

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER SHIVER YER TIMBERS...



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ANY PORT IN A STORM

AS INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY TAKES TO THE HIGH(LY DANGEROUS) SEAS

Gaza siege breakers have done it again! The *SS Dignity* carrying 27 crew and passengers arrived in Gaza at 8:10am local time, in spite of Israeli threats to stop them – all part of their ongoing blockade and siege of the whole coastline. In the pouring rain, the boat pulled into port amid cheers from the people of Gaza and tears from the passengers. Crew included Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead McGuire. The first boat sent by the Free Gaza movement arrived back in August (SchNEWS 644). Both voyages were undertaken despite threats of forcible boarding and deportation from the Israeli military.

One of the organizers, Huwaida Arraf cheered, "Once again we've been able to defy an unjust and illegal policy while the rest of the world is too intimidated to do anything. Our small boat is a huge cry to the international community to follow in our footsteps and open a lifeline to the people of Gaza."

Along with it's crew, the *SS Dignity* was carrying half a tonne of medical supplies – desperately needed in the besieged Strip. They were taken immediately to Gaza's main hospital. The Free Gaza movement said, "For the second time, we have demonstrated that the might of the Israeli navy is no match for a small boat of human rights activists determined to call to the attention of the world the occupation of the people of Gaza".

The Palestinians of Gaza have survived isolation, siege, bombardment and starvation that have brought the living conditions in Gaza to (in the words of the UN) 'the worst levels since 1967 (the start of the Occupation). Since March, when Israeli attacks on Gaza killed 120 people in a weekend to no noticeable advantage to the Israeli state/military (it's often hard to tell the difference), a ceasefire has slightly improved conditions in the Strip.

Unable to defeat Hamas in Gaza but needing to stop rocket attacks, Israel reluctantly agreed to a one sided ceasefire with the Hamas movement- basically saying "stop the rocket attacks, beg nice and we might let people eat today." Now Gaza is allowed some more medicine, some more food and other supplies - if they play ball. But everything is severely restricted - people still die for lack of medical treatment, and most industry has ground to a halt.

ONE ISM TO BELIEVE IN

Some of the crew from the first voyage stayed on and immediately re-established the Gaza branch of the International Solidarity movement (see www.palsolidarity.org). They are now engaged in human rights work across the whole of the Gaza Strip. SchNEWS spoke to one of activists about

their work and the situation in the Strip.

"Despite the supposed 'ceasefire' the siege is ongoing – the price of food is sky-high and families are slipping deeper into poverty. When I was first in Rafah [A Gazan town on the Egyptian border] you never saw people begging in the streets – now there are plenty. You now see children trying to sell things in the street. Since the ceasefire a few more supplies are making it in but the slide towards mass poverty and hunger is sickening. It's just the slow strangulation of an entire population.

The world ignores it because it's not one massive event. It's not like that because it's slow and gradual. The siege affects everyone in the Strip – it's collective punishment on a massive scale, outdoing even what's being inflicted in the West Bank."

ISM activists are now engaged in non-violent direct action in the Strip – accompanying those who find themselves under threat of Israeli military violence, mainly farmers and fishermen.

"Farmers whose land borders the green line [Israel's imposed border] are under constant threat. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have created a buffer zone on the land border. They've bulldozed areas hundreds of metres into supposedly Palestinian areas. They've destroyed absolutely everything, uprooting literally thousands of olive and fruit trees. There were massive incursions on 1st of May in Khan Younis – destroying olive trees, greenhouses



and even barns full of sheep. They'll frequently shoot farmers for going into their own land. By walking with these people we're able to give them a small amount of protection."

40,000 people depend on the fishing industry in Gaza, and yet anyone who ventures out into what are technically Palestinian waters find themselves at risk of attack from IDF gunboats. Israel has unilaterally enforced a six-mile limit for seaborne trips from Gaza.

"The limit [for seaborne trips from Gaza] has supposedly been set at six miles but in reality any Palestinian boat can be considered fair game. One eighteen-year-old who was out with his friend in a rowing boat just hundreds of metres from the Rafah beach was shot in the leg when they came under 'targeted sniper fire'. He may lose his leg. Many other fishermen have been shot."

"So we decided to start going out on the boats. They have a right to be in those waters. Since we started accompanying the fishing boats – there has been a 200% increase in the catch landed. When internationals are aboard the trawlers the Israeli gunboats are more likely to just fire warning shots and use tear gas – giving the boats a chance to get into deeper waters where fish are more plentiful. This is a really effective form of direct-action." Footage of the action can be seen <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZBwcPcAeFA&feature=related>

"With the boats from Cyprus we meant to break the siege – symbolically at first, but now the Free Gaza movement aims to literally break it - providing a lifeline of hope for Gaza."

