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Opposition to War in Iraq Increasing

Biggest anti-war protest in a generation: As Bush and Blair gear up for another war, the public get creative in showing opposition

Protests against war in Iraq and years of sanctions have continued throughout the summer. In early August, the Westminster Council looked to evict a peace activist from his 11-month 'pavement protest' in Parliament Square, yet the vigil continues. On 2nd September there was a banner drop at Downing Street.

Beyond demonstrations, the peace movement in Britain continues gather momentum. Members of War Resisters' International are facing legal action over withholding the portion of their tax to be used to fund illegal aggression. Moreover, over 160 Labour Party backbenchers signed an Early Day Motion against attacking Iraq. Over a thousand people have signed a Pledge of Resistance, committing themselves to taking part in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience should Iraq - or any other country - be attacked in the course of the 'War on Terrorism.' Hundreds more have pledged to support them.

In a powerful turnout of the opposition to the U.S. and U.K. driven proposals for war on Iraq, the anti-war demo on Saturday 28th of September, organised by the Stop The War Coalition, the Muslim Association of Britain, and supported by CND attracted around 400,000 demonstrators. Police had informed that they were expecting 30-40,000 people on the anti-war march, but their estimates were proven wildly unsubstantial and remarkably out of touch with public sentiment. Asked how many people there were, a policeman said: "Haven't got a clue. Hundreds of thousands. Can't even hear my radio, mate."

A strong, colorful, vibrant and vocal anti-capitalist bloc marched with the sounds of Samba providing the beat and inventive puppets adding to the action. When the Samba Band stopped at Whitehall in front of Downing St, a cloud of orange smoke emerged from a cardboard tank and effigies of George Bush, Tony Blair and Berlusconi, the crowd cheered and danced for a short time.

The march finished at Hyde Park where speeches (several calling for direct action) finished at around 6pm - Speeches from trades unionists, religious and political figures were greeted enthusiastically by the extraordinarily diverse crowd. Ahead of the demonstration a peace camp had been set up at the Imperial War Museum, and though initially threatened with eviction, it still continues at going to press (10th of October). Stop the War Coalition convenor Lindsey German



announced that the Coalition would be holding a 'Don't Attack Iraq Day of Action' on Thursday 31st October. "This Day of Action will include college occupations and teach-ins, workplace meetings and protests plus peaceful direct action in city and town centres all over the country.

Similar protests were held throughout the world on 28th of September. Around one hundred thousand demonstrated in Rome, while more actions were held in Milan, Cairo, Berlin, Dublin, Seville and Madrid, Sydney and across New Zealand. With political opposition to an Iraq war building up in the U.S., thousands gathered in San Francisco Washington DC and hundreds rallied in St. Louis for peace.

For latest updates: www.indymedia.org.uk
Dedicated IMC UK Iraq / Middle East Section
Schnews: www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news373.htm
Active Resistance to the Roots of War : Direct Action

BREAKING NEWS: Washington DC IMF/WB Actions

Thursday, September 26 witnessed a broadening of the debate over the World Bank and IMF meetings and protests in Washington, DC. USA.

"The reason we are here is because we are living under a central command economy that has made our nation the poorest nation in Africa, and that economy is being controlled at 1818 H Street in Washington D.C.", said Demba Dembele, Forum for African Alternatives of Senegal. These opening words were a powerful lead in to an informative day of workshops at the Teach In "Global Struggles Against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund" held in DC on day two, attended by about 400 people. Activists came from Chad, Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa, Columbia, Venezuela, Chiapas and Argentina.

On Friday, September 27, Reports are coming in of 80 arrests. Police are equipped with chemical munitions, fleets of vans have been deployed...



Latin America update: Economies melt down as resistance grows

Latin America Update - Economies melt down as resistance grows

Troubled times still dominate the future for the people of Latin America. While the US government continues its 'offensive' in Latin America, promoting coups, economic ruin, domestic terrorism and drug trafficking, and the economies of several different countries collapse or buckle under the strain of external debt and IMF austerity measures - such as Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, and Uruguay - local people still rebuild their lives and continue to resist both capitalism and US imperialism.

