

GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH TAKE

The Red Pill

FREE

FREE

GAZA

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EYEWITNESS: INSIDE GAZA

~EWA JASIEWICZ~



Ewa Jasiewicz is a journalist and activist, and is currently the co-ordinator for the Free Gaza movement and one of the only international journalists on the ground in Gaza.

When I got there, the gates of Beit Hanoun hospital were shut, with teenage men hanging off them. The mass of people striving to get inside was a sign that there had been an attack. Inside the gates, the hospital was full. Parents, wives, cousins, emotionally frayed and overwhelmed, were leaning over injured loved ones.

The Israeli Apache helicopter had attacked at 3:15pm. Witnesses said that two missiles had been fired into the street in Hay al Amel, east Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel. With rumour of an imminent invasion this empty scrubland is rapidly becoming a no-man's land which people cross quickly, fearing attack by Israeli jets. But the narrow, busy streets of the Boura area rarely escape the intensifying airstrikes.

Eyewitnesses said children had been playing and waiting in the streets there for their parents to finish praying at the nearby mosque. "We could see it so clearly, it was so close, we looked up and everyone

ran. Those that couldn't were soon flat on the ground," said Khalil Abu Naseer, who was lucky to have escaped the incoming missile.

"Look at this, take it," insisted men in the street, handing me pieces of the missile the size of a fist, all with jagged edges.

"All the windows were blown out, our doors were blown in, there was glass everywhere," explained a neighbour. It was these lumps of missile, rock and flying glass that smashed into the legs, arms, stomachs, heads and backs of 16 people, two of them children, who had been brought to Beit Hanoun Hospital on Thursday afternoon.

Fadi Chabat, 24, was working in his shop, a small tin shack that was a community hub selling sweets, cigarettes and chewing gum. When the missile exploded, he suffered multiple injuries. He died on Friday morning in Kamal Adwahn Hospital in Jabaliya. As women attended the grieving room at Fadi Chabat's home yesterday to pay their respects, Israeli F16 fighter jets tore through the skies overhead and blasted four more bombs into the empty areas on the border. Two elderly women in traditional embroidered red and black dresses carrying small black

"GAZA" ON PAGE SEVEN

WHAT CAN AMERICANS LEARN FROM THE GREEK ANARCHISTS?

No doubt about it, Greek Anarchists are organized and ready to spring into action at a moments notice. On December 6th, a group of youths were ordered to disperse and one 15 year old challenged the police, who responded by shooting him point blank with a service revolver, killing him instantly.

The response was instant, the cops fled (only to be arrested) and ten days of rioting ensued. Think about Amadou Diallo being shot 41 times by the police, unarmed, in New York City, or Jose De Menezes, being shot seven times in the head (by mistake!) in London's tubes. How did we react to these and numerous grievances and violence against our people? Pardon the expression, but we didn't really do shit.

Of course, the cold-blooded murder of Alexandro Grigoriopolis was merely the match that lit the powder keg of Greece's social and economic problems. One waitress in Athens said, "I have two degrees and am lucky to have my waitressing job. Me and many other people are stuck. We're tired of having no opportunities." Sound familiar?

Truth is, Americans like to think of themselves as brash and bold, ready to rush out as minutemen, but we're not really that way. Real wages have gone down steadily since the 1970s and now even low-paying service jobs are hard to find. The PATRIOT Act, the phone spying, the big government bailout, we all take in stride. Americans are not very difficult people to control.

The Greeks, on the other hand, responded with thousands of people in the streets of Athens, and Thessalomki, Greece's second largest city. Greece has very strict laws offering asylum in their schools, so their schools are now a combination refuge, and armory for making petrol bombs for their riots.

As is so often the case, we were on the wrong side of the Greek military Junta of 1967-1974. The wealthy people controlled the armed forces and one day, they simply ordered them against the general populace, with guns, tanks, everything they had. It was a quick battle. In the first year, over 2,500 citizens were tortured and countless intellectuals were exiled.

There was always some resistance, but a major turning point came in 1973 when the warship, HNS VELOS, refused to sail back to Greece after NATO exercises; instead, the captain docked in Rome. This event re-energized the masses and within a year, civilian rule was re-established.

When you think about it, seven years is not too long a time to banish Fascism, especially when it was sponsored largely by the C.I.A. With all the problems we have accumulated over decades, we could probably learn from the Greeks. Wonder how many years of Bush they would have tolerated...

Socialist leader, George Panadreu calls for early elections. He says, "This government cannot deal with these crises. It cannot protect its people or their rights; and it cannot identify with the anxiety felt by the younger generation."

For his part, Prime Minister, Costas Karmanilis has ignored numerous requests and demands that he step down.

ABOUT MY DAILY LIFE IN GAZA STRIP, RAFAH

Fida Qishta lives in the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Fida is a freelance journalist, filmmaker and blogger, and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) coordinator for the Gaza Strip.

December 31

For the last year and a half the Israeli government has intensified the economic blockade of Gaza by closing all the border crossings that allow aid and essential supplies to reach Palestinians in Gaza. This forced Palestinians to dig tunnels to Egypt to survive. Israel continued talking about a military operation in the Gaza Strip, until the madness of war became inevitable for the both sides. And since it began, hundreds of Gazans have been killed.

I don't know how other people around the globe think. Did you think to be honest with yourself once to understand the truth? A handmade Palestinian rocket jeopardizes Israeli security, but the Israeli's scary F16 rockets, missiles, and the tanks don't jeopardize Palestinians' security!

