

LETTERS FROM LARNACA AND GAZA

Joe Fallisi

(translation by Alexander Synge)

to infopal (I):

I MET ZENO

Yesterday, as I walked by the sea, I met Zeno, a small statue with a very serious look about it. In its golden age, Larnaca was called Kitium. I have been here for two days, in the company of my friends from Free Gaza (Huwaida Arraf, Greta Berlin, Ramzi Kisia, Dereck Graham...). Now that I've met them personally, my respect for them is even greater. Each has a job, and their own private life. And each finances the

common cause out of his or her own packet. They do it out of the love of justice, not because they work for a party or to further their careers. Breaking the siege with its stranglehold on Gaza; trying to reach Gaza by sea - the project was born two years ago. Incredible but true, human rights activists from Australia, Lebanon, the UK and the USA came up with the same idea simultaneously and independently of each other. This is how Free Gaza came about. Since they're serious folks and not just people who chat by the fireside and do little else, they soon raised the funds they required and bought two small seagoing craft. Now they'll attempt a second journey. Perhaps the hardest and most dangerous. Everyone knows, and the Zionist entity knows this more than others, that another successful mission could truly lead to changes. Encouraged by the example of Free Gaza, independently, it appears a new ship will soon set out from Yemen. If only the Arabs would wake up! A number of snags, legal and red tape, presented themselves during the last days, and the weather forecasts were not encouraging. But now it looks like we can get going at last. The departure is planned for Wednesday 24 September at 10 p.m. After a day and half's journeying we should, Inshallah, see the boats of Gaza who are awaiting us to celebrate the event... and we shall join once more some of the passengers on the first trip who remained behind in Gaza (both to work in Gaza and to leave space for some Palestinians whose poor health conditions have at last received adequate attention at the hospital in Larnaca), or who remained because they were not allowed out through the land border crossing points. There'll be twenty of us, including two reporters from Al Jazeera and the Irish woman who was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1976, Mairead Maguire. It probably won't be that easy for the despots in Tel Aviv to sink us or even arrest

us. The great Zeno said we have two ears but just one mouth, which means we should listen more and speak less.

I'll sign off my first letter at this point and return to the beach to listen to what the generous sea has to tell me.

Joe Fallisi

Larnaca, Monday 22 September 2008

to infopal (II):

FREE GAZA

We're still in the city of Zeno. But it looks like we'll at last be on our way to Gaza tomorrow evening or at the latest on Monday. One thing we know for sure. The Zionist entity is doing everything in its power to hinder us. To overcome as rapidly as possible the red tape problems I mentioned earlier, the organisers of Free Gaza have, over the last few days, tried to rent or even buy another small vessel. Yesterday, three of them flew to Beirut to negotiate with various proprietors. We are faced at every turn with a 'rubber wall' (obstacles placed in our path). Things get postponed. Requests are received which have little to do with reality. People are undecided: 'Yes. No. We'll talk about it later. OK? We'll see'. The fact is, the determination of the organisers of the first trip remains unchanged. If anything, it has grown. A poke in the eye for all despots and word-mongers. So, we found out today that we can use one of the two boats owned by Free Gaza - the one that

bears that very name. In Greece, where the last papers are to be signed, various friends have been hard at work. Now the conveyance papers are ready, ahead of schedule. The boat should then be ready to take to the seas. Tomorrow we'll go and paint her and have her beautifully turned out for our departure. If no storm is on its way (I can imagine a necro-kabbalist is trying to produce one!), Free Gaza will soon be on her way to Gaza. This is the passenger list (updated to 21h21m - 20h21m Italian time):

Abourashed Amin, Holland
Al Jabar Ali, Qatar
Alshubashi Mohammed, Germany/Palestine
Arraf Huwaida, Palestine/US
Barghouti Mustafa, Palestine
Boulous Nicolas, Greece
Butterly Caiomhe, Ireland
Cox Rod, UK
Ernshire Eliza, Australia/UK
Fallisi Joe, Italy
Graham Derek, Ireland
Hamami Ibrahim, Palestine/UK
Al Hams Walid, Palestine/Sweden
Klontzas George, Greece
Kysia Ramzi, US/Lebanon
McDermott Theresa, Scotland
Maguire Mairead, Ireland
Masarwa Lubna, Palestine '48/Israel
Mohammed Amir, Sudan
Wall Sylvia, UK
Zahalka Jamal, Israel