Colombia: On August 13, the new president of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, declared a "state of internal commotion" seven days after his inauguration. The measure was invoked through the Colombian constitution, allows the government to bypass normal legislative procedures, restrict civil liberties, and put into place security measures. The measure lasts 90 days, but can be renewed twice, and has been implemented numerous times in Colombia's history.

The device was implemented after a week of intense fighting amongst the Colombian military, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and

right-wing paramilitaries, which ended with more than 100 hundred people dead. This latest round of fighting began with a bombing at Uribe's inauguration, which killed thirteen people and was attributed to FARC. Uribe is justifying these provisions which divert finances and resources to the military in order "to counter terrorists and narco traffickers," and claims that the paramilitaries will be pursued with the same vigour as FARC. For more info see Colombia IMC at <http://www.colombia.indymedia.org>

Movimentos de Brasil: The Osasco landless peasants and workers camp in Brazil has been threatened with violent eviction and is increasing in tension as the imminent ousting by federal police of thousands of families that live there worries civil rights organisations throughout the nation, who are urging people to support the camp.

A 48-hour period of negotiation, jointly established on Monday, August 19 by the city of Osasco and state government was broken by judge Anelise Soares, from an Osasco court. The order allows military police to evict people remaining in the camp with force beginning at 3 a.m. on August 21. By Friday, August 23, however, the camp, which includes more than 8,000 children, has not yet been

evicted, hope remains. The three entrances to the encampment are blocked with barricades, while constant police patrols and helicopters encircle the area.

The camp was established by various groups, including Popular Resistance, the MTST (Movement of the Workers Without Living Spaces), and the MLP (Movement for a Popular Struggle) in order to build a community for homeless people throughout Brazil. <http://brasil.indymedia.org/>

Porto Alegre: Employees of the Brazilian National Agency of Telecommunications (ANATEL) raided the community radio station Restinga FM on August 15. The station, in the midst of a registration process, was shut down without a judicial order. The equipment was confiscated and the station which has operated in the Community Centre of the Restinga (CECORES) since November 19, 2000 was closed.

In recent years, pirate, community and free radios stations with various radical, popular, and libertarian perspectives have been established and subsequently closed by ANATEL. Restinga FM served one of the major poor neighbourhoods of Porto Alegre. During its two years of operation, the station broadcast social and cultural coverage for the community.

Radio Restinga - <http://restingafm.rg3.net/>
Rede Brasil de Comunicacao Cidadã - <http://www.rbc.org.br/>

Mexico: The farmers who have been waging a 9 month battle to stop a 2.3 billion dollar airport project have just declared the town of Atenco (on the eastern edge of Mexico City) 'autonomous', in a similar fashion to the Zapatista communities in Southern Mexico in Chiapas.

See for more info Chiapas Indymedia: <http://www.chiapas.indymedia.org>

Paramilitaries Execute Two Zapatistas: Two campesinos from EZLN support bases were assassinated by paramilitary groups on the morning of August 25 in rancharía Amaytik, at the independent municipality Olga Isabel. The newspaper La Jornada has reported on the previously announced assassination of two Zapatistas in the Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality. The 'official' version, released on August 26 by the State Prosecutor's Office, and widely refuted by residents of the area, is that it was due to an infamous "family" dispute. Human rights organizations mobilized at least three brigades of observers from San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Ocosingo and Chilón to head to the scene of the assassinations.

These are the second and third deaths of residents of the bases of support of the EZLN in recent days. Every day this seems more and more like a coordinated operation of the diverse paramilitary groupings that operate in the forest and the Northern zone to harass and intimidate the communities in resistance. The murders happened near an operational base of the Mexican Army, leading many to believe that the government is complicit.

Argentina: The U.S. Treasury Secretary was greeted in Buenos Aires on August the 6 by large protests. He was there as a part of an IMF commission to determine their conditions for further loans. Despite requests from Argentine President Duhalde and other government officials for an emergency loan similar to those granted by the U.S. to Brazil and Uruguay, O'Neill did not grant one. As rescheduled elections for March 2003 approach, so does the likelihood of fresh loan defaults.

