



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER I SHOULD MEXI-CO-CO...

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# TACO HELL

## MEXICAN WAVES OF RESISTANCE AND REPRESSION

**"They might have the strength to impose their will, but we will never give them our consent." - Radio APPO announcement.**

3,500 police backed by armoured vehicles and helicopters retook control of the Mexican city of Oaxaca on Sunday (29th) following five months of occupation by striking teachers and other activists. Burning barricades were no match for the additional 6,500 military personnel, water cannons and tear gas, as physical resistance was crushed.

Teachers and their supporters have been demonstrating since May against a corrupt authoritarian state regime, guilty also of seriously underfunding local education. Included on their list of demands were outrageous requests for more textbooks, breakfasts for schoolchildren, scholarships, uniforms, shoes, medical services and better pay. The clincher, perhaps, was their demand for the resignation of the Governor, Ulises Ruíz Ortíz, who has been busy using the usual array of tactics available to Mexican cops, with disappearances, beatings and torture being used against so called 'subversive elements' for some time.

"An unrivalled success story", the *Economist* investment rag says about Mexico's economy. This is despite the fact that the richest 10% of Mexicans own around 60% of the wealth, a gap that continues to rise, along with the number of poor and hungry, despite all the 'sustained economic growth'.

One of the demands was for an increase in the minimum wage. During the 1990s the value of the Mexican minimum wage actually fell by 5%. In Oaxaca the minimum is lower than in most places as the government keep the rate down cos they reckon it's cheaper to live in a poor place, so why pay so 'em more money?! After all, along with Chiapas and Guerrero, Oaxaca is amongst the poorest three states in Mexico and that makes that ten-bedroomed Hacienda a much more affordable holiday home for a weary Mexican stock broker.

On May 15th, National Teachers Day in Oaxaca, teachers threatened a week long state-wide strike if their demands were not met. They weren't and a week later a 40,000-strong group of mainly teachers and other union activists occupied the centre of the city. Such actions have been common for the last 25 years in Oaxaca but this was bigger and commanded much more support amongst the general population than usual.

The occupation continued until 750 police stormed in on June 14th in maximum

repression mode. Local media reported four deaths from the ensuing violence and the teachers' radio station, Radio Plantón, was trashed. Soon after, though, students at the Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca seized the uni station which had a much more powerful transmitter.

On 8th August, police infiltrators poured sulphuric acid on that equipment, but by this time TV *Caserolas* had been running for 8 days. The state-owned Chanel 9 station was seized and re-named after the women who had marched on the station banging pots and pans.

Before they were booted out on 21st August, TV *Caserolas* had paraded a host of Mexicans on the telly - each of whom gave a withering commentary on what neoliberalism meant to them - the loss of land to developers and the ramshackle rural mountain schools without toilets; the thousands of communities without safe water or sewage systems; the rising cost of food and rent as subsidies are removed in the name of free trade; and, of course, the continuing falls in the value of those wages.

By July, 365 grassroots organisations including unions, indigenous groups and womens movements had joined up to form an umbrella group known as the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO), receiving the backing of the Zapatistas and even former presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

## NO APPO-LOGIES

Meanwhile under "Operation Iron," Governor Ruiz was busy renovating the prison in the city of Tlocolula. He's overseen a development to double its capacity and keen to keep costs low, Ruiz has not bothered building any extensions preferring simply to put a partition wall in each cell! Many prominent activists are, however, more worried that they won't even make it to prison, convinced of an impending wave of repression that is sure to follow the recapture of the city.

As government top brass debated what to do, primary school teacher, Pánfilo Hernández Vásquez was shot dead as he left a public assembly. His death brings the average number of murdered teachers, activists and indigenous leaders to one a week since May. They were joined last Friday by New York-based Indymedia journalist Brad Will, who was shot dead along with three others as pro-government militia opened fire on the unarmed demonstrators.