Israel's military operation makes Palestinian blood fall like rain. There is no solution in sight. The Israeli government and their army commit inhuman acts against civilians. For the last five days Israeli missiles have killed 394 Palestinians and injured more than 1800. Do you know my dear reader how many Israelis were killed by Palestinians resistance rockets? Four were killed and 12 injured. I wrote these numbers to say this is not equal, and it's unfair for the world to keep silent.

On December 28th, we woke up at 7am after an Israeli F16 attack. Our house was shaking. We all tried to imagine what had happened, but we wanted to at least know where the attack was. It was really scary. We tried to open the main door to our flat, but it was stuck shut after the attack.

Two friends and I climbed out the window to leave the house. It was a shock when I found our neighbor's pharmacy was the target. It was just 60 meters from our house. They targeted a pharmacy. I still don't believe it and can't imagine it. I filmed and asked some people who were really close to the pharmacy about what happened and their thoughts.

64 year-old Saed said, "At almost 6:30 am three missiles were fired by Israeli fighter jets. They hit the pharmacy in our neighborhood and the surrounding shops. They're just civilian buildings. And as you can see, the street is damaged. All of the buildings are damaged. The Palestinian people elected Hamas in a democratic election, and all the world witnessed the election. And we are punished because of Palestinian democracy. If it were Israeli democracy the world would welcome it. I'm 64 years old and I never saw a sweet day in all my life. Since I was born in 1945 we've been in a conflict with the Israelis."

Om Mohammed said: "They say that they don't attack civilians, but they attack children. Why do they do that? They care so much about Palestinian rockets hitting them. Don't they realize how much their air strikes hurt us?"

"We fold our arms and they attack us. Then they say to the world that Arabs attack them. Do you see? Did we hit them? Israel is a liar. Israel is a liar. They do anything and they don't listen to the international community. This is medicine for the children. There's no medicine. No drinks, no water, no gas. We are suffering from hunger. They attack us. What does Israel want? Can it be worse than this? I don't think so. Would they accept this for themselves?"

"Look at the children. What are they guilty of? They were sleeping at 7:00 am. All the night they didn't sleep. This child was traumatized during the attack. Do they have rockets to attack with?"

"They [Israeli forces] attack everywhere. They became crazy. The Gaza Strip is just going to die...it's going to die. We were sleeping. We were just asleep. Suddenly we heard a bomb. We woke up and we didn't know where to go. We couldn't see through the dust. The dust filled the house. We didn't know where to go. We called to each other. We thought our house had been hit, not the street. What can I say? You saw it with your own eyes. What is our guilt? What are we going to say? Are we terrorists? I don't carry a gun, neither does my girl."

"ISM" ON PAGE SIX



EVERY MONDAY • 7:00PM

Solidarity Not Charity meets at Confluence Books to discuss ways to alleviate problems experienced by the disenfranchised in our community.

For more info call: 245-3720

EVERY SATURDAY • 12:00PM

The Red Pill meets at Confluence Books. GET INVOLVED!

For more info: 245-4442
600 White Ave. #302 Grand Junction, CO

EVERY SATURDAY • 4:00PM

Solidarity Not Charity meets at Whitman Park to serve an evening meal to the homeless community.

All are welcome!
For more info: 257-9520

OF BAILOUTS AND BANKERS...



Over the past two months the world has watched in amazement as the the United States economy, once the flagship of free-market capitalism and deregulation and the enforcer of neoliberal policies the world over, turned from one of the strongest economies ever known, to one only surviving off of the handouts from the government totaling in the trillions of dollars.

There are many reasons given for the economy failing; it depends on how you ask the question and whom you ask. The economist will tell you that the entire banking system took a gamble on sub-prime mortgages and risky securities and, like a house of cards, one failed and took the rest with them. Ask a stockbroker and he'll say that this is just a market correction so don't worry. Ask a family who has just been foreclosed on and evicted from their home and the answer will be that a greedy banker promised them a house at a fair price and instead they were given a loan with soaring interest payments and a house the price of which was so inflated by the same banker that they couldn't sell it for even half of what they paid three years ago. In a way, they are all correct. The only person who won't give you a good answer is the politician, who will tell you that he doesn't know how this happened, but he'll make sure it doesn't happen again. That's a lie: the politicians in power (the Democrats and the Republicans) passed legislation deregulating banks, allowing them to loan out assets that they didn't have, which has led to our collapse.

Ask what should be done about it, and no one will give you the same answer. Everyone has their own ideas about how to fix the mess we're in, and no one can agree on what to do. It is obvious that the general consensus among the power-brokers of Washington and the stock-brokers of Wall Street, is to throw trillions of dollars at the hole in the wall; maybe that will patch it. Even Henry Paulson, the current Treasury Secretary in charge of doling out these trillions of dollars will admit that he doesn't know if this will fix it; there are too many pieces of our economic system broken to know just which one is the problem piece. Imagine our economy is your car and Ol' Man Paulson is the only mechanic in town and he says he doesn't know how to fix your car, but for 4,860,000,000 bucks an hour (7 trillion dollars, the amount global government has given to Wall St and investors since October 3rd, divided by 1440 hours, or 60 days) he'll mess around with it; yeah, it's like that.

Well, in that situation I tend to just say fuck it and call up my friends down at the scrap yard. They most definitely do not know how to fix it, but they at least know how to get rid of the damn thing. Which takes me to another point; can you imagine how much money we could make if we scrap Wall Street? That place must be LOADED with copper, with all those ticker tape machines and electrical lines...

