

# offline



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## More than half the story

Reports on the global strikes and actions on International Women's Day

March 8th brought together the amassed strength and possibilities harnessed in the bodies and souls of over half the world's population. It was a time to recognise and reflect on women's daily achievements, struggles and exploitation in an economically stratified neo-liberal capitalist system which extends to every hearth and kitchen table.

Thousands of women of all generations across the globe took various forms of action, marching, striking, singing and rallying in protest at unequal and inhumane treatment, oppression and unacceptable living standards. UNICEF reports that more than 20% of world's women suffer maltreatment. In Britain the figure rises to 25%.

Women have always fought and resisted oppression, but March 8th commemorates events in recent history. It was this day in 1908 that 15,000 garment makers of New York went on strike to demand shorter hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labour.

When some of them locked themselves in the factory in protest, the owner burnt it down with the women inside. This date, March 8th has since become International Women's Day, inspiring women worldwide in their fight for their rights and a celebration of their gender. This year the Global Women's Strike saw 51 countries on all continents taking part, demanding change to wage distribution, pay equity, as well as an improvement to women's living standards and an end to third world debt.

Coupled with the Global Women's Strike, International Women's Day saw autonomous actions around the world:

**Ankara, Turkey:** Police wielding truncheons detained 31 people at a rally for chanting political slogans.

**Nancy, France:** Two women's groups symbolically covered the plates depicting street names of well-known male figures, replacing them with those of heroines, including scientist Marie Curie and the writer Colette.

**New Delhi, India:** Hundreds of women attend a march in New Delhi on Thursday to demand equal rights, better healthcare and education.

**Istanbul, Turkey:** Thousands of Kurdish women marked the day with a minute of silence for the

victims of rape and honour killings. In London's Trafalgar square 'Wages for Housework' led an exuberant, diverse gathering of women, which marched to Parliament Sq. protesting as part of the Global Women's Strike. Solidarity for the Zapatista women was also mentioned in speeches.

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New Delhi, India: women demand equal rights and better healthcare



Helping themselves: Zapatista caravan hands out essential supplies to local communities on the way to Mexico City

## Facing the road ahead

Sunday, March 11th: The EZLN Delegation and accompanying Zapatista supporters have made their official entrance into Mexico City, greeted and cheered by an impressive crowd of more than 200,000 people. The central rally was held on the Zócalo – the central plaza and heart of Mexico City in front of the National Palace. A recent communiqué by the EZLN states that the delegation will remain in Mexico City "until there is a dialogue with Congress". An invitation by Mexican President Vicente Fox to meet in the Presidential Palace was rejected by the commandantes as it would be "a hollow media event".

Solidarity actions in support of the Zapatista's triumphant arrival in Mexico City have taken place in central London and around the world to highlight the

Chiapas guerrilla's three key demands: the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights; the removal of Mexican military bases from Chiapas and the release of all Zapatista political prisoners. Supporters gathered at the Mexican embassy in Hyde Park to listen to speeches and music. Later campaigners occupied Niketown in London's busy West End shopping area. Aggressive security guards attempted to stop the occupation but campaigners were able to unfurl banners while making impromptu speeches to shoppers and fellow campaigners denouncing the inhumane working conditions enforced by the sportswear manufacturer in the 'Global South', and thereby making the link between the actual costs of our commodity driven lifestyles and its impact on the everyday existence of people around the world.



Indymedia is an open network of information produced by groups and individuals, that addresses the bias of mainstream media. To report on actions in your own words visit the publish section of the IMC UK website at: [www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk)

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Women held a Day of celebration and protest with films and performances by female singers, dancers and poets. 'Soho on Strike' women stopped work and marched in solidarity with the Global Strike. Crossroads Women's Centre toured the city with their loud speaker system and headed a march with a huge multi-cultural female puppet.

For more information, see:

[www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk) and [womenstrike8m@server101.com](mailto:womenstrike8m@server101.com)

### Resist Sweatshops - Just do it!

A couple of well-known stores were also targeted as part of International Women's Day protests. Campaigners accuse them of violating human rights and exploiting women and children in their sweatshops as sources of cheap labour where young girls often as young as 12 work for as little as 11 cents a day in their bid to maximise corporate profits. After 6.00pm, with the Rhythms of Resistance providing extra energy, they moved down Oxford Street with a harried-looking police escort. No Sweat speakers described the abysmal conditions in these multinational factories and gave messages of unity to striking factory workers in Mexico who had occupied their factory.