Meanwhile in Uruguay, the government has managed to secure a \$1.5 billion (U.S.) loan from the IMF and reopened the banks after a rough few weeks. More than 13 supermarkets were looted in poor neighbourhoods of Montevideo on August 2 to the shouts of "we are hungry." Riot police were dispersed throughout the city, shooting rubber bullets at people as they tried to get food.



Spanish Government Outlaws Basque Political Party

On August 26, a Spanish judge issued an order to suspend Batasuna, a Basque left separatist party. This ruling was on the basis that it is part of ETA (Basque Fatherland and Freedom). ETA is an armed group fighting for an independent Basque nation, declared a terrorist organisation by the Spanish and other governments.

The order closed all official Batasuna offices, and prohibited the party from political organisation or activities. It also seeks to shut down the party's website, which could be

the first case of an internet site to be closed by the Spanish government. The decision is based on Article 129 in the Spanish penal code, which was designed for private associations, and does not mention political parties. Simultaneously, the Spanish Parliament passed a law banning Batasuna if it does not publicly renounce ETA bombings. This measure has been criticised as a breach on fundamental rights in the Spanish constitution. Moreover, the three parties governing the Basque

autonomous region have opposed the law. Batasuna has polled around 10% of the votes representing nearly 48,000 voters in Navarra, and about 143,000 in the Basque Autonomous Region. The party is also present in northern Basque regions under French administration. Polls show a split between Spanish and Basque public opinion, with Spanish public opinion supporting the law by a vast majority while a majority of Basques oppose it.

The same day, police closed offices

of the party, triggering violent clashes between Batasuna supporters and both national police and the Basque autonomous police. Other offices belonging to the Basque Prisoners Relatives' Association and the Association Against Torture were shut down as well.

More Indymedia coverage is available from Basque indymedia: <http://euskaHerria.indymedia.org/>
Info on Article 129 : http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Penal/1010-1995.116.html

Bhopal: Survivors demand justice

Bhopal was the site of the worst industrial disaster in history. THE former chairman of the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC - now merged with DOW), Warren Anderson, is a fugitive now living in the United States, avoiding criminal prosecution in India in the Bhopal gas disaster case. He was the chairman of the company when the disaster, which killed or maimed thousands of people, took place in 1984.

Several tons of a poisonous mix of gases leaked from the methyl-isocyanate (MIC) storage tanks from Union Carbide's factory site in Bhopal. With safety systems either malfunctioning or turned off, a huge area of the city was enveloped in lethal gas. People woke in their homes to fits of coughing, their lungs filling with fluid. In the span of the first three days after the accident, over 8,000 people died in Bhopal. To date, 20,000 have died from gas exposure and the effects are now extending into the next generation. 150,000 of the survivors are chronically ill and communities are drinking contaminated groundwater because Dow has still not cleaned up the dangerous chemicals Union

Carbide left behind.

Survivors' rights groups have claimed that cost-cutting and poor safety systems at the plant led to the disaster. A \$470 million dollar settlement between the Government of India and Union Carbide was reached in 1989 but criminal charges against Carbide as well as company officials including against then chairman, Warren Anderson, are still pending in Bhopal courts. Union Carbide and Anderson have evaded appearing in Indian courts and are proclaimed absconders (fugitives from justice).

The Central Bureau of Investigation, the Indian equivalent of the FBI, and the Government of India, which has dragged its feet in applying for extradition of the fugitive Anderson, had applied to reduce charges against Anderson. However the Bhopal District Court rejected the application to reduce outstanding criminal charges against Mr Anderson and called on the Indian government in the sternest language to move immediately for the extradition of Anderson from the U.S. Speaking from Johannesburg where Bhopal supporters have been protesting against the presence of

Dow Chemicals at the Earth Summit, Satinath Sarangi of the Bhopal Group for Information and Action, which opposed the application to dilute, said "The Indian Government must now pursue extradition proceedings against Warren Anderson without delay."

