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Migrants March... 'Presente'

"Latin America presente... Africa presente... Asia presente.."

Chants on the October 7th London demo on the Transnational Day of Action for Migrants Rights, demonstrated the breadth of grassroots network building in the UK and globally. This was the third such convergence, the first took place in 2004, demanding the closure of detention centres, the regularisation (amnesty) of all immigrants in Europe and the recognition of the right to remain. The theme for the second in 2005 was the "freedom of movement and the right to stay". This year, the focus was on regularisation, migration controls and the border regime. This theme challenges issues of (illegal) detention and deportations, immigration controls, criminalisation of refugees and asylum seekers, denial of rights and the fear generated by the state to control a precarious class.

In active support of the migrants movement for marching for their own rights, London saw over 500 people join in a loud, colourful and

diverse march that had a festive atmosphere. Beginning south of the river at the Imperial War Museum winding through the streets past Borough High Street the march stopped at Beckett House, an immigration reporting center where asylum seekers have to 'sign on' regularly. There, a letter was handed in to the reporting center while speeches described what de-humanising processes occur inside. The march ending with a rally and music in a park whilst others prepared for a conference to follow up the issues the next day.

The support on the streets recognises the struggles of the Migrants Movement which challenges both the internal and external borders of Europe; arriving as asylum seekers, economic migrants, the environmentally displaced, war survivors, one of the fundamental struggles is to be recognised as a holder of rights – to stay, live, work, marry and move freely. 'Rights' for migrants however are the first casualty, in a process of 'dehumanisation' where cultural tags such as 'asylum seeker' strip identities and allow for

exploitation and criminalisation. The militarised and border controls of Fortress Europe reinforce negative treatment of those seeking entry by adopting a language of alienation - 'removals', 'holding centres and 'dispensable labour force'. However the past year has witnessed an upsurge in migrant and refugee struggles. There have been an increasing number of self-organised initiatives by immigration detainees such as hunger strikes and collective demands over the appalling conditions in detention centres.

Workplace-based organisation of migrants have grown in strength over the past year, notably the "Justice for Cleaners" campaign on the London Underground and in the City of London, carried by the Transport and General Workers Union. Networking and communication continues to develop, creating greater visibility for migrant struggles and increasingly vocal calls from NGO's, activist and community groups and trade unionists to put the issue of regularisation back on the political agenda.



Global Migrants Movement

In **Vienna**, some 350 people joined a demonstration against detention pending deportation and for the freedom of movement. Later one speech told of the situation of one man who started hungerstrike against custody pending deportation. A new law against foreigners (in force since January 1, 2006) has made it is possible for the officials to forced feeding people who are detained under the foreigners law and who are using hungerstrike as protest against custody pending deportation. From the **US**, the National Immigrant solidarity network reported that on Friday 29th Sept, the Senate passed the shameful Border Fence Bill, calling for construction a multi-billion dollars 700 miles of wall along the 2,000-mile border with Mexico. In **Brussels**, people 'with no papers' joined a Reclaim the Streets party on the Saturday. In **Athens** a demonstration for the rights of the children who are born in Greece to get Greek citizenship took place. Around 500 people participated in the demo, one week before municipal elections will take place. The demo went through small streets were lots of

immigrants live and work (athens.indymedia.org). In **Hamburg**, about 6-700 people, among them many refugees, demonstrated, against camps and deportations, for the right to stay and equal rights for all. Although it was raining people were in high spirits due to music from a truck with soundsystem and information about a new global passport, which was available on the demonstration, and also to several speeches, telling about struggles here and elsewhere. Meanwhile activists in **Lindau** staged a symbolic landing of a immigrant boat in the yacht-harbour of Lindau. Once landed the immigrants were 'arrested' and brought to an 'internment camp' in the city-center. during the action a number of speeches were held and flyer's were distributed among the public (de.indymedia.org). In **Rotterdam** on the morning of Friday the 6th of Oct activists climbed on the floating deportation prisons in the harbour of Rotterdam and blockaded the entrances by locking themselves to the gate (nl.indymedia.org). For more see www.Indymedia.org and <http://no-racism.net>



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www.indymedia.org.uk

Ten Facts about migrants in the UK

01 Refused asylum seekers and many asylum applicants, who are normally from the global south, are frequently detained and/or electronically tagged

02 They are frequently deprived of the right to work meaning they, together with visa overstayers and trafficked people, are forced to work in the informal economy and/or in jobs which are dirty difficult and dangerous for the lowest wages.