Yesterday afternoon, I and Mairead Maguire (a small woman with a mega-heart as big as GB and Ireland combined!) paid a visit to a patient whose health conditions are a source of great concern and who was brought to safety in Cyprus by the first Free Gaza mission. His name is Saed Khaled Mahmud. He's 16 years old. His smiling, sparkling eyes, so typical of all Palestinian children, shone like stars. In Gaza, the zionist criminals fired at him from a distance of 10 metres. His left leg was torn to pieces and he received serious abdominal wounds. His poor leg had to be amputated. They cut it off at the top, even above the pelvis. It looks like, at last, the situation is no longer life-threatening. But he'll need special prosthetic care. His is an extreme case. I send his entire medical case history to infopal (and to the Italian NGO, Emergency). I pray someone can help him concretely. Just contact me (flespa@tiscali.it) and/or infopal (direzione@infopal.it). His father Khaled Musleh, who displays that great sense of dignity we also see in Saed, has 11 other children. It must be this unshakable vital strength that sustains the heroic Palestinians and that shall see them gain their freedom one day.

Joe Fallisi,
Larnaca, Thursday, 25 September 2008

to infopal (III):

THE CHEAPEST TELEPHONE CALL OF THEM ALL! (FROM
HELL)

A big technical snag has just presented itself. It was unforeseen, and unfortunately it has delayed our departure. It means waiting another week in Cyprus. For many of us this is impossible. So we have decided to meet up soon (in about a month's time). The next time, we know we'll be able to start out. There's no point in hiding our disappointment and frustration. Much stronger than any disappointment or frustration, however, is our will to do what we set out to do, and which we shall do. In any case, no one imagined it was going to be easy. The first trip was subject to exasperating delays, too. At last, despite all the plotting and planning against us, the two boats have left the coast behind. We're on our way! The intrepid captain Arrigoni is waiting for me to take some mint tea together... Just a few days, friend!...

The day before yesterday, Barghouti, using graphs, told us what's really happening under the occupation. Things are worse than people generally believe and a hundred times worse than the racism of white apartheid in South Africa. This is the view even of politicians who lived in South Africa at that time, during that regime. According to a precise plan, the evil entity has, since 1948, continued to steal land, olive groves and water from the Palestinians, while harassing them in all manners. There is just one aim. It has never changed. Render life impossible for Palestinians and bring about this massive act of ethnic cleansing. The "jewish" State must rule supreme. Its rule must be absolute. It must be the sole ruler. However, underneath the surface, the Zionists themselves know, even with the Shylock-economy reaching new heights, that theirs is not a dream but a nightmare. It is a nightmare for a martyr people, the Palestinians. But it is a nightmare for the Zionists too. It would be enough for the yanks to go bankrupt (or

rather, for their creditors to ask to be repaid and for international exchanges to take place in, for example, euros, instead of spectro-dollars). If that happens, the judaic prison house, whose zombie-like existence is prolonged by the iron lung of the US Lobby, would soon collapse like a card castle, to fully reveal its downright wicked, shameful nature. The Palestinians have never bowed their heads down. They shall never submit. And their families are so large! Healthy in all senses. The only problem is how easy or hard it will be for them to forgive those responsible for all the abominations and torture that has been their lot. In the last two years, 20% of infant deaths (babies under the age of one year) are to be ascribed to criminal checkpoint procedures. Like the Wall itself, these checkpoints are both the symbol and bearing structure of Zionist tyranny. Likewise, 73 women were forced to give birth without hospital care, and one third died. So Palestinian women now often turn up at checkpoints months before their time... Before returning to his 'planet Lovecraft' parliament, Jamal Zahalka told us a joke. Three new arrivals in hell. One's from Houston, another's from London and the third's from Gaza. They want to call up their families and relatives. The American makes his call. It'll cost him 5,000 dollars. The Englishman makes his. 1,000 pounds. The Palestinian makes his. He then asks, "How much do I owe you?"... "Nothing", said the devil. The Palestinian was amazed. The devil looked at him and said, "You want to know why? It was a local call. That's why".