* See www.freegaza.org and www.electronicintifada.net

OLIVE & LET DIE

The Brightonians who went to the West Bank to engage in a spot of international solidarity - and olive harvesting (see SchNEWS 652) - have been getting stuck in with the realities of occupied life. Whilst accompanying the villagers of Al Masra, one of their number was attacked by an Israeli settler.

The delegates had been asked by the village to accompany them to their olive groves, as the Palestinians in Al Masra have had to face regular violence and intimidation at the hands of settlers, especially when they try to enter their own lands (which border the Israeli's illegal settlement).

Before they'd even got to look at any olives, the internationals saw a group of settlers circling a woman in her seventies, punching her and spitting on her.

When they tried to film the scene, one of the settlers attacked, injuring one of them. It turns out that the attacker is a particularly nasty piece of work by the name of Moshe

Benben Ishti. This was the same settler who murdered a child on a demo last year (he escaped conviction despite several eyewitnesses to the killing - a depressingly typical result for the Israeli legal system). IDF soldiers then 'intervened' letting the settlers go with smiles and pats on the back.

In the event, the Palestinian-Brightonian group didn't get to pick any olives. When they arrived at the farmers' groves most of the olives had already been stolen off the trees by the same settlers - losing them a whole year's income. The soldiers wouldn't let internationals accompany them to their other olive trees and, with the real threats to life and limb from the settlers, they decided not to go alone.

It's still olive season in the West Bank for another 4-5 weeks and there's an urgent need for an international presence to help reduce the violence that Palestinians face during harvest. Visit www.palsolidarity.org and www.brightonpalestine.org

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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CHRISTIANA ALMIGHTY

Christiana – the famous squatted community in Copenhagen (see SchNEWS 513) was under attack again this Tuesday (28th) – with ensuing riot. Goons from Slots & Ejendomsstyrelsen (S&E), the government authority for Christiana, arrived at 7.30am to evict the second storey of a house. People were dragged out of their beds and by 9am construction workers were tearing the top floor down. Some 300 police – one of the largest police operations yet against Christiana – were on hand to help the eviction with tear gas guns in hand, and cleared the area of onlookers.

It's claimed that this second floor was built without permission – but permission is always declined, making any new building at Christiana illegal.

By late morning a demonstration marched from Christiana to the S&E offices – as police tried to blockade them. One police car charged

at the crowd hitting two people, but no one was seriously injured. One of the city's bridges was then taken by protesters for an hour, who marched back to Christiana. Then at 5pm, after this demo had dispersed, people regrouped and took another bridge.

Later, back at Christiana, police and protesters faced off at the entrance to Christiana, as large amounts of tear gas was met with flying bottles. Then the survivors broke around police lines and started lighting fires on the street, and the streetrage continued for several hours. Apparently police ran out of tear-gas and had to have more supplies brought in from elsewhere. Eventually the police pushed the gas-choked crowd back into the entrance of Christiana, with twelve arrested. See <http://english.indymedia.dk>

* For more on last year's Danish riots see SchNEWS 579

OAX MURDERERS

People took to the streets in Oaxaca ('wha-hacka'), Mexico on the 21st of this month against the audacity of the municipal government in arresting and charging Juan Martinez Moreno (a member of the resistance movement in Oaxaca) with the murder of indymedia journalist Brad Will in the uprisings of 2006, despite film and photographic evidence showing the real culprits.

The protesters blocked the road as they marched to the barrio where Brad was killed. Carrying enlarged photos of the men involved in the murder, guns still in hand, the protesters demanded the release of the innocent Moreno – and the arrest of the real murderers, Manuel Martinez Feria, Abel Santiago Zárate, Manuel Aguilar, and Juan Carlos Soriano Velasco.

Although human rights organisations are pointing towards 'obvious holes in the case'

against Moreno, the question as to why none of the actual trigger men have been detained or even questioned can easily be answered – Feria is the ex-mayor of Oaxaca, while two of the others are cops.

Other demos are planned in connection with this, and for the upcoming second anniversary of the 'Battle in Oaxaca' (2nd November), when 3500 police and army forcibly and brutally took back the city after months of occupation by striking teachers, their supporters and other activists (see SchNEWS 567).

*For more, plus breaking news of how a well-known local reporter - who writes in support of the Oaxacan struggle and dares criticise the ruling government party - was kidnapped, beaten, tortured and robbed on Saturday night in Oaxaca, see www.narconews.com

SHOCK AND A.W.E.

This Monday (27th) saw the biggest Blockade at the Aldermaston nuclear weapons site in ten years. Some 350 protesters joined the day of action which saw surrounding roads closed for five hours, and 33 arrested – mostly for obstruction of the highway and public order offences.

Starting at 5.30am, affinity groups carried out separate blockading actions, using lock-ons, arm-tubes and tripods – leaving the police busy cutting and drilling people out all morning. Several people super-glued their hands together forming a human blockade across the road. Others chained themselves to gates or mounted tripods in the road. Nearly all of those arrested were given cautions or fixed penalty notices.