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For wearing fancy dress at Halloween...**  
One Halloween reveller got nicked in the States for dressing up as Osama Bin Laden and holding a toy gun. This was way too scary for cops who charged him with "Criminal Threatening". It turns out that the arrested man was Tom Connolly, the lawyer who revealed President Bush's drunk driving arrest in 2000, and he said he intends to plead not guilty.

President Vincent Fox finally authorised the really heavy squad, the Federal Preventative Police (PFP) to 'retake' the city military style, last Sunday. Since then things have quietened a little with the heavy ongoing military presence, but resistance continues and people's spirit and determination seems unbroken.

Whilst President Fox declared victory, announcing "the return to peace" in Oaxaca, as we go to press, the University of Oaxaca is under attack with the PFP launching tear gas in an attempt to evacuate the premises. Radio APPO is currently still managing to broadcast (have a listen at <http://icecast.v2v.cc:8000/appo1.mp3>). The Zapatistas have called for a general strike and national day of action on November 20th.

Triggered largely by Brad Will's murder, there have been a series of actions in the US and around the world. In the UK, a protest against the repression took place in front of the Mexican Embassy in London on Monday evening. Eight arrests followed an attempt to project Brad Will's final footage on to the embassy itself.

\* For fuller coverage, including pictures and footage, see [www.narconews.com](http://www.narconews.com) and [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)

## PITCH BATTLE

Sticking at least one finger up at the SOCPA rules (See SchNEWS 483 and most weeks since!), up to 100 people managed to camp out at Parliament Square last weekend. Advertised as an "Unauthorised" 24-hour peace camp, there was a vigil on Saturday when people 'illegally' assembled to mark the second anniversary of the coalition offensive on the city of Fallujah in Iraq and hear ex-SOCPA-convicts Maya Evans and Milan Rai read out the names of those who have died there.

Then, on Sunday, tens of activists turned up, assembled tents and made camp, with banners and chants stressing the demand for "No more Fallujahs". They managed to stay there all night, until cops moved in on Monday morning (maybe the next camp should be called 'Another 48 Hours'), some demolishing the camp and confiscating equipment. Ten people were arrested, some of them for refusing to give their names to police, but no one was charged.

\* For more see [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)

## MOGADISHU OF THE DAY

Like so many unfortunate countries before, the history of Somalia changed rapidly once spooks from the CIA muscled in. Not content with cocking up in Iraq fighting the War on Terror™, Spooks are now meddling in Somalia to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The super-spies are sponsoring an anti-terrorist alliance of warlords, the 'Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism' (AR-PCT) in the war-ravished capital to crush the previously little-known 'Islamic Courts Union' (ICU) which, claimed the US, had ties to the usual suspects over in Al Qaeda.

From this point onwards the events moved in a fairly predictable fashion. With the announcement that the 'Alliance' were receiving US cash and guns, virtually the entire population of the capital Mogadishu responded ... by giving their wholehearted backing to the Islamists.

Within a matter of days Mogadishu turned from a city ruled by hundreds of competing warlords, each claiming territory often no bigger than a neighbourhood or a few streets, to a city with a functioning government and a virtual end to the violence and theft that had plagued the city since the time Papa Bush sent troops in back in '92.

Catching the entire world by surprise, Somalis celebrated in September with a mass rally of people and vehicles ceremoniously travelling from one end of the city to the other, an event which would not have been possible before the change in government. The Islamists, while publicly decrying Al Qaeda-style nihilism and sectarian killing, have begun to stretch their influence outwards from the capital, extending

south towards the country's provisional capital, Badioa, near the Ethiopian border. Militias have either surrendered or gone over to the ICU en masse, bringing with them their guns and armed vehicles with them. Town after town has gone over to the Islamists without a fight.

As they now seem about to take control of the country, Ethiopia has picked up the gauntlet from the ARPCT, and has begun covertly sending its troops into Somalia to thwart the ICU's advance, under the guise of 'military advisers' (eyewitnesses report seeing hundreds if not thousands of such 'advisers' in full battle gear and army trucks).