Joe Fallisi

Larnaca, Monday 29 September 2008

to infopal (IV):

TILL WE MEET AGAIN, ZENO

This is the last letter. I hope to write more on another occasion. I dedicate them to Saed's brothers and sisters. To Jasmine (15 years old), Weroot (12), Hanin (10), Saeeda (9), Hadeel (7), Nairma and Umdellalah (twin girls, 4), Mahmud (5), Samir (3), Abdularti (2) and Mohammed (1). Saed is the eldest child. One day, he'll be the head of the family. He's extremely smart and has a very fine sense of humour. He never complains. As he looks at you, with his eyes brimful with light and the sea, it is as though he understood everything. A young lad with the mind of an old sage. He's as slender as a branch. It is as though he were transparent. He owes his existence to the flimsy thread of life and to his father's love, and the love of his family and friends. He's still at the Vorkas Clinic in Larnaca. Everyone loves him here and everyone helps out (Cypriots are generally in favour of the Palestinians; they know a thing or two about what life under an occupation means) But Saed needs treatment elsewhere, in a hospital which can provide specialist care for cases such as his. One thing is, once his internal conditions have all been cured, procuring the specially constructed prosthetics he'll need if he is to stand up. Another is re-training his body for standing. The remaining leg, which also received wounds, now so thin and feeble, also requires attention. So we set up a small committee to attend to his needs. We shall soon find the hospital he'll require (perhaps in Germany or even Italy), and

the money he'll need. We await the new updated medical report for Saed from two marvellous friends who live in Nicosia who have agreed to take action in accordance with the decisions made. The report will soon be ready. It's a matter of days. It'll then be a question of seeing what the clinics we contact say, and then we'll know the next step. Then Saed and his father will board a flight. The first in their lives. And they'll see from above the land that craves to see Saed return safe and sound.

Free Gaza is (still) a movement. It's not a party. It has no "leaders". No petty tyrants who gaze at themselves in the mirror and delegate tasks to underdogs. Everyone does what they can, freely, on a voluntary basis. Everyone does what they can toward furthering its actions. The people who took part in the first trip - the second is at the planning stage - were responsible for bringing Saed to safety. Others will be responsible for completion of the mission. I remember on one of the early days taking with one of the activists. We talked about "where we came from". I told that ever since I was a child, I had been an anarchist. Her eyes sparkled on hearing this, and we reached out and held each other.

Joe Fallisi

Larnaca, Tuesday 7 October 2008

[PICTURES]

to infopal (V):

DIGNITY

Just got back to Larnaca. I receive an e-mail from Vittorio Arrigoni,
our captain courageous who stayed behind in Gaza. He writes:

"(...)

so are you ready to put wings to your feet?

Better still. flippers.

That Zeno, Poseidon and the entire pagan pantheon be propitious.

I'll try to be on the first boat out to welcome you.

When you see the coastline of Gaza, your joy will be immense and unexpected.

I know, because I have fed on it. I think it is very like becoming a father.

Your child is called Freedom, and Hope.

(...)

here's a hug as huge as the Mediterranean! (...)".

Yes, we're back again in the city of Zeno and very soon (tomorrow afternoon) we shall be on our way to join the million and half who live in the largest open-air prison in the world. This will be the second time we penetrate the odious siege. Again, like just a few weeks ago, the organisers prospected various scenarios. Each of us drew up his or her. will... One thing we know is that we'll on our way. The legal snags, the red tape and technical aspects have all been settled. Who knows what'll happen next? How will the Zionist entity react? Will it let us through again?... Will they shoot us? Over

the last two years they've killed 14 Palestinian fishermen. Will they surround us and prevent us from reaching Gaza?... Will they claim the right to board us? Will they carry out 'controls' and then arrest us?... For our part, one thing's for sure. We shall not collaborate with the occupying forces in any way whatsoever. None of us recognise them. It's all for one and one for all. If we have to resist, we'll choose peaceful means of resistance. They're the experts in violence. We'll leave it to them. But if they choose to use violence against us, they shall do so under the eyes of the whole world. What follows is the official definition of the Free Gaza mission in four points:

1. Allow international access with no restrictions to Gaza, id est Palestinian sovereignty.
2. Render evident the fact that Israel continues to occupy Gaza, whatever it says to the contrary.
3. Show international solidarity with the people of Gaza ad with the rest of Palestine.
4. Provide a concrete example of the potential of non-violent methods of resistance.