But lets redirect our focus back on the economy for a minute, specifically the giant bailout.

The bailout is, in essence, a taxpayer bailout of corporate America. Hundreds of billions of dollars are being pumped into

corporations that behaved irresponsibly in an attempt to keep the financial crisis from spreading to the entire economy. While at first this may seem like a sound decision for everyone involved, a deeper reading of the subject takes us to some heavy questions; Where was this money when families were being unjustly evicted after falling victim to predatory lending? Wouldn't that bailout the same loans that the government is now bailing out banks for while keeping hundreds of thousands of families in their homes? Will this bailout fundamentally change how business is done to prevent this from happening again in the future, or are we just rewarding corporations who take huge risks and lose big because they are deemed "too important" to our economy? If this economy is worth saving, why is it so hard for most of us to get by? Wouldn't bailing out the victimized homeowners, by renegotiating bad loans into ones that they can meet, be less costly as it doesn't require mass infusions of cash to Wall St.? How is the bailout going to be felt in the schools, the hospitals, and other human services where the money is being taken from? Is there going to be a bailout of the pension funds that have lost billions upon billions of dollars? Are the corporations we're bailing out being monitored? Why did the AIG executives take a \$440,000 trip to a luxury resort, only days after they were bought out by the government? Don't those CEOs and CFOs and Chairman of the Boards have the money to fix their own corporations? Shouldn't they help clean up their own messes?

The truth is, neither the bailout nor its backers can answer these questions, because to answer them would require a criticism of this economy not allowed in public: Capitalism works to keep the rich getting richer at the expense of everyone else. Corporations aren't being bailed out because they are too important to fail, but because they have long padded the pockets of politicians, and a bailout that would support people instead of corporations would put them out of business and they won't let that happen. We are their hostages, held by bonds of debt they put on our wallets. Corporations and politicians think it is our responsibility to save them, the ones who are already having a hard time putting food on the plate.

We are told by politicians and corporations alike that it is our responsibility to pay for and fix this system, and that without our taxpayer help the entire economy will crumble. That it is the responsibility of those of us on the bottom of the heap: we who have the hardest time getting by; we who are trying to put food on the table; we who have taken the kicks from this system the hardest; we who this system has never worked for. Our responsibility? OUR responsibility?!?!?! I ain't the one that broke it—I'm the one it tried to break. I vote that we let this sinking ship sail, and let it take the captain down with it.

I, in the meantime, will be sitting outside Wall St. with my wire strippers. My fortune awaits...

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Surrounded by wastelands
Nothing left but ruins
Shells of what used to be
Where society left its footprint
While the wars cracked the earth itself
& engulfed all the world in flames
Except for the animals
Who keep me company

POEMS BY JOSH MAUST

MEDICATION

I lost something
Don't know where
It was sure
Something I could rely on
I've looked for it
But to no avail
Bought a new one
But it didn't do anything for me
Let it come to me
It was nostalgia stained
Memories attached to it
Lost grip of it
Now those memories
Aren't so clear

Saturday, January 24th • 6PM

Red Pill 5 Year Anniversary Party

Music, Sales, Food, and Party in celebration of five years
of The Red Pill

600 White Ave. #302 Grand Junction, CO

Sunday, January 25th • 1:30PM

SNC Copwatch Know Your Rights Training.

Come find out what your rights
are when dealing with police.

600 White Ave. #302 Grand Junction, CO

Saturday, February 14th • 6PM

Queer 101 for straight folks and friends.

600 White Ave. #302 Grand Junction, CO

CAPITALISM OR COOPERATION: A SIMPLE CHOICE

The world is changing. Free market economics and Greed have led our society to the point where our entire economic system is crashing. Banks are failing, companies are closing, and stock markets are in free fall. And, as it is when things fall, it's people on the bottom who are getting it the worst. Families are being foreclosed upon after greedy bankers suckered us into sub-prime mortgages; hard-working people are showing up at shuttered factory doors; and retirements promised to us have disappeared. Even though the Grand Valley is sheltered from the storm for now, rest assured, we will soon see the forceful winds of depression blowing through our happy valley.

Today, we stand at a crossroads—we can choose the old ways of a failing economy, or we can choose a new world. A world that builds our community's strength while supporting local businesses. A way that meets our needs, but respects our environment. A model that can help guide us through the hard times soon coming to the valley.

Success through Cooperatives

Many of us are familiar with the idea of a cooperative, introduced to us by the cooperative movement of the 70's. Based on egalitarian principles and basic business principles, coops spread costs between a community of people to reduce the overall purchase price of goods for coop members. By choosing to eliminate profit as a goal of a co-op,

people can buy goods at a significantly lower price than that available at the store. By sharing labor, costs can be reduced even more. The basics work like this (we'll use a food coop as a model): you buy a share in the coop, paid in the form of a monthly fee, and put in an order for the food products you want (veggies, dairy, breads, meats, grains, etc) and pay the at-cost amount for the goods. On either a daily, weekly, or monthly schedule (it depends on how often you want it and how often the retailer can make it happen) the order arrives and you go in to pick it up. The more of a product bought, the cheaper it is. The monthly fee goes toward keeping a storefront open (stocked with extra foods so that if you run out during the week you can go down and still get your at-cost ingredients) and paying a small staff. Non-members can purchase at the store front, but have to pay market price for the product. Many coops adopt a model where either all members must also contribute labor to the coop or where members may contribute labor to the coop for a reduced membership rate or credit in food purchases; this keeps the coop storefront open while reducing or eliminating the need for paid staff.

