

TAX MONEY? DON'T WEST BANK ON IT

Report from the ground on the effects of Israel starving the PA of cash.

The full force of Israel's withholding of Palestinian Authority (PA) tax money is being felt by Palestinians in the West Bank this week. SchNEWS spoke to Motasem Aliwawi, a Palestinian film-maker from Hebron, who told us how this was affecting the society, as well as his views on what the future holds.

He said, "The most important impact has been on health and education." West Bank schools have closed, as have hospitals and medical centres, and there's no medicine for ill people anyway. The Ministry of Education have asked teachers to pack a week's worth of lessons into three days, but kids still can't take exams they were due to sit.

State employees received no salary for last month, and will receive half their salary on Tuesday next week, after the Arab League nations have just agreed (at the time of writing) to give the PA \$100 million. As most people spend half their monthly income on paying off bank loans and mortgages, this means the 50 per cent they do get hold of they have to give straight back to the banks. People can't get to work because they don't have the money to get there.

PA tax money currently is collected by Israel, who then give it back to the PA, thanks to a particularly pernicious agreement within the Paris Protocol. This covers all taxes as well as arbitrary charges, such as 30 euros each for anyone crossing the bor-

ders of occupied Palestine.

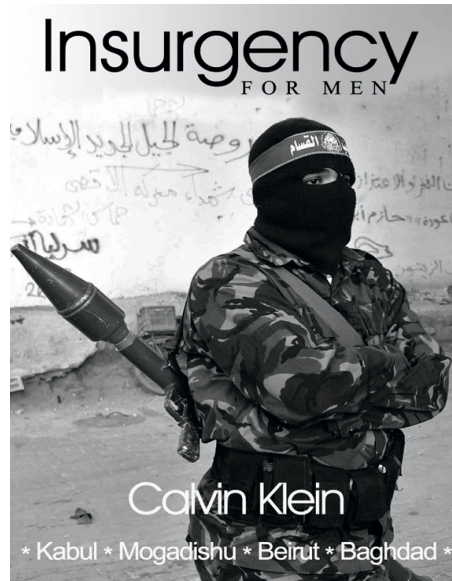
Israel are currently withholding all the PA's funds to punish Palestinians for being granted observer status at the UN. They started two months ago, but just two days ago the authority ran out of cash, causing chaos for all state-run services and employees who make up a large majority of the Palestinian workforce. To add insult to injury, the PA has also lost much of its international support since the vote went in its favour, and not just from usual suspects like the US but, more inexplicably, from other Arab countries too.

The great idea of Head of Ministry Salam Fayd has been to tell people to boycott Israeli goods, but it was quickly pointed out to him that no-ones got money for anything, Israeli or Palestinian, as things stand. Is the point of this to cripple the Palestinian economy? Our correspondent says not: "We don't have an economy anyway... They are just pressuring the PA and the people so they don't go further, for example for full statehood at the UN. It's the same with checkpoints - making us wait five or six hours there. It's about controlling the people."

This isn't the first time that Israel has kept Palestinian money with dire consequences. In 2006, the PA was starved of money for a whole year after Hamas won the election. Vital services such as schools were only kept afloat by wealthier Palestinians offering to pay small salaries to teachers.

No-one knows how long the current stand-off is

gonna last, but the situation's looking bad. For most people living in the West Bank, the most pressing concerns are about day to day existence: finding food for themselves and their family, getting money to get by. In 2006, people found ways to pull together. In the run up to Eid, when parents want to buy children new clothes and couldn't afford too, shopkeepers would give them what they needed on the basis of an I.O.U.



...and finally...

Stuck for gifts this Christmas? So last year you got your copy of "SchNEWS: in Graphic Detail", but now you just cant think of a fitting gift for your loved ones over the festive period. Well, worry not, hot of the shelves of all the best perfumeries in Gaza comes the latest scent "M-75". It's not named after the latest girl band or a washed up Spice Girl, M75 gets its name from the rocket that the Palestinian armed resistance in Gaza fired at Tel Aviv during the last offensive. Whilst the vast majority of missiles fire during the 8 day conflict were Israeli weapons shot into the Strip (killing over 170 against 6 Israelis killed) Palestinians both inside and outside of the besieged territory rejoiced that one of their primitive rockets was actually able to strike at the Israeli capital. The explosive fragrance (made of citrus fruits and herbal essences and sold in 2 oz black-and-green bottles for \$13 apiece) is the brainchild of one Rajaey Odwan, director of Gaza's Continental Style perfume company, who said that he thought he'd "give customers a chance to smell victory and turn it into a perfume". "Sales have gone through the roof", he said. Indeed they have, just like the real thing. (Available in all good underground smugglers' tunnels).

