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Tense Moments for European Movements

The past month has seen the increase of a worrying trend in Europe, particularly in Italy and Spain, in the rising level of repression and state tactics against the anti-globalisation movement.

During the night of Friday, 15th November, 20 alleged members of the Italian social movement 'No Global Network' were arrested with another 22 people under effective house arrest. The accusations against them are levelled at: "Subversive association and political conspiracy finalized to disrupt Government functions, subversive propaganda and violent subversion of the economic order of the State". The charges are not of actual criminal acts but of 'political conspiracy' and 'subversive propaganda'.

The seriousness of the arrests are compounded by the fact that Francesco Caruso, leader of the 'No Global Network' from Naples and one of the main speakers of Italian Disobedients, was arrested and sent to the prison of maximum security of Trani, reserved for the Red Brigades terrorists. Also arrested were Francesco Cirillo and Giuseppe Fonzino, leaders of the movement

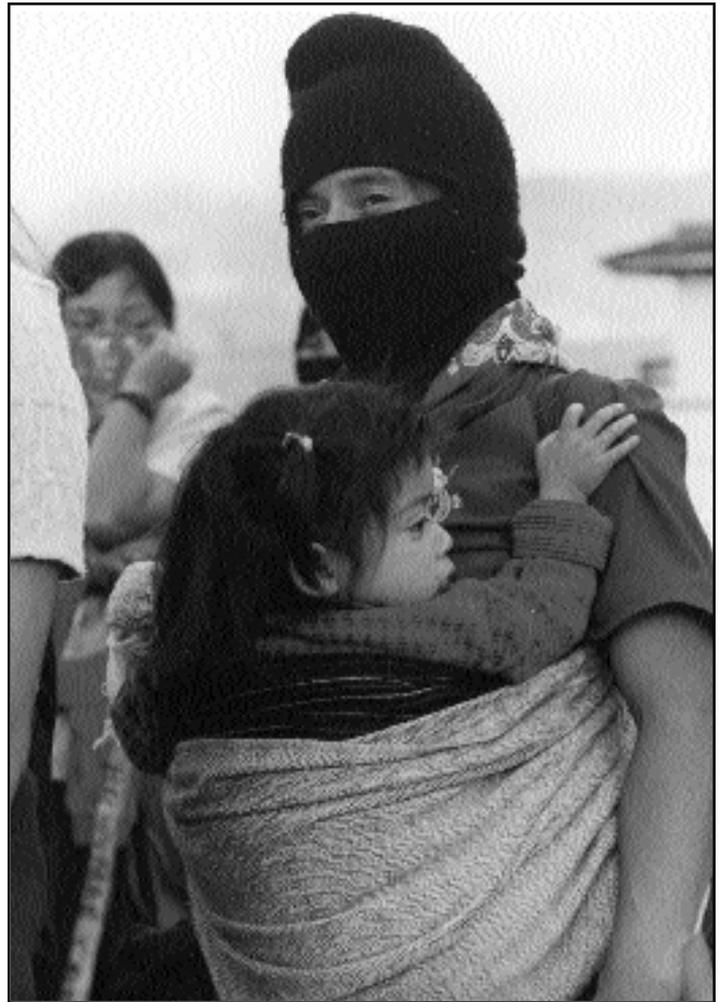
in Cosenza and Taranto.

The arrested were not allowed to seek information from lawyers. The other 22 people were searched and investigated within the same inquiry coordinated by the special investigative group of the Ros (Carabinieri), the Procura of Cosenza and the Digos (Italian political police).

In Italy speculation is rife that the wave of repression against alleged 'leaders of the anti-globalisation movement' and the particular gravity of the accusations (used in the 70s to fight terrorism) is clearly an intimidating act. This came just days after the success of November's European Social Forum in Florence which gathered last week over 700,000 demonstrators marching peacefully against global war.

Protests and demonstrations were called for to show solidarity with those arrested. Thousands of people took to the streets of many Italian cities with reports of 60,000 people in Cosenza on 23rd November, 30,000 people in Rome, 10,000 in Napoli and several thousand in Firenze, Genoa and Milan. At the same time a netstrike was proposed by the ECN

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Nine Year Anniversary of the Zapatista Uprising

1st January, 2003 marks the nine year anniversary of the Zapatista uprising, and the day when the Zapatista rebels of the EZLN broke their silence and took on San Cristobal de las Casas, the main town in the Mexican southern region of Chiapas, once again. The Zapatista uprising of 1st January, 1994 coincided with the introduction of the USA's led North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which imposed, amongst other trade rules and regulations, the removal of all Mexican tariffs against US agricultural products.

