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Carnival against oil wars & climate chaos

On Thursday (April 24th) London's Royal Festival Hall was host to two disparate, but similarly themed gatherings. The first was the British Petroleum (BP) Annual General Meeting (AGM), where shareholders and various chairmen and CEOs gathered to review the companies economic accumulation for the year. The event was flanked by an entourage of private security, police and surveillance teams.

Recognising this auspicious event in BP's calendar was the Carnival Against Oil Wars and Climate Chaos, ready to meet the delegates and BP employees with music, jugglers and samba dancers and plenty of counter-info.

Outside the AGM hundreds of copies of the 'Real' BP Annual Report 2003 were handed out to arriving shareholders - this amazingly produced glossy magazine depicted BP's rape of the land, its contribution to climate change catastrophes and exploitation of indigenous peoples and peasant farming communities. The event was also crucial in revealing the complicity of oil companies in the attack on Iraq and other oil wars as they strive to fund, open and control new foreign oil markets.

For over an hour as crowds gathered, a samba band played tunes of resistance to drown out the talk of corporate green-wash and hypocritical hyperbole of concern over environmental impacts. Together with the band, sexy samba dancers provocatively wiggled their bottoms and streamed pink ribbons at delegates and the lines of police 'protecting' the entrance to the AGM, while several women dressed in black mourning clothes with veils greeted the shareholders.

Meanwhile, inside the AGM, a small number of campaigners made their objections clear,



shouting and letting off stink bombs before being forcibly ejected. Outside many banners adorned walls and bridges leaving no one in any doubt as to the reasons for the protest, with one large info display detailing the many forms of environmentally friendly energy sources available

to us. At one point the samba began to snake around the crowds and slowly danced their way around the exterior of the venue, easily gliding past a small accompanying police line. They brought with them a small crowd of campaigners and activists. As they **Continued on Page 2**

War, what are we fighting for? – Imperialism and oil

Although the bulk of the fighting in Iraq has subsided, the aftermath of the war is only beginning. The civilian death count has yet to be reported, and the Pentagon announced that it "has no plans" to determine how many civilians were killed or injured during the war.

US forces remain firmly entrenched in Iraq, where they are likely to remain for a long-term occupation. As Iraqi civilians looted hospitals and archeological museums, US troops were busy

protecting the Ministry of Oil building.

The US military continues to impinge on the freedom of the press in Iraq, banning from the Palestine Hotel members of the human rights group Voices in the Wilderness. This occurred after VITW released a press release outlining US failures in Iraq.

Postwar plans for a democratic Iraq have been revealed to be fraught with hypocrisy. Many have questioned whether the US is interested in a real

representative democracy or simply colonialism in the region.

There has been much talk lately of the new global role that the United States is playing. Some claim that the United States used the war on Iraq to send a message to the rest of the world: don't stand in the way of US economic and geopolitical interests, or else face brutal consequences. There is already evidence that the US intends to continue its foreign policy in this fashion. Leaked on 22 April,

a secret memo written by Donald Rumsfeld calls for "regime change" in North Korea, and the US seems to have moved on quickly from its task in Iraq, as it now threatens Syria in familiar tones.

Leaked Rumsfeld memorandum:
<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0421-08.htm>

Reports from Baghdad:
<http://www.indymedia.ch/frmix/2003/03/6719.shtml>



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reached the back entrance they were stopped by a heavier mobilisation of police. The campaigners danced at the police lines but were vigorously pushed and shoved back, with one or two rougher incidents. As the samba left the back entrance, there was one of the several incidents of random "Stop and searches". The young lad in question was searched apparently for offensive weapons.

With the AGM underway inside, the samba band and campaigners were back on the riverside of the south bank, to listen to an alternative "AGM" that was getting underway. This AGM had all the markings of the real one inside, except that the PA system was provided by two mobile sound systems mounted on tricycles. Announced by a besuited chairman spoofing the sustainability ethic of BP, a new BP logo - BP the frog - an amphibious green reptile - was unveiled. We heard hysterical environmental reports and financial reports, as well as a wonderfully funny freak weather news slot.

