

offline



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Not quite the May Day they were expecting

Actions occur across London despite months of media scare - whilst the police tactics threaten the right to protest

The May Day protest in London's 'monopoly' districts was an amalgamation of many large peaceful protests. Starting at 7:30am in both Marylebone Station (West) and Liverpool Street station (East) the Critical Mass cycle ride, attracted more than 1,000 participants. The bicycle activists and pedestrians turned central parts of the City into a colourful car-free zone flanked by large numbers of police who temporarily, and violently, detained two people at London Bridge without charging them.

The Critical Mass culminated at Kings Cross Station at around 9:30am, where an action by campaigners from London Animal Action proceeded to distribute free veggie-burgers outside the busy McDonald's opposite the station. After the veggie give-away Critical Mass was joined by the Rhythms of Resistance samba band who marched up the road to Euston. The mass of participants began celebrating on the street, heading North. Their exit was closed off by several hundred police officers. The participants were then sectioned 60'ed at Euston hemmed in for around three hours, eventually letting people out one by one whilst taking photos.

At around 10:00am an autonomous news stall was set up at Angel Islington, just outside the



station, handing out "hot off the press" information about campaigns highlighted by various groups involved in May Day activities.

Homeless issues were literally brought home as cardboard hotels were built at speakers corner, opposite the opulent Mayfair area.

Further South, Elephant and Castle roundabout, an anti-privatisation action in the form of a picnic took place. Protesters dressed as corporate fat cats highlighted the dangers of privatising the London

Underground. A pedal-powered sound system provided music and people danced in the drizzling rain, though a very heavy police presence prevented the party from moving onto the street. After an hour the 200-odd protesters moved off towards Westminster and Lambeth Bridges, but huge numbers of police prevented them crossing the river. Faced with the blocked routes, the crowd split up and headed north in separate groups.

After midday police again tried to use the Section 60 at Mallet Street were a small peaceful student protest against fees by University London Union took place. Legal observers informed the police, however, that they were in breach of the

law. The proposed Beltane celebrations at Eros, Piccadilly, saw some performance and entertainment but the rain at that point prevented more participation. The crowd and performers later joined the march to Oxford Circus.

Around 1:00pm another large protest gathered outside the private bank Coutts on the Strand against third World Debt. Police in riot vans surrounded protesters for a period of time and refused to allow people to

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Get out of jail free!

The Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (LDMG) is a London based support group which gives unconditional support to anyone who is arrested in demonstrations, protests and actions.

If you were arrested, know somebody who was detained, or witnessed police mis-behaviour during the May Day protests please contact the LDMG. Any visual evidence (video or photos) you may have of police conduct can be essential to keep someone out of jail.

The LDMG can be contacted at: BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX. 020 8245 2930 or ldmg@altavista.com

Also **Liberty** are compiling reports of people penned up. Email your story to: info@liberty-human-rights.org.uk or write to 21 Tabard St., London, SE1 4LA

National and International actions

Bristol: A 'chilled out' carnival against capital with added mischief for good measure. **Manchester:** a series of actions took place in the city with police penning in a peaceful demo. **Leeds:** people congregated at Central Square. **Birmingham:** Several protesters gathered near the city's centre. A number of arrests were made. **Glasgow** 1200 people took to the streets.

EUROPE: in **Berlin, Germany**, several thousand people were celebrating on the streets until police provocations triggered some confrontations. Anti-fascist demos took place in **Dresden, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Aushurg, and Essen.**

In **Athens, Greece**, Communist Party demonstrators took part in a May Day rally and march. **Barcelona** and **Madrid**, also had large demonstrations. About

300 people protested shutting the Stock Exchange in **Dublin**. Protesters in **Portugal:** immigrants shout slogans demanding equal rights and residency permits in downtown **Lisbon**. Other Demos took place in **Rome** and **Zurich**. **AUSTRALIA:** Actions started in **Melbourne** with Critical Mass bike rides and blockades of financial centres. In **Sydney**, the country's largest city, protesters began meeting at 7am, forming barricades at the entrances to the Sydney Stock Exchange. A crowd of about 6000 May Day protesters - including trade unionists marched through central Melbourne, blocking streets and causing widespread disruption. One arrest, several people hauled away and a few hurt.

