

EAST LONDON Adversaries

www.get.to/armsfair

DSEI 2005 SPECIAL

FREE

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FREE

BOMBBUSTER VIDEO

see inside for details

Gun Crime in the dock

SINCE 1999, the ExCeL Centre in Docklands has played host to Defence Systems & Equipment International (DSEi) every two years. The event is co-organised with the UK's Ministry of Defence and attracts thousands of arms dealers and buyers from around the world. Everything from battleships and helicopter gunships to cluster bombs and machine guns are available for sale at DSEi.

Welcome to Defence Systems & Equipment International, variously pronounced "dessey", or "dicey" - this year will see over 1,000 companies from 26 countries selling their wares and expertise to delegates from all around the world. DSEi 2003 ran into trouble when it was revealed that at least a third of the exhibitors had no license to trade weapons. Worse still, despite previous assurances from the organisers, journalist revealed that illegal cluster bombs were available from exhibitors at the fair.

'banned and illegal weapons'

Arms fairs have become increasingly controversial and the subject of many grassroots campaigns over the past few years. Saddam Hussein received many of his weapons from US and British companies through deals made at previous arms fairs in the UK. In 1999 it was revealed that land mines were being offered for sale at DSEi, despite them being banned as illegal weapons in the UK.

The DSEi official organisers, Spearhead Exhibitions, promise that DSEi 2005 will be 30% bigger than last time. At the last DSEi, there were 973 exhibitors selling their wares to delegates from a third of the world's countries, many with appalling human rights records.

Britain is one of the leading weapons exporters in the world, selling to countries with appalling human rights records and even to some regimes that the US deems too brutal to support.

Leaked documents revealed that the Metropolitan Police were aware that at least 300 of the exhibitors at the 2003 DSEi did not have valid licences to trade arms in this country and so were committing a criminal offence. It is alleged that the Home Office advised the police not to pursue prosecutions as this would embarrass the British government which helps to organise, promote and fund the event.

DSEi 2005 takes place once again at Excel from 13th to 16th September, and like previous years, anti-arms trade campaigners are planning a week of action and resistance.



INNOCENT VICTIMS - Tom Hurdell was shot in the head while volunteering as a peace activist in Palestine. While the killer, an Israeli soldier, was finally convicted last month after his family brought the case to appeal, most similar cases have never even been investigated. As with Jean Charles de Menezes events like these are explained away with empty phrases like "caught in the crossfire" or "tragic accident."

DISRUPTION AND DELAYS

TWO YEARS AGO, people, from local residents going about their daily lives to commuters, journalists, and protesters, were harassed, intimidated or stopped and searched by police using section 44 of the Terrorism Act (despite prior assurances).

During DSEi 2003, there were at least 156 arrests yet despite a substantial police presence, protesters managed to cause a fair amount of disruption to the arms fair. Around the country, the offices of arms companies received visits from groups of campaigners both day and

night. Access roads were blocked a week before DSEi, disrupting the set up of exhibits, and warships were prevented from entering the dock. Once the fair itself had begun, trains and buses full of delegates were stopped as people blocked roads with cars or climbed onto trains on the Docklands Light Railway. ExCel security was breached and a small group managed to unfurl a banner inside the arms fair and lock themselves inside one of the armoured tanks on display.

The East End's history of people-participation and direct action in the Suffragette women's movement and the anti-fascist Battle of Cable St. has a living legacy in anti-war protests today.

One inevitable and regrettable side effect of the police and protesters' actions was the inconvenience to people living or working in the area. Protesters

are very sorry about this (especially considering the support and welcome they received from local people), but can only argue in their defence that they were trying to prevent much greater crimes.

In this issue we look at the groups involved, their motives and the tactics they may use in attempting to shut down DSEi. Hopefully this will give you an idea of what to expect during the week of action and enable you to plan around possible inconvenience, whether it's doing your shopping a couple of days earlier or parking the car on the other side of the A13 on days when protests might result in road closures or delays. According to media sources, the police will impose an exclusion zone on parts of the Docklands, up to 48 hours before.

The diary of events is on page 7.

INSIDE around town
your money
who's who
things to do
rule of law
what's on sport

DEADLY SYSTEMS
EQUIPMENT INTERNATIONAL
EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE

13-16 SEPTEMBER 2005. EXCEL LONDON

www.dsei.org



EAST LONDON ArmsDealer

Thousands of people from the UK and Europe are expected to travel to London when Docklands hosts the world's largest arms fair yet again, despite opposition from local residents, Newham council and London's Mayor.