03 Failed asylum seekers, overstayers and trafficked people are effectively denied the right to access justice, full employment rights, and non-urgent health and maternity services. They are also denied the right to marry in a civil ceremony.

04 Many regular migrants who have entered the UK using "legal" routes or via Accession are denied full employment and social rights. Non-EEA migrants will be subjected to the ID card before UK nationals and to surveillance at work and when they use public services.

05 For many developing countries such as Ghana and Bangladesh remittances from migrant workers including those in the UK are very important to their national countries' economies and local people's survival.

06 Many migrants who are well-qualified are forced by their immigration status and visa conditions to work in jobs that are not commensurate with their skills and qualifications

07 Capturing lost taxation and other revenues could net the Treasury up to £1 billion a year more when set against the potential £4.7 billion cost of deporting the entire irregular migrant population (IPPR: 2006)

08 The UK is already holding more than 2500 people who have not been convicted of any criminal offenses, in immigration detention centres at a cost of more than £2 million per week. It costs £812 to hold a person in detention for one week, excluding overheads. Source: Asylum/Immigration [Cost of detention] House of Commons 16/06/06

09 The number of persons who were removed or departed voluntarily (either as a result of enforcement action or under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes) from the United Kingdom (UK) in 2005 was 58,215, a decrease of 5 per cent on 2004 (61,160).

10 Asylum removals: (including assisted returns and some voluntary departures) rose by 9 per cent in 2005 to 13,730, excluding dependents. Including dependants, 15,685 failed asylum seekers were removed in 2005, 5 per cent more than in 2004 (14,915). Info: <http://www.october7.org.uk>

Conference on Migrants and Refugee Rights

Organised by October 7th Network

As part of the International Day of Action, London NoBorders organised a one-day conference (8th Oct) bringing together NGOs, activists, trade unionists, socialists and migrants to discuss concrete steps for starting a movement on migrants and refugee rights. The challenge, and hotly discussed, was to find a common platform amongst all the different positions on regularisation, immigration controls and freedom of movement on which we all can work together. Though the Coalition has not happened formally, and another meeting was arranged to discuss this further, the discussion went ahead with ideas of how our groups can link up with other migrants and refugee groups, and how to reach out to groups or institutions that are not necessarily working with migrants and refugee issues, but have a link to it on a less subtle level, like teachers teaching English to migrants who have an interest that migrants are coming here to save their jobs.

>> The migration website on indymedia is going to be used by the participants to post events or conferences for strengthening or expanding the networks.

>> The Date for further discussion is on 29th October at 4pm at the TNG building near Holborn tube station.

>> Monthly picket of Communications House, next one on 4th November, 1 pm to 3 pm. (<http://noborderslondon.blogspot.com>)



UK-wide Actions

Elsewhere in the UK, members of Birmingham's Anti-Racist Campaign, supported by Birmingham No Borders, gathered in Victoria Square in Birmingham to lay wreaths to commemorate asylum seekers who have died as a result of the government's immigration policies. In Glasgow, several hundred people converged on George Square, having set off from points north, west and south of the city centre, for a march and rally organised by the Unity of the Union of Asylum Seekers (UNITY). The rally finished with a performance by local / international hip-hop crew Fugees United.

Links for more information: Indymedia's Migration page <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/topics/migration/>
<http://noborderslondon.blogspot.com>
<http://www.ncadc.org.uk> <http://www.asylumsupport.org.uk>



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

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

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.

Photos / Audio / Video: 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 etc), and then hit the 'Publish' button.

It really is that easy! There are some guidelines covering what type of reports should be uploaded, sections to post announcements, current debates local contacts and a mission statement. The site is for you to use!