SOUTH AMERICA: In the **Colombian**

city of **Medellin**, several thousand people took part in the annual march called by the two main trade union confederations.

NORTH AMERICA: In **Pittsburgh, USA**, 50-200 people celebrated May Day at lunchtime. In **Vancouver, Canada**, CBC radio is reporting arrests and "violence" at the protests.

ASIA: in **South Korea**, hundreds of people formed a mass "wave" action in **Jonju** to protest against the dredging of mudflats and blowing up of 120 mountains. Mayday is also Buddha's official birthday in the east Asian country. **Middle East:** in **Bahrain**, Labour groups demanded that the new Emir recognise thousands of unemployed. And many many more - too many to list here: see www.mayday2001.org



Indymedia is an open network of information produced by groups and individuals, that address the bias of main stream media. To report on actions in your own words visit the publish section of the IMC UK website at: www.indymedia.org.uk

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leave. Yet another Section 60 was placed on the Feed the Pigeons action at Trafalgar Square, which involved Animal Action distributing a nutritious feed.

At around the same time campaigners from No Borders played a special Monopoly game to shed light on the plight of asylum-seekers and immigration issues throughout the UK at the Earls Court offices of Accommodata Limited. The afternoon also saw the traditional TUC march leave Highbury Fields to Clerkenwell at around 2:00pm

There was a protest at Pentonville Prison, to highlight the detainment of illegal immigrants and the development of a huge private prison building programme. Section 60 again used on a group of around 20 people, effected almost immediately on arrival. Phillip Hockly Furs was also picketed by anti-animal cruelty protesters.

The main meeting place for culmination of the various actions was to take place at Oxford Circus at 4:00pm, for the "Sale of the Century". This was, however, precipitated by the protesters from the World Bank action who marched up from Pall Mall onto Regents Street. Almost immediately the police hemmed in the crowd and placed the by now over-used section 60, keeping people in for up to 7 hours in the rain and in incredibly cramped conditions. At around 4:00pm the samba band came to support the crowd and gave energy to the protest, however with the arrival of the WOMBLES the police re-doubled their numbers and forced and managed to enclose the Samba band, and the Oxford Street protest in separate groups. Several times the former groups broke through lines and people struggled free, but the thick lines of heavily-armed, increasingly aggressive police officers

Activists expose BP rebranding

On 19th April activists from London Reclaim the Streets altered the BP-sponsored Ecology exhibition in London's Natural History Museum by unfurling banners and posing as smooth-talking BP tour guides, while others heckled with questions they chose not to answer, such as "How can you claim to be 'beyond petroleum' when you are increasing oil production by 5%?", "Why do anti-BP activists in Colombia get threatened and killed by paramilitaries?" and "How does drilling for oil in the fragile Arctic fit in with your new 'green' image?".

BP also hosted its annual general meeting on World Car Free Day. The oil giant relies heavily on portraying its brand as being environmentally friendly through intensive advertising and corporate sponsorship programmes. At the company's recent AGM shareholders rejoiced at the £9.8bn profits it had accrued for the last financial year. [More info: www.bpamoco.org.uk, and www.risingtide.org.uk]



Banners put up in Natural History Museum against BP

Star Wars in the streets

More than 500 people demonstrated outside Downing Street on Saturday 14th April against U.S. government plans for a ballistic Missile Program, the National Missile Defence (NMD) System 'son of star wars', which requires the use of bases in the UK.

A Darth Vader puppet illustrated the force of evil represented by the Star Wars project. Demonstrators from a range of groups highlighted the atrocious record of George W. Bush since he stole the election in the U.S. four months ago. Representatives of CND spoke of the need to withdraw British support for the project, saying that it will only serve to destabilise international relations by encouraging the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Known as "Son of Star Wars," the NMD would make use of Menwith Hill communication station and Fylingdales radar installation in North Yorkshire. Blair's visit to Washington in February resulted in what appears to be a commitment on the part of the British government to support the program. [More info: www.cnduk.org/briefing/nmd.htm]

Genetics propaganda in schools

More than 140,000 glossy brochures sponsored by the US corporate giants of genetic modification such as Monsanto are being pushed into Scotland's schools by Scottish Enterprise, with the enthusiastic backing of the schools watchdog HM Inspectorate of Education.