Ken Livingstone expressed anger that the already overstretched police will have to devote much of their resources to policing the event at the expense of maintaining the current state of high terrorist alert. "Such events are a disgrace and ought to be denounced by all Londoners.", he said, and bemoaned his inability to ban it.

One Londoner who plans to join protests against the fair said "It is disgraceful that within weeks of the London bombings, London is hosting the world's largest arms fair. We have to act to stop this trade in terror and death."



Newham up in arms

The Docklands was one of the most heavily blitzed areas of London in World War II. Dealing in bombs and guns is a particular slap in the face to Newham and everybody in the community seems to be doing something about it.

In August, Newham pensioners met with ExCel's chairman, Lord Tom King, and vividly recalled their experiences of digging children out of bombed-out schools on the site of ExCel. On the 60th anniversary of the end of WW II, it is hard to imagine a more callous, cynical and insensitive trade being carried out in East London than the selling of munitions.

Local people are increasingly hostile to DSEi being hosted at ExCel. In recent months, Newham Borough Council has passed a unanimous resolution condemning the DSEi arms fair as immoral, and calling on ExCel to refuse to host it. In July, East London residents handed a 1200-strong petition to London Mayor Ken Livingstone, urging him to use his powers to ban the arms fair.

The Mayor of Newham, Sir Wales, added: "I oppose the arms fair being held in Newham. I always have and I always will. My priority will be ensuring that the people of this borough do not suffer because of it."

But Poplar and Canning Town's MP, Blairite Jim Fitzpatrick has directly opposed majority opinion in his constituency on everything from the war on Iraq to pension rights. Instead he's busy pushing for Public Private Partnership initiatives and privatisation in the health service and surprise, surprise, of council houses.

Largely flattened during WW II and rebuilt in the post war boom, conditions have not changed much since Charles

Dickens said that "Canning Town is the child of Victoria Dock". During Canning Town's industrial birth in the mid 19th century, situated, as it was then, just outside London's border and the jurisdiction of it's building regulations, many developers took full advantage of a golden opportunity. They built row upon row of cheap, often unsafe and unsanitary homes to rent to workers. Life in these cramped neighbourhoods was well documented by Dickens, London, Orwell et al over the course of a century, as well as by the personal testimonies recorded in East London oral history projects.

Today, some of the worst poverty in Britain sits alongside luxury housing which have mushroomed all over Canary Wharf. 80% of residents are on low incomes or benefits, over 50% are single parents and large numbers of families include people with disabilities. Housing in Canning Town is dominated by the public sector with a far higher proportion of council housing than in other parts of England.

Many people live in hugely overcrowded homes, some even without baths. East London's diverse population includes refugees and migrants fleeing from countries who come to buy arms at DSEi. The arms trade fuels poverty and conflict, and there is a heavy irony in the fact that many East London residents are fleeing war zones fed by the deals done at ExCel.

In a survey 181 children from Canning Town were asked about their views of the local area and the facilities available to them. The children expressed disappointment at the reluctance and inability of the authorities to deal with general social problems. One child said: "The council builds houses and schools but not properly so the schools and houses start falling down", and another: "I don't like going to school in Canning Town because the buildings are falling down. My school is very bad. Most of the classrooms have leaks, some lights don't work and there are gaps in the windows".

Being bombed in WW II didn't bring Canning Town's community any joy. Public money funding bomb sales in the 21st century, instead of constructing decent schools and houses doesn't do it any favours either.

SECRET SHOPPERS

Who are those be-suited men and women slipping into the heavily guarded ExCel Centre? We take a sneaky peak under the counter... On the basis of the official invitations from previous DSEi exhibitions, we can say with some certainty that representatives from countries engaged in conflict, with poor human rights records and with major development needs will all be in attendance.