We think that those Gazan entrepreneurs may have nicked the idea from a graphic of ours (see above) a few years back; but don't worry we wont sue- all our stuff's Copyleft .

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, if you're reading this then the Mayan apocalypse wasn't the fire and brimstone affair we'd been led to believe- so it's baktun basics for all of us. Honest!

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER APOCALYPTIC POST...



Friday 21st December 2012

Free/Donation

Issue 833

BATTLE OF BEXHILL

Anti-road protestors in Bexhill were ambushed by an early start to the tree-felling on the controversial Bexhill-Hastings link road this week, but they rallied and a week of constant direct action has put a spanner in the works.

Work wasn't expected to begin until early January but as soon as East Sussex County Council acquired the land (by compulsory purchase) the chainsaw gangs were set to work.

On Thursday evening information was received that tree felling in Combe Valley was to begin on the route of the Bexhill-Hasting link road early Friday morning. As contractors with machinery moved into woodland near Adams Farm, south of Crowhurst early on Friday morning they were greeted by tree bound activists and locals who had been occupying the area since dawn. Contractors and security soon realized there would be no felling, with a early lunch called shortly after activists got in the way of brush cutters attempting to clear access to trees.

Saturday saw a large number of trees felled in the disused railway cutting in the suburbs of Bexhill before activists (reinforced by a landy full of stray hunt sabs) climbed over the bridge and forced contractors to stop cutting. The protesters refused to leave after warnings from High Court bailiffs and followed the contractors to their next target - a stand of trees to the east, which was already being occupied by a couple of enterprising locals who'd shinned up one tree with a ladder. Flummoxed, the chainsaw boys put their toys back in the van and called it a day.

With trees already falling, people once again gathered on Sunday in Bexhill and in Crowhurst at Adams Farm. Work was stopped in Bexhill with people once again entering the site. But large area of trees were able to be felled before contractors packed up and left for their compound. Contractors attempted to continue their reign of destruction, showing up at Adams Farm once again. This time activists were in waiting with one person quickly locking on under a pick-up truck with two pairs of hand cuffs, blocking the site's only access point and causing the other vehicles to reverse in fear of the same fate.

Sunday forty people turned up to a public meeting in the hamlet of Crow-

hurst about the plan for the bypass. One potential ray of light was the announcement of a new legal challenge by BLINKRR (Bexhill Link Road Resistance) - who claim that the new road is on the actual site of the Battle of Hastings and are aiming to get the whole area re-classified as a World Heritage Site.

On Monday 17th, resistance continued along the route today with four arrests being made as bailiffs dragged local protesters out of the trees.

Action to stop the felling of trees along the route of the proposed Bexhill-Hastings by-pass has continued; with locals and activists on the ground preventing work.

Tuesday saw locals occupy the disused railway track in Bexhill where treecutting was taking place, work was halted and security guards moved in pushing and shoving, with reports of the private security firm Sher Group dragging people from trees, the same firm who have profited from evictions of squats in Brighton and the parliament square peace camp.

On Wednesday trees in the valley continued to be felled with activists blocking felling where possible.

Rising early on Thursday two defenders were able to take position in a tree overhanging the proposed route of the road, well supplied they set up cover and ropes, greeting suprised chainsaw gangs as they arrived in the area ready for work. Support from locals and activists from across the country is rising, however more people are needed everyday if the road, first of the governments resorected road building program is to be halted. If you can, travel down for a day or more, accommodation, support and gear is available. Contact Combe Haven Defenders for updates from the ground

www.combehavendefenders.wordpress.com/ or tel:07926423033

SchNEWS has kindly included several maps of the Combe Haven site to help direct action explorers navigate their way around the area. Make sure to take one with you when you get down there, but most importantly-

Get yourselves down there! (see pages 2 & 3)

Homeless?

