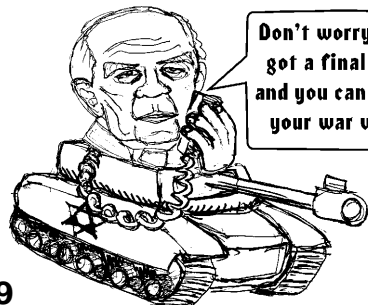




HOLY SHIT! IT'S YER FAITHFUL

SchNEWS

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STATE OF TERROR

"History is repeating itself... This is fascism, how they [the Israeli soldiers] are dealing with people, detaining them in big schools and interrogating each one, writing numbers on them... people are terrified. The Israeli soldiers are shooting everything. Life here has totally stopped; it's dead. This is terrorism against civilians. It is organised terrorism by the state... this is an organised war against a whole people who have no weapons to resist tanks, and helicopters and F16s." - Ashraf, a Palestinian imprisoned in his home in Ramallah.

It's Monday in Beit Jala, a small town near Bethlehem and 150 people from the International Solidarity Movement and dozens of Palestinians are marching peacefully in the deserted streets. They are attempting to visit families besieged in their homes, before Israeli tanks block their path. Two of the marchers start to move towards the tanks with their hands up in order to negotiate, but soldiers open fire at both the crowd and the reporters that are there. Eight people are injured, one seriously.

Other activists are holed up with Yasser Arafat in his headquarters. Mario Lill from Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST) is one of those who are acting as a human shield and has become a sort of war correspondent broadcasting live to Brazil. Others such as anti-globalisation French farmer Jose Bove were arrested in the compound by Israeli troops.

Wednesday and two thousand people including internationals, Israeli and Arab civilians gather at a checkpoint near Ramallah trying to get humanitarian aid delivered to the besieged town. Soldiers fire tear gas and baton charge people. One of the protestors was Yehudith Harel "Two Israeli faces surfaced today. One is the decent and humane face of the Israeli Anti-war movement - an alliance of Israeli citizens - Jews and Arabs, adamant to struggle together for Justice for the two peoples. The second is the ugly and brutal face of the Occupation mentality and practices threatening to crush us."

CASUALTIES

People from around the world have been volunteering in the occupied territories of the West Bank for over a year, taking non-violent direct action like clearing roadblocks and acting as willing human shields to protect the Palestinian people. Invited by Palestinian activists, these international supporters live and work in solidarity with them - a similar call out to the one made by the

Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico. People from abroad can often get away with a lot more when protesting, partly because they have the eyes of the international press on them - until Monday that was, when live ammunition was fired at the international observers for the first time.

As for the Palestinians, even the doctors, nurses and paramedics are being used by the Israeli army as human shields or forced to strip and sit on their knees at gunpoint in the streets. Israeli forces have stopped ambulances delivering aid or picking up the wounded and are detaining the Palestinian Red Crescent society and aid workers. *120 Palestinian paramedics have been killed in the last 18 months.*

As Israeli tanks roll in to Palestinian settlements, they destroy telephone lines and cut electricity and water supplies. All men between the ages of 16 and 50 are rounded up. Some homes are destroyed, others have their windows blown out and walls dynamited as soldiers move from home to home. Soldiers occupy other homes forcing the residents to live together in a single room, with little or no access to telephone lines, news coverage or even food and water.

An entire civilian population is being openly terrorised after over 50 years of occupation by the Israeli State.

Michael Ben-Yair, former Israel attorney general said, "The Intifada is the Palestinian people's war of national liberation. We enthusiastically chose to become a colonist society, ignoring international treaties, expropriating lands, transferring settlers from Israel to the occupied territories, engaging in theft and finding justification for all these activities... we established an apartheid regime."

Lev Grinberg (Director of the Humphrey Institute for Social Research at Ben Gurion University) sums up the situation: "Suicide bombs killing innocent citizens must be unequivocally condemned; they are immoral acts, and their perpetrators should be sent to jail. But they cannot be compared to State

While Palestinians are being shot dead by Israeli troops and Americans wage 'War on Terrorism' BAE Systems, the world biggest arms trading company, are laughing all the way to the bank as their share prices have increased by 13.8%. Why not congratulate them at their AGM on May 3rd. To get involved, contact: Campaign Against Arms Trade 0207 2810297 www.caat.org.uk

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For selling saucy postcards

A couple from 'Hookers for Weed' were nicked on Monday for selling postcards at Camden in London. The Medical Marijuana Barbie cards featured a marijuana leaf where the traditional fig leaf would cover. This offended the Police's sensitive natures and the couple were banged up for six hours and charged with 'Obstructing Free Passage along a Highway' (sic). Mind you, last time the group protested, a woman stripped off on top of a bus stop at Oxford Circus. www.hookersforweed.com

* Bournemouth has become the latest city to open a Dutch-style cannabis café. Police are yet to act, go down fast and leave real slowly. www.whspliff.net/Bournemouth.html

* There will be cannabis festivals all around the world in over 200 cities on 4th May www.schmoo.co.uk/cannabis/

terrorism carried out by the Israeli Government. The former are individual acts of despair of a people that sees no future, vastly ignored by an unfair and distorted international public opinion. The latter are cold and "rational" decisions of a State and a military apparatus of occupation, well equipped, financed and backed by the only superpower in the world."