Revealing the exploitation of women and girls in sweatshop factories, this protest was highlighting just one aspect of the effects of globalisation on women around the world.

For more events:

[www.gn.apc.org/womeninlondon](http://www.gn.apc.org/womeninlondon)

**Fact:** 95.5% of the world's property is owned by men. 4.5% by women.

**Fact:** Women do 2/3 of world's labour. 2/3 of this labour is unpaid.

**Fact:** Women receive 5% of global income.

**Fact:** Women constitute around 52% of the world's population.

**Bread & Roses.** "Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes. For our hearts starve as well as bodies. Give us bread, but give us roses." (*Striking mill workers in Massachusetts, 1912*)

### Let them eat cake...

Clare Short was left to eat a big slice of 'humble pie' after Just Desserts activists splattered her with short-crust banana cake as she delivered a speech on globalisation at Bangor University. She failed to mention new research which shows that by forcing developing countries to open their doors to foreign companies her policies make the poorest 40% of the population even poorer.

### Drug companies aid suffering

Activists boycotted the London offices of several drug multinationals recently as part of a global campaign to highlight the unnecessary suffering of 4.2 million HIV/Aids sufferers in South Africa. 39 pharmaceutical companies are currently engaged in a legal battle with the South African government to stop them producing cheaper generic drugs, claiming that their "patent copyright" is being violated. Multinational drug companies, who are making billions of pounds in profits annually through the sale of drugs such as AZT, are spending more on marketing than research.

### A manufactured epidemic

Thousands of farm animals are being slaughtered across the European Union as the Foot and Mouth virus continues to spread from the UK. Industrial farming has had a strong influence on the spread of both this and past epidemics. Mass meat production makes animals more prone to disease and excessive transport spreads epidemics in a matter of days. Low-tech local food production and consumption would be an answer, but the government has declared it will continue to favour intensive farming models. This week, 58 locations for GM oilseed rape beet field trials - sponsored by bio-tech giants Monsanto and Aventis - were approved.

### 'New terrorists' defy government Act

Activists involved in Reclaim The Streets, anti-genetics groups and the Network Against the Terrorism Act (NATTA) have protested against the Terrorism Act which came into effect last month. Statues of famous figures from history - such as Emily Pankhurst and Nelson Mandela - were awarded sashes bearing the legend 'Terrorist', as they too could be labelled terrorists under the new law, and a large 'Terrorist' banner was unfurled in front of the Houses of Parliament. The Terrorism Act has attracted the condemnation of human rights groups, who have said



Short for words: Clare gets it in the face in from a Welsh cook

it removes fundamental liberties and has been described as a redefinition of protest and dissent as terrorism. Even wearing a T-Shirt with the motif of a foreign liberation movement may lead to a prison sentence. Unsurprisingly, government ministers are exempt from the Act. [www.blagged.freereserve.co.uk/ta2000/](http://www.blagged.freereserve.co.uk/ta2000/)

### Nobody kicks off election campaign

With speculation over the date of the next election rife, activists are asking people disillusioned with party politics to vote for "Nobody" on their ballot papers. Districts with a majority for Nobody would then declare themselves 'autonomous zones' free from council control. As the campaign slogans say, "Nobody will salvage the NHS" and "Nobody really cares" so you might as well vote Nobody. For more info and posters go to <http://uk.geocities.com/votenobody/>

### Hackney strikes back

Hackney residents occupied a nursery in Atherden Road to reopen it as a community centre. Hackney council, declared bankrupt last year, closed the nursery in spite of the 1,000 Hackney children on waiting lists for nursery places. The site is worth millions to developers and the council is keen to bail itself out of the financial mess it got into through previous squandering of public funds. The Nursery is now a thriving centre, putting on events for a diverse community.

### Suicide after asylum claim rejected

Iranian refugee Ramin Khaleghi took his life at the 'International Hostel' in Leicester, one week after his asylum claim had been rejected by the Home Office - despite medical evidence of torture by the Iranian police. A leading immigration barrister said "this tragic death appears to be a direct result of the Home Office practice of wilful and callous rejection of asylum claims, no matter how clear, strong and compelling they are". For more info: [www.noborders.org](http://www.noborders.org)

### YOUR LOCAL VOICE

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

**Step One:** All you need to start is hit the 'PUBLISH' link on the front page ([www.indymedia.org.uk](http://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 front page of the site.

