

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER SPRING LOADED...

# Weekly SchNEWS

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## A BIT OF HOWS YER INTIFADA?

### AS SCHNEWS EXAMINES THE NEW WAVE OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

A mass non-violent (or at least unarmed) resistance movement is on the move in Palestine. Inspired by the events in neighbouring Arab countries but drawing on decades of resistance - the Third Intifada may be here. The waves of the Arab movement are beginning to lap at the Israeli shore.

Al-Nakba (literally 'the catastrophe') day is traditionally the annual focus for Palestinian resistance. On March 15th, a day after Israel's independence day, Al-Nakba day marks the moment in 1948 when the creation of the Jewish state meant exile for the 700,000 Palestinians within its new borders. Displaced by terror, they are still recognised by the U.N as the world's longest term refugees. Some are in the West Bank, many more are spread in the Palestinian diaspora in neighbouring Arab countries.

This year's Al-Nakba day was infused with the spirit of the Arab Spring. This time round masses of Palestinians marched, unarmed, towards the Israeli border, demanding the right of return. In three separate episodes during the day - on the Syrian border with the Golan Heights, on the Lebanese border and on the border with the Gaza Strip, thousands crossed or attempted to cross the border —those marching were met with live gun fire. At least a dozen Palestinians died. Many more, most of them young men, were injured.

A volunteer with the Jordan Valley solidarity movement told SchNEWS: "There was a general buzz around this year's Nakba day - posters went up across the West Bank, thousands joined Facebook groups calling for mass demos - there were large demonstrations in Jordan two days before".

Within the West Bank the largest demonstration was at the Qu'alandia checkpoint, which chokes off movement between Ramallah and East Jerusalem. According to one eyewitness - a volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement - "Thousands turned up in the morning; there was a constant barrage of teargas and rubber-coated bullets. Three or four ambulances were constantly shuttling back and forth - there was no way we were going to force our way through but our intention was plain, people stayed for thirteen hours. The shebab (youth) lit tyres and hurled fireworks - we're expecting more checkpoint demos tomorrow."

Meanwhile the border fences were breached in the Golan heights, a long disputed territory between Israel and Syria. Despite several protesters being shot dead, hundreds poured through the broken fence and into nearby village Majdal Shams. Similar scenes occurred in Lebanon. In part these scenes played into

the hands of Syria's leadership, who are gunning down protesters (over 850 in the last two months) in an effort to resist the same tide that swept Mubarak out of power. Certainly it seems likely that Assad's henchmen were involved in facilitating the protests in an effort to deflect attention from the own crimes.

While these mobilisations outside the borders owe a great deal to the new spirit seizing the Arab world, the West Bank and Gazan unarmed resistance movement was already well established. The advent of the Popular Committees - grassroots social movements in the villages in the West bank - has been significant. Our ISM contact told us, "This could be the start of something bigger. Year on year the village demos have been getting bigger. More villages are creating Popular Committees every year." In villages like Bi'lin (see SchNEWS 673) every Friday mass demonstrations of villagers and internationals brave teargas and rubber bullets to attack the separation barriers that cross their land and divide them from their livelihoods. In some cases they've achieved remarkable successes, but at a high price. Many have been killed, others maimed with organisers liable to be seized and incarcerated under the Israeli system of administrative detention.

In the Jordan Valley north of Jerusalem, a population massively reduced from its 1967 high of 300,000 is struggling to survive. Here, according to one volunteer with the Jordan Valley Solidarity campaign, "We are building to resist the Occupation" and they mean this literally. Jordan Valley communities are surrounded by networks of settlements and settler-only roads. The army and civil authorities maintain tight control over what can be built. One act of resistance is the building of schools in Area C - an area inside the West Bank under full Israeli security control. Side by side, Internationals and Palestinians build these basic institutions of community and effectively dare the army to demolish them

In fact, you could say that the Palestinians were the pioneers of non-violent resistance in the Arab World - the first intifada (1987-93) originally consisted largely of mass protests and strikes, only later giving way to the armed struggle of the PLO. The second intifada (2000-05) was conducted largely by armed groups - resistance was conducted paramilitary style in an era of suicide bombing and rocket fire from Gaza. Eventually the Palestinian Authority were co-opted into being Israel's watchmen (see SchNEWS 627) (papers revealed to Al-Jazeera showed just how thoroughly the PA sold out the people they were supposed to represent in order to cling onto any vestige of power) and the armed struggle ceased



to be effective. Perhaps now the spirit of village resistance is spreading into the towns; the upsurge at Qu'alandia checkpoint was the biggest in recent years.