Most coops also focus on purchasing local products as much as possible. After all, we all know that when we buy from local farmers, dairies, and ranchers we get a higher quality product AND help keep

"COOP" ON PAGE EIGHT

ROBINSON CRUSOE

—A CARTOON—

A scratchy 1920s film score escapes through a keyhole in one of society's dresser drawers before gently dusting the ears in the theater.

A row of trees lines the back of the stage, the remainder of which is empty.

A dripping and ragged man enters from the left with a bundle of muskets, walks to center stage, arranges the guns on the floor in a calculated manner, then exits the way he came.

This cycle of entrance, arrangement, departure and reentrance continues, every time the man bringing new objects with him to further his construction: a large trunk then a sack of grain then a ship's sail then the body of a black man then a dozen swords then three wooden planks then a length of rope and a jar of pickled eggs then a coffee table then a book case then sundry pots and pans then an assortment of tools.

The man becomes finicky, but continues his fortifications, peering over his shoulder from time to time as he shoves a chest overflowing with gold and jewels, leaping from the snap of a twig as he smuggles a can of gas, and almost fainting with terror as he creeps with a TV and a microwave.

Regaining his composure, the man finishes the assembly of his outpost with a recliner, a fish tank and a few feather pillows before lining it to the point of invisibility with the saplings from the back of the stage then disappearing into its confines.

A cacophony of electric tools rises with a cloud of dust from inside the hut.

As one the trees topple outward, replaced by a barbed wire mesh fence boxing in the man's hovel of salvage.

Cutlass and musket bedecked, the man exits his compound through a gate in the fence, snapping a padlock behind him.

The man begins to patrol his compound, stalking about it in a squeamish, jittery, feigned confidence.

A native in a grass skirt and feather headdress sneaks up on the man and follows him, keeping out of the man's vision by darting behind his back when he turns around and ducking when he glances over his shoulder, until the man, realizing he's being stalked, abruptly launches backward, knocking both himself and the native onto the ground in a squalor of feathers and spastic emissions.

The man pops up and aims the musket at the native, who innocently examines the gun, running his finger across the tip of its barrel,

momentarily confounding his captor with a complete lack of fear.

The man points the gun to the sky and fires it.

A bird drops from the sky, causing the native to instantly correlate the firearm with death.

Compassionless, the man points the musket at the native, motioning him with the barrel into the compound.

The man resumes his armed guardianship of the premises.

A pirate crew of three reels onto the stage from the left, each decorated with a rapier and pistol.

The man hides on the right side of his shelter, capturing with his ears every grunt and ragged breath produced by the wobbly intruders.

The man, springing forth with fierce yelps and acrobatic twirls of his scimitar, startles the rogues into dropping their weapons, then marches them without any resistance directly through the gates of the clubhouse gulag.

Satisfied beyond doubt with his antics, the man resumes his circumambulations, only to be interrupted, moments later, by the shrill battle charge of a trumpeting page-errant as he enters from the right with his expertly cultivated, baroque painted liege.

Unthreatened by the two latest impostors, the man strolls over to them, extending his hand in friendship, bowing his implements of violence.

With grandiose sweeps of the arm, the man initiates the pair in the secret of his enterprise, displaying for them his monument of progress and industry.

The page and his master, scintillated by the man's accomplishment, begin to gyrate against the posts of the fence with erogenous fervor, falling to their knees and begging to be let in.

The man is dumbfounded, so he ignores them.

The man is sickened, so he spits on them.

The man is inspired, so he invites them into the cage, clamps the lock shut behind them, and turns to face the audience, brushing his hands clean of the whole sordid affair as he does so. The whiz of electric tools erupts briefly and a funnel of smoke rises from the interior of the jail house.

As the man turns to investigate the pandemonium the fence protecting his land collapses, revealing his inferiors perched like marksmen upon his precarious mass of debris, all bullets and daggers trained on him. •

Thursday, February 19th • 6PM
PFLAG monthly potluck.

for more info call 242-8965

Every Thursday • 2:00PM
SNC Copwatch meets to coordinate citizen oversight of
the Grand Junction Police Department.

Confluence Books 600 White Ave. Suite #302

April 20th-26th • All WEEK
TV Turnoff Week.
Tune out, Turn off, and Join the world.

ALTERNATIVE PARENTING WORKSHOP SERIES

The new Alternative Parenting Workshop Series at Confluence Books offers parents and parents-to-be the opportunity to step outside the flow of mainstream child-rearing. Monthly workshops will offer information and skills that you can use to deepen your relationship with your child and reduce your family's impact on the environment.

January's workshop will focus on Baby Sign Language, presented by Julie Morales, a local American Sign Language interpreter and instructor. Learn the skills to teach your baby to sign by 6 months, or develop new ways to communicate with your older baby.

Join us Saturday, January 17 from 1-2:30pm at Confluence Books, 600 White Avenue #302.

February's workshop will present cloth diapering as an environmentally friendly, cost effective, and healthier option for diapering your baby or toddler. The workshop for March will focus on Home Birth as a safe alternative to hospital birth, and feature presentations by two local home birth midwives. Future workshops topics include Attachment Parenting & Natural Parenting, Babywearing, Breastfeeding, and much more. •



AGNOSTIC FRONT HITS GRAND JUNCTION WITH NYC HARDCORE PUNK

Agnostic Front has been at the forefront of the NYC hardcore scene since the 1980s. They've seen and done a lot in that time, some good, some bad, some violent, some sublime, but all along, they kept it together and kept playing.