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"I thought the state was only there to help rich people, now I know different"

*To get a faster service give Mike Weatherley a call



COP ARREST OF THE WEEK

It's all over the mainstream news, but "Plebgate" is the story that just keeps on giving. For months now the papers have been full of stories of (now ex) Conservative Chief Whip Andrew Mitchell getting himself busted for being a elite prole-hating piece of Tory scum- having been accused by the police of calling two officers "fucking plebs" after they refused to let him through the gate they were guarding (we think the scandal should have been called "Gategate" but that's a another matter).

But now a copper has been arrested accused in turn of having fabricated a witness statement to ensure that the police version of events is believed. That's right, you heard it here: the cops stand accused of being corrupt lying scum.

So at some point the powers that be will have to come down on one side or the other- either officially branding Tories as arrogant snobs or the police as two faced liars. This puts SchNEWS in mind of various other "scum on scum" battles we've witnessed in the past; the ones that leave us cheering on the sidelines and hoping that both sides lose. Tommy Robinson and Nick' Griffin's intra-fascist bitchfights stand to mind, as does the Greek "rioting cops vs riot cops" hoo-ha we reported on a while back.

But for us, not even "Alien vs Predator" can beat the infamous 2004 ding-dong that pitted Countryside Alliance inbreds against British riot police thugs outside Parliament Square- for our money still the best moment of enemy-on-enemy action.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

NO BAIL OUT OF JAIL CARD FOR MORGAN THE ORCA

The future seems hopeless for Morgan the Orca. Yesterday (13th) at an Amsterdam Court house judges delivered their final decision in the case of Morgan. Morgan is a young female orca, who was captured off the coast of the Netherlands in June 2010, taken to a dolphinarium near Amsterdam and was eventually shipped to an amusement park in Tenerife, Spain. The trial began on November the 1st (See SchNEWS 831) and was the third in the series of court proceedings Morgan has been involved in since her glorious rescue in 2010.

The Orca Coalition had filed a lawsuit to return Morgan back to the wild. The judges concluded the decision made by a Dutch Minister to allow the young female orca to be transported to Tenerife was lawful and all appropriate legal steps were taken in the process. The license to transfer Morgan was granted given the stipulation the orca would only be used for educational purposes. This is clearly not the case as the orca is being trained to perform tricks which goes against the terms agreed with the license. The court also stated there is not sufficient reason to think the orca's health is in danger; however evidence shows Morgan is attacked by other orca in the park on top of the injuries is inflicts on herself. The lawsuit was backed by animal rights campaigners, international scientists, orca experts and a host of celebrities from all corners of the world. Since her rescue the orca was incorporated into captivity, without any release plans. Orcas after all are hard to come by. The small print under her rescue plan would have read something like "As payment for my rescue I will spend a life in servitude, doing tricks at amusement parks in tacky resorts. I understand I will never swim in the ocean again or have any interaction with other sea creatures apart from ones in captivity. I will not incite other orca. I will not object to being part of the captive orca breeding programme... and so on".

The Orca Coalition tried to give Morgan a fighting chance against tough odds, marine biologist Barbara van Genne said during an interview "We are extremely disappointed that the legislation gives so little protection to wild animals as Morgan. Decisions about

the rehabilitation of these animals should not be left to commercial stakeholders, because of the undermining of the interests of the animal, and there is no question of protection. Luckily we were able to expose this problem thanks to the support of many private supporters, and we have generated global attention for the protection of wild animals and the fate of orcas in captivity". This ruling sanctions that animal rescue can have an unfortunate end result for wildlife as it then becomes captive and a profitable commodity for its captors. The Orca Coalition wants to lobby for a distinct separation between organisations that rescue wild animals and organisations that have an interest in keeping animals in captivity.

