

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER RIOT-WING...



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THE U.N. HOLY LAND

AS SchNEWS TAKES AN OVERVIEW OF EVENTS IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

The machine-gunning of an Israeli bus and the subsequent air-raids on Gaza represent another dangerous turn of the screw for Palestine. Anxious to rescue themselves from their own domestic discontents (see SchNEWS 781) another border war might be just what the Israeli authorities want.

While it's the shocking attack on the Israeli bus that's grabbed the headlines, the slow grind of the occupation is the reality on the ground. Just in the last week there have been the usual assortment of never-ending attacks, raids, air strikes and killings, to name but a few of the daily realities each Palestinian has to endure. On Friday (12th) three children were injured during an anti-wall protest in the village of al-Ma'sara, West Bank by Israeli troops. The children, Abada Brijiyah, 11, Osama Brijiyah, 9 and Hareth Brijiyah, 10, were assaulted with rifle butts and batons by the Israeli military as they approached the site of the wall. Many others were tear gassed and shot with rubber coated steel bullets. In the village of Bil'in soldiers attacked internationals and Israelis during the weekly protest against the apartheid wall. Local villagers have held non-violent demonstrations every Friday for over 6 years in villages across the area. (see SchNEWS 673)

In the early hours of the 16th August Israeli air strikes zeroed in on Zeitun, Gaza City and Khan Younis respectively. The trigger for this attack was a report from an Israeli policeman claiming a rocket was fired into the Israeli city of Beersheba. The raid on Zeitun resulted in three people being seriously wounded. At the same time Amin Talab Dabash, 38 years old, died after Israeli border police attacked him in East Jerusalem. According to one witness 'he was killed deliberately'. The same day a 17 year old Palestinian was shot down dead by Israeli gunfire. The teenager was killed as he drew nearer the border with Israel, at a refugee camp in the central Gaza strip.

Talks between Hamas and Israeli officials have been taking place in Cairo with Egyptians acting as a (sort of) impartial go between. A hoped for prisoner deal could free 1,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons in exchange for one Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, held since 2006. At the moment at least 6,000 Palestinians are rotting in Israeli prisons, 219 sit in detention with no charge. Out of the detained, 44 have

been residing there for over a quarter of a century. 299 of the prisoners have been there over 20 years. Further indignation comes from the ever decreasing access Palestinian prisoners have to education; 1800 Palestinians were ready to take their June examinations but were prohibited by the prison service.

All facets of a prisoner's life are suppressed. Many in need of health care are simply denied it. Medicine, food parcels, clothing and blankets often don't seem to reach them. A spokesman for Wa'ed, an organisation fighting for the rights of prisoners said, "Israel has been preventing family visits to 750 Gazan prisoners for five years now." Last week Palestinians en route to see family members detained in Southern Negev prison were subjected to chants of "No visits for Gilad, no visits for you" from a group of fifty Israelis they passed.

The latest addition to the jail house is Samer Allawi, a Palestinian journalist for Al Jazeera. Allawi was detained on Wednesday (10th) as he was leaving the West Bank to return to his post in Kabul. He has not been charged.

The situation in the region is as dire as ever, yet the upper echelons in Palestine are pinning their hopes on gaining UN recognition for Palestinian statehood on 20th September. While a Palestinian state could prove a diplomatic headache for the Israeli government, what would the title of '194th member of the United Nations' really mean for the people of Palestine? What difference would it make? Israeli journalist Akiva Eldar, writing in Ha'aretz had this to say, "This time, too, Israel will accuse the Arabs of unilateral steps, ignore the United Nations, expand settlements in the West Bank, and build more neighbourhoods for Jews in East Jerusalem."

THE ZION SLEEPS TONIGHT

Meanwhile west of the Apartheid Wall in Israel itself a story of suppression and reaction is unfolding. At the beginning the discontent arose from the continuing rise of the cost of living and rocketing house prices as well as the 5th highest income inequality amongst developed countries. One in four Israelis lives below the poverty line (See SchNEWS 781). This month numbers of protesters have escalated and their demands are changing from outrage over the sky-high cost of living into calls for social justice, cheaper housing, education, healthcare, food

and fuel. More than 300,000 protesters from different backgrounds took to the streets on the 11th of August, with rallies in Jerusalem, Holon and Haifa, as well as Lod, Hod Hasharon and Nazareth.