Nearly all the passengers who took part in the last mission are back, including the reporter and cameraman from Al Jazeera. Some newcomers have also joined us. Including two Italians, Vilma Mazza and Marco Giusti, from Ya Basta, an association with contacts with Mustapha Barghouti. The boat's beautiful and (practically) in mint condition. It's much more robust, and also faster that the previous two. We called a special meeting to decide what to call her. I had proposed three: Dignity, Hope, Equity. The choice fell on Dignity, the reference being to the dignity of the Palestinians who have not bowed down and to the dignity of others around the world who find it

impossible to look on as the Palestinians face martyrdom. Something concrete and effective needs to be done, and it must take a form which differs from the norm. Creativity and imagination are required. Free Gaza, as an international group of men and women of good will, who don't belong to parties or groups, also represents the second name on my list: Hope (active hope).

Joe Fallisi

Larnaca, Monday 27 October 2008

to infopal (VI):

HOPE

Yes, we made it. I could hardly believe it. Here I am in Gaza! A lifelong dream come true! I'll transcend the barriers of time and dedicate my arrival to my friend and comrade, Marco Melotti (see <http://it.groups.yahoo.com/group/libertari/message/54046>). It was about 6:30 a.m., we were about to leave 'international' waters - 20 miles from Palestinian land - when two Israeli patrol boats arrived on the scene. They seemed to be heading for us. The intrepid Huwaida acted promptly, and was ready with a megaphone (yesterday the navy ministry in Tel Aviv had released a declaration to the effect that it intended to prevent the mission and arrest us). In the meantime Dignity was making good speed toward Gaza. Then things seemed less clear. The patrol boats swung back and

forth, this way and that, and then disappeared. Seen from above, these movements would have looked fairly choreographic. As we proceeded, two circles formed around us. The outer circle was made up of the Zionists. From then as we approached the coast, formed an inner circle of Palestinian boats. We then entered the modest port of Gaza escorted by a festive entourage of fishing vessels, their crews, youngsters, and Vittorio Arrigoni, beaming at us from his masthead post on the nearest boat. This is the list of the new arrivals:

Denis Healey, Captain, UK
George Klontzas, First Mate, Greece
Nikoals Bolos, Crew, Ireland
Derek Graham, Crew, Ireland
Ghazi Abourashad, Holland
Ali Al Jabar, Qatar
Dr. Mohammed Alshubashi, Germany
Huwaida Arraf, attorney, US
Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Palestine
Audrey Bomse attorney, US
Renee Bowyer, Australia
Caoimhe Butterly, Ireland
Rod Cox, UK
Joe Fallisi, Italy
Marco Giusti, Italy
Dr. Ibrahim Hamami, UK
Ramzi Kysia, US
Alan Lonergan, Ireland
Theresa McDermott, UK
Jock McDougall, UK
Mairead Maguire, Ireland
Lubna Masarwa, Israel

Vilma Mazza, Italy
Amir Siddiq, Sudan
Gideon Spiro, Israel

Hugs and kisses galore. You could see it on everybody's faces, of the people awaiting our arrival and our own. We were moved, and still incredulous that we'd made it. The arrival itself was the most effective restoring cure one could imagine after the trials of the journey itself. But we immediately realised we were in the real Gaza, where there is very little to celebrate or smile about. This time, we brought many more medicines with us than the last time. So the first thing we had to do was to get to the Shifa hospital. It's the largest hospital, not only here but in Palestine as a whole. Husein Ashour, a physician who received his medical training in Germany, manages the hospital with considerable skill and self-sacrifice. We visited the various departments in the company of him and his colleagues. It was like standing in death's antechamber. I shook the hands of many patients, young and old. Were I to return again over the next few days, I would know they were gone. Why? There is only one reason. The entity's siege: collective punishment against Palestine's civil society. The doctors are true experts. The equipment includes some of the most advanced instruments available (the cancer department, for example, would be capable of diagnostics and therapies which have no rivals, I'm told, in the entire Middle East). But the equipment stands idle. Why? They can't get the medicines they need. Spare parts are missing, along with everything else they need to run what equipment they have. Idle, as the days pass, it takes on an increasingly unreal, spectral air. The equipment receives in turn visitors from time to time, but seems itself a hopeless patient. The power supply could be

interrupted from one moment to the next. No one can guarantee sufficient fuel for the generator. If the remaining dialysis equipment suddenly packs up, the consequences for the patients would be dire. And irreparable.