Their music moves and inspires powerful emotions. In the late 1990s, this writer was depressed, despondent and suicidal. My C.D. player randomly shuffled into a hardcore punk explosion and the speakers offered up the rage of healing. The song was Agnostic Front's "Time Has Come" and it really penetrated my senses that morning, for whatever reason.

"The time has come now
Can face anything
Gonna show you
How I really am."

I still am prone to depression, but after moshing it up in my garage that day, I haven't felt suicidal. I made a decision that day to produce an Agnostic Front show ASAP. That fall, Agnostic Front was co-heading with Voodoo Glow Skulls on the Punk-O-Rama tour package. I set it up for the Montrose County Fairgrounds, threw up a second stage outside for local bands, plus a mini-skate park. Everything was in place to produce Punk-O-Rama at their smallest ever venue.

But Agnostic Front was going to be late. Why? "We hit an elk with our tour bus." Guitarist Vinnie Stigma recently recounted. "A big fucking elk; the largest elk ever taken in the state of Utah." Look it up. The largest elk ever taken by any means was taken by New York City hardcore band, Agnostic Front's tour bus.

The punk legends recently pulled through Grand Junction, and the Red Pill had a chance to catch up with them backstage before the show. Here's how it went with Vinnie Stigma and Roger Miret.

Red Pill: Welcome guys.

Vinnie Stigma: Hey.

Roger Miret: Hey.

R.P.: To start off, define New York City hardcore.

RM: First off, New York is a big place with its own identity. It's got a beating heart and energy you can't deny. We try to bring that into

the music—all the rage and hurt of the city.

VS: We're kind of a voice of the people.

RM: (laughing) plus our neighborhood was just plain hardcore!

RP: How is the New York scene now?

VS: It's doing all right. It fluctuates, but right now people are showing up for shows and forming bands.

RM: We're not the type of people that look upon the good old days. We're moving forward.

RP: Do you see signs of hardcore across the country?

RM: Sure, it's spread everywhere, if you look hard enough.

VS: Unity is important to us, so we're always seeking out new people wherever we go.

RP: Tell us about the new album.

VS: It's called "Warriors" and it's one of our best. Everything in all our other albums come together, the words, the message, the music, it's all at a peak on "Warriors."

RM: My brother produced it.

VS: I think people like this one a lot.

RP: You just got back from a South American tour; how'd that go?

RM: It went great, lots of hardcore going on down there, plus I have Spanish blood and that means a lot. We felt a strong brotherhood all tour.

RP: Some of your fans nowadays were in diapers when you started out. How do you explain the attraction?

VS: People are attracted to us, I don't know, I guess as a voice of the people. They can relate to our universal message of unity and can feel it from the band outwards.

RM: People can tell that we speak our truth, with no bullshit, and I guess, they respect that.

RP: What's next for you guys?

VS: Oh, I think we've got at least one more album. (Laughing) We gotta be around to tour for the thirtieth anniversary of our first release.

RP: So you plan on sticking around?

RM: Yeah, you're stuck with us for the foreseeable future. •

You can check out more about Agnostic Front on their website at: www.agnosticfront.com

RED PILL NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We need volunteers. We need your events. We need writers. And most importantly we need cash for a new copy machine. You can get a hold of us at gjredpill@hotmail.com, or donate through Pay-Pal at our website www.gjredpill.org. We couldn't do all this without you. Thanks.

Support the RNC 8

Support activists charged with terrorism for organizing protests against the St. Paul Republican National Convention.

<http://rnc8.org>

“ISM” FROM PAGE TWO

Also on December 28th an Israeli F16 attacked a mosque in Jabalya. That increased the number of mosques attacked to five, and today they attacked one more in Gaza City. When they attacked the mosque in Jabalya, one of the houses nearby was totally destroyed. But the house is not the problem. The problem is the family who lives there, five sisters were killed and their mother seriously injured. The first question the surviving daughter asked was, are my dad and mum okay? She was between the two dead bodies of her sisters. How will she forget that? No treatment in the world can erase that image from her mind. It's not the education that Palestinians give their children, it's the experience that the children live.

December 27 Update

We just received a phone call on our land line. It was the Israeli Defense Ministry, and they said that any house that has guns or weapons will be targeted next, without warning and without any announcement. Just to let you know, we don't have any weapons in our house. If we die please defend my family.

December 27

This morning I went with some friends to visit the Block O neighborhood in the city of Rafah in the South of the Gaza Strip. While we were in one of the houses that we planned to visit, my phone rang. It was a friend from Gaza City. He was asking about something. Suddenly I heard the sound of an explosion at his side. At the same time I heard an explosion in Rafah too. He said, Fida they are attacking nearby, and I said they are attacking here too. It seems that they attacked all of the Gaza Strip at the same time, all the cities at once. We hung up.

My friends and I in Rafah ran into the street, and in the street everybody was running, children and other people who wanted to see their relatives and friends. It was the time for schoolchildren to go to school, and for the second school shift to start. To explain more, because of the number of students here, which is increasing daily, schools in Rafah work in two shifts. The first shift starts at 7 am and finishes at 11:30 am, and the second shift for a different group of students starts at 12 pm and finishes at 4:30 pm. The attack happened at 11:30am, the time when schools change shifts, just as the first shift was coming back from school, and the second shift was to go to school.