Oppression - The Foreign Office's annual Human Rights Report for 2005 takes a special look at twenty countries in which it considers that human rights

are a particularly serious problem. Six of these; Afghanistan, China, Colombia, Israel, Russia and Saudi Arabia, were invited to DSEi in 2003, and a seventh, Indonesia, was invited in 1999. The FCO website also says that in Algeria there have been "numerous documented allegations of human rights abuses by the security forces and state-armed militias, including the 'disappearances' of at least 4,000 people, abductions, torture and extra judicial killings"...and in Nigeria it says that "the Army has committed serious abuses of human rights." Conflict - Israel, whose 38 year occupation of Palestinian territories has been judged illegal under international

law; Colombia where both military and paramilitary forces kill and 'disappear' civilians regularly; Russia whose war to stop Chechnya gaining independence has killed thousands; and of course the US, who with the UK and Poland continues to occupy Iraq, (an estimated 100,000 Iraqi deaths). Pakistan and India continue to be hostile over Kashmir, and in 2002 went to the brink of war several times. Damaging Development - Arms sales undermine sustainable development both by diverting resources, and by sustaining and provoking conflict, itself a huge negative impact on development. Like many southern African countries, Tanzania is struggling to

cope with the AIDS epidemic and half the population lack access to clean drinking water. Yet the UK government considers it a legitimate target for UK arms sales. All are invited.

Whilst we are eventually told who got 'official' invitations to DSEi, there is no way to know who the 20,000 people with visitors' passes are. Since human rights are little more than a minor PR snag for the corporate arms traders, it is unlikely that any controls are placed on who can attend DSEi; so long as they are bona-fide government or military personnel - despite DSEi being publicly subsidised, concerned members of the general public need not apply.

Terror Laws Used On Protesters

While the protestors - grannies and all - who gathered outside Excel in 2003 certainly didn't look like your stereotype terrorists - apparently they did to the police.

Armed with new powers to stop and search people under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act, police found it easy to stop and harass whoever they wanted. S'44 is made easy by S'45, which says

that although a police officer can only use S'44 "for the purpose of searching for articles of a kind which could be used in connection with terrorism," they can do so "whether or not the constable has grounds for suspecting the presence of articles of that kind". In other words, a police officer who wants to search a demonstrator can do so even without any reason for suspecting they have anything more dangerous than a pensions book or a rotten egg.

A precedent has now been set for using the Terrorism Act for purposes other than fighting terrorism; in this case, to quell political dissent and lawful demonstration. When the legislation went through parliament, the government promised this would never happen - so much for the promises of government.

anti-social

The terror laws have not been the only new laws to be abused. Last August, Emily Apple, along with her baby and a friend, stood outside the Spearhead Exhibitions Ltd premises. They handed out leaflets and held a banner calling for an end to the arms fair. The police told Emily and her friend that Richmond was designated as a dispersal area under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. They were told they had to leave the town centre and threatened with arrest if they failed to leave, or returned within 24 hours. These powers were apparently intended to be used against 'yobs' and not to stifle dissent by peaceful protesters.

OUTRAGE AT BILL

Shutting down DSEi would not only be the ethical thing to do, but also save the public money. Many taxpayers are outraged that they are footing the bill for policing a commercial event.

When the fair first moved to ExCel in 2001 the policing bill was £1million. In 2003, at least 1,600 officers were used each day with initial announced costs at around £1.7 million. When the final bill was announced it reached £4,380,000! (hardly surprising then that many beat officers earn up to £100,000 annually with overtime).

The Metropolitan Police Authority have now asked DSEi organisers to pay for the 4,000 officers required to police the fair this year, but so far they have refused.

"It is denuding London of policing at a time of unprecedented demand. The defence industry makes huge profits. I think we should be getting some money from the people exhibiting", said Assistant Commissioner Steve House. "At the moment the taxpayers are having to pay. I don't think it looks right or is right. It is going to cost £4m with no money coming from the exhibition because the protests are taking place outside."

However, the argument over who pays the policing bill is perhaps irrelevant. Since the government co-organises and

funds the event, we shall always end up being the ones that pay.

DSEi is heavily subsidised by the government.

Government support takes many forms including the expense of running the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), the cost of Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) cover for arms sales, proportions of the cost of Defence Attachés, embassies, official government and royal visits, hospitality and funding for military research and development.

Research has revealed that the UK Government subsidises the British defence export industry to the tune of £763 million a year - that's £8,500 for each of the 90,000 jobs in the arms export business.

The ECGD is part of the Department of Trade and Industry and provides insurance cover for UK exporters and interest rate subsidies for purchasers of UK exports. Without these watertight government guarantees and financial support, it is likely that many arms sales to high-risk countries would not go ahead. This cost is borne directly by the taxpayer, subsidising the trade in death while schools and health services go underfunded and pensioners die in the cold.

