

INJUNCTIVITIS!

"We are the market leader in obtaining ground breaking injunctions on behalf of individuals and corporations who have been the subject of harassment by direct action protests groups." Law Firm Lawson-Cruttenden's website

"I don't have a problem with people coming here to protest - it's a democracy" David Jones Managing Director EDO/MBM 8th March 2004

"We felt that after the blatant illegality of the war in Iraq that it was time that discontent over the way that the arms trade fuels conflict around the world was brought back to the factory floor"- SMASH EDO leaflet

You what? A company which proudly boasts of its expertise in the delivery of laser guided bombs is complaining about noise, damage and harassment. Can it be the cases that people thick skinned enough to make money from the slaughter of Iraqi civilians are genuinely upset about a demonstration on their own doorstep? Surely this must be joke. But no, oblivious to irony, Brighton's favourite warmongers EDO/MBM Technologies Ltd are seeking an injunction under the Prevention of Harassment Act 1997 to restrain anti-war activists from protesting outside their HQ and factory on Home Farm Rd, Moulsecoomb Brighton. Thirteen individuals and two organisations SMASH EDO and BOMBS OUT OF BRIGHTON are named on the summons to the High Court on April 14th.

An unholy trinity consisting of an international arms dealer, an ex-military solicitor and Sussex Police are conspiring to make protest virtually illegal in a large area of Brighton.

Here's how it works. After a year long campaign involving rooftop protests, road blockades, noise demos and weekly vigils all aimed at drawing attention to what EDO were actually doing inside their anonymous green building, EDO were persuaded by Sussex Police to enlist the services of lawyer Timothy Lawson Cruttenden. Cruttenden's specialty is the use of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (originally framed to protect the public from stalkers) to protect those with deep pockets and guilty secrets. Money changes hands, an "exclusion zone" is created and a form of martial law is introduced.

Cruttenden (or TLC as he is affectionately known) is infamous among animal rights activists (see SchNEWS 471), having managed to gain draconian anti-protest injunctions against SPEAC and SHAC on behalf of Oxford University and

Huntingdon Life Sciences. One activist involved in the legal battles told SchNEWS "The reason the police and corporations are so keen on these injunctions is that an "interim injunction" with the full force of the law behind it can be granted at an early stage with the court requiring a very low standard of proof. The police then use the injunctions as a tool for arrest, search and general harassment". Injunctions under the Protection from Harassment Act, unlike civil injunctions, create powers of arrest, which explains why Sussex Police are so keen on getting one. The proposed exclusion zone would effectively make any protesters, including for example the local Quakers, at the factory liable to arrest.

If the interim injunction against Smash Edo is granted (and judging by past cases there's no reason it won't be) activists will only be able to protest for two and a half hours on Thursday afternoons, providing there are less than ten of them and they make no "artificial or musical noise or use anything to amplify sound". Although the injunction singles out SMASH EDO its scope broadens to anyone acting as an "agent" or "in concert" with them basically including everyone whose opinion runs counter to the arms trade.

BANGERS 'n' SMASH EDO

People in the animal liberation movement have often warned that powers used against them are certain to be used elsewhere. The message is clear. When a campaign becomes successful and starts to challenge the capitalist status quo it gets made illegal. These injunctions favour the rich and powerful and have the potential to be used against anyone fighting a corporation. Anyone who is challenging a local phone-mast or bypass or is involved in union activity should beware. SMASH EDO aren't being targeted because they're an extremist minority (in fact their attitude to the Iraq war puts them in the majority in Brighton); or because of allegations of criminal damage! And home demos! They're being targeted because they're bringing unwelcome attention to and obstructing the profits of a major defence contractor.

The British economy is peculiarly skewed towards arms production. The world's fifth largest economy is its second biggest arms producer. The UK government heavily subsidises arms production (each job in the defence industry is calculated to be underwritten to the tune of £14,000pa). SMASH EDO are directly challenging the logic of taking resources from the community here to sub-

Defend the Right to Protest

SMASH EDO

DEMOS

* Wednesday 13th

2pm: Outside

EDOs Bomb

Factory

* Wednesday 13th

5.30pm: Rally in

Churchill Square

* Thursday 14th

9am: Supporters

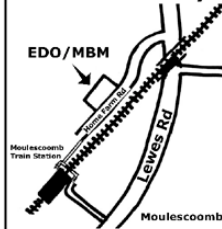
Rally outside High

Court in London

smashedo@hotmail.com
www.smashedo.bpec.org

Defy The Injunction!

Where Are They?



dise the bombing of communities elsewhere.

EDO/MBMs parent company the gigantic US EDO Corp is a classic example of the revolving door between the British state and defence corporations. Its board of directors includes Sir Robert Walmsley ex Chief Procurement Officer for the MOD (he retired in 2003). Busy Sir Bob also finds time to be a director of US arms firm General Dynamics who were awarded a £2bn contract to build radios for the British Army in his last two years at the MOD. In another astounding co-incidence, shortly before Sir Bob joined EDO UK as Chairman of the Board they got a £1.2 m contract for components for the ill-fated Eurofighter project. It's hardly surprising that, with friends like these, EDO can rely on police protection. In fact Sussex Police have spent over £30,000 protecting EDO so far.