Only two years ago it looked as if Palestine was going to end up in the model of the rest of the Arab World - rule by a handful of corrupt strongmen on behalf of more powerful outside agencies. But now the people are on the move. Israel may find itself as a theocratic, racially divided state surrounded by democratic(ish) Arab regimes. The risings in Tunisia and Egypt have proved to be a real game changer, leaving the West and Israel struggling to play catch-up. Obama has suddenly found a few billion down the back of the sofa to shower on the Arabs, in an effort to make them forget about the dictatorships foisted on them in the past with enthusiastic US backing. But it isn't Uncle Sam who's making history in the Middle East any more - it's the Arab people

\*Blog of a Palestinian village in resistance [www.iraqburin.wordpress.com/](http://www.iraqburin.wordpress.com/)  
International Solidarity Movement [palsolidarity.org](http://palsolidarity.org)  
Jordan Valley Solidarity [www.jordanvalleysolidarity.org](http://www.jordanvalleysolidarity.org)  
Brighton Tubas [www.brightonpalestine.org](http://www.brightonpalestine.org)

## ANGEL GRINDERS

Last week (9th-15th) saw a Sol Fed nationwide week of action against the misleadingly-named Office Angels. Prompted by the non-payment for two days work of a Wimbledon temp called Dan, the temping agency dealt with pickets outside its London offices and a successful phone and email-jamming exercise with requests that the poor man be paid. Although Dan's still not got his money, the red and black banners seem to have got the shoddy-work specialists running. One publicly announced picket in Wimbledon found the offices conveniently closed for "staff training". Small demos also took place in Leeds, Northampton and Brighton.

\* See [www.solfed.org.uk/](http://www.solfed.org.uk/)

## BELL END?

Anti-fascists paint bombed a Brighton pub on Monday (19th) night. The Railway Bell was the meeting point for this year's March for England (see SchNEWS 769) and has been used by the EDL on previous occasions. Though a splattering of paint is unlikely to cause the fascist hordes to flee, it is the third such incident since the march and this minor economic warfare can deter venues from hosting thugs in future.

\* See [www.brightonantifascists.wordpress.com/](http://www.brightonantifascists.wordpress.com/)

**INFORMATION FOR ACTION**

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## MADRID FER IT

Thousands of youths have occupied Madrid's main plaza in protest against austerity hit Spain's economic and political situation.

Fuelled by youth unemployment of over 40%, the protests began on Sunday (15th) with a march of a few hundred students. Police arrested 19 for public order offences and damage to public property. Undeterred, hundreds more returned on Monday with some staying on to set up camp. However, at 5am the following morning police violently evicted the campers.

The eviction acted as a catalyst for further protests and by Wednesday around 10,000 had gathered at the Puerta del Sol. Sensing strong popular support for change, the city council promptly declared the demonstration illegal. Despite this police had clearly grown tired of fanning the flames of revolt and decided to skulk around the edges of the square all night, rather than attempt another eviction.

Most of the credit for the uprising has gone to group called '¡Democracia Real YA!' (Real Democracy Now!) whose slogan is "We are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers". They are avowedly pacifist and unaligned to any political party. Organised mainly by ordinary people communicating through Facebook and Twitter, what started out as a relatively small march has turned into a mass occupation of the capital's square - sound familiar?

As of Thursday (19th) evening, there are still thousands occupying the centre of Madrid, with similar demonstrations across Spain. Protesters plan to stay on until, at least, the regional elections on Sunday (22nd), but with the result unlikely to pacify the masses, they could be in for the long haul. Politicians, on the other hand, are pushing for the protesters to be removed before the polls open. With political campaigning illegal the day before elections, things could come to a head on Saturday. \*For the latest news from the Spanish front search twitter for #spanishrevolution or #nonosvamos.

## IT MAKES NO CENSUS

Have you been "the one that forgets"? Or possibly "the one that doesn't want to fill in a census form that has Lockheed Martin's blood-stained finger prints smeared all over it"? Either way you're not alone in facing down the hordes of Census Non-Compliance Officers currently combing the land for unreturned forms; at last count a whacking 10% of the 26million households sent forms are yet to return them.

Campaigns against Lockheed's involvement in the Census have been running since the news broke of the government's 150 million smackers deal with the death merchants. Around the time of the census there were a number protests, pickets and e-mail campaigns, but the main focus has been the issue of what to do with the form itself. Protesters split into two camps, the devil-may-care boycott and be damned folk on the one side and the wilier mess-up-yer-form and hit the bastards in the pocket while dodging a fine crew on the other.

At the moment, Lockheed's Lackeys are in the last phase of collection, with officers who have the power to interview under caution doing the rounds. If you haven't sent it in yet and are getting twitchy, the best advice seems to be not to answer the door to the collectors, no matter how much they huff and puff. The only prosecutions are those where there is hard evidence of refusal - hard to rustle up by shouting through a letter box. If you're still feeling edgy, consider this: In 2001, only 38 people out of 6,100 no-returns - a mere 0.6% - were prosecuted and no one was fined more than £500 plus court costs.

\*See [www.countmeout.me.uk](http://www.countmeout.me.uk)

## MEXICO: POETIC JUSTICE

On May 8th, after four and a half years and at least 40,000 dead, Mexico witnessed its largest march yet against the government's 'war on drug-trafficking'. Between 80,000 and 200,000 marched on Mexico City's central plaza, demanding "Peace with Justice and Dignity".

Demonstrations also took place in cities throughout the country, most notably in San Cristobal, Chiapas, where the Zapatista Army turned out in (unarmed) force. Up to 25,000 gathered to show their support for Mexico's civil society with a silent march. Subcomandante Marcos issued a rare communiqué - one of the very few times that the Zapatista leadership has addressed the violence of the drug war directly.

