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Ten years of uprising: twenty years of the EZLN

The 1st of January 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) uprising in the state of Chiapas, southern Mexico, and 20 years of modern Zapatismo. Under the campaign "El Fuego y La Palabra - EZLN 20y10" (The fire and the word), thousands of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Chiapas, Mexico and all over the world, have been remembering and celebrating that early morning of 1st January of

1994, when an army of primarily indigenous people shouted Ya Basta! (Enough!) whilst taking over San Cristobal de las Casas and several other major towns of the state of Chiapas. With that rebellion, the Zapatistas not only declared war on the Mexican government, but also to NAFTA, the free trade 'agreement' that went into effect that same day, and which, the rebels claimed, "it meant death to indigenous peoples".

Throughout the following decade, the EZLN has been a key reference for anti-neoliberal and anti-racist struggles around the globe. The Zapatistas have not only injected the anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation movement(s) with notions of horizontality and direct democracy as a way of organising and operating, but they have also consistently pointed out the need for autonomy and diversity within a global 'movement of movements', made up by a civil society that has many different faces, voices, ways of expressing and modes of being visible.

During the evening of the 31st December 2003, as well as during the 1st January 2004, a series of celebrations took place in each of the 5 Zapatista Caracol centers in Chiapas. These were modestly attended by the EZLN and Zapatista communities rank and file, and somewhat more generously by national and international supporters. The Zapatista caracol of La Realidad became one of the major focus of these celebrations in the rebel Zapatista territories, where hundreds of people gathered to dance and listen to radio broadcasts by some EZLN commanders in clandestinity.

Zapatista solidarity actions and celebrations also took place in many parts of the world, some of which included: Barcelona (Catalunya), Chicago, Iruña (Basque Country, Spain), Helsinki, Mexico, Sheffield and Ljubljana (Slovenia). In London, a special Zapatista radio program was streamed worldwide by the community radio station Resonance FM.

Indymedia Chiapas: <http://chiapas.mediosindependientes.org>



Tom Hurndall Rest In Peace / West Bank update

Tom Hurndall died on the 13th January, after several months on life support in a London hospital critically ill, diagnosed as brain dead. Tom was shot in Rafah (Gaza, Palestine) in April last year while pulling away children out of the way of a tank. The Israeli sniper who shot Tom was arrested only days before Tom's death. The army leadership has now admitted that its initial accusations of Tom being armed and in camouflage, as well as its claim that the soldier was returning Palestinian fire, were lies. "Mr Blair, you know now

that an Israeli soldier has confessed to shooting in cold blood an unarmed British citizen who was trying to shepherd children away to safety. When will you be ready to openly condemn these actions?" Jocelyn Hurndall *January 10/04 Guardian*

The arrest of the sniper is particularly important, as opening fire on activists in Palestine is becoming increasingly regular for the Israeli army. On December 26th, Israeli soldiers fired live ammunition into a non-violent action. Gil Na'amati, an Israeli from the Anarchist Movement Against the

Wall, and an American woman of the International Solidarity Movement were seriously injured. The demonstration was convened by Palestinians, Israelis and Internationals against the Apartheid Wall as part of the programme of activities of the Deir Ballut village Camp against the Apartheid Wall. Later, on 1 January the Israeli army fired over 100 rubber bullets aimed at people's heads during another demonstration. Approximately ten people were taken to the hospital and deportation orders were issued against four activists,

including a Swedish MP.

The beginning of January has seen an escalation of resistance to the Israeli state's "separation fence" in the occupied West Bank. Protests and direct actions are taking place daily, marked by highly visible solidarity among Israeli and Palestinian activists, as well as by the Israeli state's use of lethal force against Jewish citizens.

<http://jerusalem.indymedia.org/>

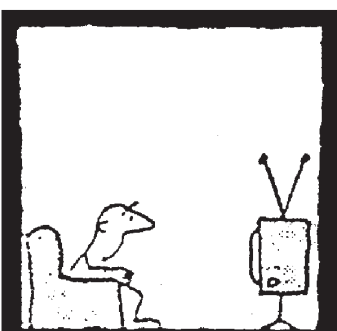
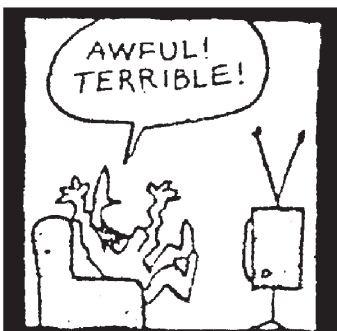
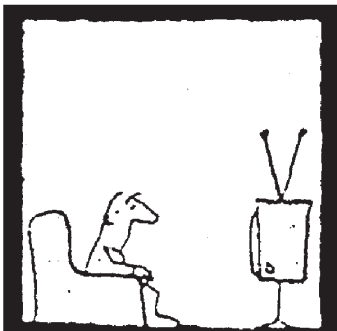
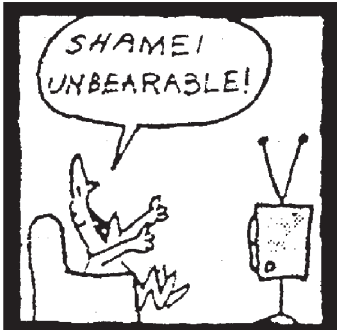
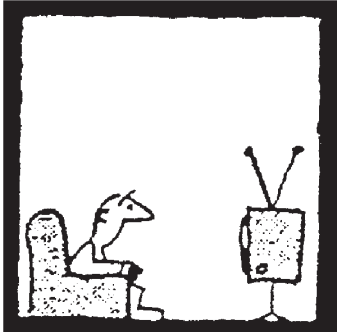
<http://indymedia.org.il/>