On a more serious note speakers included a representative from Colombian communities under daily threat from paramilitaries sponsored as protection rackets for corporate interests. A representative from the Kurdish communities taking about the human costs of the new BP Baku-Cyan pipeline project, to be built across miles of natural habitat. There were amazing poetry and singers contributing to the voices raised against the destructive force that is the oil industry.

The alternative AGM was informative, funny and a whole lot more concerned about the principles of environmental protection, civil rights, climate chaos and the real human costs lost to BP's profit driven agenda than the "real" AGM inside the Festival Hall.

As the AGM wound down to its conclusion, the crowd joined in making a one hell of a noise for around one minute cheering, whooping, blowing whistles and banging drums to make certain those inside the AGM could hear dissenting voices. Finally those present outside voted not to accept the real BP annual report. With the mobile sound systems blasting out music and delicious veggie pasties and cakes being served the event drew to a close, but not before the crowd again danced around the Festival Hall as the delegates were leaving.

More info see:

<http://www.burningplanet.net/main.html>

Reclaim our water

Oil fuels war, but the struggle for water is likely to make it worse as states are competing for scarce water supplies and companies see it as a commodity for profiting from the poor. From 16-23 March at the third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan, thousands of delegates discussed if water is to be a basic human right or a commodity owned by private companies. Ten corporate players dominate the global water industry, which is estimated to be worth \$400 billion annually, CEO of Suez, Gerard Mestrallet, promotes the worldwide expansion of Suez into new markets as a philosophy of "conquest". Suez and Vivendi Universal together control over 70 percent of the existing world water market and operate in over 130 countries. Consequences of water privatisation in the South can be seen in Argentina, Bolivia and South-Africa where prices have risen and quality dropped. Summit organisers portray the WWF as an international body with a mandate to protect water resources. But human rights advocates charge that it is really an exclusive club accountable only to the demands of the market.

While most of the delegates were corporate representatives with vested interests in privatization, there was a separate global grassroots presence as well. In retaliation to workshops like "How Will the Poor Become Customers?" a broad coalition of over 30 organizations from some 27 different countries challenged the privatisation drive at the WWF. Grassroots activists decided to speak out at a panel of top executives from the leading water companies. They took control of the discussion from the floor as speakers told story after story of the daily crises caused by water privatization in their countries. A Mexican activist from Cancun brought a plastic bottle of brackish tap water, which was dark brown and smelled of gasoline, to pass around the panel for inspection.

Tom Goldtooth, of the Indigenous Environmental Network said it is up communities around the world to safeguard water resources for future generations. As one native woman put it, "I am the Colombia River." An Argentinian trade unionist observed, "You are not happy with taking us to war over oil. You want to take us to war over water too," Vandana Shiva drew applause when she pointed out that "People do not drink money, we drink water." Shortly thereafter, two large banners appeared on

stage, one reading "World Water Council Mafia" and the other, "No Profits from Water." On cue, about 100 civil participants walked out by way of the stage, blocking the presenters behind their expansive desks. At the end of the meetings, a group of water activists crashed the "members only" meeting held by the World Water Council. They announced that more than two hundred organizations had signed on to the Water is Life Alternative Vision Statement. The statement is meant to counter the World Water Forum's vision of water as a commodity and source of profits.

Given the recent decision by the world's largest water company (Suez) to pull out of major cities in the South, and the growing opposition to water privatisation in many countries, there are signs that the tide may be turning for the corporate water giants. However, western countries are also seeking the privatisation of water through the WTO General agreement on Trades in Services (GATS). The future of water supplies, however, will be better off, if maintenance is done in a participatory way by the people themselves; Peoples' Global Action's (PGA) last international in Bolivia, September 2001, recognised this need and created "sustained campaigns" and a communication list (water@lists.riseup.net) was initiated.

As a result, a loose network of people have started to organise around the issue of water. And one powerful option in discussion for a European context is to target bottled water. Bottled waters, like Evian, are straightforward targets because they exemplify the final consequence of capitalism; the disappropriation and profit-maximisation of the most pristine sources of life, because water is life. As a consequence, groundwater is being depleted at incredible rates to fill the millions of plastic bottles and cans with which we quench our thirst, leaving behind a massive mountain of rubbish. The water business is greater in turnover than oil, incredible but true, and well-known brands such as Evian or Perrier, both owned by Nestle, are the most prominent high-value sales, reflecting the corporate interest in our water.