And the power cuts come and go with increasing frequency. The option of transferring patients elsewhere so that they might receive the care they need is to be ruled out. The star-of-David bearing cops prohibit it. We're now close to a toll of 260, owing to these murderous prohibitions. As things stand, the toll can only rise. Ismail Hanyeh welcomed us with a kefiah and medal for each of us. He is a man of dignity. There can be no doubt that he is free from corruption. He loves his people. He called us heroes. But the real heroes are the Palestinians who resist, in all senses of the word, whose back is held straight in the face of the most tremendous adversities. We have done little more than pry open a door and let in a little light, and hope.

Joe Fallisi

Gaza, Wednesday 29 October 2008

to infopal (VII):

EQUITY

I sang at the Theatre of Gaza!... the top concert hall in the world!... Like a second dream come true just as the first, bigger, dream came true... This was the first time an operatic

voice was heard between these walls. The reception I received was marvellous and I was thoroughly moved... I'd packed my formal suit and bowtie for the occasion, and my brightly polished shoes. Nothing but the best for the harassed citizens of Gaza. The best of everything and the best for everything. Who knows? Perhaps the concert, too, will help break down the siege... the besieging forces are not primarily interested in denying these people food, drugs and the material means required for existence. They are (perhaps above all) interested in wreaking havoc within the soul and crushing all that lies along the path of pleasure.

We paid a visit to Khan Younis in the afternoon. Accompanying us was an old gentleman who was a representative of the local community. At a certain stage, a tear slipped down his cheek. He swept it away immediately, perhaps ashamed of such a public display. Here we see what we mean when we talk of the siege the Zionists have imposed on the Palestinians. The week before there'd been very heavy rainfall. The flooding had swept away the main roadway for an entire urban quarter, flowing into people's homes and wrecking them. The situation at the hospital presents itself here, too, in exactly the same manner. Public intervention and solidarity measures were immediately taken. The 'top' people and the 'people' below ask for nothing but to be given a chance to help and rebuild. But everything they need to get the roadway back into working order and to provide decent homes for family life is missing (primarily, concrete). Kids, in particular, are seriously at risk because of the polluted water. And there seems to be no way out. It would be enough for the Egyptians to wake up to the facts in the field, or perhaps cast their minds back no further than to Nasser's times. Is that too much to ask of them. It's not as though we want them to take

as a model the far-off times of the pyramids and pharaohs! If only they woke up, this infernal situation could be dealt with. Rafah crossing provides a perfect case in point, illustrating the evils besetting the Middle East as a whole. The Egyptian border patrols allow some tunnels to be dug (there are so many; at least something, never enough, gets through!), and Mafia-like speculation surrounds the traffic of goods passing through each of these tunnels. Then, when the Zionist entity and the invaders of Iraq (USrael) say it's time to blow one up, the border guards blow one up or even spike them with poison. They frequently use gasses, and dozens and dozens of Palestinians have died underground as a result. Arabs do this to their fellow Arabs. The occupiers and cleansers, the racists par excellence, look on and smile the smile of the executioner. Things can't go on like this. One day, perhaps sooner than we think, the situation will change. The splits within the Palestinian camp will end. The evening before, we were honoured to be able to witness an event of great historical significance - something that hadn't happened in coming up to two years. An assembly was held. All factions attended. All spoke, and all expressed their desire to see an end to intra-Palestinian hostilities (the government also announced its unilateral decision to release its political prisoners). But unity has to start at the grass roots. Among the people and on behalf of the people. Only upright politicians are to be accepted, who are not guilty of betrayal, who have not sold out. This is the key to the success of Hamas and Fatah's fatal stumbling block. Abu Mazen's portrait as President of Palestine still hangs on the walls of public buildings in Gaza as an expression of allegiance in the wake of the last elections. And yet he must go, taking with him his entire, corrupt entourage who all dance to the enemy's music. They have their fortunes stashed away in

tax havens. They must go. To hell!