Sue Hawley wrote in an article for the Observer: "Of the four to five billion pounds worth of British exports and overseas investment that the ECGD backs every year, large percentages go to defence equipment (30-50%), power plants (25%) and oil and gas projects (15%). Projects in these sectors have consistently been controversial and often environmentally damaging and been shown to be the worst offenders when it comes to corruption."

The ECGD operates in some of the most corrupt countries in the world. Over the last five years, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Russia - all countries which figure strongly in independent assessments of levels of corruption - have regularly been in the top 10 markets for ECGD support."

A coalition of campaign groups brought a case against the ECGD in the High Court earlier this year.

The DESO co-ordinates most of the direct government support for arms exports, providing marketing assistance and military advice to exporters, as well as organising arms exhibitions and promotional tours. It has over 600 civilian and military employees in London and offices

UK Statistics	
percentage of total employment in arms export	0.3%
arms as percentage of total exports	3%
ECGD support given to arms exports	>25%
percentage of Govt research budget spent on arms	55%



COMMENTS

I remember the Police claimed at the time it cost only 1 million while a local paper's headlines screamed in outrage it was costing £2m. So the final bill of £4m plus is well over the top. Interesting to see how far they will go to manipulate public opinion by blatantly lying about figures etc. Some events already have to pay loads to cops - like some of the green festivals. They don't get permission to hold their event unless they have cops there. Then the cops charge the event organisers loads of money which is paid for in the price of the ticket. Racketeering is the word I think.
Steve, Newham

Walking round unknown streets after having been corralled by the police all day can be pretty tiring and a bit dispiriting, so a big thank you to all the lovely people of Newham who gave me words of support and encouragement and generally made me welcome.
Clea, London.

How can the home secretary talk about too many asylum-seekers and refugees when this government is openly sponsoring the sale of weapons that force families to flee war-torn countries and come to Britain in search of refuge?
Susan, Newham

The police do nothing when our houses are burgled or there is violence in our area, they don't even come when we call them, but when people try to have their say hundreds of the f**kers invade us!
Anon, Local

Several months into the invasion of Iraq, while outright warfare still raged and Saddam was still on the loose, I read a country report from an aid agency working in the north. It detailed that young boys were being pressed into active combat, and girls were being taken for "cooks and comforts". This was by groups seen as 'our allies' in the fighting. In war, cruelty and abuse exist on both sides of the battle. I am sick and tired of hearing politicians describe different sides as 'good' and 'evil' in a system where might equals right, and winning absolves the victorious from the horrific crimes of war. We all know we want to live in peace and we all know that conflict brings misery. All bombs are bad news, let's get rid of them.
Rose, Whitechapel

DEATH MART PLC

On Sept 11th, 2001, the world froze in horror as hijacked aeroplanes flew into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Even as the towers collapsed, another shadowy network was already gathering on this side of the Atlantic. Invited by the UK government, these terrorists came to London not with box cutters and knives, but with cluster bombs, 'mini-nukes', and land mines.

Dressed in smart suits, they came to enrich themselves at the expense of the lives of millions while serving the interests of the rich and powerful. While many events around the world were cancelled out of respect for the dead, the arms fair was not halted. For three more days, countries including America, Israel and 14 different Arab nations continued to shop, side-by-side, for weapons to attack each other with.

Globally, tens of millions of people have been killed in conflicts since 1945. By the end of the 1990s nearly 90% of war-victims were non-combatants, at least half, children. Despite this, the UK government uses military exports as a tool of foreign policy and places this policy above both human and economic costs. For decades the UK government has had a policy of promoting arms exports. It actively goes out to sell arms and provides the military industry with support well beyond that which civil industry could hope for. Because of the vast sums involved, arms traders become hugely influential politically.

To export military goods an export license needs to be obtained from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The Ministry of Defence (MoD), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for

International Development (DfID) are each consulted before a license is granted. The government claims to have a 'responsible' policy on military exports, taking the human rights record of the purchasing government, the consequences of arms exports on existing armed conflict, and the technical and economic capacity of the recipient into account. In practice, the decision-making process is weighted heavily in favour of the arms dealers and concerns of human rights are overridden in the interest of exports.

The FCO 2000 Annual Report lists exports to Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Angola, Algeria and Colombia; all countries with ongoing internal armed conflict. Where more than one country is involved, the UK commonly sells to both or all sides. The report also lists exports to India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan, Turkey and Greece, Israel and many of its Middle East neighbours, and Uganda, Angola and Zimbabwe during their involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict. Supplying arms to the Middle East seems to be a particular speciality.