The march was inspired by the poet Javier Sicilia, whose son was killed by narcos in the city of Cuernavaca. However, the movement is about much more than individual killings - the entire strategy of 'President' Calderon has caused nothing but suffering to Mexico (and neighbouring countries). Killings, kidnappings and extortion have become so common that in some states every family has a story to tell. Recently (and related to the San Fernando Massacres, see SchNEWS 767) six immigration officials in Tamaulipas were arrested on charges of assisting the kidnapping of migrants. Allegedly they received around £350 for each victim turned over to the Zetas Cartel. It is these same victims whose bodies are still being identified from the mass graves.

\*For more information see: [www.upsidedownworld.org](http://www.upsidedownworld.org) [www.laotradivisiondelnorte.wordpress.com/](http://www.laotradivisiondelnorte.wordpress.com/) (Spanish) and [www.global-ganjareport.com/content/mexico-rebels-and-immigrants-join-march-against-drug-war](http://www.global-ganjareport.com/content/mexico-rebels-and-immigrants-join-march-against-drug-war)

## NO STOKES WITHOUT FIRE

Two weeks on from the anti-corporate and anti-pig uprisings (see SchNEWS 769,770) in Stokes Croft, Bristol and while Tesco is still boarded up, the Telepathic Heights squat lies empty and four protesters remain banged up.

Brothers Joe and David Foster, a man called Ben and another unidentified defendant have been held on remand since the riot. "Little Joe" was arrested during the first police attack on the Telepathic Heights squat accused of possessing a petrol bomb. Having first pleaded guilty to possession but denying intent to use, during his appearance via video link in Bristol Magistrates Court on May 11th he seemed unsure about whether to agree to the plea after his duty solicitor neglected to visit him in jail before the hearing. He's next in the dock on 1st of June.

David and the other two - who are only 17 - were nicked whilst occupying the roof of Telepathic Heights a week later during the second attempt at eviction.

According to our source on the ground, there has been a predictably increased police presence in the area since the kick-offs, although it seems to be waning again. The cops were also out in force following the Bristol Anarchist Bookfair. SchNEWS has also heard reports that a couple of people got nicked in the days after the riot just walking out of the site adjacent to the Tesco.

\*See the SchNEWS website for addresses to send prisoner support. If you're worried about repercussions, or are one of the people who were arrested in connection with the riots, there's a helpline offering legal advice and financial support: [bristolarresteesupport@riseup.net](mailto:bristolarresteesupport@riseup.net)

**PARTY & PROTEST**  
For events listings updated weekly see  
[www.schnews.org.uk/pap](http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap)

## MOUND ZERO

Brighton community garden The Mound was evicted by force in in the early hours of Wednesday morning (May 18th). Around twenty heavies and eight coppers turned up, taking the opportunity to swoop on the site whilst most of the gardeners were out of town visiting another community garden at Heathrow.

By the time the The Mound collective rushed back to Brighton, the site was heavily guarded and the bulldozers were already in full swing. There was one arrest around as a protester tried to scale the walls to resist the eviction. He was cuffed and dragged down the street by cops just as more supporters started to arrive.

The guerilla gardeners stood together, with signs and placards, and watched as 'The Mound' signage was tossed aside. The bailiffs then spent twenty paid minutes literally polishing the Hargreaves 'To Let' sign. Well, if its gonna last another ten years, folks, it really does need to sparkle... \* **Meanwhile Lewes Climate Camp** (see SchNEWS 769) also faces eviction having lost their legal battle to remain in the disused grounds of a former special needs school - St Anne's - handily located under the windows of the county council offices. Can it be mere coincidence that both county and district councils became Tory controlled the week before?

The camp's original plan to stay a week was torn up after garnering healthy local support and finding out the council had designs on selling the site for prime development. A new occupation called STAND (St Anne's Diggers) was started. Three weeks in, the well organised and family-friendly site is still going strong and taking to the trees ahead of next Wednesday's expected eviction attempt. There will be an open meeting on Sunday afternoon for people supporting their attempts to stay and eventually hand over the precious open space to Lewes residents. See [www.climatecamp.org.uk](http://www.climatecamp.org.uk)

...and finally...



Can there be any worse nightmare than being hunted down by the capitalist incarnation of cartoon characters from your childhood? (Well, yes, but) Imagine being pounced on by Postman Pat or gnawed on by Noddy. How about being issued with threatening legal letters by the Mr Men?

Yes, it seems the previously little-known Mr Litigious has SchNEWS in his sights. This week we received a letter from the owners of the Mr Men brand, Chorion Ltd demanding we withdraw an old graphic for breach of the brand's intellectual property rights. The graphic in question? A rather slipshod couple of imaginary misters mocking the BNP for, wait for it, receiving a 'cease and desist' letter for their portrayal of "Mr Jihad" on their website.

Having rather 'painted' ourselves into a corner with last week's 'and finally', Little Miss Copyleft felt she had no alternative than to stand up for fair satirical use and say 'Bring it on, Mr Strong'...

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all lawyers, your toy town charged would only stick in nonsense land. Honest.

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