Joe Fallisi

Gaza, Friday 31 October 2008

to infopal (VIII):

THE TIME WILL COME

Last night, my friend Vittorio, a giant in all senses of the word, couldn't make it to the concert. Ah!... I would have picked him out immediately from among the audience had he been there!... I expected him... but the henchmen of Zion had different plans. He goes out with the fishermen practically every day and has been doing so from the very start. His help, and that of the other Free Gaza activists (there were ten of them yesterday) is absolutely crucial. I'm against the exploitation and slaughter of animals. I could never do what they do. However, I do understand, and I share their impulse toward solidarity: the struggle against abuse. The cops spelt it out clearly. When the "internationals" go, you're in for trouble, they said! There you have it. Procuring food is tantamount to terrorism. Furthermore, anyone who helps someone feed his or her family is a supporter of Hamas. Around the world you will find no situation as clearly unjust as that which the Palestinians must endure. The kippah-ed tyrants can do what they like. It matters not how criminal or illegal. The Western powers will mutely cringe at their feet in obeisance. Their

vision borders on devotion. News items disappear or are manipulated. Their cowardice breeds monstrosities beyond ones worst imaginings. Not 'over' the media. Big Brother has come to rule via the media. Only small scattered groups of media rebels remain. Thus, again yesterday, yet another normal occurrence, and the video material is there to prove it. There were no deaths. Free Gaza arrived, but "Rai" and "Mediaset" (the Italian state TV and radio broadcaster and Italy's biggest private media network, respectively) took no notice. They're too busy spreading other lies to take notice of us! The 'law' says navigation is permitted within 12 nautical miles. But, of course, it's a 'law' that applies to all, unless you're Palestinian. The Israeli racists claim these waters for themselves even 6 or 4 miles from the Gaza coastline and practically within the harbours themselves. A patrol boat appears. They fire their machine gun and a (dirty) water cannon against unarmed civilians. But THE TIME WILL COME FOR FREEDOM, also for the people now residing on occupied land. Their suffering cannot be in vain. Something concretely earthshaking is happening. It is happening far away from the forums of our superannuated political practices. It is the concrete will to truth and justice. Like the first, the second mission was successful. As soon as we return to Larnaca, Dignity will be prepared for the third mission, then the fourth and fifth.

I went this morning with the two Al Jazeera reporters, Amir Siddiq and Ali Al Jabar, to Saed's family to bring them his presents. They live at Beth Hannoun. There has been so much suffering here: Saed's and that of other youngsters wounded by invaders. There was a big turnout awaiting us. Grandad, an old man, the eleven kids, their mother and their uncle, her brother, who had left his own home to help out. Khaled, Saed's

father, told me his wife was the perfect woman for him. A marvellous gift from Allah. Before leaving, with Amir's help, I told her what Kahled had told me, and it seemed the glow of her beautiful face had flooded the room with light.

Joe Fallisi

Gaza, Saturday 1 November 2008

to infopal (IX):

THE TIME WILL COME WE'LL BE BACK!

Yes, we are on our way to Larnaca, but we'll be back again in Gaza. As soon as we arrive, Dignity will rest up for a few days in Limassol. Then she'll be ready for another trip to Palestine planned for 7 November, with other passengers. A libertarian movement has been born. It has been spawned by civil society. No one can stop it, because it has the ability to manifest itself in unpredictable ways. They'll be looking into all the options and routes. Not just the sea. The time will come when the siege will be besieged and ousted, definitively. I fully confirm what I said at the very start. The founders of Free Gaza are serious folks. They don't sit around looking at their belly-button or talking about nothing else but their own concerns. There are no hidden agendas, and they have the up-front energy and intelligence required to put their plans into practice. This is no flash-in-the-pan initiative! Here, and everywhere else, if people don't organise themselves, outside and against the

parties of the omnivorous "Caste" or ruling class, there can be no change for the better or even an attenuating of the worst. The last time, we reunited a Palestinian family in Cyprus and made it possible for Saed to receive medical attention. This time we have a student with us (one of many) whom the Zionist entity had decided should not study at a European university. However he shall, as is his right. Alongside Vittorio, who intends to stay for a few more months, to help the fishermen, nine other Free Gaza activists are there at the moment. Three reached Gaza in the Dignity: "Queeva" and Theresa (two extraterrestrial angels), and Ramzi, the one with the big pen.

We see Israeli ships on the horizon. They' were soon gone, just as they disappeared at the time of our arrival. Anyway, we did what we came to do. These are Palestinian waters. We'll then cross international waters and reach the coast of Cyprus.