Discriminatory Asylum Vouchers

Over 5,000 'failed asylum seekers' in the UK receive £35-a-week vouchers instead of cash for their NASS support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, despite concerted efforts by the Home Office to open routes of enforced and 'voluntary' return to get rid of them. The so-called "hard-case support" claimants are stigmatised, demeaned and discriminated against on a daily basis. Yet, the House of Commons have recently debated extending the use of vouchers for more asylum seekers, 4 years after the original Asylum Voucher Scheme was abolished following huge public pressure and a lot of criticism. In most, if not all, cases, these vouchers are exchangeable for food and drink only, at prescribed retail outlets only (big chains, that is). This means asylum seekers are unable to buy clothing, footwear and other essential needs; are unable to use public transport and telephones, despite the fact that most of them are required to 'sign on', on a weekly or monthly basis, at far-away immigration reporting centres. Further, it means they have limited access to culturally appropriate food and cheap, local shops.

De-vouchering: A dignifying alternative, obviously, is to swap the vouchers for cash without having to be exploited. And this is what some grassroots activists have been doing recently with a limited number of asylum seekers. Many voucher recipients used to drop in at the Cottage Occupied Social Centre in Birmingham, where Birmingham No Borders held their meetings and activities, to 'swap vouchers'. This practice, however, stopped when the Social Centre was evicted last month. The same has more or less been happening at the Food Not Bombs servings, which take place in Birmingham's city centre every two weeks on Saturday. <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2006/10/353502.html>

Manchester Hummer Protest

On the 16th October around 40 individuals inspired by the camp for climate action shut down the Bauer Millett hummer dealership in Manchester town centre. The protest began with activists posed as potential buyers. They were informed by the car dealer that although the new Hummer3 was technically classified as a Heavy Goods Vehicle it still fitted into some large parking spaces! Then the "real" activists arrived and started telling other potential buyers about the destructive value of 4x4's. A banner saying "Stop urban 4x4s" was then dropped from the tram bridge overhead whilst other activists attached themselves to the 4x4's in the forecourt, one lay covered in fake blood a casualty of the killer hummer. The police then arrived more concerned over the safety of the vehicles. www.climatecamp.org.uk/ www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk/ www.suvsuck.org/

UK Anti-McDonalds Day

On Thursday, 16 October a variety of protesters gathered outside McDeath in Leicester Square displaying a large McExploitation banner. Over a thousand McLibel leaflets were distributed to the public, many of whom were in support of the action. McDonalds is despised in many corners for the poor quality of food they sell, promotion to children, their exploitation of workers, lack of consideration towards the environment and massive contribution towards the misery of millions of animals every year. Protests also took place in Nottingham and Beeston. www.mcspotlight.org/

Saving Queens Market

The women Newham, London will be taking to the streets from their local Plashet Park on Saturday 28 October, heading a procession to save Queens Market, one of

London's most multi-ethnic markets. The procession is held on the first Saturday after Newham's festivals of Diwali and Ramadan. It will have an atmosphere of a carnival celebration with children blowing whistles and a marching samba band. The procession goes along Green Street, which is the food and shopping heart of Newham, up to Queens Market. The Parks constabulary have been warned to expect a huge attendance as community anger is boiling up. One shopper spelled it out, 'The council men in suits and the company men in suits are hand in glove to hijack our market! Totally undemocratic! But we're the women, we're the shoppers, we will make them all do u-turns!' <http://www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk/>

Occupied Dalston Theater Eviction

The occupied theatre on Dalston Lane (Hackney, London) is currently facing eviction - the local council has got permission to demolish the buildings from next Wednesday. Dalston Theatre was occupied in February to protest against the gentrification of the area and has ever since been open as a community centre, hosting a variety of activities and workshops. The first attempt to evict the building, in March, was successfully resisted. Now, the



International Newswire

The Occupation of Bellanaboy.

"This is no longer a public road, we own it now". Garda LM261 The myth of Shell's newfound commitment to achieving "local consent" before proceeding with the Corrib gas project was utterly debunked this month, as an army of around 200 police forcibly removed Shell to Sea protesters from their picket at the proposed Bellanaboy Corrib Gas refinery site. This underlines Shell's disregard for the concerns of the majority of people in Mayo and reinforces the Shell to Sea prediction that the only way this project can go ahead is by the use of force. Clearly the state is more than willing to lend its strength to Shell to be used against the people it supposedly serves.