Successive governments have claimed to exercise responsible control over military exports but, usually for reasons of 'commercial confidentiality', few specifics are known about what is sold to whom. Labour delivered on its 1997 election pledge to produce an annual report on arms sales and there is now significantly more information available regarding past arms deals. However this is akin to a post mortem, as once equipment has gone overseas, it has gone. The size and secrecy surrounding arms deals make them particularly prone to corruption, and commissions, or bribes



in normal parlance, paid to middlemen are reputed to account for around 10% of the value of many deals. One of the rare investigations into corruption was carried out by the National Audit Office (NAO) regarding the massive Al Yamamah deal with Saudi Arabia. The parliamentary committee responsible decided not to publish the findings, despite the fact that most of its members were not even allowed to read it!

frozen chickens have been used as part payment for fighter aircraft

In addition to illegal commissions, there are substantial, completely legal 'offsets'. This compensation is often worth as much as the full cost of the equipment purchased. Common offsets include: investment in the buyer country's companies (military or civil); the purchase of produce from the buyer country (frozen chickens have been used as part payment for fighter aircraft); setting up production lines in the buyer country; and sourcing components from the buyer country.

Things to do

If what you have read has made you keen to get involved, here are some things you may be able to do this week.

Events - Participate in some of the events advertised on page 7. Also consider if there are actions you could initiate yourself or with friends.

Posters - You can put up a poster in your window to let the delegates know their presence is unwelcome and ask your local shops to do the same. Ready made posters can be downloaded from the resources section of the www.dsei.org website.

Accommodation - Do you know of anywhere that DISARM DSEi could use as extra accommodation space? Accommodation is being organised however more spaces are needed. Know of any church halls, community centres, squatted buildings and anywhere else where people from outside London can stay for part or all of the week? They are also looking more specifically for a space with disabled access. Even if you can only offer floor space for a few people it would be much appreciated. Please call **07817 652029**

Information - If you are an employee of Reed Exhibitions, Spearhead Exhibitions, DSEi or any of the catering or service companies involved in the arms fair then you may have information that will help stop the trade in death. You can contact DISARM DSEi in confidence. Either call or text **07817652029** from a public phone box, or go to a internet cafe and type or paste your message into the contact page on www.dsei.org or email whistle@dsei.org from an anonymous online account.

After DSEi

There are many ways in which you can help in the ongoing campaign against DSEi and the arms trade - from writing letters to taking part in protests or direct action. Here are a few ideas.

Spread the word about the negative impact of arms fairs to make it harder for decision-makers to support them. You might want to write to your local newspaper and MP

www.writetothem.com
www.jimfitzpatrickmp.co.uk

Put pressure on the organisers. Disarm DSEi facilitate pickets and electronic blockades of Spearhead Exhibitions on the first and third monday every month. Find out how you can take action to persuade them that they should stick to promoting less murderous products, go to www.dsei.org and click on 'Spearhead and DSEi'.

Shut down the Whitehall gunrunners. The Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) which promotes UK Arms Companies at the taxpayers' expense. They play a massive role in organising DSEi and Farnborough. Contact CAAT to find out how you can support the campaign to abolish DESO and write to your MP.

Check which charities receive blood money by looking at the 'social responsibility' sections of arms company web sites. Write to those sponsored by arms companies, to say, 'what the hell do you think you're doing?' One example, sponsored by BAE, is the No Way Trust - "one of the most ambitious and progressive Charities in the United Kingdom today... it's core aim is to raise the awareness amongst young people about the Causes, Consequences and Penalties of Crime, and the effects of Anti-Social Behaviour." Ha! Their contact details are www.pmnw.co.uk, tel 01482 224382, fax 01482 382088, info@pmnw.co.uk or No-Way Trust, The Deep Business Centre, Tower Street, Hull, HU1 4BG

www.armsfairs.com

Campaigning against the arms trade since 1972

The work of the Campaign Against the Arms Trade is really great and I wish we had something comparable in the U.S. - Noam Chomsky

www.caat.org.uk
0207 281 0297

SMASH EDO
www.smashedo.org.uk
 07891 405923

DISARM DSEi

The campaign relies 100% on voluntary work & donations.

Donations can be made by cheque, by bank transfer, or online using PayPal.

You can send cheques payable to DISARM DSEi to
 BM Box 3679, London, WC1N 3XX.