Protesters have highlighted the fact that the UK gov't is committing £76 billion to the Trident replacement nuclear missile programme at Aldermaston, when really they should be spending it on healthcare, education etc – no need to even mention the economic crisis...

The risk of radioactive pollution to the local community could also help spur on support against the weapons project. The nearby AWE Burghfield plant experienced difficulties during the floods which could have resulted in radioactive pollution to the local area.

* See also <http://blockawe.blogspot.com>

You Cannot Be Syria's

A US helicopter strike in Syria killed eight civilians and wounded fourteen others in an attack near the Abu-Kamal area, by the Iraqi border on Monday (27th). The US claims to have killed a major Al-Qaeda operative and targeted a "robust foreign fighter logistic network."

Syria describe those killed as construction workers and children.

An unnamed military official said that the US was "taking matters into their own hands". This raid is the first known attack by US forces inside Syrian territory, coming after a string of air strikes on the Pakistan-Afghan border earlier this year, one of which led to civilian deaths at a school.

The actions of the US also may jeopardise (or may have been meant to jeopardise) Israel's indirect peace talks with Syria, despite the Israelis trying to distance themselves from this attack (they merely attacked Syria last year!)

With the the US's consistent commitment to cause instability in the Middle East, who's brave enough to predict any major change in tactics even if Obama does gets voted in next week?

To read transcriptions from Al-Jazeera on the Syrian strike, see Television Without Borders www.linktv.org/mosaic

...and finally...

As capitalism folds in on itself, there is, at least, one ray of light for the world of publishing. According to the *Financial Times*, sales of Karl Marx's un-pick-uppable doorstop *Das Kapital* are going through the roof. Anti-capitalism is a big-dollar market these days.

The FT even went as far as alerting its elite readership about yer good ol' SchNEWS, with a quote from issue 649 about global capitalism collapsing of its own accord without anyone "having to lift a finger - let alone throw a Molotov". The article is about the rise of anarchist radicals – but we're wondering if they are feeding those in the 'risk management' industry with a top tip about surviving these turbulent times... Any speculators looking for a surefire boom could do worse than buying into stocks of SchNEWS at Ten – books no doubt soon to soar in value.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, we might've made it into the pink pages but we're still red and black - Honest!

THROUGH THE ROOF

Last Friday (24th) anti-arms trade campaigners ended their 38 hour occupation of the rooftop of Raytheon's missile and defence company in Bristol. Having begin at 6am on Thursday morning, they got settled on the roof with a tent and loads of banners but after refusing to talk with negotiators eventually the nine were eventually arrested. One protester said, "They have their offices here in our city. We feel it is our civic duty to bring this to the attention of the public..."

Raytheon is one of the big US arms manufacturers who have made a bomb (literally), particularly since the War of Terror™ began. Missile are one of their specialities, including the Patriot, Sidewinder and Tomahawk. Protesters now want an investigation into claims that Raytheon is manufacturing cluster bombs.

In June this year, nine others (the official 'Raytheon nine') were acquitted, by unanimous verdict, of three counts of criminal damage at the Raytheon office in Northern Ireland. In this landmark case, protesters were acquitted as the prosecutors could produce no evidence against the defendants who were acting to prevent war crimes committed by Israel, using weapons supplied by Raytheon, during the Lebanon war (see www.raytheon9.org). It's official: opposing war crimes is no crime.

* This comes after another demo outside the Bristol Raytheon office the previous Tuesday (16th). Weekly protests are held there every Thursday. See www.bristol.indymedia.org

PARTY & PROTEST

* Listings updated weekly *
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

SHIPLEY SHAPE

Protests against the Shipley open-cast coal mine continued this Monday (27th) as protesters and the weather combined forces to halt the first stages of coal excavation. The morning's digging was late starting due to rain, and Earth First! activists took over at 1pm for three hours of interruption. The digger drivers themselves were said to be glad of the extended break as UK Coal likes them to do eleven-and-a-half hour shifts with minimal rest times.

Apparently the police vehicle couldn't get across the mud at the site so they hitched a ride with UK Coal workers. Once there, they were more interested in getting protesters' details and photos than making arrests, quoting the 'Aggravated Trespass' section 68 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act - meaning that protesters risk arrest if they return within three months.

Also on Monday, one of the protesters arrested when Bodge House was evicted in August (see SchNEWS 643) had their charges of Aggravated Trespass thrown out of court. The site was squatted for two months – with tunnels and a tower made of scaffold, in protest against the proposed open-cast coal mine. The judge at Derby Youth Court said that the prosecution didn't have the evidence to support its case.

* For more see www.leaveitintheground.org.uk

Sch-Product Recall

Some copies of our DVD *On The Verge* are sadly duds. The offending copying company is reprinting them - so if yours doesn't work email us with an address and we'll mail one out to you. NB – if you're thinking of blagging one, why bother when you can download it free as a torrent – see www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies/on-the-verge-schmovies-2008.mpg.torrent

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