Ever since that day, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the Zapatista autonomous

communities of Chiapas have been rebelling against the neoliberal policies of NAFTA and the Mexican government, as well as resisting the attacks and repression by the Mexican Federal Army, whilst, at the same time, upholding the rights and culture of the indigenous people of Chiapas through a system of direct democracy, autonomy and participation.

Currently, the Mexican government is renewing its threats of arrests and evictions in the Monte Azules Biosphere Reserve region of Chiapas (read report by the Social Justice Committee) whilst still rejecting the Zapatista demands for autonomy, dignity and justice for the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

As a result of this situation, the Zapatistas chose the anniversary of their uprising to call for a day of protest in Mexico. Peasant organisations called for the blockade of the highways, the airports and even the frontiers. More than 25,000 Zapatista women, children and men - many wearing masks and carrying machete knives - of all ages and from all over Chiapas, came out of the mountains of the Lacandon jungle to march into the city of San Cristobal de las Casas, thus ending a period of silence that had begun nearly two years ago, after the EZLN's Caravan to Mexico City took place in April 2001.

For further information see: <http://chiapas.indymedia.org>



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- Isole Nella Rete network. On 3rd December all the people arrested on 15th November were released. This was however followed almost immediately by a further arrest spree, of lesser known member of the Italian movement, from social centres and those involved in more local activities.

A report by Indymedia Italy states that, "On the morning of the 4th of December, investigations against 23 people in different cities of Italy were instigated by magistrates. 45 raids in houses took place."

The accusations against those being investigated are related to the G8 protest in Genoa last year and are levelled at: devastation, depredation, fabrication and possession of explosives, possession of illegal weapons, resistance and violence against public officials.

The judge, Elena D'Allosio, ordered preventative arrests for nine of the 23 under investigation (four are under house arrest; six are obliged to remain at home; four to present themselves to the police station).

All of this happened the day after the liberation of the activists arrested on 14th November, 2002. The show goes on, in the days in which the magistrates want to shut the case against Placanica - the carabinieri who is accused of shooting Carlo Giuliani.

Once again, everyone is speaking about Genova and the events that ended up with the assassination of Carlo Giuliani: justice is equal for everyone, legitimate defence is not.



Local Newswire

Feeling Peckish? McDonald's is Selling Up from Central London

For years they have planned global domination, appearing on street corners all over the world.

Now - after being unable to escape them - visitors to central London will find a strange lack of McDonald's after the chain's decision to pull out of many prime locations.

The golden arches of the fast food giant will disappear from Oxford Street, Regent Street, Haymarket, Tower Hill Vaults and Whiteleys shopping centre. McDonald's most controversial branch on Hampstead High Street will also disappear - to the delight of campaigners who resisted it for 13 years.

Downturn in demand has affected its billion dollar profits and caused closures in other countries. Last week, McDonald's announced it was closing all its operations in three unspecified Latin American and Middle Eastern countries.

Nuke Sub Boarded by Peace Protesters

Two peace campaigners entered Devonport naval base undetected and boarded the trident nuclear submarine HMS Vanguard where, much to the surprise of MoD staff and dockyard workers, they rang the ship's bell.

The action was part of the Trident Ploughshares Disarmament Camp. Camp: 07773 640159 | Press: 07905 917532 / 07967 819514

Eco-protesters Target Eco-consultants

On Monday 4th December, a dramatic protest took place at an unlikely target: environmental consultants. Protesters from London Rising Tide occupied the Cavendish Square office of Environmental Resource Management (ERM).

ERM has been carrying out research work for oil giant BP on the proposed pipelines system planned to be built from Baku in Azerbaijan through Georgia to the port of Ceyhan in Turkey.

Meanwhile, on 27th November in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, a group of citizens together with representatives from NGOs and political parties went in protest to the office of the Georgian International Oil Company (GIOC), one of BP's partners in the pipeline project.

With banners and placards they want to raise their concerns over the environmental impact of the pipeline project.

Read more <http://www.erm-concerns.com/> and <http://www.risingtide.org.uk/> and <http://www.falkor.org/>



International Newswire

Growing Calls for More Democracy in Iran

As the world is focused on Iraq and Palestine, there is a growing democracy movement in Iran that is diverse and widespread. As conservative clerics, Mullahs, have recently sentenced to death the leading modernist Muslim scholar Hashem Aghajari, students have taken to the streets in protest to call for a people's referendum on the future of the government.