Bank Transfer
 Account number: 65112153
 Sort code: 08-92-99

www.dsei.org
 07817 652029

ORDINARY PEOPLE

Our rulers rail against refugees and migrants. They can't deport enough. They make the barriers ever higher to stop people coming in. They cut off their benefits, evict them, hold them in detention and take their children away. And yet they are hosting the world's largest arms fair here in London. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to see the connection. Where do refugees come, where are asylum seekers fleeing from? The Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Columbia. Statically, the largest groups of people displaced both internally and externally through conflict are women and children. Regimes and military protagonists get armed to the teeth at arms fairs like this. Their representatives come to DSEi and similar fairs to buy mines, rockets, planes, cluster bombs as well as instruments of torture and 'riot control'. Economic migrants usually come from places where poverty is rife, life expectancy short, disease stalks the land and opportunities are limited.

nooneisillegal@gmx.net
www.noii.org.uk

The Taxpayer

DSEi may be run by a private company, but the government provides financial support amounting to millions of taxpayers' money. It supplies (and pays for) defence ministers and civil servants to attend, British military personnel to demonstrate equipment (on behalf of the arms firms) and finances the visits of the UK and the Government's invited guests. The Government's military research and development arm, DSTL, was sole sponsor of the conference for DSEi 2003. The UK taxpayer also picked up the bill for more than £4 million of policing. But because this is an international arms fair, that means the UK Government is supporting the competitors of British arms firms as well.

F.I.T.
 Police Forward Intelligence team spend countless hours photographing the same people over and over again in an blatant attempt to intimidate and hope that their photos might eventually prove useful. More than once however, police footage has been used by protesters to prove wrongful arrest in court. SMILE!

PEOPLE AGAINST THE ARMS TRADE

Action Medics
 These voluntary medics will be on the streets and in the convergence centre, applying first aid to anyone injured during protest. In an emergency, call an ambulance.
actionsmedics.org.uk

MOD
 Part of the MOD, the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) is a voice of the arms industry at the heart of government and essentially a marketing department for the UK arms industry which is paid for by the taxpayer. It employs around 600 staff and seventeen overseas offices. The head of DESO, Alan Garwood, used to work for the UK's leading arms exporter BAE Systems and he is just one in a long line of DESO bosses with a background in the arms industry.

Legal Observers
 The Legal Defence And Monitoring Group is made of of volunteers and was set up to observe and document police behaviour during major protests; provide support and legal representation for anyone arrested or injured; assist those assaulted or wrongly arrested to sue the police; monitor court cases and provide support to those remanded. They have no paid workers and are funded by donations.
www.ldmg.org.uk

Media Activists
 Indymedia encourages everyone to 'be the media'. People will be photographing and recording DSEi actions and protests and uploading to the indymedia website. You don't have to be a trained journalist to have valuable reports or pictures. Anyone can publish their own reports, photos or video online.
www.indymedia.org.uk

There is no one homogenous group campaigning against DSEi but a variety of groups and individuals ranging from faith based groups, NGOs, local pressure groups, to peace activists, anarchists, socialists, and many more.