"On August 15 we launched the 'Jaroo Maro Dow' (Hit Dow with a Broom) campaign in India. This is to remind Dow Chemicals that it has a lot of mess to clean up in Bhopal. It has to clean up the contamination; take responsibility for long-term medical care, economic rehabilitation of the people and answer the criminal charges that it has inherited from Union Carbide," said activist and Bhopal survivor Rashida Bee. "We want to hand over this broom to Bill Stavrapoulos, president of Dow, who is expected to play a major role at the Earth Summit through his involvement in the World Business Council on Sustainable Development." <http://www.greenpeace.org/campaigns/> Anderson was located in mid-August when a representative of Greenpeace tracked him down in the wealthy Long Island community of Bridgehampton, 75 miles east of New



York City. Protesters gathered on September 13 outside the UN to demand Anderson's extradition before journeying to the home of the elusive executive. Since then, Diane Wilson and others have held a vigil outside Anderson's home. They have enjoyed global support for this action, as well as a mixed reaction in Bridgehampton. Besides confronting Anderson, they have been harassed by police and heckled by neighbours, including producer Don Hewitt of 60 Minutes.

For more information see: <http://mumbai.indymedia.org> <http://india.indymedia.org>

International Newswire

South Africa: Evictions, Cattle Prods and the New Apartheid

Sebokeng has joined Khayelitsha and Thembelihle in the Cape Town area in the wave of evictions. On Wednesday, September 11, 6000 people were evicted from a privatised hostel - an Apartheid-era worker dormitory - in which families had been living since 1977. On Thursday evening, at a meeting attended by evicted residents and members of the Anti-Privatisation Forum, a decision was taken to reoccupy the hostel.

During the reoccupation on Friday, one woman was shot in both legs by South African police. On Saturday, when 'Red Ants' from Wozani Security, a private firm, attempted to re-evict the families living in the hostel, four people were shot, including a security guard who died on the scene.

The eviction order came on the order of Vicva Investment, owner of the building. This opened the door for the deployment Wozani Security, specialists in mass evictions. Three Vicva Investment shareholders are also ANC local councillors.

Meanwhile on Wednesday, September 18, 100 residents of Mandela Park appeared at court to support Anti-Eviction Campaign and labour activist Max Ntanyana. Ten Mandela Park residents, some of whom are also activists from the AEC, appeared in court as well on charges of public violence and malicious damage to property. These charges came from July 8, when police and Mandela Park residents clashed after the sheriff repossessed a woman's furniture. Dozens of police were deployed, and during the standoff, another AEC member was arrested. Supporters were later beaten

out of the packed courthouse with cattle prods. Disquiet remained in Mandela Park on Thursday.

The 'rainbow nation' has called on the same tactics as the apartheid state in suppressing dissent. Throughout South Africa, continuing legal and violent attacks, coupled with a high level of state surveillance on social movements after the WSSD are beginning to seriously strain the country's social movements as the battle against neoliberalism builds in the Global South.

There is a growing feeling among South African activists that by adopting similar strategies used against Apartheid, they will realise their goals. This means informing international civil society of the actions of the (post-)apartheid South African government, and inspiring an uprising of conscience in the Global North. Already, a solidarity protest was held in Toronto on September 16. More information South Africa IMC <http://sa.indymedia.org>

WEF Protested in Salzburg and Across Europe against the WEF

Protests were held across Europe over the last week, focussing upon World Economic Forum meetings in Salzburg, Austria. On Friday, September 13, a 'Battle at the Bridge' was held in the centre of the city. On Saturday, a rally was held in support of migrant workers' rights. Under the banner of "No Person is Illegal", nearly 1,000 demonstrators marched through the streets of Salzburg.

Beginning downtown at the central train station, the march proceeded to the Mozart memorial and park, where speakers denounced the WEF and its relationship to the growing political trend against "illegals", migrant and refugee workers forced from their homes by war and hunger, and traditionally welcomed in Europe. The

protests were marked by an overwhelming police presence, intolerance of dissent, and a Schengen border clampdown caused massive traffic jams at the German border and preventing the entry of hundreds.