A group of Iranians are forming an Independent Media Centre in Iran to further the goals of a truly free and democratic Iran. Join their mailing list to get involved and support greater freedom in the Muslim world. For a full report see: http://indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=221677

Bush and NATO Protested in Vilnius

Long time forgotten Lithuania - a small Baltic country in eastern Europe - was at the centre of world affairs for a short time two weeks ago. The nation was formally invited to join NATO during its meetings in Prague and was visited by US President Bush two days later following meetings in Prague and with Russian President Putin in St. Petersburg.

On 21st November, the day of the official invitation, activists in Vilnius organised protests against Bush and perpetual war. The protests included stickers, posters, banner drops and street theatre. Police presence and action was pervasive, as persons were arrested for illegal postering and observed by the State Security Department (SSD). For the full article online see: http://prague.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=4434 or IMC Russia / IMC Prague

Passionately Saying NO to WAR

In Australia, one of the largest protests in Sydney's recent history took place on Saturday with up to 20,000 anti-war demonstrators. The peace march was held in conjunction with similar events across Australia as part of a National Weekend of Action Against War on Iraq which involved trade unions, student, environment, community and religious groups.

Around 15,000 people also marched in Melbourne while thousands more protested in other towns and cities. On a lighter note and staying in Australia, Activism was re-named Pash-tivism when a mass kissing action took place inside the State Parliament, chalking up a grand total of 154 kisses. The apparently bizarre snogging action was in reply to Police Minister Michael Costa's parliamentary denunciation of the 'Spin The Bottle Bloc' during anti-WTO protests last November. Mr Costa, apparently unaware that spin the bottle is a popular teen kissing game, took the phrase to be a code for violent disruption, viewing the reference to bottles as quote "disturbing threats of violence", after police confiscated a six foot model of a bottle! See IMC Sydney.

Animal Activists Sentenced to Prison

10 animal activists were sentenced to seventeen days in prison and a blanket fine of 20,000 Euros for squatting the office of the Biomedical Primate Research Centre (BPRC) in Rijkswijk on Sunday 24th November. The activists locked themselves in the building to protest against the tests done there. They were arrested and spent ten days in prison before their trial on 5th December. The additional seven days were given as probation. The BPRC currently holds about 1,500 primates for medical research, as shown on a 40 minute video. The BPRC, its owner TNO and their financial adviser, ABN Amro, one of the biggest banks in the Netherlands, are regular targets of protests. Most of them are carried out by the Campaign Koen, named after the recently deceased chimpanzee called Koen who was infected with HIV 20 years ago and kept in solitary confinement until his death. see Netherlands IMC

Anarchist Parenting

An interesting site from the US and introduces us to Anarchist Parenting, for all those budding breeding radicals out there! A very interesting site. Remember, it all starts at home. For more info see: www.anarchistparenting.com/

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Step One: All you need do to start is hit the 'PUBLISH' link on the front page of the site

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 - 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, then select from the drop down menu what type of file it is (either mp3 or realaudio for audio files, or realvideo for video), 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, where to post announcements, current debates and a mission statement in the making.

Summits in Portugal, Denmark and Finland Blockaded

The tenth ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was held in Oporto, Portugal on 6th and 7th December. Protests were held to denounce the role of the OSCE in European affairs.

The start of the demonstrations were violently dispersed by the police. Just several minutes after the arrival of protestors near to the OSCE meetings, police removed the barriers they were standing behind and charged at the protesters, beating them with batons.

Television coverage showed that the police charged without provocation or reason.

There were 15 people injured, 2 seriously and 10 arrested, of which the majority were people taking pictures or filming. Later in the day, police also tried to take film from persons who had photographed them earlier.

Journalists present at the OSCE conference later laid down their photo and video cameras on the entrance floor and threatened not to cover the summit if one of those arrested, a journalist with official credentials was not immediately released - this seemed to work as she was indeed soon released.

The irony of all this was it occurred on the day the OSCE conference was discussing declarations on civil liberties, free speech and fighting terrorism.

EU Summit in Denmark

From 13th to 14th December the final EU summit of Denmark's presidency of the EU is taking place in Copenhagen.

As in Gothenburg last year activists planned a counter summit and demonstrations. The

radical left in Europe is mobilising now to take part in the protests, continuing to challenge what they see as the illegitimate power of the EU and its neoliberal globalisation agenda.

Leading the protests is 'The Initiative for Another Europe', a coalition made up of Danish and European activist groups, grass root organisations, left wing parties, and labour organisations who want to focus on environmental issues and labour rights.