For more info:IMC Japan

<http://japandada.bandwidthcoop.org/feature/display/119/index.php>

Green pepper: <http://squat.net/cia/gp/greenpepper.htm>

Peoples' Global Action: www.agp.org

YOUR LOCAL VOICE

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

offline

THE INDYMEDIA NEWS SHEET

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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, 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.

Faslane: The really big blockade

Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base, thirty miles from Glasgow in Scotland, is where Britain's Trident nuclear missile submarines carrying nuclear weapons with the destructive power equal to 1,000 Hiroshimas, are moored.

Over the last two and a half years there have been four sit-down blockades of Faslane disrupting work in the base. Over 1,000 people from all walks of life have been arrested including politicians, church leaders, students and pensioners.

They were acting in peace for peace - upholding international law that forbids the use of indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction.

April 22nd saw the "Really big Blockade" of Faslane, by campaigners of all ages and from many countries for almost ten hours. Starting before 7am the annual big blockade saw over 600 people taking part in the action, many locking themselves together using chains and plastic tubing as they blocked the access gates of the base. There were over 170 arrests, including seven people arrested during breaches of the base.

Banners were hung on the fences and giant puppets danced in the street to the sounds of a samba band as three different waves of activists arrived at the base. One campaigner said: "This has been a great action with so many people with such a diversity of age, nationality and background willing to put themselves on the line to disrupt these horrifying weapons of mass destruction."

Trident is illegal under international law because it would kill millions of civilians - The manufacture of Trident pollutes the environment with deadly radiation - Trident takes millions of pounds away from housing, hospitals and schools

For more info: <http://www.banthebomb.org/rbb/index.htm> and Indymedia UK front page.

Real Lives Not Media Lies

Activists are targeting the mainstream media for its pro-war bias on the invasion of Iraq. In the U.K., on April Fools Day in Manchester, thirty people occupied the News International Office, which owns the Times, the Sunday Times and the Sun. Once inside they handed out literature to the staff before being painfully removed. In London, a protest outside the BBC was met with a line of police preventing access.

The above actions followed a demonstration outside the Manchester BBC offices which saw two marches converge on the Headquarters. Earlier last week, BBC deputy Editor Mark Damazar was confronted with a barrage of questions at a public discussion organised by Media Workers Against the War criticising the pro-government war led agenda.

On the eve of the invasion of Iraq, Sir Ray Tindle (owner of over 100 local newspapers) ordered the editors of his papers to censor any dissenting views about the invasion of Iraq.

In Totnes, Devon, the Editor of the Totnes Times, Gina Coles, wrote a front page article (20th march) in which she referred to Tindles demands as a 'brave move' and said she was proud to back him. Residents of Totnes were not amused and as well as boycotting the censored papers, they produced a one-off independent paper to provide a forum for the issues being censored by the editors of newspapers owned by Tindle.

On Wed 23rd, a group "visited" the offices of the Totnes Times, many wore masking tape across their mouths to symbolise the censorship of the anti-war movement in Totnes Press release:

http://uk.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=64520
Where you can also download a copy of the special paper.

EU Summit in Athens, Greece

As up to 20,000 police guarded the EU meeting in Athens, Greece, up to 8,000 anti-war protesters clashed with police and smashed shops and banks. Police mounted an unprecedented security operation in the city of 4.5 million people, turning Athens into a fortress. Some 20,000 officers were on duty and dozens of key streets were blocked off. Police responded with tear gas and savage beatings, and were met with stones, bottles and petrol bombs.

Elsewhere several other blocs (parts) of the demonstration managed to get near to the meeting, but were met with tear gas. Several undercover police and agents provocateurs were beaten by protesters and expelled from the demonstration. The British, Italian and French embassies were all attacked, and about 100 demonstrators occupied a British Airways office in an Athens suburb to protest against Britain's role in the U.S.-led war on Iraq.

The summit was held to ratify the accession of 10 new member states, but was overshadowed by the EU's bitter splits over the Iraq war. The day ended with 106 arrests, with many arrestees reporting police violence in custody.