So anyway, when we went to the area it was full of children and people looking at the wreckage. It was scary for many people to come and look because the Israeli attack wasn't over, and from where we were we saw an Israeli airplane attack another police station. Some people could say they are police and that gives the Israelis the right to attack them. What about all the civilians who were walking or driving nearby? What about the children who were in this street? It's impossible that the world sees just part of the truth and denies the important part. Even if it's a police station, this government was elected and democratically chosen.

Most of the people who were killed were people walking nearby or children going or coming back from school. I can't believe what this world thinks.

Below are some interviews I conducted this morning.

Interview 1:

We heard the explosions and went to the scene. People were shouting. Some of the schoolchildren were afraid. There was damage throughout the whole neighborhood. Until this time we don't know the exact number of martyrs. But people have been killed and many have been injured. There are martyrs under the wreckage...as you see.

Interview 2: Naama, 13 years old

I was sitting with my friends when the attack happened. We were scared and we ran out of our school. Our headmaster asked us to go home. We saw fire. We were told to leave the area by another street.

Interview 3: Policeman, 39 years old

We were at the police station. The Israeli planes came and suddenly the building collapsed on us. I saw four dead bodies near me. They were in pieces. Outside I saw the same thing. Everyone was shouting. I lost consciousness and then found myself in a hospital.

Interview 4:

We were in a meeting in Rafah. I was with Abu Odeh, the manager of the traffic police, and with Rafah's manager. We were preparing to release impounded motorbikes before the Israeli attack. We received an order to evacuate the police station, and as we were leaving the attack happened. We managed to reach the door of the police station. The explosion was strong and I fell down. I looked around and saw my colleagues and they were in pieces. The situation was desperate, so I said the Shahada prayer until I was rescued and taken to the hospital.

Interview 5:

We heard the attack. It was far away in Tel Al Sultan [northern Rafah] and we were in the city centre. We ran away from the police station. I was injured by shrapnel as I was leaving the main gate of the police station. We didn't have a chance to get an overview of the scene because debris was flying everywhere.

December 26, 2008

Our experiences here reveal much more than what is in the news. Here in Palestine, the death penalty was ordered after a summary trial before a military court for people caught with Palestinian passports. Why?

While the world celebrates Christmas and people wish each other a happy New Year, it shocks me how many people in the world live below the poverty line, and how many children die every year because of bad food or water. And where I live in the Gaza Strip, sickness and poverty are increasing. Gaza is the only prison in the world which has no limit on the number of prisoners or on prisoners' age.

The prison here has no image that you can imagine, and no description that writing can describe. And the prisoners here range from a day old to over a hundred years old.

In Gaza you might be confused to see many shops full of things to buy. With so many things to buy, you might ask, are these people really under siege? Yes the shops are full of things that Gazans need to survive, but can't buy. How can they buy something they don't have they money for. You can find chocolate in the markets but you can't find bread. You can go to the hospital but you can't find the necessary treatment.

From the thousands of stories about life in Gaza and the suffering of the people here, I was amazed by one story of Gaza's fishermen that I heard when I was out on a fishing boat. To write a story like this you need to wake up at 5:30 am and prepare yourself to leave Rafah at 6am to be on time for the fishing trip.

The trip from Rafah to Gaza City is an hour by taxi. Normally, we share the taxi with six other people. We don't know one another, but the strange thing is that we talk to each other as friends who see each other every day. And in that way you can hear six stories about life, about a father or a son, a mother or a daughter, a lover or a friend, about their days, or about the questions in their minds that need answers. We share the taxi to share the costs, but at the same time to share the happiness and the sadness. This is one of the things we have that people in Europe don't.

At 7 am on my first day fishing, I wanted to be on one of the trawlers. I didn't think it would be easy or that I would be safe, but it was worth trying, in order to see something different and a window on the world that is almost closed.

I arrived at Gaza port with one of my friends, got on the boat and started the trip, after the fishermen had prepared themselves. On the boat I realized how open the fishermen were, how much they wanted to talk about their experiences. They just needed somebody to listen, somebody to make them feel better.

While we were all chatting about different things, Ahmed, who is 20 years old, started to talk. He said, my brother was shot in the head while he was working on this boat. I remember that day very well. All of us on the boat were working, and things were going alright until an Israeli gunboat showed up and started to shoot at us. You are going to ask me, for no reason? Yes, for no reason, unless they aim to make us suffer on land and in the sea. The gunboat started to shoot directly at our boat. Ibrahim was shot in the head. Some of us were scared, and some tried to deal with Ibrahim's wound. They were really strong to be able to deal with his injury and

“ISM” ON PAGE EIGHT

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“GAZA” FROM PAGE ONE

plastic shopping bags moved as quickly as they could; others disappeared behind the walls of their homes, into courtyards and off the streets.

At Fadi's house the grief was still fresh. Nearly all the women were crying, a collective outpouring of grief and raw pain with free-flowing tears.

“He prayed five times a day, he was a good Muslim, he wasn't part of any group, not Fatah, not Hamas, not one, none of them, he was a good student, and he was different,” said one of his sisters. She took me to see Fadi's younger brother, who had been wounded in the same airstrike. Omar, eight, was sitting on his own in a darkened bedroom on a foam mattress with gauze on his back covering his wounds.

“He witnessed everything, he saw it all,” the sisters explained. “He kept saying, I saw the missile, I saw it, Fadi's been hit by a missile.”