**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. 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 file or video file you

need to select the file from your hard drive using the 'Browse' button in the 'Multimedia Stories' box. Select from the drop down menu what type of file it is (either mp3 or realaudio for audio files, or realvideo for video) and then 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, where to post announcements, current debates and a mission statement all accessible from the front page.

# Zapatistas: the history of a struggle

A brief background to the 'Peace and Dignity' tour by the indigenous people of Mexico to their capital city

On February 24th the 24 Sub-Commandantes of the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) embarked on their journey to Mexico City to demand from Congress the constitutional recognition of the rights of Mexico's indigenous peoples. And they are not alone: with them there are delegates of the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and some of the oldest Zapatistas in the country who have fought alongside of Emiliano Zapata at the beginning of the 20th century. There are also representatives of the civilian base of the EZLN as well as of the National and International Civil Society: people of all ages from all parts of Mexico and from all over the world.

More than seven years ago the EZLN emerged in the public when indigenous men and women armed with guns and sticks unexpectedly occupied five towns in the state of Chiapas. The government sent in the army, and during the ensuing battles hundreds of lives were lost.

Thanks to national and international protests there was a peace agreement after 12 days of heavy fighting. Even though the truce was frequently broken by the government a dialogue was started with the mediation of the Bishop of San Cristóbal which resulted in the Accords of San Andres signed by both sides in 1996 but never made into law due to the government's obstruction.

While the state party PRI and president Zedillo were talking about peace and reconciliation, they were waging a quiet war of extermination in Chiapas: the state was

militarised with the deployment of 70,000 troops who were in turn training paramilitary groups whose arms were financed by the government. Today there are more than 20,000 refugees in Chiapas who have been driven out of their villages by the paramilitaries or the Federal Army itself. During all these aggressions the EZLN has kept the truce and its support bases

have only resisted in a non-violent manner. The only weapon the guerrilla has used extensively since 1994 has been that of the word. Numerous *communiqués* by Sub-commandante Marcos have been translated into many languages and the Zapatista cause has found worldwide support.

Since the San Andres accords have not been implemented, the EZLN suspended the dialogue with the government in 1996. With the change of government in December 1999, when the 70 year long PRI rule was broken, a new era seemed to have dawned.

Vicente Fox from the rightist Party of National Action (PAN) promised during his election campaign to solve the conflict within 15 minutes. This quarter of an hour has long since passed and Fox has contradicted himself more than once. But, finally the caravan of 'peace and dignity' (as the EZLN calls it) has become possible and the spirit it invokes will continue until "a world in which many worlds have their place" is created.

For more information: see the UK Indymedia website that has been running a daily update of the caravan tour:

[www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk)

The Chiapas Indymedia site is at:

[chiapas.indymedia.org](http://chiapas.indymedia.org)

Zapnet: Net of Autonomy & Liberation:

[www.actlab.utexas.edu/~zapatistas/](http://www.actlab.utexas.edu/~zapatistas/)



Looking to the future: 'the face that hides itself to be seen',

## Newswire International

### Zanzibar crack down

Tanzania: 22nd February  
In the semi-autonomous Zanzibar island, Zanzibar, thousands of Zanzibaris took to the streets to question the legitimacy of the nation's October 29th, 2000, elections. On February 11th, 10,000 people rallied on Unguja, Zanzibar's largest island, to call for a new constitution. The rally followed a bloody January 27th protest, during which government troops massacred over 60 participants in an "illegal" demonstration.

President Benjamin Mkapa has expressed public concern that the actions of his government will arouse the attention of human rights organisations, which in turn may threaten Tanzania's chance of obtaining international loans. On February 23rd, Mkapa and several other African heads of state will begin a three day

summit in Dar Es Salaam with Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Horst Köhler, and World Bank President, James Wolfensohn.

Critics point out that the IMF's loans and Structural Adjustment Programs will make the country reduce public expenditures to its 32 million citizens, nearly 60% of whom live on less than US\$2 a day, in order to continue to attract multi-million dollar loans and international investment.