The brochures, which sing the praises of GM technology in medicine and marine science, have provoked widespread protests from teachers, consumer groups and environmentalists. They are suspicious that GM companies are trying to soften up students as part of a campaign to quell mounting public fears about the dangers of genetic engineering. [For more information: www.corporatewatch.org.uk]

Animal activists barricade bank

For the second time in a week activists from Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) targeted major shareholders of animal drug-testing firm Huntingdon Life Sciences. Dressing as business people to evade the high security, protesters occupied and barricaded themselves inside the Bank of New York's executive offices in London. They remained there for more than 10 hours negotiating, before leaving peacefully. SHAC has fought a long campaign against Huntingdon, and earlier this year brought the company to the brink of collapse before a last-minute financial backer was found.

Nowegians say shut down Sellafield

The Norwegian Environment minister Siri Bjerke has expressed their wish for the shutting down of the Sellafield re-processing plant after the latest monitoring showed an increase in levels of technetium-99 along Norway's coastline. She said the levels have increased sixfold since 1996 and raised the issue when she met up with Michael Meacher the UK Environment minister in a recent meeting. The abatement plants at Sellafield remove radionuclides such as plutonium but Technetium-99 isn't removed and discharges of this nuclide have increased as Sellafield tries to clear up it's backlog of waste.

Fascists on the march

A tiny group of about 20 National Front supporters were given massive police protection to march in Bermondsey in South East London on 20th April. Several hundred anti-fascists, including Anti-Nazi League, No Platform, Firefighters Against the Nazis, Socialist Alliance, local Labour Party and religious groups protested against the NF march, and tried to stop it, but were blocked in by hundreds of cops and continually photographed. In the aftermath of last weeks march by the NF in the area, at least three racist attacks happened, but they were allowed to march again. Last weeks police operation to protect them cost half a million pounds

offline

THE INDYMEDIA NEWS SHEET

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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).

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.

Free Trade encloses itself in Quebec

"Quebec City has been successfully transformed into a menacing place, inhospitable to people with concerns about corporate-driven trade and economic deregulation. Protesting, rather than being a healthy part of democracy, seems like an extreme and dangerous sport" - Naomi Klein

Up to 50,000 demonstrators filled the streets of Quebec, and thousands more staged solidarity demonstrations on the 20/21st April in what has become an uprising of opposition to closed and elite international trade negotiations. The trigger of unrest was the meeting of leaders of 34 American nations in Quebec to further the ratification of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). If implemented, FTAA policies, a more extreme version of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) set up in 1994, are likely to spread the latter's devastating effects throughout the Americas, serving the interests and privileges of capital, while the most basic rights and interests of citizens, consumers, workers and the environment are recast as "trade barriers".

An array of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), unions, grassroots groups and concerned individuals united to voice their concerns and to disrupt the meeting. Massive demonstrations, ranging from peaceful protests to direct confrontations took place in Quebec.

Police reacted with heavy use of tear gas, plastic bullets and water cannons. Legal demonstrations, such as the union march and confrontational actions were attacked alike. Police also fired rubber bullets into the foyer of Indymedia Quebec and evicted the activists' medical centre at gunpoint.

On Friday, the 10 foot high steel fence surrounding the centre of Quebec was partially demolished by protesters and was repeatedly



Quebec FTAA: Together the wall came tumbling down

breached over the weekend. The 3.8km of fence had been put up by the authorities to make sure the meeting was not 'disturbed' by critical voices.

While a Montreal lawyer went to court to try and have the fence ruled illegal, some protesters tried to focus attention on the fence itself - seeing it as symbolic of how a small number of unaccountable individuals make decisions based on profits that then effect the lives of millions - for it is only behind such fences, with thousands of riot police and harsh border controls in place, that these meetings can go ahead. The next large G8 meeting in Genoa (Italy) in July will be held on a luxury cruise liner moored offshore, and the harbour area will be sealed off by another huge fence, while the next WTO meeting (following

from Seattle) will take place in November in Qatar - a desert state not renowned for its human rights records but the only place willing to host the next meeting.