For coverage check out Danish Indymedia @ <http://endk.indymedia.no/>

Demonstrations in Helsinki

In the run up to the EU summit demonstrations on Friday 6th December, the Finnish national day, an energetic and strong demonstration took place around the Presidential Palace in Helsinki.

There were two simultaneous marches: one of radical leftist and trade unionist groups, and one of colourful and creative resistance led by a dancing and drumming samba band. The goal was to siege the Presidential Palace where the rich and the powerful held their elitist national day celebration.

Around 600 people protested, one commented:

"This year the manifesto of the demonstrators obviously hit the right spot."

As we arrived, we saw some hundreds of protesters gathered at the riot fences set up by the police. You could sense the frustration of young people towards the system, which, on the one hand, accuses them of their 'lack of interest' towards politics, and on the other, accuses them of 'terrorism' whenever they choose their forms

of political action by themselves.

The streets leading to the Presidential Palace were sealed off by fences and by lines of riot cops with batons and shields. The protesters attempted to push through the police lines a couple of times, but failed.

A report in Finland's biggest newspaper claimed the situation "was about to turn into a riot".

But in reality there were no missiles thrown and no property damaged.

All in all, the protesters showed very clearly that there is opposition to the neoliberal order which they say has been - year after year - increasing the gap between the rich and the poor, reducing public services, turning welfare system into control system, increasing precarious forms of labour, and detaining and deporting refugees and immigrants.

"Let me explainify the war against Iraq a little bit in Texas terminology."

We not Exxonnerate Saddam Hussein for his actions.

We will Mobilize to meet this threat in the Persian Gulf until an Amoco ble solution is reached.

Our plan is to BPprepared.

Failing that, we ARCOming to kick his ass.

DemocracyMeansYou.com



Firefighters brave the cold weather to demonstrate for fair pay in central London.

Landless Peasants Evicted in Brazil

On 5th December, around 8,000 homeless workers were evicted by riot police from a land occupation in the city of Osasco in Brazil. Since mid-July, the workers had been occupying a large unused urban area of 50 hectares near a golf course in a middle class neighbourhood. After months of negotiations with the state government of Sao Paulo, a peaceful eviction was agreed.

However, on early Thursday morning, 5th December, bulldozers arrived and destroyed tens of houses as women and

children looked on crying, until the residents negotiated another deal. At this point, buses and trucks arrived to transport their possessions to a provisional holding area. The state government will now send them to a new location 30 miles away.

In Brazil hundreds of thousands of landless people have been occupying sites to provide their own homes and grow food. Despite high levels of popular support, they are often subject to violent repression and in the past few years many have been killed.

A Medieval Verbal Duel Between Marcos and Garzon

Some surreal news has reached the Indymedia desk about a possible public debate, a medieval style verbal duel, between the Zapatista leader, Subcomandante Marcos and the Spanish judge who tried to put Pinochet on trial, Baltasar Garzon. The saga started when Marcos wrote a letter in which he called Garzon a clown and criticised his role in the criminalisation of Basque nationalists and the illegalisation of the independentist party Batasuna.

The letter caused immediate outrage in Spain, and prompted Garzon to retaliate by accusing Marcos of supporting the armed separatist group

ETA, while challenging him to a public debate.

Marcos denied the claim that he supports terrorism, but he accepted the challenge in a letter full of chivalrous references. He proposed the terms for the debate, to be held in the Canary Islands in the spring, with a seven member jury.

Marcos, famous for always appearing masked, has offered to unmask himself in the event that he loses, while if he wins over Garzon, the latter will have to champion the indigenous demands for recognition of rights and culture in international tribunals.

The debate would take place as part of wider

discussions by civil society on a peaceful resolution to the Basque conflict. This is an attempt to break the closed bloody dialogue between ETA and the State, and refuse both lines of political violence.

Despite the almost comical circumstances of the events, the proposal to hold these peace talks is potentially a revolutionary step towards ending the spiral of conflict between Spanish and Basque nationalists. The conflict is also being used by the Spanish government to criminalise all social movements and groups on the left of parliament, through repeated attempts to link them to ETA.



Piquetera in Argentina continue to block main motorways to enforce their demands on the government

Tension in Venezuela

After weeks of strikes and streets demonstrations, which have divided the country to the verge of civil war, Venezuela is in a state of tension

Sectors of the oil, banking and media industries, have been waging an ongoing campaign against the populist president Hugo Chavez since he came to power. The reasons behind the confrontation are Chavez's opposition to neoliberal policies and US interference in Latin American sovereign states.

An indefinite general strike against Chavez called on 2nd December was accompanied by companies blockading oil tankers in an attempt to paralyse the heart of the economy of that once rich country.