* **Boycott Israeli goods protests** happening around the country this Saturday (6th) including: Waitrose, Western Road, Brighton 11am; Sainsbury's, Queens St. Cardiff 10am; Marks and Spencers Oxford St, Swansea Midday. To order boycott leaflets and stickers and find out events happening in your area email: big@palestinecampaign.org or call the Palestine Solidarity Campaign 020 7700 6192

* **Saturday 13th April National rally and demonstration for Palestine.** Assemble 2pm, Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. Tel 020 7272 2888.

* To find out about more about the International Solidarity Movement www.freepalestinecampaign.org/

Bypass the corporate media
www.jerusalem.indymedia.org,
www.zmag.org
www.palestinechronicle.com,
www.alternet.org.

* **Nearly 400 Israeli Defence Forces reservists** are refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Read their reasons why www.yesh-gvul.org

OUTBACK FIGHTBACK

“Before we knew it we were all inside the perimeter fence... face to face with the detainees, only a few metres of steel railing and razor wire separating us. This was an incredibly emotional moment, people were crying, reaching through to touch hands, I will never forget those peoples’ faces. ... Then quite suddenly some of the men managed to break some of the fencing, it seemed to actually be quite weak. One by one they clambered out, stage diving down onto the excited mob of protesters. Still the police seemed to be paralysed, maybe they couldn’t believe what was happening. The escapees melted quickly into the throng of people, swapping t-shirts and hats and running with us in big groups back to camp.” – *Miranda*.

Last weekend an asylum seekers’ detention centre in the Australian desert was broken into by 1000 protesters, 50 ‘detainees’ managed to escape – and a few are still unaccounted for. This was part of the Woomera 2002 Festival Of Freedom – a tour of actions held around the desert town of Woomera 500kms north of Adelaide which was to call in on the detention centre, then move onto nearby uranium mines. Working with the local Kokatha and Arabunna peoples, this ‘festival’ was to combine the issues of uranium, refugees and indigenous land rights: Rebecca Bear Wingfield of the Kokatha people said that aboriginal people did not want the refugees to be imprisoned on their land, and also pointed out the connections: ‘the uranium mined ends up as bombs and depleted uranium weapons is used in wars which create more refugees’.

In the days leading up to the protest a camp had built up near the detention centre and on Friday protesters took cutting tools to the centre and passed them to the detainees to help free themselves. That night the campers were huddled in tents with asylum seekers and heard horror stories about both Woomera and the places the people had come from. The next day protesters tried to move detainees out, some succeeded, but others were caught and are up on charges of aiding and abetting escapees – and bizarrely found themselves sharing cells with asylum seekers. Detainees claim that tear gas is used in the centre, and after the breakout some who had contact with the protestors were tortured and beaten.

Since 1994 the Australian asylum policy has been to bang up all asylum seekers – kindly housing them mainly in remote desert centres such as Woomera where people can wait for years for a verdict, and many are now prepared to risk possible deportation and death rather than suffer the conditions. Already this year Woomera has seen riots, hunger strikes, suicide attempts and people sewing their lips together in protest about their treatment.

www.noborders.org. www.woomera2002.com
www.melbourne.indymedia.org

MONEY TO BURN

Yarls Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire which was the scene of the fire in February (see SchNEWS 348) closed this week. Unfortunately this wasn’t due to a change of asylum policy by the government, but a result of the insurers whacking up their premiums. Just to guarantee that they won’t be out of pocket over February’s incident though the insurers have put in a claim for £97million against Bedfordshire Police Authority. www.ncadc.org.uk