### Daewoo struggle

South Korea: 22nd February  
In South Korea 1,500 protesters tried to force their way inside the Daewoo plant 30 km from Seoul, to join a sit-in of 300 workers which began after the bankrupt business notified 1,751 workers that they were fired because of a restructuring plan intended to make the factory an attractive purchase for General

Motors. The clash is yet another episode since the Asian financial crisis in 1997-8. To soothe this crisis the International Monetary Fund offered to loan South Korea approx US\$21 billion in exchange the government agreed to the IMF's economic restructuring program.

Officials from the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions predict the nation will face several hundred thousand layoffs if the government continues to follow IMF prescriptions. The union pledges to fight those layoffs, "we've nothing more to lose, what can we do but protest?"

### Life for sale

Your Body: 17th February  
Last month geneticists from the Human Genome Project, announced they had mapped the 30,000 genes that human DNA comprises of. The British wing of this international project is

substantially funded by The Wellcome Trust, claiming independence from the Glaxo Welcome pharmaceutical company, but has a 4.7% share.

Since the 80s the U.S. government has removed internal legal barriers to patenting human genetic information and pushed similar policies through international trade bodies like the WTO. During the 90s research teams from biotech corporations

scoured remote parts of the globe for patentable genetic material, finding it primarily in indigenous peoples. Many of these donors did not suspect their bodies were being exploited for profit. The cruel irony is that, while the goal of such research is to develop drugs to treat diseases to which these peoples are susceptible, international agreements ensure that such drugs or any profits will never reach them.

## offline THE INDYMEDIA NEWS SHEET

Offline is the first of a monthly publication bringing the highlights of *IndyMedia* news back to the streets. *IndyMedia* is a global network of news websites that encourage the public to report their own stories to the world uncensored. Providing background stories the corporate media ignores. Maintained by a collective of media activists, extending links to the direct action movement and campaigns concerned with anti-racism, anti-capitalism, state oppression and others. Please feel free to copy and distribute widely, a PDF version is available on the website. For more information and extra copies please send a stamped addressed envelope to: PO Box 587, London, SW2 4HA.

# Media monkeys around with Mayday

A look at the 'Riot' hype in the mainstream press in the run up to London's MayDay demonstrations

The corporate media has started a hysterical campaign of misinformation in the run up to demonstrations planned for Mayday 2001. In a spooky repetition of last year's mainstream coverage surprisingly similar stories have appeared in newspapers over the last few weeks.

Mayday 2000 saw a three-day conference, various peaceful actions against the Terrorism Bill (now in force), Critical Mass bike rides and the Guerrilla Gardening event in Parliament Square. Months before the day itself articles were printed (mainly in The Sunday Times) claiming that extremists were planning more violence than had been seen at the huge J18 demonstrations in the City of London in 1999. Many articles claimed that on Mayday 2000 thousands of violent extremists would take to the streets armed with pitchforks and scythes. As Mayday approached the number of misleading articles increased so much that you could have believed an apocalyptic bloody revolution was being planned with military precision. Instead the real plans involved gardening, planting seeds and celebrating community (a fact that was obvious to anyone checking out the various websites, emailing lists or public meetings).

Just before the day itself the Evening Standard ran the headline 'Army On Standby' thus completing the media campaign to create a climate of fear around the gardening event. The press had already decided the outcome of the day before it even happened and helped to ensure that a great deal of the public

expected to see one of the most violent riots in mainland Britain. Having created this framework the press were duty bound to follow through, and complete, their incredible story (or face looking rather silly).

While people peacefully sowed seeds and danced around a Maypole in Parliament Square, journalists scuffed their shoes and looked bored. Later in the day when a Macdonald's restaurant was damaged, the press found their story - tying this together with graffiti on the Cenotaph - their coverage over the following few days blew these events out of all proportion. In fact these incidents were isolated in the context of the whole day.

Recent press coverage has referred to the events of Mayday 2000 as 'the Mayday Riots' - effectively re-writing history and setting the stage for another round of extraordinary claims dressed up as fact.

And so to the latest 'facts' the press would have you believe...

Just like last year the newspapers have reported 'extremists' are planning violence on a scale bigger than that seen in the City on June 18 in 1999.

They have also stated that 15,000 'hardcore European anarchists and' (somewhat sinisterly) 'terrorists' will travel to London for Mayday - again an astonishing claim presented as 'inside intelligence'. Other parallels with last year's so-called 'reporting' include stories that report how groups are using the Internet to communicate and advertise the Mayday protests (yes there are webpages and email lists where

people are discussing the issues, but these are open to anyone and are not some sinister plot).