On Sunday, September 15, the major protests were held, with about 5,000 people gathering to demonstrate. This march, sponsored by the Salzburg Social Forum, antiWEF.org and ATTAC had been declared non-confrontational. After winding through the city, the march finished at the Volksgarten, featuring speeches and music. Solidarity protests focussing on the WEF and threats of war were held throughout Germany and Europe on September 14: Solidarity with Salzburg demonstrations were held in Bern, Switzerland, while 40,000 marched in Cologne, Germany. Other protests were held in Berlin, Moscow, and 500,000 protested against Italian PM Berlusconi in Rome.

More information is available from reports from the global Indymedia September 13 feature, the Germany IMC, IMC Print reports about the demonstrations, and numerous audio and print reports from imc.subnet.at.

Annual World Bank & IMF Meetings Met with Grassroots Opposition

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) faced demonstrations, despite crack-downs on civil rights following 9/11 and corporate media parroting of status quo interests. The World Bank and IMF their annual meeting in Washington D.C. on September 28/ 29. They were discussing their development plans and global investment strategy for the coming year under shaky geopolitical conditions. A World Bank report prepared for the Johannesburg summit warns that "environmental problems and social unrest threaten international poverty reduction goals."



Omitted Iraq facts

You can bet that these facts, in the Bush administration's PR campaign to "sell" the idea of attacks on Iraq to the American public, will be omitted:

1 US corporations were Iraq's major source – perhaps only source – of biological weapons materials just prior to the Gulf War.
www.twf.org/News/Y1998/IraqHypocrisy.html

2 International weapons inspectors were instructed not to report the nation of origin of any such weapons they found stockpiled in Iraq.

3 Weapons inspectors in the late 1990s were satisfied that Iraq's capability to sustain a biological weapons program had been effectively ended.
www.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,4280517,00.html

4 Iraqi weapons inspections were halted by the US government, not by Iraq.

5 The Bush administration does not want Iraqi weapons inspections to resume; they arranged the ousting of Jose Bustani (former head of the Organisation for the Prevention Chemical Weapons) in the midst of his promising negotiations to reopen Iraq to inspections.
www.inthesetimes.com/issue/26/14/feature1.shtml

6 Iraq apparently poses no significant military threat to the US or to its regional neighbours.
www.mirror.co.uk/printable_version.cfm?objectid=11697201

7 The US government has produced no evidence linking Iraq or the Saddam Hussein regime to 9/11 terrorist attacks (and not for lack of trying).
www.converge.org.nz/pma/cra0439.htm

8 A US military attack on Iraq, as an act of aggression, would be explicitly illegal under every relevant US and international law.
www.crimesofwar.org/thebook/aggression.html

Local Newswire

Crystal Palace Fences Torn Down

At a candle lit vigil on Sat 21st, around 50 local residents tore down fencing blocking off part of Crystal Palace Park in south London. The fencing had been erected by Bromley Council pending development of the park area. In previous years the site had been earmarked for a huge 18 screen UCI cinema but lobbying, protests and direct action were successful in stopping the development.

Social Centre News Update

St.John's nursery in Hackney, London has been occupied by parents in protest at its closure by Hackney Council. This follows similar actions and an ongoing campaign in the borough, where Socialist Alliance candidate Paul Foot is to stand for Mayor in October. Elsewhere in Hackney the Random Artist Collective has opened a squatted community art space at 282 Richmond Rd and are running practical DIY workshops alongside exhibits and a newly installed Riot Squad Records shop.

A recently opened squatted Social Centre in Colchester has been ordered closed after court action by PFI partners Capita Insurance Services. The 50 room building had been left empty by the Capita Group for years, but the new occupants had more community minded plans including cafe nights, internet access and children's events.

A new resource centre (La.R.C) has opened in Lancaster. Not to be mistaken for 'LARC' (the London Action Resource Centre in Whitechapel) the Lancaster Re-Source Centre in Penny St has a literature section and internet access and is open on Wednesdays from midday to 7pm.