The memory sets Omar off into more tears, his sisters, mother and aunts breaking down along with him.

Nine-year-old Ismael, who had been on the street with his sisters Leema, four, and Haya, 12, had been taking out rubbish when they were struck by the missiles.

Ismael had been brought into the hospital still breathing and doctors at first thought he would pull through, but in the end he died of internal injuries.

Within the past six days in Beit Hanoun alone, according to hospital records seven people have been killed, among them three children and a mother of ten other youngsters. Another 75 people have been injured, including 29 children and 17 women.

As well as the fatalities and wounded, hundreds of homes have had their windows blown out and been damaged by flying debris and shrapnel. Two homes have been totally destroyed. Nearby the premises of two organisations have been reduced to rubble. One of them, the Sons of the City Charity, associated with Hamas, was blasted with two Apache-fired missiles, gutting a neighbouring apartment in the process and breaking windows at Beit Hanoun Hospital. The Cultural Development Association and the offices of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, were levelled by bombs dropped from F16 jets.

It is hard to imagine what the Israeli pilots of these aircraft see from so far up in the sky. Do they see people walking; standing around and talking in the street; kids with sticks chasing each other in play? Or are the figures digitised, micro-people, perhaps just blips on a screen?

Whatever is seen from the air, the victims are often ordinary people. Last Thursday night saw volunteers from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Beit Hanoun take to the streets in an effort to save lives. Like all emergency medical staff in Gaza, they risk death working in the maelstrom of every Israeli invasion, during curfews and night fighting.

In one of the ambulances during an evening of total darkness caused by nightly power cuts, I meet Yusri, a veteran of more than 14 years of Israeli incursions into the Beit Hanoun district of Gaza. Moustachioed, energetic, and gregarious, Yusri is in his 40s and a local hero. Seen by people within the community as a man who rarely sleeps, he is a front-line paramedic who zooms through Gaza's streets to reach casualties, ambulance horn blaring as he shouts through a loudhailer for onlookers and the dazed to get out of the way.

“Where's the strike?” Yusri asks locals, as we pick our way through a gutted charred charity office and the house of the Tarahan family. Their home, on the buffer zone, has been reduced to a concrete sandwich. There are six casualties, but miraculously none of them are serious.

Beit Hanoun Hospital is a simple, 48-bed local facility with no intensive care unit, decrepit metal stretchers and rickety beds. I drink tea in a simple office with a garrulous crowd of ear, nose and throat specialists, surgeons and pediatricians. The talk is all about politics: how the plan for Gaza is to merge it with Egypt; how Israel doesn't want to liquidate Hamas as it serves their goal of a divided Palestine to have a weak Hamas alienated from the West Bank.

The chat is interrupted by lulls of intent listening as news crackles through on Sawt Al Shab (“The Voice Of The

People”), Gaza's grassroots news station. Almost everyone here is tuned in. It is listened to by taxi drivers, families in their homes huddled around wood stoves or under blankets and groups of men on street corners crouched beside transistor radio sets.

It feeds live news on the latest resistance attacks, interspersed with political speeches from various leaders, and fighter music—throaty, deep male voices united in buoyant battle songs about standing up, reclaiming al-Quds (Jerusalem) avenging fresh martyrs, and staying steadfast. News is fed through on operations by armed wings of every political group active in Gaza; the Qasam (Hamas), the Abu Ali Mustapha Martyrs Brigade (PFLP), the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (which is affiliated with Fatah) and Saraya al-Quds (Islamic Jihad). One thing is widely recognised - the attack on Gaza has brought all armed resistance groups together. However, everybody adds wryly that “once this is all over, they'll all break apart again”.

One of the surgeons asks me about whether I'm scared, and whether I really think I have protection as a foreigner here. I talk in detail about Israel's responsibility to protect emergency services; to cease fire; to facilitate movement; to respect the Geneva Conventions, including protection of civilians and injured combatants. The surgeon talking to me is an intelligent man, highly respected in the community, in his late 40s. He takes his time, explaining to me in detail that all the evidence from everything Gazans have experienced points to Israel operating

above the law—that there is no protection, that these laws, these conventions, do not seem to apply to Israel, nor does it abide by them, and that I should be afraid, very afraid, because Gazans are afraid.

He recounts a story from the November 2006 invasion which saw more than 60 people killed, one entire family in one day alone. About 100 tanks invaded Beit Hanoun, with one blocking each entrance for six days. He remembers how the Red Cross brought water and food and took away the refuse. All co-ordination was cut off with the Palestinian Authority. The same will happen this time, he insists. He remembers too how one ambulance driver, Yusri, a maverick, a hero, loved by all the

staff and community, faced down the tanks to evacuate the injured. Yusri, the surgeon says, just drove up to the tank and started shouting through his loudhailer, telling them to move for the love of God because we had a casualty, then just swerved round them and made off.

Yusri has carried the injured and dead in every invasion in the past 14 years. He shows me a leg injury sustained when a tank rammed into his ambulance. The event was caught on camera by journalists, and a case brought against the Israel Occupation Forces, but they ruled the army had acted appropriately in self defence.

“Look in the back of the ambulance here, how many people do you think can fit in here? I was carrying 10 corpses at a time after the invasion, there was a man cut in two here in the back, it was horrific. But you carry on. I want to serve my country,” he says.