Related Link: <http://www.shelltosea.com>

The taking of the Golden Highway

South Africa: "Highways are the arteries and veins of the capitalist body. This week, we took the Golden Highway. With our bodies and whatever else we could carry, we blockaded this highway. For a few hours it wasn't business as usual. For a few hours, our voices could be heard. On 6th September this year, we took the highway for the first time. Our slogans were 'No Freedom Without Basic Services' and 'No Peace Without Development'. We wanted the Mayor of Johannesburg, Amos Masondo, to come to Orange Farm to address the lack of service delivery in our township. So, we took their highway' peacefully. Their police responded with rubber bullets, birdshot and teargas. Many people were hurt. We refused to disperse. Others joined us as the police went into Orange Farm randomly shooting people busy with their daily chores. This was not the last blockade. Each time we return to the highway, we are able to hold it for longer. For as long as our voices are not heard and our problems not addressed, we will return to say 'there will be no peace without development'." <http://southafrica.indymedia.org/>

Challenges to Israel's Wall

As on every Friday for the last 20 months, the villagers of Bil'in, supported by international and Israeli activists, marched from the village mosque after prayers to the Israeli annexation wall, which has stolen around half of the village's agricultural land. Not deterred by the intense midday heat and their empty stomachs (as Muslims, they are fasting throughout the day every day during this holy

occupiers are asking for support to resist the eviction once again. The week of resistance started with a "Day of Celebration" last Sunday, 15th Oct.

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2006/10/353509.html>

Rambling round "Croughton balls"

On the 7th Oct, around fifty peace campaigners today took a walk around the perimeter fence of "RAF" Croughton, finishing with a picnic, entertainment from the Oxford Sea Green Singers and speeches from Felicity Arbuthnot, John McDonnell MP and the Rev David Platt. RAF Croughton is a little known but essential component of the US communications and spy network which includes other bases on UK soil such as Menwith Hill.

www.indymedia.org.uk/

en/regions/westcountry/2006/10/352840.html

Liverpool Squat Action

There is a plan to open an empty building for a few days of educational workshops and events. This could be a one off or the start of something big. More people are needed. What would you do with an empty building? Contact: liverpool_squat_action@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

month of Ramadan), many villagers decided to continue the protest by marching down the slope along the wall. They were immediately attacked by Israeli forces firing multiple rounds of tear gas.

Around 20 protesters suffered from the effects of the gas and were forced to disperse into the olive groves where they watched as the Israeli Army turned their attention to children in the olive groves on the opposite side of the road. Snipers took up positions and started firing rubber bullets at children in the groves, who responded by throwing stones.

The Israeli troops then prepared to invade the village itself, but villagers blocked the road with rocks, and the village youth successfully managed to prevent soldiers from the world's fourth largest army from invading their town, armed only with the stones they could find on the ground. <http://www.imemc.org/>

Continuing Red Alert in Oaxaca

The federal government is preparing a massacre against the people of Oaxaca. Thousands of military police units are already in the state, and hundreds of bulldozers have been seen. In the past weeks, gunmen have killed and wounded protesters from the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO) which groups together hundreds of local organizations. APPO have occupied Oaxaca's historic central plaza; taken over television and radio stations; blocked state government office buildings; painted most of the city with graffiti calling for Governor Ulises Ruiz's ousting; led a march of several thousand people over 250 miles from Oaxaca to Mexico City; and built thousands of barricades throughout the city. Since August gunmen including plain-clothes police have shot at protesters in marches and at their camps, so far killing six people and wounding fifteen. Paramilitaries have also abducted movement leaders and participants, and the people of Oaxaca face an impending police and military invasion. The conflict in Oaxaca began months ago, but exploded into a massive, statewide civil disobedience uprising after a failed attempt to violently evict the striking teachers, protest camp. The teachers union, Section 22 of the National Union of Education Workers, are refusing to return to classes until the present state government is dissolved. <http://imc-yucatan.espora.org/>