To overcome the effective shutting down of border crossings, protesters are teaming up with the Mohawk Nation whose territory straddles to US-Canadian border. Every year they open up the border as an assertion of independence - this year they will do it on April 19th, offering passage to protesters and speaking out against FTAA. Activists illustrated the effect free trade has on borders - that money, jobs, goods and services are allowed through, but people are not. Four other border actions took place along with 80 protests the Americas.

Also in Quebec, a large "People's Summit of the Americas" was held on 17-21st April bringing together activists, scholars, representatives of labor and peasant groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGO's) from all over the Western hemisphere, giving voice to the alternative ideas that the media say do not exist within the anti-capitalist movement.

One of the main networks preparing for the carnival protest is CLAC. Its unity statement says, "We reject a system driven by an exploitative logic that sees human beings as human capital, ecosystems as natural resources and culture as simply a commodity. We reject the idea that the world is only valuable in terms of profit, competition and efficiency."

[More info: <http://quebec.indymedia.org>]

NewsWire International

Castor train delayed in Germany

Thousands of anti-nuclear waste protesters severely delayed a train transporting nuclear waste from the French reprocessing plant La Hague to the repository at Gorleben, Germany between the 26-29th March.

A variety of actions, from sit-ins on the tracks, to tractor blockades by local farmers, to direct confrontations by black bloc 'Autonome' succeeded in stopping the train for one day and raising the costs of the transport to unprecedented levels. The train finally reached its Gorleben destination on the morning of Thursday 29th.

The Castor train had arrived in the Wendland region on Wednesday with only a few hours delay, but then the plans to proceed the remaining 50 km went into total disarray. Thousands of people had blocked the tracks and could

only be moved by police using extreme force. At Sueschendorf, five Robin Wood activists had chained and cemented themselves in between the railtrack, forcing the train to stop and even retreat for the first time in the history of Castor transports. It took police 20 hours to remove the activists. [for more info: www.germany.indymedia.org]

Police spark riot in Cincinnati, US

Several people have been hospitalised in Cincinnati suffering fractured ribs, and bruised organs after being shot by police armed with "bean bag" bullets. The city was under curfew after three days of clashes between protesters and police, after a white officer shot and killed Timothy Thomas, an armed black 19 year old.

The latest incidents occurred just after Thomas's funeral - an

Associated Press photographer said he saw police get out of their cars and without warning, shoot several rounds at a small, peaceful group away from the main crowd. Keith Fangman, leader of the Police Union, denied his members were acting like 'rogue Nazis' [for more info: www.indymedia.org]

Refugee Hungerstrike in the Netherlands

Five Kurdish refugees fighting deportation have been on hunger strike since February, and are now in a serious condition. The Dutch government has declared Northern Iraq a safe place and wants to deport 9000 Kurds, even though the region is in a state of civil war, and was recently invaded by Turkey.

The Dutch government claim that the Kurdish population had an "internal flight alternative" and therefore did not need to flee the country.

Thousands of Kurds now risk being deported back to Iraq to face persecution and torture at the hands of the Iraqi government, and the poisonous legacy of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons attacks on the region. [for more info: www.noborders.org]

Crisis intensifies in Vieques - Porto Rico

Police have arrested over 100 demonstrators on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques - including a sitting U.S. Congressman who was subsequently physically abused - as opposition to U.S. military bombing on the island intensifies.

Opponents of U.S. occupation of the island are rallying support across the hemisphere in response to the Navy's decision to push ahead with bombing. [For more info, www.viequeslibre.org]

FBI raid Indymedia centre in Seattle

The Seattle Indymedia centre was embroiled in a Free Speech Battle following an FBI/Secret Service Visit.

On Saturday, April 21st, as tens of thousands demonstrated against the FTAA in the streets of Quebec City, the IMC in Seattle was served with a sealed court order by two FBI agents and an agent of the US Secret Service. The terms prevented IMC volunteers from publishing its contents.

On the 24th, the gag order was lifted, enabling the IMC to finally break its silence about these events. Apparently the FBI thought an article posted on the Seattle site threatened the Presidents safety. Lee of the Electronic Frontier Foundation characterised as "a threat to free speech, free association, and privacy." [for more info: www.seattle.indymedia.org]

Solidarity in creating spaces

A personal view from a social centre near you...