However, thousands of Chavez supporters have also taken to the streets in a series of events which culminated in a 24 hour vigil outside corporate TV and radio stations throughout the country. They claim the corporate media is being used by its owners to oust the democratically elected government.

On Tuesday, the government informed of the imminent threat of a *coup d'etat*. Meanwhile, international mediators from the Organisation of American States try to settle a resolution of the crisis, probably involving new elections early next year.

However, anti-government leaders maintain their objective is to oust Chavez, so the situation remains extremely volatile.

Indymedia will be showing grass roots films of the Venezuela struggle as part of our monthly screenings at the Other Cinema - see the site for details.

Italian Prosecutors in London to Interview those Arrested and Beaten in Genoa

Meanwhile back in the UK, Italian prosecutors were last week in London to hear evidence from UK residents in connection with the Genoa anti-G8 protests last year. They heard testimonies from those who were beaten, arrested and tortured after the police raided the offices of the umbrella group Genoa Social Forum and Indymedia. A huge number of inquiries are still underway in Italy, and the latest news indicates that high ranking police officials are now implicated in a plot to both frame protest groups and justify the violent actions of the police, after yet more evidence has emerged, regarding the planting of petrol bombs during the raid.

To listen to Radio Sherwood go to - <http://sherwood.it/> For up-to-date information see IMC-Italy - <http://italy.indymedia.org/>

Another worrying case of political repression through the application of anti-terrorist laws to social movements comes from Spain. Three weeks ago, four squatters were arrested in Valencia in unclear circumstances, apparently in relation to some broken windows in an estate agent.

After the judge had an interview with the head of the Information Brigade of the police, charges were increased to

terrorism. This means that the detainees are not allowed to receive any information about their case or sentencing and the impossibility for the defence to know precisely what acts the squatters are accused of committing.

Since then, demonstrations, sit-ins and all kind of protests have been taking place all over Spain, demanding their release on bail and the withdrawal of terrorism charges. Several lawyer associations, including the Barcelona Bar Committee for the Rights of Detainees and the University of Barcelona Observatory of Human Rights, have joined the string of voices opposing the court's action.

They claim the interpretation of anti-terror laws in this context is blatantly wrong and mainly designed to repress and intimidate people. Family and friends were threatened, beaten and identified when they went to the courts and police stations to inquire about those arrested.

Similarly, a demo of 1,500 people in Barcelona last Saturday was savagely attacked by riot police when people were dispersing, with a toll of 15 protesters injured and two arrested. For more info see Barcelona Indymedia. <http://barcelona.indymedia.org>

Repression on Spaces, of Freedom and Expression

With the ever increasing onslaught and demand for the privatisation of space, the fight for shelter is a fight for one of the most exclusive commodities. This has become a massive focal point of struggle for social justice.

The fight against eviction in the past weeks has been demonstrated in Hamburg. The right-wing Hamburg government, elected just over a year ago, had recently declared a desire to get rid of all 'Wagenplaetze' (travellers' sites) as soon as possible, and so eventually one of the most well-known, 'Wagenplatz' Bambule, received their eviction order for 1st November. The order saw the largest

eviction in a long time take place in Hamburg in the early hours of Monday 4th November.

Situated in the middle of a traditionally 'alternative', yet fashionable neighbourhood, Bambule has served as a symbol for alternative ways of life. One of several sites in Hamburg and other German cities where people live in lorries and trailers where many of those living on such sites are involved with local political activism such as social centres, anti-racist work, etc. On hearing the news of impending eviction, the city with a long history of strong autonomist movements, was awakened with invigorated protests against the

eviction of the Bambule. On the Saturday night prior to the eviction, and as a culmination of a week of action, hundreds of people gathered in several street parties around the city. On the night of the eviction (which was Sunday 3rd) police had amassed around the neighbourhood 'Karolinenviertel' where the Bambule was situated. At around 7.00 am over a 1,000 riot police equipped with water, supported by police from Berlin and from neighbouring towns, started to advance from all sides into the small streets of the Karolinenviertel. Here several hundred supporters of the Bambule waited, having occupied several crossroads and erected

barricades to defend the 18 vehicles due to be evicted. The night saw clashes between police and protesters angry about the way the eviction had taken place, as well as the fact that the Bambule inhabitants had been driven out of the city and some been arrested.

On Saturday 9th, one week after Bambule's eviction, demonstrations and actions took place once more in the streets of Hamburg with a 4,000-strong demo with participants from a wide section of society expressing their disgust with the right-wing city government.

For more information see feature on IMCUK world page or IMC Germany.