The all too familiar hand of the CIA appears once again. And all the ingredients are there: a country racked by famine and civil war sees its fledgling government (which committed the heinous crime of being chosen by its people but not installed by the US) immediately attacked by its neighbours. Complicating matters, next-door Ethiopia is a largely Christian nation, upping the ante as a US-backed attempt to control a small nation threatens to erupt into a full scale ethno-religious regional war.

The UN recognised 'government' of Somalia (in reality little more than a group of ex-pat Somalis residing in Ethiopia and Kenya) has been thrown into complete disarray as minister after minister has quit over the issue of negotiations with the ICU, and reconciliation talks scheduled in Khartoum this week collapsed before they began.

As war looks increasingly imminent, hats off to the CIA for such a great job!

\* For updates <http://english.aljazeera.net>

## STERN EXPRESSION

A decade in the making... no, not the reputation of yer peerless SchNEWS, but the time Tony and his cronies have taken to even begin to take climate change seriously. The trouble is, acting to resolve the problem poses a real threat to profits. OK, so people are going to be scorched into hunger over in Africa, but what's going to happen if we all can't keep shopping? People flooded out of house and home may no be so interested in buying that new plasma TV or three piece suite! That's right folks, don't worry about the environment; money's more important - think how much money you could lose if we don't fix things right now.

Stern's report is designed to demonstrate the risks climate chaos poses to business, and warns that it could lead to an economic recession! The report drops the shock conclusion that global carbon emissions must be slashed - hardly news (See SchNEWS 81). Stern also promotes the kind of carbon trading that inevitably turns into a carbon redistribution rather than reduction scheme (See SchNEWS 514). The government's plan is to enable UK plc to pass on any costs to the public through increased prices and 'green' taxes. When asked whether they could do more, company bosses stressed the importance of looking the other way. The UK's a small place after all; apparently if we cut turned everything in Britain off right now, it'd all be undone by 2 years growth in China, so why hassle UK businesses?

\* Some people, however, are actually up for doing something about climate chaos. In the early hours of Thursday morning (2nd), 30 Greenpeace activists got up and occupied a 200 metre chimney in Didcot power station, the second biggest emitter of carbon, after Drax power station.

\* **This Saturday (4th) there'll be a March for Climate Action starting at the US embassy at midday, later moving onto an "I-Count" Mass Gathering in Trafalgar Square at 2pm. See [www.campaigncc.org](http://www.campaigncc.org)**

## FOR YOUR PERU-SAL

In Peru, a remote Amazonian tribe who have had little contact with outside society have had a reprieve after the Chinese oil company Sapat have announced they will not be entering their land. Little is known about the Piro people, but they would likely be vulnerable to the diseases of outsiders. This comes after 800 Achuar Indians in the northern Peruvian Amazon held a two week blockade against Argentinian oil company Plus-Petrol's oil plant, which is the largest in the country. They didn't manage to kick em out, but Plus-Petrol are 'promising' to improve environmental practice, and will give the Indians oil royalties.

\* For more see [www.survival-international.org](http://www.survival-international.org)

## ...and finally...

A lesson in how to overcome electronic door security: campaigners against Shell's destruction of the environment in Rosspport, Ireland (SchNEWS 564) decided to take their message directly to Shell's offices in Chesterfield and found themselves facing an electronic swipe card system. The solution was a simple one and relied not on weaknesses in the electronic system, but on the stupidity of the workers inside.

Armed with nothing more sophisticated than an empty cardboard box with the address written on in felt tip pen, one of the would-be invaders strolled up to the doors, pressed the buzzer and announced they had a package to deliver - whereby they were let in, and the rest of the mob stormed in for a chat with Shell about their environmental credentials.

It seems the old 'Trojan horse' gas isn't ready for the knackers quite yet...

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... those that can, teach, and those that can't, riot. Honest!