This is the largest ever Israeli protest over socio economic issues. It seems Israel is having its Arab Spring, even if it's a bit of a late bloomer. On Saturday the 13th demonstrators were encouraged to head out of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to support protests across the rest of the country. There was a call-out for demos in eighteen different cities. The government response was passive and watchful, and some protesters accused them of using delaying tactics. One spokesman told Israeli press "We don't want a group that will just hold discussions over and over again for months." A tenuous promise of change in the future just doesn't cut it any more. The weekend protests attracted 75,000, huge in a country of just 6 million.

Confrontations between hundreds of Israelis and police took place on the 16th as a 500 strong march made its way towards the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem. Inside the Knesset sat the ruling elite plotting, erm... discussing the recent protests, as the protesters shouted "We want social justice". The police were unable to restrain the demonstration and failed to keep it away from the parliament. Recent polls suggest that 80% of all Israelis are against the policies of PM Benjamin Netanyahu, with 88% supporting the protest movement. So far this movement has taken no position on the Occupation, with mainstream peace groups standing back so as not to de-rail the popular uprising. What implications it has for relations with the Arab world remain to be seen.

UK ACTION: ROTTEN TO THE CORP.

Meanwhile back in London, pro-Palestinian activists on Tuesday (16th) dumped rotten fruit in the foyer of UK/US investment firm Apax Partners. The firm has major investments in Carmel Agrexco, Israel's largest exporter of agricultural produce, harvested from illegal Israeli settlements on Occupied Palestinian land. The protesters then held a boisterous picket outside the Apax offices, handing out information and chatting to passers-by. The solidarity action was part of the ongoing boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign to halt the Occupation.

*for more <http://electronicintifada.net/> and <http://www.bigcampaign.org/>

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

SHOCK TACTICS

On Tuesday (16th) evening Dale Burns, a 27 year old from Barrow, Cumbria died after been Tasered 3 times by police at his home. Police had been called to a “disturbance” and apparently felt the need to use a Taser to arrest Dale on suspicion of criminal damage.

Tasers, which fire 50,000 volts into anyone unlucky enough to be on the receiving end of them, were first issued to British police in 2003, but only to armed units as a ‘non’-lethal alternative to firearms. Years of gradual creep has seen Tasers issued to more and more ordinary bobbies – such as those that electrocuted Dale – being issued with them. Hundreds of the notoriously incompetent British Transport Police have been equipped with Tasers since 2009 – so you could be in for a shock next time you jump the train.

Current guidance is that Tasers should only be “used in the most extreme circumstances”, although this is the same language that was originally used for the now common place pepper spray, and we’re not sure quite how “extreme” an arrest for criminal damage can get. In the last decade over 250 people have died as a result of Tasers in the US alone, the last death in the UK was in 2006, though as recent as July Met police hospitalised an 82 year old by Tasing him.

The IPCC investigation following Dale’s death is unlikely to have much effect on the increasingly tooled-up nature of British cops so maybe it time to integrate a Faraday cage into your black bloc clobber?

GETTING THE HUMPBACK

It looks like all the blood, sweat and tears in the icy Antarctic seas have paid off for Sea Shepherd, the direct action anti-whaling group. Some Japanese officials are looking for ways to end the annual ‘scientific’ whaling expeditions in the Southern Ocean. A senior member of a government review panel set up to advise options after last years ‘disastrous’ season (thanks to Sea Shepherd, whalers returned with only a fifth of their allocated quota of 1000 whales) has raised the stakes by openly calling for a halt.

Japanese consumer advocate Hisa Anan rejected any scientific need to kill whales. “Research whaling has been conducted for more than 20 years now, I think they’ve gathered enough scientific data and even if they want more, they can conduct non-lethal research.”

Unfortunately Ms Anan is in a minority on the all-important Fisheries Panel and despite losses of £25 million last year – the Japanese authorities may authorise another throw of the dice.

Paul Watson has confirmed that all three of the group’s ships would be positioned in Sydney and Fremantle in October. “We are also looking for a fourth ship,” he said “if they return we will be ready to engage them again.”

Meanwhile Sea Shepherd activists are readying themselves to disrupt the annual bloodletting of the Grind – the Faroese slaughter of Pilot whales in Operation Ferocious Isles.

* www.seashepherd.org

CRAP JUSTICE OF THE WEEK

“This was about people showing indifference to right and wrong, people with a twisted moral code, people with a complete absence of self-restraint.”

Fast-forward ten years and Cameron’s words might be a better description of the judicial lynch mob mentality taking hold in England’s court-rooms right now. In what seems to be a sort of ‘shock doctrine’ approach to criminal justice, the government have decided to wage “all-out war” on gangs and gang culture. If anything illustrates the ruling elite’s fear of the mob it is this return to transportation-era justice. Five months for receiving a pair of shorts, six months for stealing water, six months for nicking ice cream, four f**king years for organising a riot on Facebook that never happened. This uprising had our masters worried (one top cop has leaked that during a COBRA meeting a panicking Cameron was considering bringing in the army).