<http://www.narconews.com/> <http://mexico.indymedia.org/oaxaca>

Barcelona Mobilises for the Right to Dignified Housing



"V de Vivienda-V de Victoria" (V for Housing-V for Victory) is the main slogan for a movement that is growing in several Spanish cities. Barcelona and Madrid have recently seen mass mobilisations for the right to have access to housing for everyone, against speculation and gentrification. This 'new movement' has taken most people by surprise, not only for its social make up (a mix of seasoned activists, squatters, young families, students, people with mortgages, homeless people and so on) but also for the way it became first visible in the streets (the early calls to action spread through SMS mobile messages)

In Barcelona, this has solidified into the "Popular Assembly for a Dignified Place to Live", which main aim is to prevent housing from continuing to be a commodity. Following the first spontaneous mobilisations of spring and early summer, on the 30th of September

around 15,000 people followed the Assembly's call to take to the streets, thus transforming something that started as marginal into a 'social movement'. On the 16 and 17 of October the Housing ministers of the EU were due to meet in Barcelona, but later this summit was cancelled at a short notice, a move that many argue is a direct result of the strength of the recent popular mobilisations in the city. Other recent actions included an occupation of Barcelona's main Ikea store on the 14 of October, when around 100 people staged a 'Pyjamas Party' and 'moved in' to the bedrooms, living-rooms and kitchens in display. The main Ikea's logo in Spain reads "Welcome to the Independent Republic of Your Home". The activists shouted: "What Republic?, and What Fucking Home!?".

Video: <http://www.sindominio.net/v/bcn/?p=42>
For updates: <http://bcn.vdevivienda.net/>

Sack Parliament!

At 1pm on Monday October 9th, up to one hundred and fifty angry and concerned people converged on the Palace of Westminster, to sack parliament. The plan was to surround parliament and cause parliamentary activities to cease. MPs, Lords and civil servants would be prevented from re-opening Parliament after the summer recess. According to participants, "The rank incompetency of the cabinet, the government and parliament in their handling of both foreign and domestic policy cannot be ignored any longer. Take part! Stop them continuing their wars; we have only one option left: sack parliament."

Various groups and individuals had called out for events to happen on the day. The first of these was a Critical Mass meeting under Waterloo Bridge at midday. Later, an anti-authoritarian and anarchist block meeting in Parliament Square, which would be near to the Rehabilitation block and Party@Parliament both of which were prepared to offer support and advice to sacked parliamentarians. The right-wing media have also helpfully publicised the event, and helped to show just what the police think of protest in this day and age -



'Womble riot threat as Commons opens' by the Evening Standard; As soon as protesters started to arrive, police quickly moved in to stop and search everyone that was considered 'suspicious'. Many people were turned away from reaching Parliament Square, others were singled out and surrounded by police units and prevented from joining the protests.

An NUJ photographer was hospitalised by police after being violently thrown onto a kerb. He was apparently grabbed by police and swung forcibly around by his arm, falling and hitting his head hard.

The people were trapped in a large police ring and were eventually let out and escorted from Parliament Square after having been searched, photographed and identified. All were told that they would be reported for summons for the

offence of taking part in an unlawful demonstration, under SOCPA law. Aside from assaulting and hospitalising NUJ photographer, Marc Vallee, fairly early on in the day, the police dished out some pretty uneven and dodgy treatment to other members of the press who had come to cover the events at parliament square. Their tactics were clear from the start, with Parliament Square and the surrounding areas packed with police vans and FIT teams.

There were reports of up to 40 people having been arrested. The court hearings for those arrested and summoned started on Tuesday 17th Oct at 10am in West London Court. Video footage from the 7th was screened a few days after the event at Rampart Creative center. A request to have the British government arrested for war crimes was sent to national newspapers.

Upcoming Events:

Sat 28 Oct: National Anti-Incinerator Summit, London.

Sat 28 Oct: Queens Market Women's March.

Sat 28-29 Oct: "No More Fallujahs" weekend of mass civil disobedience, London.

Sat 4th Nov: International Demonstrations on Climate Change ahead of UN Climate Talks.

6th Nov: Day of Action Against Short Haul Flights.

25th Nov: National DEFY-ID Gathering, 11am Sumac Centre, Notts