The Orca Coalition is made up of seven organisations which took legal action for the release of Morgan and build public pressure to ensure the Dutch authorities enforced adequate protection for cetaceans. "The fact that the license for the care of these animals is no longer in the name of the amusement park Dolphinarium, but in the name of SOS Dolphin, is a good first step." says van Genne. The coalition group included the Dutch wildlife conservation organizations Dolphin Motion, EDEV - Een Dier Een Vriend, Bite Back, PINK!, Sea First Foundation, The Black Fish and Four Paws. Throughout all the court proceedings the Orca Coalition had been working alongside the Free Morgan Foundation a group of orca scientists and cetacean specialists such as marine biologist Ingrid Visser, Cetacean Field Veterinarian with Sea Shepherd Conservation Society Verne Dove and many others. Their expertise played a vital role in pushing this unprecedented case forward however disappointing the results have turned out to be.

Morgan will continue to be imprisoned at Loco, Parque in Tenerife. Animal rights groups in Spain have expressed their intent to continue raise awareness and to fight for the future of the unlucky Orca. The orca coalition plans to get together soon to discuss what their next course of action will be regarding the young female orca. For updates and latest news please follow on @OrkaCoalition on Twitter or visit the website at <http://www.orcacoalition.org>

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INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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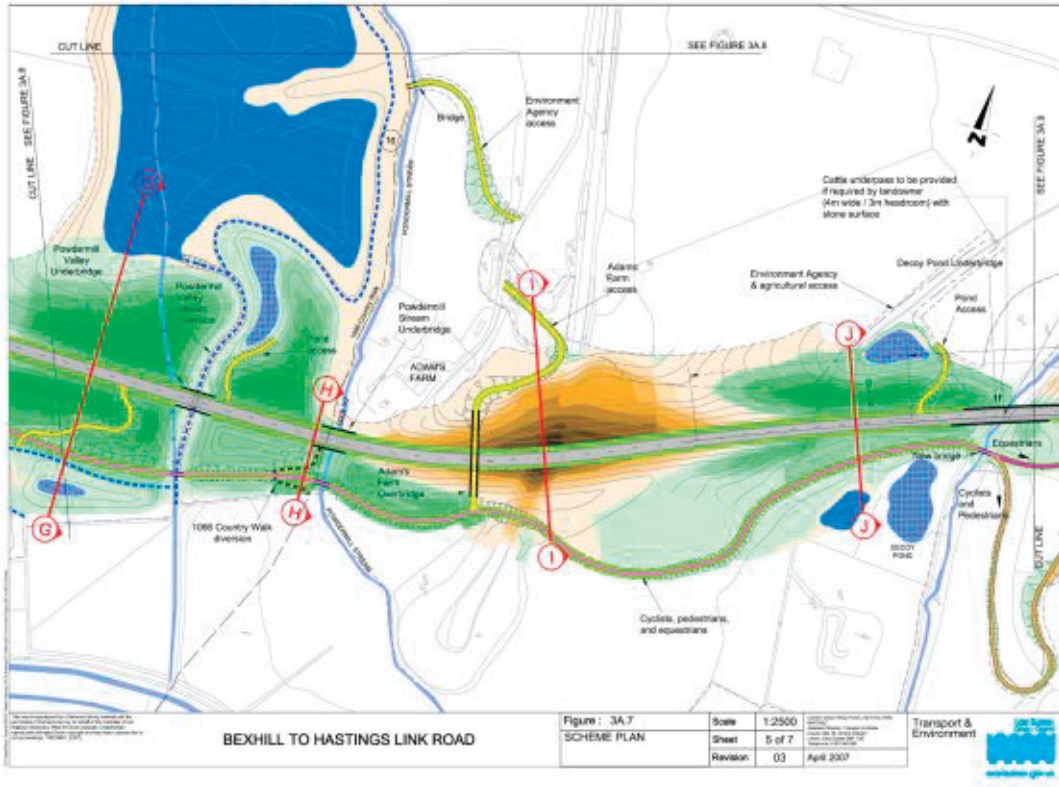
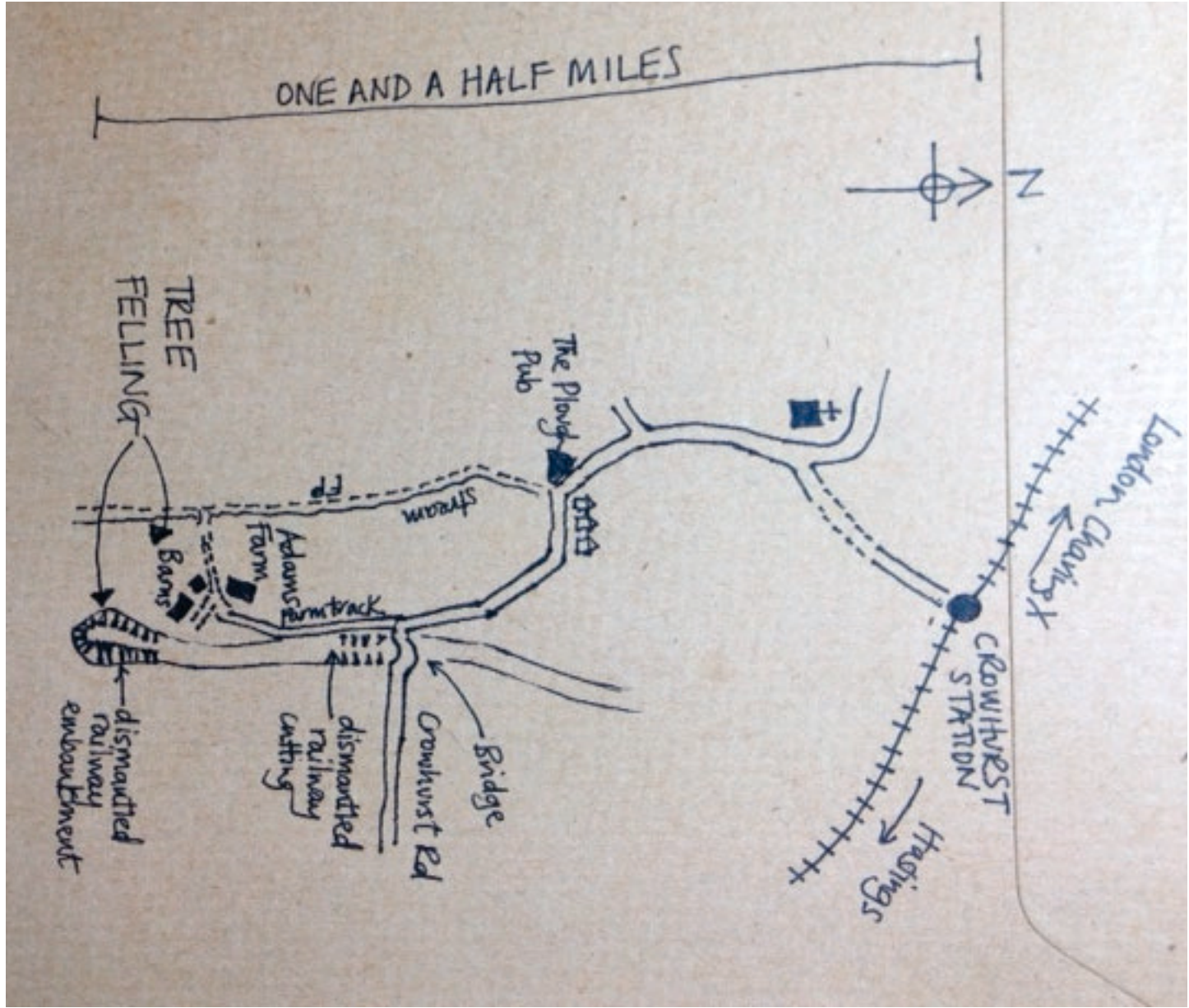
INFORMATION FOR ACTION
MAPS OF COMBEHAVEN SITE / PROPOSED BEXHILL-HASTINGS LINK ROAD
(also available at <http://combehavendefenders.wordpress.com>)



Transport & Environment

Figure: 3A.4	Scale	1:2500	Revision	03	Date	April 2007
SCHEME PLAN	Sheet	2 of 7				

BEXHILL TO HASTINGS LINK ROAD



Transport & Environment

Figure: 3A.7	Scale	1:2500	Revision	03	Date	April 2007
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BEXHILL TO HASTINGS LINK ROAD