For more info: <http://thessaloniki.indymedia.org/>

Argentina fights factory evictions

Argentinian workers fight evictions and repression of co-operative buildings With only ten days to the upcoming election, strong repression is the governments answer to economic problems and to the resistance of the people. Squatted factories and houses, as well as cultural and social centres are in danger of being forcefully evicted. It started on 25 February, with the eviction of the squat "el Padelai" in which about 500 people lived for 20 years. On 14 April, the ex-Mayo bank building located in the Buenos Aires neighbourhood of Barracas was evicted. The "Lezama Sur" popular assembly recovered the building in 2002 and it had since been a major cultural and political centre for the people of Barracas. Among others it also housed the office of IMC Argentina

The Brukman factory is a suit factory under worker control. The 55 workers, mostly women took over the factory in December 2001. This is the third eviction that the workers have experienced. Burkman is one of the factories in Argentina that is run by the workers themselves, a major factor in Argentina's crisis-ridden economy. From the 18th April, thousands have gathered around the Brukman factory in Balvanera, Buenos Aires to support the workers that were finally evicted on Thursday at 11pm.

The eviction involved a massive operation, which included almost 2000 officers in front of the factory and hundreds more in the neighbourhood around the factory; Human Rights groups have called it a militarised zone, while the police strapped live ammunition to their chests. The workers and those who support them however are standing firm and will not leave until the workers control the factory once again.

On the 21st the Infantry division of the Argentina Federal Police showed its true face in a brutal repression of the 7000 people who had gathered around the Brukman factory to help the workers reclaim what is theirs. After 4 days of waiting in front of the factory and after the Government repeatedly refused any real negotiations the workers attempted to peacefully enter the factory by moving the barricades the police had formed. The workers however where met by a shower of tear gas and rubber bullets, to the point where the whole city block was turned white in tear gas. The people

defending themselves as best as they could where chased by the police who continued to shoot at them, in some cases following them over 25 blocks to a children hospital and then shooting tear gas into the hospital itself.

Motorcycles belonging to police roll on the street of Balvanera neighbourhood, persecuting demonstrators who run away from their repression, even inside hospitals and universities. Journalists are also being blocked from visiting and counting the detainees. On Balconies outside the factory and near the Police station, in an act of solidarity people have begun to bang pots and pans to support the demonstrators.

The night of the 21st ended with over 100 arrested, and 32 wounded, one of them by live ammunition; the police forces have been denounced by the Argentina IMC. The wounded also included 2 IMC journalists injured by the police while in visible possession of their press credentials and equipment. Workers are expected to continue mobilising.

For more info: <http://argentina.indymedia.org/>

Barcelona Day of action against war

The city of Barcelona was shaken on Thursday 10th April as thousands of people took to the streets in a day of protest against the killing in Iraq and the permanent war. Many businesses were closed, following a call by several anarcho-sindicalist unions for a general strike of 24 hours. Actions were continued until the late evening.

Since the early morning, groups held protest actions in front of banks and chain shops, shutting down many of them and convincing others to participate in the general strike. Around midday, large groups of people - often forming spontaneous demonstrations - converged from all sides onto the city centre. There, at least ten thousand people started a loud and colourful cacerolazo demonstration, banging on pots and pans, lamp poles and police cars, and setting up mobile sound systems. Protest rallies ("escraches") were held in front of a big bank which is involved in the arms business, at the stock exchange and at the ministry of the economy.

At the city centre, a group of protesters shut down the Burger King "restaurant" at Plaza Catalunya and opened a popular kitchen on the street in front of it as part of the campaign "Active Boicott". Demonstrations continued until the late evening, including an anarchist demo, a shut-down protest at a petrol station, and a human mosaic. As every night during the past weeks, a giant cacerolazo ended the day. All over the city, people got out on the pans. As every night, a deafening roar filled the streets, a massive outcry against the war, whilst, at the same time, expressing the increasingly popular demand of "Que se vayan todos!" (They all must go!), a slogan taken from the streets of the Argentina's popular revolt and now shouted in Barcelona as a rejection to the right wing Spanish government of the Popular Party.

This day of action was just the latest in a long series of events against the war, that under the slogan "Guerra a la Guerra" (War to the War), have been taking place in Barcelona and elsewhere in the Spanish state during the past weeks. Seven houses all over the city were squatted for anti-war events, demonstrations took place on almost a daily basis transforming the city onto a continuous state of protest, and several camps were set up in the city centre, one of them directly in front of the doors of the local government palace, were activist groups and social movements have been discussing the war, the relation of the anti-war movement to other social movements, and actions were planned.