Another interesting feature of recent reports is the claim that this year's Mayday events will actually be THREE DAYS of violence designed specifically to disrupt the general election. The truth remains that Mayday was always planned to be a protest irrespective of any election - the date for which is far from certain.

Recent stories have also reiterated claims that all police leave will be cancelled inside and around London and that the army may be put on standby - is anyone getting a feeling of *deja vu* here? Once again events about Mayday are being built up in the corporate media, giving the public the impression that planned violence is the aim of the protest. Whatever happens on Mayday this year you can be sure the issues and reasons for protest will receive little attention, while the corporate media will just press ahead and run the story they already seem to have decided upon.

Perhaps this is all connected to the publicly-stated 'war of attrition' against campaigning and direct action groups declared by government after the June 18th demonstration in 1999. Perhaps it's just part of the corporate media's laziness and profit driven sensationalism. Whatever the root cause you can be sure that the only rational and increasingly necessary reporting of Mayday events will come from the alternative media. Indymedia will be providing coverage of Mayday events direct from the streets.

For information and background on this years Mayday protests see [www.maydaymonopoly.net](http://www.maydaymonopoly.net)

For details of recent press coverage about Mayday 2001 [www.uk.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=1726](http://www.uk.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=1726)

## Three strikes and it's over

Workers and students in the UK are taking action in the fight against privatisation

A recent ballot by tube workers in favour of strike action on 29th March is just one in a series of industrial disputes this year which has resulted in massive protests. ASLEF and RMT members overwhelmingly voted to carry out a one-day stoppage of the London Underground (LU) in a bid to counter the Public Private Partnership (PPP) scheme. The LU has already been broken up into four separate operating units as part of the preparation for its sell-off and there is concern among LU workers and public transport users that safety will be further compromised by opening it up to the free market. As one train driver said, "the tube is another Hatfield waiting to happen".

Strike action has also consumed the London Borough of Hackney where a Labour-Tory alliance in the local council has been formed to force through several unpopular cutbacks to

crucial local services. In the last three months Hackney workers and residents have rallied outside the Town Hall and also marched through the streets in January bringing the inner London borough to a near standstill. Last week protesters were able to bypass police and security and occupied the Town Hall.

In the educational sector students have been holding a series of occupations to highlight issues of financial hardship. As we went to press 20 students at Luton University were still besieged inside the faculty of Science, Technology and Design.

At the nearby Luton Vauxhall car plant workers took one day strike action on 24th February to voice their anger at proposed redundancies announced by car giant General Motors. Workers at GM's other plant in Ellsmere Port also took part in the action which meant production ground to a halt.

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CCTV

**1** There is one CCTV camera for every 57 people in the UK - the highest proportion in the world. (a)

**2** In 1999 an extra £153 million worth of central Government funding was made available for more CCTV cameras to be installed in England and Wales. (b)

**3** Jack Straw: "CCTV is playing a crucial role in helping the police combat crime". (b)

**4** Hackney Council security worker: "The criminals have disappeared but the CCTV just run them out of one area and into another". (c)

**5** Crime displacement (crime moving from one area to another) in the Scottish city of Strathclyde found that CCTV only helped to reduce illegal activity by 21% (d)

**6** In February 1999 the plaque laid to mark the spot where Stephen Lawrence was murdered by racists was daubed with paint - the video surveillance camera monitoring the site was actually a 'dummy' and had no tape. (e)

**7** Abuse of CCTV-gathered footage by camera operators is supported by research: Routine abuses among those studied include operators using equipment to watch people having sex in car parks while also targeting disproportionate numbers of young black people in their monitoring habits. There was also some evidence of police interference in surveillance when cameras captured 'wrong-doing' by fellow officers. (e)

**8** The Data Protection Act (effective from March 2000) gives the public a right to view any footage in which they may appear, including footage taken by police officers at demonstrations. (As long as it isn't in the "interests of national security" and that you are prepared to pay a tenner for the privilege).

**9** Representative for Liberty human rights group: "Police filming demonstrations ... intimidates people and discourages them from exercising their right to demonstrate."

**10** Michel Foucault (French philosopher): "Surveillance, and with it normalisation, becomes one of the great instruments of power."

Sources:

- (a) CCTV Users Association
- (b) The Home Office
- (c) Hackney Council's Chubb Security Group
- (d) Strathclyde City Council
- (e) The Independent newspaper