Meanwhile the Carnivalistas are founding the Lambeth Community Action Network in south London, while raising funds to buy a space for a new social centre. The Carnivalistas are part of the growing London Social Centres Network which includes Emmaz (www.emmaz.org.uk) and the Radical Dairy in Stoke Newington (020 7249 6996 for summer events). See the growing list of Uk Social Centres at http://www.geocities.com/mersey_a/socialcentres1.html Manchester MERCi Centre <http://www.bridge-5.org/merci.htm>

Reclaim the Futures - party & workshops

A Reclaim the Streets inspired party/workshop weekend was held by and for an amazing array of participants, bands, performers, activists and dancers at a reclaimed venue in Tottenham – the old Leisure rooms. The party was to raise funds for future actions/events and was a great success.

YOUR LOCAL VOICE

How to publish your own reports on the Indymedia UK Website:

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Step One: All you need do to start is hit the 'PUBLISH' link on the front page of the site (www.indymedia.org.uk).

Step Two: Follow the instructions on the Publish page (they're easy to follow) - you have to enter some information about the report you are uploading - a Title for your report and your name, which can be anything you like. There are also other spaces on the form for your email and telephone number etc, but you don't have to fill them in.

Step Three: You then just need to select what it is you want to publish on the site.

Text: If you are submitting a text report then simply type straight into the part of the form called 'Text Stories - the article', and then hit the 'Publish' button at the bottom of the form - That's it! Your report will now be added to the website.

Photographs: If you are submitting a photograph you need to select the picture from your hard drive using the 'Browse' button in the 'Multimedia Stories' box, then select from the drop down menu what type of picture it is (either jpeg/jpg image or gif), and then hit the 'Publish' button at the bottom of the form - That's it! Your picture will now be added to the website.

Audio / Video: If you are submitting either an audio or video file select it from your hard drive using the 'Browse' button in the 'Multimedia Stories' box. The Indymedia software will auto-detect nearly all file types. Just make sure that you have named your file correctly: for example song.mp3 or interview.ra for audio files; for video use names like video.rm or film.mpg, hit the 'Publish' button at the bottom of the form - That's it! your sound or video clip will now be added to the website.

It really is that easy! There are some guidelines covering what type of reports should be uploaded on the publish column, and where to post announcements.

Contaminated GM News

DEFRA will allow the planting of the genetically modified winter oilseed rape trials following the results of seed testing for GM contaminants. Last week, Dorset Police Press Department were forced to correct their original media statement which claimed that protestors had targeted the wrong field during an action at Hilton in Dorest. Fourteen were arrested for 'criminal damage' and aggravated trespass when they attempted to decontaminate the illegal GM trial site. The protest was in reaction to the news that an unauthorised release of antibiotic-resistant GM oilseed rape has occurred in over twenty five GM trials since 1999.

In defense of Titnore Woods

The future of the ancient Titnore Woods in Durrington, threatened by property developers and their bulldozers is defended by a well-supported local campaign against a threatened 900-home estate. However the local police seem to be overly jobsworth in their bid to identify "organisers" of the campaign. Police questioned a woman who helps produce local independent newsletter 'The Porkbolter' about plans by protest group Ye Olde Friends of Titnore to deliver a letter on Sunday September 1 to the landowner, and were eager to be provided with names.

Previously Worthing police hassled a Titnore Lane resident with repeated visits because she was displaying a "Save Titnore Woods" placard. The letter in question is a special scroll inviting the landowner to enter into a covenant with the people of Worthing to preserve the future of Titnore Woods "for our children, our children's children and our children's children's children".

Sustainable Woodland Community

On the 14th August the inhabitants of Steward Community Woodland workers cooperative, set up in April 2000 in the Wray valley as a permaculture based sustainable living project, received a 5 year temporary planning permission to continue their sustainable woodland living project. This decision comes as the culmination of two years of planning applications and appeals to the Dartmoor National Park Authority and the Planning Inspectorate.

The permission means that the 7 benders and assorted communal structures (bikeshed, longhouse, kitchen, workshop) are now safe, and that the community now have a five year period to further develop the project and achieve their aims. The community comments: "The planning conditions attached to this permission will ensure that this project remains sustainable and continues to have a positive impact on the local ecology and the surrounding community."