



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ALL IN THE SAME BOAT...

SchNEWS

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THE REAL GULF OF MEXICO

FLOWER POWER

RESISTANCE TO POLICE REPRESSION GROWS IN MEXICO

In Texcoco, (just east of Mexico city) a flower market was the flashpoint for a bloody showdown between the state and a local community hell-bent on self-rule and autonomy. All this took place against the backdrop of the Mexican elections and the Zapatista inspired "Alternative Campaign" which is touring the country attempting to build an anti-capitalist coalition.

Police had ordered the closure of the flower market, where the local Mayor plans to build a commercial centre, including a Wal-Mart, on the site. The EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) has pledged to support the residents, and all concerned are gearing up for a bitter struggle for justice. Market traders had gone for help to the local revolutionaries, the FPDT (People's Front in Defence of Land) based in the nearby town of Atenco.

In 2002, a courageous direct action campaign by Atenco residents managed to stop a massive \$2.3 billion airport being built (see SchNEWS 367) that would have displaced them from their land. They represent a powerful inspiration of solidarity and resistance to Mexico's poor, struggling under the neo-liberal lash of the North Americas Free Trade Agreement. This time though the authorities were clearly determined to win with overwhelming brute force. With elections coming up in Mexico, Vicente Fox's

government want to show that they are in the driving seat.

Before dawn on Wednesday May 3rd, 60 flower vendors in Texcoco were setting up their stalls when police attacked them. Residents of Atenco and the FPDT responded by blocking highways. This kicked off a long day of violent clashes. Some police were beaten by crowds. 15 others were taken hostage, beaten up, and later released to the Red Cross. This drove the police to seek large-scale revenge. The afternoon saw 3000 police enter the fray armed with batons, tear gas and sub-machine guns. The residents built barricades, burnt tyres and armed themselves with machetes (their traditional weapon and work-tool) and Molotov cocktails.

The next day police launched an invasion of Atenco and held it under siege all day while they terrorized residents. One activist told SchNEWS that the police "beat the living shit out of everyone in sight". Over the two days, hundreds of people were attacked and hospitalized. One 14-year-old boy was killed by the impact of a tear-gas canister hitting him. More than 400 were detained, of which the authorities only recognized 109. 18 people have 'disappeared', and five foreigners have been deported. Seven women were raped in police vans, and sixteen more were sexually assaulted, beaten and robbed.

CRAP DINNER OF THE WEEK

The SchNEWS benefit lunch is finally happening (after it had to be cancelled last time when the oven packed up). At the Cowley Club, 12 London Rd, Brighton, Sunday May 21st, from 1pm. Get yer vegan nosh-up and a chance to have a beef with the SchNEWS writers.

Many journalists were attacked by police, and also threatened by protesters angered by the skewed coverage on the news. When a German photographer was beaten up and arrested by police, her neighbour asked what she had done, to which a policeman replied, "She did whatever I say she did."

The police arrested and beat Igancio de Valle, leader of the FPDT on Wednesday in a deliberate act of provocation. He is still being held. It is perhaps no co-incidence that the organisation was providing security for Subcomandante Marcos, (or Delegate Zero as he is currently known) of the EZLN (the Zapatista liberation army), during his visit to the area. He said that the Zapatistas are on red alert, and that "Alternative Campaign" activities are on hold while they devote themselves to emergency support for the people of Atenco. He urged civil society to take action to force the government to free the political prisoners.

* **There have been many solidarity demos** across Mexico, the USA, Italy and Catalonia, and at the Mexican Embassy in London. Email glasgowpatistas@yahoo.co.uk to get involved. For more background see www.narconews.com

SQUARE-MONGERING

How many people can say they've had a law written especially for them? Brian Haw can. It's the kind of personal touch that makes Neo Labour Authoritarianism feel so much cosier than the cold hands of all those other anonymous regimes. It's the bar where everybody knows your name (and where you live).

Brian has been camped out in Parliament Square for the last 5 years in protest (see SchNEWS 507). He started protesting against the sanctions on Iraq, then stayed as the US/UK went to against first Afghanistan, then Iraq.

This constant reminder of their complicity in war crimes didn't go down well with the political classes and a paragraph of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (see SchNEWS 493) was specifically aimed at Brian. Basically it says that anyone who wants to demonstrate in a 1km zone around the Mother of Parliaments must have permission from the police when the demo starts.

But last July, Brian's crafty lawyers

claimed that because he had been on his marathon demo constantly for the past 5 years, he was exempt from the act because his protest began before it came into force. Red faces all round - but the Home Office appealed against that ruling, probably had a few quiet words in some m'learned ears and on May 8th, Brian lost his right to demonstrate outside Whitehall without permission. The government described his behaviour as "absurd", and said he could be a security risk. Brian retorted, "This is such a farce. Security? I have been here five years keeping the security of Parliament. We are not the security risk, we are not the risk to the world - Bush and Blair are."

The clampdown on any right to protest in neo Britain continues...

