 16b Cherwell St, Oxford, OX4 1BG No New Oil www.nonewoil.org ** PayDay are organising a meeting called '**Refusing to Kill**', this Sat (30) 2-5pm with **Israeli refuseniks** and a discussion of **Gulf War syndrome**, at Crossroads Womens' Centre 230A Kentish Town Road, London, Kentish Town tube, www.refusingtokill.net 0207 2094751 ** Don't forget its **World Vegan Day** on 1st November - yum, pass the rice cake.

...and finally...

A Judge who happily sent May Day protestors to prison, confirming his reputation as the 'Hanging Judge Of Horseferry' - has quit - after being accused of paying for sex with rent boys.

Judge Roger Davies resigned after spending the last year on leave, which must have been a chore on his £90,000 a year wage. Due to his early retirement, not only has the investigation which would have brought out the sordid details has been conveniently stopped, but he's also still in line for an index-linked pension worth £45,000 a year. Add to that a lump sum award of just over £100,000 and he's got himself a nice little pension deal worth around £1 million.

Davies was due to try more protestors nicked in May 2003. One of those he bailed, a young Brighton man, said "I was expecting him to come down hard on me but he just smiled at me over his glasses; in hindsight I find that quite worrying."

It seems Davies has done very well, relying on the old boy network to clean up after his indiscretions with the young boy network.

This comes only four months after another judge, David Selwood, was allowed to keep his pension after being convicted of downloading child porn. In 1997 Selwood sent three editors of Green Anarchist magazine to prison, after they were found guilty of publishing information liable to 'incite' others to commit 'criminal damage'. Selwood described the magazine as "The most contemptuous document I have ever seen in my entire career." What about the kiddy porn he'd been looking at?!

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