<http://electronicintifada.net/new.shtml>



Indymedia is an open network for information produced by grassroots groups challenging the bias of corporate media. To report your own actions, upload photos and video or see what else is happening locally near you – visit the IMC UK website at:

www.indymedia.org.uk



Local Newswire

IMC London: DSEI 2003 samba court case dropped

The court case against a samba player from Turin, who had been accused of three counts of assaulting a police officer during the anti-arms fair DSEI protests last september, was dropped this week. The samba player was arrested at a protest against the DSEI arms fair delegates dinner at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, on the anniversary of September 11th.

Witnesses said police attacked the samba band, and then accused one member of the band of assaulting them. The police officer who had brought the case against the activist had typed the wrong court date in a memo, and so none of the police witnesses turned up!

The presiding magistrate rebuked the police for gross incompetence, and when it was pointed out that the defendant and several witnesses had come from Italy for the trial (as well as UK witnesses having traveled from Edinburgh and Northern England), he dropped all three charges and abandoned the case. Those involved say there is no doubt that the large number of defence witnesses helped convince the magistrate that the case should be dropped.

IMC Liverpool: Censorship of local news website

The Liverpool based Independent website The Kirkby Times was effectively censored by its ISP Blueyonder on the 28th Nov. Blueyonder, informed them that they had had received serious legal threats off Knowsley Council which led to Blueyonder pulling the plug on the Kirkby Times. The Kirkby Times have been fighting against local corruption in Liverpool for over two years. It takes a satirical view of the councils ineptness, which has obviously upset some people in high places. The Editor was able to mirror the website and now has it hosted abroad.

<http://www.kirkbytimes.co.uk>

IMC Manchester: Bayer GM Targetted in Widnes

On Thursday 11th December half a dozen Lancastrians made their way to a pesticide manufacturing site in Widnes to protest against Bayer's involvement in GM crops. Some of them entered the building, whilst others help up banners, made lots of noise and leafleted the staff car park. Work was disrupted for two and a half-hours, as staff locked themselves into their offices and site security barricaded the gates against the protesters. People inside the building eventually got to discuss Bayer's GM involvement with the site manager and demanded that Bayer pull out of GM now. Bayer CropScience (formerly Aventis CropScience) has tried to keep a low profile over its GM activities. The recent actions have scared Bayer into trying to prevent further demonstrations, and consequently restricting freedom of speech, by asking for a court injunction against named individuals and groups.

<http://www.stopbayergm.org/>

IMC Oxford: GM Pink Castle found guilty!!

On 15th December 2003 a District Judge in Weymouth, Dorset found four anti-GM activists guilty of aggravated trespass for attaching themselves to tractors. The activists were attempting to prevent the sowing of a trial of GM maize near Weymouth in May 2002. This marks the end of a drawn-out and contradictory legal process which saw all four activists cleared of aggravated trespass by the same District Judge in March 2003.

The four now face prison for refusal to pay the punitive costs. The story began back in April 03 when activists placed a pink castle on one of the two GM sites on the Littlemoor estate. The pink fortification stood guard over the entrance of the field in which the mutant remains of last years GM maize crop can still be found and also prevented Land owner Charles Foot from planting a new test crop.

www.sayhi.to/thecastle

International Newswire

Indonesia - Protester killed at Newcrest Mining site in North Maluku

On January 8, BRIMOB paramilitary police acting as security for Melbourne-based Newcrest Mining shot one person dead and arrested and beat many others of the Kao and Malifut community who took part in a peaceful protest against the company's open pit goldmining operations on their land in Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. PT Nusa Halmahera Minerals/Newcrest (Australia) has been conducting land clearing, without a permit, on the Toguraci protected forest since May 2003, in clear violation of Indonesian Forest Law 41/1999, which bans open-cut mining in protected areas.