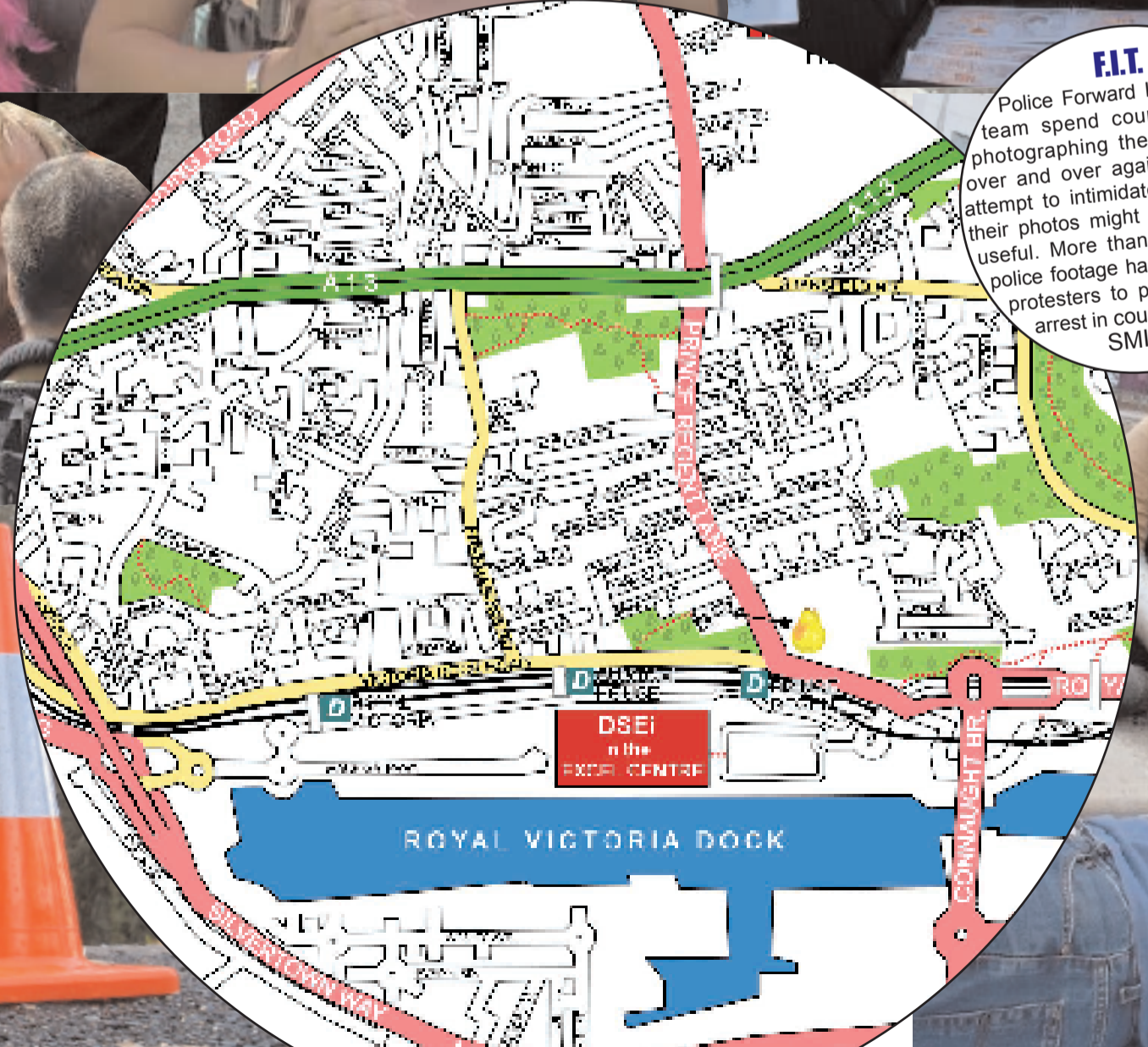
The Protesters

Their priorities are: to end government subsidies and support for arms exports; end exports to oppressive regimes; end exports to countries involved in an armed conflict or region of tension; end exports to countries whose social welfare is threatened by military spending; support measures, both in the UK and internationally, which will regulate and reduce the arms trade and lead to its eventual end.

Newham Opposition to War and Racism (NOWAR) is a loose local network of anti-war activists, many of whom are up in September 2001 in response to the racist backlash against Muslims following the attacks on the US, and to campaign against the fledgling 'war on terror'.

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) is a broad coalition of groups and individuals in the UK set up in 1974, working to end the international arms trade. "Involvement in organising and participation in CAAT's demonstrations and protests is conditional on accepting the need to remain nonviolent at all times."

East London Against the Arms Fair (ELAAF), hold regular musical protests outside ExCel as part of a campaign to persuade other organisations not to hold events at the venue while they continue to host arms fairs. They are also to get the arms fair out of Newham. They group meets on the second Monday of each month at the Garden Café (7 Cundy Road). Everyone is welcome.



Sport

Get the latest action news from
www.indymedia.org.uk

Victory For Dragons In Sailor Showdown

How do you stop a 20,000 ton battle ship, fully equipped with state of the art weapons of mass destruction? According to waterborne activist Jonah Smith, "Drink rum the night before, and get yourself some Toys'R'Us inflatable dragon boats."

Shortly before the last DSEi, four warships sailed up the Thames, aiming to moor alongside the ExCel centre as part of the exhibition of the latest 'must have' weapons of war. To get there they needed to pass through Gallions Reach Lock and into the Royal Victoria Dock. However, the tide only left a four hour window of opportunity and three separate groups had made it their mission to prevent them.