This wave of vicious sentencing has been co-ordinated from the top. While cops were considering introducing tactics, like the use of baton rounds, from Northern Ireland onto the streets of the mainland the judiciary has taken a leaf out of the Stomont book and is in effect introducing a form of interment. The existence of the directive...sorry ‘guidance’ was revealed by the chair of the bench at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court, Novello Noades, as she sentenced one man to six months in prison. Don’t forget that most of those headed for custody now are actually on remand – an astounding two thirds of all defendants have been remanded.

Cruder weapons are set to be deployed as the principle of ‘collective punishment’ is used. Tory-controlled Wandsworth council is trying to evict a family because one member has been accused of involvement. “We wanted to get the ball rolling,” said the council, nodding in the direction of the old fashioned ‘innocent ‘til proven guilty’ schtick by saying “If he is acquitted we will end our eviction proceedings”. Wandsworth Council and others have promised wide application of these powers.

Today 25 protesters gathered outside the house of Ravi Govindia, head of Wandsworth Council, shouting “Evict the Tories – not the poor”. One arrest was made. For more <http://noriotevictions.wordpress.com>

Prison support groups are being set up around the country alongside the Anarchist Black Cross. Currently nearly 2000 have been nicked following the riots – with no doubt many more to follow as cops trawl through the CCTV.

* <http://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-solidarity/>

OXFORD ANTI-SOCIAL

A new social centre opened its doors this week in Oxford. The building, a squatted warehouse on Randolph Street, is still in the early stages with occupants calling for interested people to come get stuck in everyday between 5-7pm with meetings following at 8pm. Despite the owners showing no intention to use the property, court papers arrived on Wednesday with a hearing set for next Thursday (25th). Undeterred the space will be holding a big work day this Saturday (20th) followed by a community meal on Sunday.

For updates keep an eye on <http://oxford.indymedia.org.uk> or, better yet, get yer arse down there.

CHILE: EDUCATION RIOTS

Riots hit the streets of Chile again this week as demands for education reforms continue to be ignored by the centre-right government. Protesters were asking for an increased spending on schooling and a ‘free and equal’ public education.

Chilean schools are funded on a local level, meaning rich areas also have the best education facilities, while the majority are forced to attend understaffed, poorly maintained and overcrowded schools. Many of the upper-class children are sent abroad or to private schools for their education, so there is little appetite for reform amongst the ruling elite. Another bone of contention has been that private universities enjoy charitable tax status despite making huge profits, which aren’t being spent on educational improvements as required by law.

Demonstrations around education have been prominent in Chile for the past few months, occasionally spilling over into mass civil disobedience with banks, government buildings and the police taking the brunt of the anger. Last Thursday (11th) over 900 arrests in an attempt to prevent a march taking place, on Tuesday (16th) over 100,000 people were forced to march through the side streets of Santiago as they were banned from using the main avenues. Later in the day protesters threw paint, bricks and street furniture at police, who returned fire with water-cannon and tear gas. By the time the dust settled there were 273 arrests and 23 injured cops.

The government has refused to hold a referendum on education reforms as they feel it would be “dangerous”. Ever increasing privatisation of education and spending cuts in the UK should fuel similar protests on this side of the Atlantic.

EDL: YOU CAN NEVER TELFORD

It was another piss-poor effort for the EDL this week as around 250 of them showed up in Telford on Saturday to face off with a similar sized crowd of anti-fascists. Unfortunately for the League of decidedly ordinary gentlemen they squandered the opportunity last week to pose as the defenders of civilisation from unbridled looting (see SchNEWS 783) by having a riot of their own. Cameron knew he was on safe ground with Middle England when he condemned them as ‘sick’. So the EDL are back to having their marches banned, no more town centre parades, just hanging around, pissed up, in a police kettle on the outskirts of town. A heavy police presence kept the two demos apart but forty arrests were made after a post-match punch-up in Morrison’s car park. Arrests were made on both sides.

Of course this amounted to a dress rehearsal for this year’s big one – the EDL’s attempt to march through Tower Hamlets on September 3rd. Watch this space.

* brightonantifascists.wordpress.com, <http://malatesta32.wordpress.com>

...and finally...

The winner (and only entrant) of this weeks intra-office riot haiku competition:

*Nike trainers on
Is it time to kick it off?
NO says Cameron.*

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SchNEWS advises all readers, it’s time to unfriend Facebook. Honest.

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