A coalition of NGOs, including FoE Indonesia has formed "Solidarity with the Kao and Malifut Community".

<http://www.walhi.or.id/index.html> (FoE Indonesia) /

<http://www.jatam.org/english/index.html> (Mining advocacy website)

Seattle 99 WTO arrests illegal

A federal judge has ruled that the mass arrests of about 150 people during the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, three years ago in November 1999 were invalid. In a ruling in a lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Marsha Pechman said the arrests on First Avenue in Belltown violated the constitutional mandate that arrests be made only when police have probable cause to believe a crime has been committed.

Pechman called the Seattle Police Department's documentation of the arrests "atrocious" and noted that the arrest forms are incorrect in stating that the arrests were made inside a "no protest" zone closer to the WTO venues. A trial to determine whether the city is liable for damages is scheduled for Jan. 20 and will hinge on whether it can be shown that then-Mayor Paul Schell and then-police Chief Norm Stamper subsequently approved the mass arrests implemented by the police field commander. The plaintiffs suing the city allege that arresting officers made no attempt to differentiate between demonstrators and innocent bystanders.

Momentum gathering for the World Social Forum - Mumbai

Later this month the latest World Social Forum is set to take place in Mumbai, India, with tens of thousands of campaigners set to meet to discuss positive alternatives. The forum will run from the 16th-25th January and provides a counter point to the world economic forum due to be held immediately after in Davos Switzerland. The WEF informally brings together heads of government and business to discuss the corporate agenda, protests are of course expected.

World social forum: <http://www.wsfindia.org/>

No-WEF: <http://www.no-wef.ch.vu/>

How to publish your own reports on the Indymedia UK

Step One: All you need 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!

Getting To Grips With Information Society



The Geneva03 "We Seize" Polymedia Lab ran from Dec 9 to Dec 12, and even a few hours before it closed its doors, people were still working on about 10 permanent work-terminals and 30 laptops. A few hours prior, the number of connected laptops had peaked at around 40. Within the same building, a radio studio and various video streaming boxes were continuously in action - including streaming a live radio show to Resonance FM in London where it was transmitted over the airwaves.

The Polymedia Lab was an experiment in free sharing of knowledge and software, cables, boxes and food, and in some cases even clothes. It came together despite initial problems on Dec. 9th, when the authorities suddenly decided that the project could not take place at the scheduled location by closing it down. Eventually, Geneva City Council provided the Palladium, a stylish culture venue. Strangely enough, when the council was asked for a space a few weeks ago, they were not able to find something, claiming that all spaces were fully booked.

All this was taking place at the same time as the official UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, Switzerland. Throughout the week a video and audio stream was broadcasted worldwide by HighNoon. Activists demanded that the UN Summit address issues of intellectual property, human rights, the right to communicate, infowar, the rights to cheap generic medicine, and to free software as a model for technological development. Some of the issues addressed and debated, and projects put into practice in the Polimedia Lab included alternative networks such as New Global Vision (<http://www.ngvision.org>) and V2V (<http://www.v2v.cc>), who aim to collect and distribute videos on the



Internet using peer-to-peer networks. Both the projects suggest the Creative Commons license as a way to protect the productions and the authors. Other examples were of hacklabs (<http://www.hacklabs.org/>) and liberation groups such as Yomango (<http://www.yomango.net/>).

A one day event labelled as World Forum on Communication Rights also took place in Geneva alongside the WSIS summit on Thursday 11th. This was an independent civil-society led initiative, open to all seeking democratic, just and participative media and communication. This event was initiated by the Communication Rights in the Information Society campaign (CRIS), it is led by a coalition of international NGOs.

<http://www.geneva03.org/> / <http://hubproject.org/en/?l=en/> / <http://www.communicationrights.org/> / <http://www.crisinfo.org/live/index.php>

London IMC: W SIS - Feedback Session

An evening to report back from the World Summit of Information Society in Geneva and the We Seize initiative - and to discuss further participation / interventions / activities in the field of communication rights.

We'd like to invite those who were there and/or are interested to take communication rights activities further to come together in Limehouse Townhall on Friday 30th of January - to share experiences and information and to create some uk-based synergy for the issue. Some report backs are already scheduled, others will hopefully happen in an ad-hoc way. Please bring your pictures / slideshows / notes / video / thoughts along.

Friday 30 January, 7pm Limehouse Townhall, 646 Commercial Road, London E14 7HA

offline

THE INDYMEDIA NEWS SHEET

Offline is a monthly publication bringing the highlights of the IndyMedia website news back onto the streets. IndyMedia is a global network of news websites that encourage the public to report their own stories to the world uncensored. Aiming to providing background stories the corporate media continuously ignores. We would encourage you to photocopy this and spread it far and wide. For the latest copies download a PDF offline link on the site.