SMASH EDO activists are determined to fight the injunction. Lorna Marcham, one of those named on the summons said "We need attention drawn to the perversion of the law that is taking place with these injunctions and we will need funds to fight the court battle if we don't receive legal aid. We are the first non-animal rights group to be targeted in this way and it is clear that if this injunction is granted it will be another nail in the coffin of peaceful dissent in this country. It's us now but it could be you soon."

*Monday 11th April Public meeting, Brighthelm Centre, North Rd 7.30pm

*Wed 13th APRIL Mass Demonstration 2pm - for the right of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly outside EDO/MBM's HQ in Brighton at 2pm and Rally, 5.30pm Churchill Square, Brighton

*Thur 14th 9am Supporters Rally outside High Court www.smashedo.bpec.org

Inside SchNEWS

Thursday was the start of the trial of Lindis Percy, who is charged with obstructing the highway – 30 times! Since 18th May last year she has been arrested in three out of every four weeks at Menwith Hill Spy Base. Menwith Hill (see SchNEWS 410) is the world's largest spy base and it's getting bigger. The secretive and unaccountable base is also central to the US star wars plans.

There has been a long running campaign of weekly vigils against the base, often veteran campaigners Lindis Percy and Anni Rainbow, were there alone in the freezing winter. This week they were joined by people from Sheffield and Rotherham including a samba contingent from Rhythms of Resistance Sheffield, after about an hour Lindis was again arrested for allegedly blocking the road, marking her 30th arrest.

The trial is expected to last till 14th April.
* Weekly vigils at Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire, every Tuesday 6-8pm. Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases 01943 466405 www.caab.org.uk

On Monday 18th American lawyers will be putting the case against Babar Ahmad who's facing extradition to the US for terrorism charges.

Babar was nicked under the anti-terrorism laws by riot cops who burst into his home one early morning in December 2003 (see SchNEWS 474). After six days of intensive investigation he was released without charge. This wasn't good enough for the Yanks who thanks to an Extradition Agreement got him rearrested, and he has been in prison ever since. So why not charge him in the UK? Well, thanks to the Treaty, all the US needs to get someone deported there is a statement of accusation - no need to produce any of that silly, time wasting evidence in court. So although Babar may appear in a British court to hear the allegations against him, he will not be able to defend himself and could be sent to the US to face charges and up to 50 years in jail.

There will be a demo outside in support of Babar 10am-2pm Bow Street Magistrates Court, Covent Garden, London WC2 07915 063 564 www.freebabarahmad.com

Dutch Oven

If you're one of the British Gas (BG) customers in the UK who have seen your bill soar by almost a fifth over the past year, don't worry – you're not alone. Since their gas supply was privatised, Bolivians fork out 12 times more for their own gas than the multinationals pay. No wonder BG profits are up by 65%! Back in October 2003, President Sánchez de Lozada was forced to seek early retirement in Miami after he faced protests against the plans of BG and others to pump Bolivian gas through Chile to the US. Unable to resist getting their grubby hands back on the £3billion worth of Bolivian gas reserves, BG are looking to make sure they keep up their profit return of £10 for every £1 invested in the country.

Early last month the government kept the tax paid by gas companies at 18%, well short of the 50% that people are demanding. Campesinos responded by forcing the shutdown of four oil-fields and shut down access to seven of Bolivia's nine regions. Responding to the protests, parliament imposed an immediate tax of 32%, meaning that gas companies will have to pay £1bn well above the £250m currently collected. A real victory for the protest movement.

Whether a government which has already broken loads of promises in its shift to the neoliberal right will cave into BG's thirst for profit is another matter. "First, they took our silver, then they took our tin, they took everything," says one of the demonstrators, Carmelo Colque, "The oil and gas is all we've got left. We Bolivians have woken up, we won't let them have it."

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Worst ASBOs Ever!

Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been the buzzword of recent years – well as far as Neo-Labour social control freakery goes. ASBOs seem to have become the cure-all political tool of choice for those in power. Forget attempting to identify and tackle the social causes of such behaviour - lets ASBO the bastards – and no awkward 'standard of proof' required either. "It is an act of judgement or evaluation" for the agencies concerned, as Lord Steyn puts it in the Home Office's own 'ASBO Guide'. But as Matt Foot from ASBO Concern pointed out "Many ASBOs are being used against vulnerable people with complex problems. The order does nothing for such problems as it can only ban behaviour – often non-criminal behaviour such as hanging around in groups. And they aren't working. An increasing number, more than 40%, are breached and result in people being imprisoned."

Take for example the recent case of Melvyn Drage, threatened with an ASBO for putting anti-war leaflets through his neighbours' doors. Yes, the 48 year old graduate was shocked when Manchester council officials decreed his delivery of 50 Communist Party leaflets to local flats (once, mind you – not repeatedly at strange hours of the morning or anything) was threatening the "peace" of local tenants, by suggesting to them that the war in Iraq may not be just about freedom and democracy, but possibly power and oil money too – fancy! We assume that during the forthcoming general election, all party activists and canvas' will be ASBO'd rigorously, and we at SchNEWS are expecting our own orders to arrive shortly, seeing as though we distribute all kinds of information likely to be seen, in the governments words, as "behaviour...causing harassment, alarm or distress" to Joe & Josephine Public. Then again, just some of our clothes and haircuts could cause distress to some law-abiding citizens...