## FINAL CURTAIN

Yesterday (2nd) at 4.30am police arrived to evict the Dalston Theatre in Hackney (See SchNEWS 533), and evicted the building by 9am. The Victorian era theatre had been occupied as a social centre since February this year, to prevent it being knocked down to build 533 luxury flats. The building is steeped in history having been the "4 Aces" reggae club, where Bob Marley once played, but its destruction is one of several assaults on East London as the Olympics steam-rolls into town (see also Queens Market - London's most multi-ethnic market - due to be demolished for you guessed it 240 luxury apartments see SchNEWS 565, [www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk](http://www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk) For more see <http://opendalston.blogspot.com>

## HEART OF STONES

Since large-scale pagan gatherings and free festivals at Stonehenge were crushed after the Battle Of The Beanfield in 1985, the nearby tranquil setting at Avebury, the largest neolithic stone circle in Europe, has become a popular spot for pagans in the UK. While busloads of tourists descend on Stonehenge every day, the raggle-taggle convoys of travellers, festive - goers and druids head towards Avebury. But this is about to turn into a site of conflict after Kennet District Council issued an enforcement notice to the National Trust, who control Avebury, ordering them to stop people camping in the village car park from Dec 31st this year.

Kennet councillor and Avebury villager Gretchen Rawlins whinged, "It's not just the summer solstice any more. It's virtually every month. The villagers have had to learn all the pagan dates to know when their village is going to get invaded next." The onus is on the National Trust to find an alternative camp site, who have until November 6th to lodge an appeal. This year's winter solstice - the last event before the ban - is sure to be a high profile event - see our Party & Protest guide closer to the time.

## Party & Protest

For full listings see [www.schnews.org.uk/pap](http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap)

\*\* **NOVEMBER: 4th - Manchester No2ID Day of Resistance.** Meet at 12.30, the Basement, Lever St, moving to St Anne's Square (or Market St outside Boots if it's raining) to set up a stall. See <http://manchester.no2id.net>

\*\* **6th - Plane Stupid** national day of action against short haul flights. See [www.planestupid.com](http://www.planestupid.com)

\*\* **11th - Picket of Marks & Spencer**, Manchester, as part of the international week of action against the building of Israel's 'Apartheid Wall'. 12-3pm, Market St, Manchester City Centre. For info about M&S's Israeli links see [www.inminds.co.uk/boycott-marks-and-spencer.html](http://www.inminds.co.uk/boycott-marks-and-spencer.html)

\*\* **11-12 - Northern Eco-action Gathering, Leeds.** Workshops on direct action, skill sharing, strategising. Novices and experienced activists all welcome. The Common Place, 23-25 Wharf St, Leeds. 11.00am-6.00pm (both days) For more see [www.eco-action.org/northern](http://www.eco-action.org/northern)

\*\* **13th - Big Aldermaston Blockade. Block The Builders** will be using non-violent direct action to stop the building work on the new Orion laser facility at Aldermaston. For details see [www.blockthebuilders.org.uk](http://www.blockthebuilders.org.uk)

\*\* **November 1st** sees the start of the **fox hunting season** - the second year since the so-called ban. The Hunt Saboteurs Association have written to all police forces in England and Wales telling them 'For Fox Sake - Enforce the Ban!' Sabs will be out this weekend in their duel role to stop and monitor the illegal hunts up and down the country. To find out more see [www.huntsabs.org.uk](http://www.huntsabs.org.uk)

\*\* **25th - Defy-ID National Gathering, Nottingham.** 11am onwards at the Sumac Centre, to organise resistance to ID Cards and the National ID Register. Food and basic accommodation - but email in advance. For details see [www.nottingham-defy-id.org.uk/gathering](http://www.nottingham-defy-id.org.uk/gathering)

\*\* **Did you witness the police attack** on people leaving the Saqqara Bar in North St Brighton around 2am last Thursday night which saw a line of coppers attack the crowd with pepper spray leading to seven arrests. Call or email the SchNEWS office asap.

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