Noborder European wide day of action – 31/01/04

A European Wide Day of Action against refugee detention and for migrant rights, has been called for the 31st following a proposal made at the European Social Forum in Paris in November by the National Co-ordination of Sans Papiers (France), Co-ordination of Sans Papiers (Switzerland), Comitato Immigranti Italiani (Italy), Tavolo Migranti del Social Forum (Germany), Kanak Attak (Germany), and supporting groups (For the text, see "Common Declaration" on <http://www.basicrights.de/munich/index/002esf.fr.html>).

In the UK, on January 8th 2003, Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 came into force. Over the past year this legislation has made over 7,500 Asylum Seekers destitute. Within a week hundreds of Asylum Seekers were made homeless, many of them having to sleep rough before finding help.

Since that date, many groups have sprung up around the UK and Scotland pledged to Scrapping Section 55 and to providing what support they can for those made destitute until such time as it is scrapped. Around the UK from the 8th Jan there will be actions to highlight the hardship of victims of Section 55.

IMC Leeds: Anti-asylum Act Action

On the 8th January 2004, Waterside Court, the Home Office Immigration office in Leeds, which processes asylum claims had both the car park and pedestrian gates locked whilst protesters blockaded both entrances and leafleted pedestrians and drivers. Banners were displayed in front of the building with slogans of "No to Destitution, Asylum to all those who seek it" and "No Borders, Freedom of Movement". The

protest lasted 2 hours and ended peacefully.

The legislation gave the Home Office powers to deny asylum seekers access to support services if they did not apply for asylum 'as soon as reasonably practicable'. Subsequent legislation has attempted to separate asylum seekers from their children if they refuse to leave the country, as well as revoking their right to appeal. This legislation is being challenged under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

One participant in the Leeds actions said: "Leeds is a multi-cultural city and it is important to let refugees know that they are welcome here. We have a duty to give people access to public services who are fleeing from their country because of violence against them, wars or lack of work. They aren't coming here out of choice - the weathers awful! We should at least show some human kindness."

<http://www.leedsarc.org.uk> (ARC-action for radical change)

IMC Sheffield: January 31st - A Big Noise demo at Lindholme Immigration Centre, Doncaster

Lindholme Immigration Removal Centre in Doncaster, which has not had any previous actions at it yet, was criticised a few months ago by the Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers in a report into asylum detention, saying it needed "fundamental and far-reaching changes". Ms Owers had also said that detainees were not shown enough respect and were subjected to "unacceptable and unnecessary" random strip searches after visits and that, further, asylum seekers interviewed by inspectors neither felt safe nor knew what was happening to them. (<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2003/09/278236.html>)

IMC London: The demo is part of In the UK further actions include a march by refugees from the Congo in London to deliver a letter to Parliament/the Prime Minister, on the 30th or 31st, accompanied by drums and a picket/demo of the Daily Mail on Friday evening (30th). Actions are also being planned for other detention centres/prisons across the country. For more info see:

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2003/12/283098.html>

Australia Indymedia: International Asylum Plight - Nauru Island Hunger Strikers

On the tiny island of Nauru there are 284 desperate people, a third of them are children. The Australian Government and the International Organization for Migration have held refugees and asylum seekers there for more than 2 years. This has been part of the Australian Government's "pacific solution" to its problem with illegal immigrants, it is no solution at all.

Up until the 10th Jan there were 45 asylum seekers on hunger strike, including 16 in hospital, in a letter to Australian Immigration Authorities four of the refugees on hungerstrike said they expected to die.

To protest the situation of hunger strikers on Nauru, an Electronic sit-in was called for 9am Monday 5th January at the Australian Immigration Department and the Australian Liberal Party websites. Protests were also made at Australian Government Embassies over the treatment of the asylum seekers on Nauru.

The 33 remaining hunger strikers on Nauru suspended their protest on the 10th Jan, after hearing of plans for an independent Australian medical team to travel to the island. According to Hassan Ghulam, the hunger strikers representative in Australia, "they were encouraged by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' decision to review Afghan cases based on the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan."

Refugee advocates had initiated a campaign to ask for visas and travel to Nauru, although visitors to Nauru are being strictly controlled with specific visa refusals for lawyers, journalists and refugee advocates. Two New Zealand journalists did manage to use a travel loophole to visit Nauru and interview asylum seekers and much of the recent publicity has helped to regain some focus on the suffering of these stranded and abandoned people.

Nauru is arguably one of the most isolated spots on Earth, and deliberately chosen by Australia because if the public could see the detainees, this prolonged outrage would get more attention. But for a few pressure groups, the media and friends and family of the asylum seekers, the world had all but forsaken them.

For updates see:

<http://melbourne.indymedia.org>

<http://www.nauruwire.org>