Before our departure Ismail Haniyeh arrived to say goodbye. He accompanied us as we left the port with the Palestinian flag flying. I'll never forget his broad smile. The reason Hamas won the elections hands down had to do with the fact that Hamas could produce a premier like him. He never left the refugee camps or his people. His foes also know he can't be corrupted and that he's an honest man, and so, in their impotence, they hate him. Instead, they shall die buried under a mountain of bloodstained banknotes.

Joe Fallisi

Gaza-Larnaca, Sunday 2 November 2008

to infopal (X):

"FEEL FREE"

We didn't sleep a wink the other night. Me, Greta, Mary and Osama.

We were at the hotel waiting for the next telephone call from Dignity, which had left that evening, under a still waxing Moon, for its second trip (the third Free Gaza mission). The new passenger list was as follows:

Ahmed Nazir (Lord), Pakistan/UK
Andrews Christopher, Ireland
Arraf Huwaida, US/Palestine
Bartlett Eva, Canada
Bolos Nikolas, Greece/Palestine
Graham Derek, Ireland/Palestine
al-Haj Sami, Sudan
Hass Amira, Israel
Healey Denis, UK
McNeill Pauline, Scotland, UK
Morena Fernando, Spain
Nacer Mohamed, UK
O'Donnell Hugh, Scotland, UK
ÓSnodaigh Aengus, Ireland
Rossi Fernando, Italy
Sharp Rob, UK
Schermernhorn David, USA/Palestine
Shoukri Dr. Arafat, Palestine/UK
Short Clare, UK
Thomas Rhodri Glyn, Wales, UK

Tonge Dr. Jennifer Louise (Baroness), UK
White, Sandra, Scotland, UK
Zisyadis Josef, Switzerland

The list includes 11 members of the EU parliament who refuse to conform. One of these, Fernando Rossi, refused to vote the war credits. This year he gave up his post as a senator, even before the time required for the pension that goes with the post. This is something his former colleagues, all fully paid up members of the ruling class, can only contemplate with horror. How could such a monstrous thing come about!?

The journey was going smoothly. The sea was calm, practically flat.

Dawn. Where the international waters end. As happened earlier, two of the entities water craft arrived on the scene. This time, travelling at high speed, they came up very close. They entered into radio communication and asked for the passenger list. Huwaida Harraf, with incomparable verve, told them they could check out www.freegaza.org where they'll find the list of names and surnames, then adding the kind, gentle words: "Feel free to make a donation". Something like a caveman's grunt came from the radio, a snorting sound like a cross between heaves and laughter. Then they were suddenly off again. Dignity was alone, but would soon meet its festive floating entourage. Yes, Free Gaza's back at the Strip. This time it's carrying three scanners for spinal examinations. The Shifa hospital urgently needs them. The boat shall return to Larnaca on 11 November. People are calling up from all over the world. They want to join upcoming trips. The first was pretty crazy. The second was perhaps the most dangerous. The third set the pace and set a real precedent that no one can ignore. Planned in January is a ship-full of... musicians! I can't

tell you how glad I'll be to be back and to squeeze and hug my Palestinian friends!...

For Vik, our captain courageous, the struggle in defence of the fishing community is coming under increasing pressure. Things are getting worse. The entity conducted criminal attacks on their vessels today. We now have the proofs. With their extremely powerful cannons, they've been spraying the fishing vessels not just with sewage but also chemical agents. They wear overalls and masks when they do it. Our friends have collected samples of this liquid. They'll be analysed. We got the news from David Schermerhorn on one of the two fishing vessels. The communications were constantly being interrupted. Conditions are anything but stable.

So what's new in the US of A? Well, it's certainly not Barack Obama (Obama, like an infant, is being rocked in his cradle by the loving arms of Lobby power, without whose approval he would NEVER have attained the presidency and, should he to displease certain people in certain quarters, he'll soon be kicked out of the White House!!). No, it's not Barack Obama. It's a sprightly 'senior citizen' soon to reach his eightieth year, although he looks sixty-ish. This 'senior citizen' lives with his large family on a small island of the State of Washington, and he's decided to dedicate the years of his old age to a just cause. Since he is familiar with the ways of the sea he decided right from the start to offer his services to Free Gaza on a voluntary basis. He's been on all three trips. And the third is definitely not the last.

David, you're fantastic! May the Gods of the Mediterranean go with you and be propitious. Your very own,

Joe Fallisi

Larnaca, Sunday 9 November 2008

[PICTURE]