* **Gathering in solidarity with Brian Haw this Sunday (14 May), 12 noon, Parliament Square.** Brian masks will be provided! Be prepared for possible arrests - for details regarding the legal situation and what do to if arrested see www.parliament-square.org.uk/staying.htm

BOAT-OX FACE-OFF

The Castle Mill boatyard in Jericho near Oxford, which has been squatted since last summer, is in danger of eviction. This is the last public boatyard on the Oxford Canal used by residential boat owners, and operates as a boat maintenance facility. British Waterways, who own the site, are in the process of flogging it off for (guess what) luxury housing and want to sell it without sitting tenants. With an eviction due any time, nine of the narrow boats - people's houses - have been craned on to the wharf for urgent and needed hull repairs, and are therefore unable to move. Bailiffs and police came this Wednesday, but couldn't move the beached boats.

* **NEXT EVICTION ALERT:** Bailiffs are due again at the Castle Mill boatyard on Monday May 15th at 10am - get down there to lend support.

* For directions and updates call 01865 559481 or visit www.portmeadow.org

* For updates and phone tree text your number to 07788 915545.

THE STRAIN IN SPAIN

Over in the Galician city of Vigo, strikers clashed with police once again as metal workers demonstrated against poor health and safety practices, and the over-use of temporary contracts, especially in the heavy industries which dominate this part of Spain. Ever sensitive to worker safety, heavy-handed police helped provoke a riot on May 8th and responded with rubber bullets, injuring 27 and arresting 13. The 10,000 workers involved in the protest called for more strikes as they shut down the city with burning barricades, and their trade unions rejected calls for compromise. Businesses responded by locking their customers in shops, preventing them from running away and helping them buy more stuff.

Meanwhile, further south in Madrid, President Zapatero is none too pleased with the energy nationalisation plans of Bolivian President Evo Morales (see SchNEWS 542). Spanish energy company, Repsol YPF accounted for 26% of Bolivian gas production through its subsidiary Andina prior to last week's nationalisation of the industry. "The news appears worrying for us" commented a Repsol boss, "but we don't have enough information to draw any conclusions". Perhaps he's been too busy worrying about the state of his wallet to notice the signs above the petrol stations which now state that they are now "the property of Bolivians!"

WOZA BIG IDEA?

Over 100 activists from the WOZA group have been released by Mugabe's police after 5 days of unlawful detention. They had been arrested for holding a peaceful march in the city of Bulawayo, demanding an end to crippling price increases in education. Police were unable to produce anyone with complaints against the group (except themselves, of course) and they were duly released. Amongst the 105 imprisoned were a heavily pregnant woman and a disabled old man. Hundreds of supporters marched through Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, demanding their release and distributing newspapers listing their demands.

WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise) was set up to fight the massive increase in the cost of basic education imposed on Zimbabwe by the corrupt regime - increases of up to 1000% in some areas. The state also arrested 73 schoolkids for taking part in the demo and have regularly targeted kids for intimidation in attempts to break the spirit of the movement. The children were released earlier in the week.

* Email wozazimbabwe@yahoo.com or phone them directly - contact Annie Sibanda on 0026 391 898 110/2.

SchNEWS in brief

Brighton's premier pirate station **Radio 4A** is live this weekend (12-14) 101.4fm www.radio4a.org.uk ** Demo to stop **Sealife Centre's** application for seal and otter poals in Brighton. Meet outside May 13th at 12pm ** There will be a **Blockade of Aldermaston Weapons Base**, by Trident Ploughshares, Mon 15th. Call 0845 4588366 www.blockthebuilders.org.uk/action ** **No Widening M1:** Problems and Solutions in the Roads - public meeting with speakers including Becca Lush (Road Block) and Tony Bosworth (Friends of the Earth). May 18th, 7.15pm, Central United Reform Church, 63 Norfolk Street, Sheffield. Free. Call 07759 851073 www.nowideningm1.org.uk ** **Trident Ploughshares Devonport Disarmament Camp 2006** - May 18-21st. Peace pirate activities at the Devonport naval base. Bring suitable eye patches, any spare galleons and all your affinity group tricks. Call 0845 458 8363. www.tridentploughshares.org/article984 ** Yesterday (Weds) **50 students at Sussex University** occupied a 'business centre' building on campus in protest against increased involvement of private enterprise in universities.

SPIRITED AWAY

One name on Charles Clarke's list of 1000 UK citizens who 'should be deported' just because they were once convicted of something and also happened to be immigrants (the so-called 'bungle' Clarke lost his job over) is Chilean born **Ernesto Leal** (Home Office ref. L306526). Having escaped Pinochet's Chile over 30 years ago, Ernesto served a sentence for a charge of grievous bodily harm in a racially motivated pub brawl - his only ever offence - but was then arrested on May 1st and may be deported to Jamaica - a country he has no connection with, all in the name of a crack-down (See SchNEWS 542).

This week Ernesto disappeared from HMP Belmarsh for 24 hours and turned up at Forest Bank HMP in Manchester, even though he is supposed to be in Croydon today (12th) for a bail hearing - which he may not be able to get to, delaying his fight to get out on bail. His family are saying that while he was in Belmarsh he was in lockdown for 23 hours a day with very limited phone access.