The plan? To block the lock gates with people in the water

and prevent the swing bridge from opening by locking-on with bicycle D-locks. Amazingly, despite a massive police presence both on the bridge and in the water, the thirty activists actually succeeded in disrupting the manoeuvres for long enough to force the last two ships in the convoy to stop 7km downstream and wait for the next tide.

Around sixteen people were arrested and taken to Charing Cross Police Station, where a solidarity protest took place outside until their release. The cops had difficulty finding a crime to charge them with - all were released later the same day, most without charge. A few were charged with 'swimming in the dock' and attempted criminal damage. Unsurprisingly, all were eventually acquitted.

sponsorship pays dividends



The weapons industry takes place all around us, mostly tucked away from prying eyes to protect itself from the outrage that would be provoked were people to realise that these murderous profiteers were right under their noses. But not being able to see it does not mean it is not there.

Arms manufacturers, like all major corporations, require investment and promotion from various sources, ranging from high street banks and pension funds to local councils, religious organisations and charities. Sponsorship of sports may cost them some cash, but pays dividends in cultivating a friendly, socially engaged image.

Easy going for early birdies

Actions against DSEi 2003 started early with protesters taking the laid back approach. The successful blockade of ExCel's two main entrances delayed lorries carrying tanks and other military hardware for upto six hours.

Simultaneous blockades of both the east and west gates took security and police by surprise. Protesters lay across the road with arms locked inside steel tubes at the east gate while those at the west gate erected tripods of scaffold straddling the road, then lay back in hammocks slung high above the reach of police below.

Laura Semple from Oxford, who took part in the action, said "DSEi is one of the leading arms fairs in the world - arms companies will be queuing up to strike deals with oppressive regimes and to fuel conflicts all over the globe. We intend to shut it down."



Jason Hetfield said "The arms business in the UK harms local communities. The borough of Newham where I live, and where DSEi is taking place, is one of the poorest in the country. The people of Newham do not want this fair for weapons of death to come into their community. They want better education, health and job creation."

Strange sporting facts

TURF WARS

In 1969, Honduras and El Salvador were playing each other in the qualifying rounds for the 1970 World Cup. The first match was played on Sunday June 8 in the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa.

The night before the match Honduran fans surrounded the hotel in which the Salvadorean team was staying and throughout the night threw stones at windows, beat sheets of metal and empty barrels, leaned on horns of cars parked outside the hotel and set off strings of firecrackers. The next day the exhausted Salvadoreans, not surprisingly, lost 1-0.

Back in San Salvador 18-year-old Amelia Bolanos watched her team lose on TV - took out her father's pistol and promptly shot herself. Amelia was given a state funeral, the President of the Republic, his ministers, and the football team following her flag-draped coffin. On the return match it was the Honduran team's turn to spend a sleepless night - and to lose 3-0. Honduran fans were kicked and beaten (two of them died), 150 visitors' cars were burned and the border between the two countries was closed. The next day a Salvadorean plane bombed Tegucigalpa and troops launched a ground assault. Honduras retaliated by dropping bombs on El Salvador. By the time the Soccer War was over 100 hours later, 6,000 people had been killed and 12,000 wounded.

The deciding game was finally held on neutral ground in Mexico, the fans kept apart at opposite ends of the stadium by 5,000 Mexican police armed with clubs. El Salvador won 3-2.

Ian, taking part in direct action for the first time, said "This was an inspirational action to be on. It was great to see the immediate results as military vehicles were forced to turn back away from the DSEi arms fair."

Another anti-arms trade activist commented "It had an immediate and direct impact, is inspirational and makes a difference. Being able to stop military vehicles entering the arms fair is empowering. You as an ordinary citizen can stand up and make a difference. If more people tried it there would be no arms fair."



Mbyo Conteh of the Sierra Leone national amputee soccer team practices with teammates

Sierra Leone soccer stars

The club was founded in 2001 by men who had lost their limbs in the decade-long civil war and now boasts an international side as well as the two Freetown teams, East and West, who play a full 60 minute competitive match every saturday.

Many of the players are finding life tough in post war Sierra Leone and not many have regular employment or support. A few are still living in the amputee camp on the outskirts of Freetown, where amenities are very primitive.

Last month the Single Leg Amputee Sports national side left Freetown for Rio de Janeiro in

Brazil to participate in the World Cup Amputee Football Championships that ran 11th - 22th August.

A team spokesperson was quoted as saying. "Before they left, they made it clear that they were going as Ambassadors of Peace and not victims of war".