Facing death in the frontline of resistance

On 11th April 2003 in Rafah, occupied Gaza, International Solidarity Movement (ISM) peace activist and photographer Thomas Hurndall was shot in the head by an Israeli sniper as he shielded children from the line of fire. He remains on a life support machine in an Israeli hospital. Tom's parents have visited the site of the shooting and ISM activists in London have met with the Foreign Office to demand a full investigation of the incident. The Israeli military has so far refused to comment.

This follows American peace activist, Brian Avery, 24, of New Mexico being shot in the face from machine gun fire from an Israeli Armoured Personnel Carrier about 6.30pm, 5 April 2003. He was at the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) Jenin headquarters when he and a colleague left to investigate sounds of gunfire from the

centre of the city, about two blocks away.

They had traveled about a hundred metres when they arrived at a major crossroad and saw two armoured personnel carriers advancing towards them at low speed. There were no Palestinians on the streets in the area, armed or otherwise. At the sight of the armoured vehicles both activists stood still and raised their hands above their heads.

The first armoured personnel carrier was 50 metres from them when it fired a burst of machine gun fire at the ground in front of them so that they were sprayed by a shower of broken bullets and stones. Tobias, Brian's companion, leapt aside. He had fled about three steps when he looked back to see Brian lying face down on the road in a pool of blood. When he was shot Brian was wearing a fluorescent red vest with a

reflective white cross on its back and front.

Brian's left cheek has been almost totally shot off. At the Martyr Doctor Khalil Suleiman Hospital in Jenin he was treated by a specialist who recommended that he be transferred immediately to a hospital in Afula in Israel but his departure was delayed because the Israeli military refused to grant his ambulance safe passage for more than an hour. From Afula Brian was transported to a hospital in Haifa by helicopter.

This latest incidents come shortly after death of ISM activist Rachel Corrie 23, who was killed on 16 March when she was run over by an Israeli bulldozer. Rachel was trying to stop the bulldozer from demolishing the home of a Palestinian doctor in the Gaza Strip. Rest in Peace.

For further information see: <http://www.palsolidarity.org/>

Mayday 2003: "Serious Disruption To The Business Community"



Around the world people were out on the streets celebrating Mayday. In London the stage was set for a series of protests making the links between Arms and Oil as well as other issues (see www.ourmayday.org), with further protests taking place in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Bradford and beyond.

The annual Trade Union march to Trafalgar Square continued to gather support this year, with Globalise Resistance, Stop the War Coalition, War on Want, World Development Movement, and the TUC coming together to oppose war, racism and privatisation. In joined as well the Socialist Stockbrokers, and in the City of London people vacuumed up after capitalism.

In the days building up to Mayday there had also been a series of supporting actions and protests by Campaign Against The Arms Trade. This Mayday was also the 3rd birthday of Indymedia UK.



Machine guns at the Baxter Detention centre

Australia: Sunday 20th April saw the first day of protests at the Baxter Detention Centre, which began with hundreds of people arriving at the city square park in Port Augusta.

There they were given an indigenous welcome and were joined by the local aboriginal radio station, Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association.

That afternoon around 500 protesters broke through a police roadblock 2km from the detention centre in an attempt to set up camp as

close as possible but were forced back by police despite much resistance.

On the second day, 300 people downed a small perimeter fence and moved closer to the making as much noise as possible in an effort to be heard by those inside. A text message from detainees later that night confirmed that they had been able to hear. Detainees were locked in their compounds and under intense surveillance during the protests.

In the morning of Day 3, police entered the

camp armed with semi-automatic weapons in search of what was supposedly a "rifle". Around five Star Force police raided the camp after seeing the "rifle" from their helicopter. It turned out to be a protestor's tripod. Protesters challenged the police chanting "take your guns and go". After viewing the protestor's own video footage and ascertaining there was no weapon, police agreed to withdraw from the camp.

Melbourne Indymedia: <http://melbourne.indymedia.org>

Baxter watch: <http://www.baxterwatch.net/>