Anyway here's some of our favourite ridiculous - ASBOs..

For using the word "grass": Zach Tutin, the 13-year-old who was served an order banning him from using the word "grass" anywhere in England or Wales for six years.

For showing tattoos: Nathan Wadley, a 16-year-old banned from showing his tattoos, wearing a single golf glove, or wearing a balaclava in public, anywhere in the country. He was also forbidden from congregating in public places in groups of more than three people.

For Wearing a Bra: Lacking the decorum expected of her by neighbours, one young Scot has been banned from answering the front door in her underwear. The 27-year-old also faces the threat of jail if she is seen in her garden or windows in just knickers and a bra.

For being sarcastic: 87 year old Alexander Muat was forbidden from, amongst other things, being sarcastic to his neighbours!

For protesting: Heather Nicholson, a 38-year-old animal rights activist serving a five-year order banning her from going within 500 metres of a number of the country's largest animal research laboratories. The ASBO also prevents her from contacting the owners, shareholders or employees of any of these companies. Then there are the two protesters and a baby prevented from holding a banner and handing out leaflets outside Reed Exhibitions, the organiser of DSEi (Defence Systems and Equipment International) the world's largest arms fair. Police were eventually forced to apply for and subsequently issue a temporary ASBO to order their dispersal and ban them from Richmond for 24 hours. Not to mention David Edwards - a political protester who has campaigned for many years over issues such as health and safety to Rugby council, who was served an interim order, deemed to have breached it, and sent to prison. www.statewatch.org/asbo/ASBOWatch.html

* To contact ASBO Concern email MattF@fishersolicitors.com

We really are SKINT!! Standing orders and donations please, or the slug gets it. www.schnews.org.uk/extras/help.htm

SchNEWS in brief

Public meeting this Saturday (9) for people opposed to plans to **massively expand Shoreham Airport** 2pm at Lancing Parish Halls, South Street, West Sussex. ** **London Hacklabs Collective** invites you to a day of discussions and workshops on patent laws and the way corporations are trying to take control of information. This Saturday (9) Ramparts Social Centre, 15-17 Rampart Street, London E1 2LA. 3.30pm onwards. www.hacklab.org.uk ** **Cancel the ExCeL arms fair.** Musical protest outside the ExCeL Centre the next two Sundays (9 and 16th) next to Custom House DLR 1-4pm 07817 652029 www.dsei.org ** There will be a **five day peace camp at RAF Brize Norton** starting on 21st April. The base, which is near Oxford, is the largest air base in the UK, and a main gateway for the transport of British soldiers to Basra. 0117 946685 Nabataat@yahoo.co.uk ** **National day of action 16th April against Caterpillar**, who supply bulldozers to the Israeli army. Meet Hopwood Service Station Junction 2 M42. Drive to Caterpillar at Hockley Heath, rally for Palestine in Central Birmingham 2.30-4pm 020 7700 6192 www.palestinecampaign.org ** Last Friday around eighty crazy-dressed corporate pirates turned up at the offices of **Windrush International** to celebrate a 'pro-pillage party.' Windrush are part of the corporate rush to exploit the wealth of occupied Iraq. They organize Iraqi Procurement Conferences where the assets of Iraq are stripped and brought by corporations and the right of Iraqi's to decide their own economic policy is sold to the highest bidder. www.corporatepirates.gzzzt.net ** In March, the **UK's first major women's film festival** was launched. As the festival pointed out, it's appalling that only 7% of feature film directors are female, but the festival foolishly chose for the closing night bash, a stair filled venue, meaning disabled film producer Liz Crow, whose film was screened earlier the same day was excluded! As a result a group of disabled filmmakers and artists decided to hold a very public party on the pavement outside. Check out a video of the protest www.danda.org.uk/pages/BEVProtestVids.htm ** **Global Week of Action for Trade Justice** with hundreds of events are already planned in 70 countries with thousands of organisations involved. 10th - 16th April www.april2005.org

...and finally...

Fed up of the slimy critters destroying your garden? Well, Rob Hopkins, from Ireland has come up with a novel idea. "After many a torch lit evening collecting bucket after bucket of our slimy friends, I wondered what I could do with them. The solution is gloriously simple. Simply pop them in the oven at Gas Mark 4 for five minutes, not so long that they cook, but just long enough that they adopt the texture of a wine gum. Then simply slip a sharpened knife under the skin, and it peels off beautifully, like peeling a lychee. The resultant 'pelt' is waterproof, flexible and tough. After a few weeks drying and peeling, I had a large enough collection to make my first pair of trousers, sewing them together with a tough twine. Now my 'slugskin strides' are the talk of permaculture gatherings around the land, and I have started work on a matching jacket."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all edocases if you're gonna be this edocentric you need your edo examining...Honest!