His deportation appeal date has been set for June 2nd - see www.friendsofernesto.org.uk for updates and details on how to support his case.

BASE IN YER FACE

We all know, of course, that in the new world disorder America always gets what it wants, like a spoilt only-child with a submachine gun. In this case it's a spanky new military base in South Korea they're after (See SchNEWS 538), and by heck they're gonna get it. Yeehaw! The plan is to triple in size the existing Camp Humphreys base in the Pyeongtaek area, 70km south of Seoul. This has involved getting the compliant Korean government to take over some 8,000 square km of land and force anyone in the way off their land. People like those who had lived in the village of Daechuri for generations. The villagers have offered spirited resistance in recent months, attempting through official channels and direct action to avoid the destruction of their farming community. They joined together with anti-US civic activists to publicise their plight and successfully managed to delay things and cause a few headaches in the corridors of power. The government finally responded as governments tend to, and sent in the heavies.

After a series of increasingly brutal attacks, last week hundreds of police armed with batons arrived to smash up the locals. Over 3000 troops were dispatched to build a 29km fence to claim the land once and for all. Police and protestors fought fiercely in an appropriate venue, the Daechuri Elementary School and over 120 people were injured. In the end 400 protestors were detained, everyone was booted off the land and the area was secured for the good ol' boys. The school was scheduled for immediate demolition. Despite the difficulties of disagreeing with a heavy-handed heavily-armed government regime, protestors are showing that the human spirit cannot be so easily crushed and have vowed to fight on, intending to plant a new spring rice crop in spite of the odds stacked against them.

* For more see www.saveptfarmers.org

RAY OF SUNSHINE

Against gentrification... and for the commons! Today (12th) will see the opening of a squatted community centre in Brighton Upper Gardner St, North Laines. The centre aims to be open during the street theatre festival over the weekend. It will be an autonomous, drug-and-alcohol-free, centre for workshops, parties, music and happenings. The building is the old Ray Tindle centre - which was closed three years ago so half of it could be turned into yuppie flats, while the rest remained empty. The centre has an obligatory wishlist of tat - including art supplies, curtains, people with positive energy and their own tea bags. So come along and make it happen.

INSIDE SchNEWS

Daniel McGowan is a US environmental and social justice activist, unjustly arrested and charged in federal court on multiple counts of arson, property destruction, and conspiracy, relating to two incidents that occurred in Oregon in 2001. He is facing a minimum of life in prison if convicted. Currently he is out on bail, on house arrest, and electronically monitored and only allowed outside of his apartment for two hours a week to see his pre-trial officer.

* For details to support Daniel or send donations to his campaign see www.supportdaniel.org

* There is a benefit gig for Daniel McGowan and punk fanzine Last Hours at The Square social centre, 17th May, 21 Russell Square, London, from 7pm, £5. With punk bands, vegan food and other delights

COMEDY OF TERRORS

Bush tried to be funny at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner a week last Saturday. Or rather he hired a double to do it for him. But the night was stolen by comedian Stephen Colbert's merciless stand-up. By the end of it, Dubya wasn't smiling anymore, and left in silence. The audience were uncomfortable, and the best gags didn't get any laughs, as Colbert went way beyond the harmless routine they expected. The mainstream press didn't pick this up, and portrayed the night as a success. Have a look for yourself.

* The following link is for a movie clip of the last 15 minutes - <http://movies.crooksandliars.com/WH-Dinner-Colbert.wmv>

* A transcript can be seen at www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2006/4/30/1441/59811

...and finally...

Having benefited from an ill-informed electorate's sheer frustration with the empty promises of mainstream politics, the BNP are sure to be celebrating the few extra council seats gained this week. It's not been such a comfortable ride for one of the Barking and Dagenham councillors though. Whilst the BNP's erection manifesto may have suggested referendums for parents to decide if they want to "prohibit the teaching of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle choice" in schools, newly-elected Richard 'Dick Flick' Barnbrook has been busily denying having been involved in a gay porn film.

The film, called 'HMS Discovery', includes long scenes of men undressing and fondling each other, full-frontal nudity and a naked man apparently "performing a sex act on another". But Barnbrook, credited with writing and directing the red, white and blue movie, claims, "It was an art film - end of story. It was not a bloody porn film." He indignantly added, "The only nudity in it is a couple of guys running in a river..." Doth he protest too much we wonder? He certainly didn't mention the scenes of flagellation in which a group of semi-naked men apparently whip a fourth semi-naked man senseless to the ground - but that's probably not such a problem in the BNP...

Whilst it certainly wasn't gay porn then, its creator was still quick to seemingly distance himself from it, sounding more like a right-whinger than a right-winger, saying, "This was done when I was a student - it was part of my extra education, part of my studies and that was it... anything to do with my past politics or my past work, I am not interested in commenting on... This was sometime back in the mid-80s..." (That old excuse... I was young, a bit drunk, innocently experimenting... it was the eighties! We've all used it.)

Well there's obviously been a cock up somewhere along the line...

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - if you're in a Mexican stand-off then say it with flowers... Honest!

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