During a prolonged power cut in that six-day invasion there was no electricity to power a ventilator, and doctors took turns hand pumping oxygen to keep one casualty alive for four hours before they could be transferred. Roads were bulldozed, ambulances were banned from moving, dead people lay in their homes for days, and when permission was finally given for the corpses' collection, medics had to carry them on stretchers along the main street.

Today in Gaza everyone is terrified that such events are now repeating themselves, only worse. Gazans now feel collectively abandoned. The past week's massacres, indiscriminate attacks and overflowing hospitals, and the fact that anyone can be hit at any time in any place, has left people utterly terrorised. No-one dares think of what might become of them in these difficult and unpredictable days. As they say in Gaza, “Bein Allah” - “It's up to God”.

Rafah Exodus: 7th January 2009

Shortly before midnight last night missiles began raining down

“GAZA” ON PAGE EIGHT

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"ISM" FROM PAGE SIX

see all of the blood. For a while I thought he had died. But when we arrived to the port, and took him to the hospital, he was in very bad condition according to the doctors. He stayed in the emergency room for ten days, and after that it was God's will that he survived. Since then he has not come back to fish because the accident affected him.

I asked myself since hearing this story, what is the mistake that we have made to face this fate? The Israelis always say that they fight us because we are armed. Are the nets that we use for fishing a prohibited thing, are they a weapon? If so, international law should inform us of this.

For your information, according to the Oslo Agreements, Gaza's fishermen have the right to fish 20 miles from the shore, and according to international law we can fish 12 miles out, with or without an occupation. Then why does the Israeli Navy force these fishermen to fish no more than six miles from shore? Is this part of their siege, or another of their security reasons which have no end?

I asked another fisherman named Hassan who is 35 years old, is it really dangerous to fish? He answered, the Israelis have left me with no alternative but to die.

In the stories that I write I never try to remember the date or the time, but for some people it makes a difference to know when something happened. But for Gazans it doesn't make any difference. It amazes me how people here survive. Maybe as we say in Arabic, a person who sees others' miseries finds that his misery looks smaller than he imagined. •



"GAZA" FROM PAGE SEVEN

on Rafah in one of the heaviest Israeli air strikes since the current atrocities began. Continuous sorties pounded the southern Gaza city for over 12 hours. Many homes were destroyed or severely damaged, especially in the neighbourhoods along the border with Egypt.

Residents reported mass leaflet drops in these neighbourhoods by Israeli 'planes this afternoon. The papers ordered them to leave their homes in the areas stretching from the borderline all the way back to Sea Street, the main street running through the heart of Rafah, parallel to the border. This area is hundreds of metres deep and the site of thousands of homes. Most of these areas are refugee camps, where residents are being made refugees yet again, some for the third or fourth time following the mass home demolitions of 2003 and 2004 by Israeli military D-9 bulldozers.

A three hour respite was announced in the local media and residents saw this as the last possible opportunity to salvage some of their belongings despite F-16 fighter jets remaining in the skies over Rafah during this time. There were scenes of people picking through the rubble, children carrying bundles, donkey carts piled with bedding and trucks loaded with furniture.

Where will these families go? They are afraid to seek sanctuary in local UNRWA schools following yesterday's massacres in Jabaliya. They are being temporarily absorbed by the rest of Rafah's population – friends, neighbours, relatives. We have a friend in Yibna, directly on the border, who refuses to leave his home. We spoke to one woman in Al Barazil who has a family of 12 and simply doesn't know where to go and another woman in Block J who is literally in the street tonight. Her father is in his nineties.

The family home where ISM volunteers are staying is on the other side of the city centre and has become a refuge for three other families tonight. The house is filled with excited chatter and lots of children. Palestinians have a long-learned talent of making-do, but there is no escaping the deep sense of uncertainty. •

State of

Disunion

ESTIMATED NUMBER
OF PALESTINIANS
killed in Israel's most
recent offensive:
1200

NUMBER OF
ISRAELI SOLDIERS
killed in the most recent
offensive in Gaza Strip:
10

NUMBER OF
ROCKETS
fired by Hamas
into Israel:
700

NUMBER OF TIMES
larger this Red Pill is
than normal:
2

PERCENT OF
PALESTINIANS
killed who were
children:
33

NUMBER OF
ISRAELI CITIZENS
killed by Hamas
rockets:
3

PERCENT OF
PALESTINIANS
that are Christians:
8.8

PERCENT OF GAZA
FAMILIES
that make less than
\$1.20 dollars a day:
80

NUMBER OF
FORECLOSURES
listed for Mesa
County last week:
44

NUMBER OF YEARS
in Prison organizers of
RNC protest are facing:
12.5

* Sources for the State of Disunion can be found at
www.gjredpill.org

"COOP" FROM PAGE FIVE

the local economy thriving. Many coops these days are participating in Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSA), where the coop pays the farmer at the beginning of the year to ensure that the farmer has enough funds to make it through to the harvest. CSAs often enjoy the benefit of lower cost per pound because the farmer doesn't need to charge for next year's produce this year.

The storefront can also be a place for small businesses to get their start: members can approach the coop and ask for permission to start selling their product at the store with a small percentage of the profit going to the coop. After building up a base within the community for the product, the member is often able to start their own small business and move into their own shop.

Facing the hard times we are, the time to start is now. Why wait until our economy here in the valley is getting hit from all sides to start saving money and building our local economic strength? Together, we can build a stronger community and boost our economy.

If you are interested in being a part of a coop here in Grand Junction, please email benjaminryager@gmail.com for more information. •

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