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SchNEWS in brief

Organisers of this years Mayday Festivities are getting more than their fair share of police attention. Police have successfully manage to persuade web hosts not to host their site www.ourmayday.org.uk the site is currently up and running but Met Police are threatening to raid the current host. The **May Day Festival of Alternatives runs from 16th April-6th May**** Mayday Meeting Sunday April 7th to discuss actions, ideas, affinity. The London Action Resource Centre (LARC), Fieldgate and Parfett Street, E1, 2pm, Tel 07786 716 335 festivalofalternatives@yahoo.com ** **No Sweat Comedy Cabaret** fundraiser for Indonesian workers featuring Rob Newman and Atilla the Stokebroker, next Friday (10th), 7pm The Bread and Roses, 68A Clapham Manor Street SW4 Tel 07904 431 959 www.nosweat.org.uk £10/5 ** The 20th is an **alternative health/healing day at the Radical Dairy**, 12-6pm 47 Kynaston Road, Stoke Newington, London, N16 ** ‘**The history of foxhunting and land ownership in Britain**’, which digs all the dirt on the Countryside Alliance is a new pamphlet available for £2.50 inc postage RPM Publications, BCM Box 3328, London WC1N 3XX 07967 886257 www.red-star-research.org.uk ** The Council meeting to decide the future of the Brighton Station site has been postponed. There’s still a **Dragon and Drums demo with samba band** this weekend against Sainsbury’s meet 1:30pm Saturday x-Harvest Forestry building New England Road ** Plans to widen the A303 road near **Stonehenge** are currently in the pipeline. An alliance is now forming to try and make sure it’s not built www.savestonehenge.org.uk ** Next Monday is **Roma Nation Day** it will be marked in this country with a celebration march starting at noon in Victoria Tower Gardens, next to the the houses of Parliament. Bring refreshments for the picnic in the park and flowers for the ceremony ustiben.2@ntlworld.com ** **End Factory Farming - before it ends us** a rally and march against factory farming. Meet Noon at the level, Brighton. Sat 13th 01273 777688** **Women, Peace and Security** a meeting with speakers from International Alert and Widows for Peace at University of London Union building, Malet Street, 2-4.30pm, 14th April Tel:020 8467 5367 www.peacewomen.org ** **Close Down Harmondsworth Detention Centre** 11.30am - 1.30pm 15th April email: closedownharmondsworth@hotmail.com** The **End Of The Road Direct action gathering** to build resistance to the new roads program and the corporate dominance it fuels. Is happening from 19-20th April at the Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone street, Nottingham, NG7 6HX. Info 07813 ** **Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty** week of action 20-28th April 0845 4580630** There’s a **National Day of action against Profiteering Employment Agencies** on the 24th April – the 4 anniversary of Simon Jones death. The **Simon Jones Memorial Campaign** are asking supporters across the country to mark the anniversary of Simon’s death by demonstrating, in whatever way they see fit, at an employment agency in their area that profits from casualisation. Phone (01273) 685913 simonjonesaprilaction@hotmail.com, www.simonjones.org.uk ** **To keep up-to-date with what’s going on check out the party and protest section on our website**

Inside SchNEWS

A day of Action for Mark Barnsley is planned for Saturday April 13th Meet at 11am at Meadowhall bus station near Sheffield. (M1 Junc:34) to picket the Home Office Minister David Blunkett at his surgery. Mark is currently serving 12 years in prison after being beaten up by 15 drunk students. Now in his eighth year of his sentence h’es not been eligible for early release because he continues to maintain his innocence. www.freemarkbarnsley.com

TANKS A LOT

The Kurdish New Year (Newroz) was celebrated with fires and dances in traditional Kurdish dress towns and cities in Turkey. Millions of people demanded the use of the Kurdish language, the abolition of the death penalty, the recognition of their cultural identity, and universal democratic rights and support was voiced for the national leadership of Abdullah Ocalan and for his immediate release.

Turkey responded in its usual manner. In Istanbul and Mersin, they outlawed Newroz, police armed with tanks, water-cannons and plastic bullets attacked and killed two people, with more than one thousand arrested and hundreds hurt. Threats and intimidation, house arrests, confiscation of the Kurdish colours and arrests for talking in the Kurdish dialect as well as obstruction of speakers were ordered in many of the towns. In one instance police threw a hand grenade into an apartment. Despite all this, there were a greater number of revellers than previous years.

FIGHTING DIRTY

36 people were nicked on the first day of the Peat Alert Protests at Hatfield Moor which started on Monday 25th March, with more during the next four days. The threat of the four day blockade to the Easter DIY sales of peat was so much that US-based Scotts contacted groups to see if there was anything they could do to stop it. Er, how about stop digging. Scotts is due to phase out work at Hatfield and neighbouring Thorne Moors over the next two years, but continuing extraction at Hatfield could mean it will be too late to save the moor. Once again a big police presence stepped in to protect corporate interests with helicopter, vans with cops in riot gear and this time a section 14, making it an arrestable offence to get on the road that needed to be occupied to stop the lorries. After some scrambling over the moors, the road was secured for a few hours stopping all traffic to and from the works, this continued with some peat drainage filling done on the moors for extra fun. Peat Pixies also helped delay Scott’s operations after sneaking in the end of last week and slashing and ruining thousands of prepared peat bags. www.peatalert.org.uk

...and finally...

Disciples of Cupid in Calcutta, India have won a victory for passion. The Lovers Organisation for Voluntary Exhibition (LOVE) have been protesting for more space in the city for courting couples to give each other mutual admiration, without being disturbed by police and passers-by. After hugging and kissing at the Mayors office for the right to snogging space, the local mayor Subrata Mukherjee has now agreed to let lovers enjoy each other’s company in ‘free love zones’ along the river Ganges The Mayor warned however that these zones are for lovers not love makers. LOVE says their campaign will not end here, it wants a public library and a consultancy to be set up for lovers, and legal recognition of love letters written during courtship.

Disclaimer

Mum’s the word. Honest.