On the 1st of April, riot police raided and partially demolished the squatted social centre the "Button Factory" in South London, claiming it was an "anarchist training base" for May Day protests. The Button Factory had in fact served as a popular party and concert venue as well as a cafe and meeting space for people from the local community.

Further north, the Atherden community centre in Hackney is facing an uncertain future, as -- in record time-- a court ruling has dismissed a judicial review, meaning an eviction imminent in the next three days. The former nursery had been shut down by bankrupt Hackney council but was recently re-opened as a lively and necessary community centre offering parent & toddler mornings and a cyber cafe built from recycled computers. In Hampstead, the TAZ (Temporary Autonomous Zone) theatre group that renovated an abandoned ABC cinema as a temporal space for free thinking performance was also forced out by a development company, who had negotiated a goodwill agreement with them until 2002 and promptly left them out in the cold when the developers heard rumours of a rave. On the early morning of May Day riot police evicted a recently opened convergence centre "The Old Bacon Factory" in south London. The eviction followed several days of heavy police surveillance of the space and its users. The early raid of the space resulted in five people arrested.

Autonomous spaces in the UK are a physical expression of direct democracy and allow us the freedom to create new

structures of organisation that could stimulate social change. Autonomous spaces are based on decentralisation, diversity and creativity. By opening autonomous spaces as part of a lifestyle choice, we can learn how to express concepts of change in a language that is understood by people in our local communities, and encourage many people from different backgrounds to participate in the processes of constructing them. Stripped of alternatives, our urban environments become increasingly occupied by commercial ventures that ignore human needs and imbue localities, with top-down ideologies contra to possibilities for alternatives.

Space is an intensely political issue: the rights to occupy, use and develop land have been the trigger that has led to civil wars and revolutions, such as the inspirational Zapatista struggle. Space is a fundamental right; the liberty to take back control of our lives and realise ideas about free and equal social relations. Autonomous spaces are being mis-represented as a civil side of a movement where resistance is being criminalised. Evictions can be seen as part of a wider process across Europe where repression by the state portray these spaces as breeding grounds for the "threat of the the anti-capitalist terrorist", rather than as space for creative dissent, and expression of new forms of political organisation.

However when we accept autonomous spaces and social centres as a fundamental part of our struggles, they inspire the creation of many more. These immediate mini-revolutions resonate in social, political and economic relations and have themselves the potential to bring about real change.



Arms race to oblivion

Opposition mounts as the US and Britain prepare to launch a new arms race

The heavily-subsidised UK arms industry has been given an extra boost with news that Gordon Brown's "election-winning" budget includes an increase of more than 14 per cent for defence expenditure: the Ministry of Defence will now have an annual budget of £2.4 billion. This massive cash boost undermines many of the efforts taken by activists across the UK, and the world, to outline alternatives to costly wars and armed conflict.

On 12th February 340 people were arrested as over 1100 demonstrators blockaded the gates of Faslane Nuclear Base in Scotland where £2,000 a minute is spent maintaining a fleet of Trident nuclear submarines. Over the past 18 months several Ploughshares activists have been found not guilty after expensive cases were launched against them for criminal damage and trespass.

Two women who attacked Hawker fighter jets manufactured by British Aerospace as part of a lucrative Indonesian army contract were acquitted when their defence pleaded that by committing a criminal offense they were stopping a greater crime from being committed. Rachel Wenham, an activist acquitted for her role in causing property damage to a Trident

submarine, said after her trial: "At long last we have got justice from the English courts. The verdict shows that when ordinary British people are given the chance to decide on Trident and the rights of activists to intervene they are willing to be led by their conscience."

Meanwhile, the controversial election of George W. Bush as President of the USA brings new concern for anti-nuclear weapons campaigners given his aggressive policy in forcing through the controversial "son of Star Wars" project. Nuclear weapons manufacturers have lobbied intensively for the multi-billion dollar 'national missile defence system' to be developed despite concerns from Russia, China, Britain and many other nuclear powers on the grounds that it could spark a new global nuclear arms race.

The UK would play a particularly important role in the "Star Wars" plan as information gathered through the Fylingdale early warning station in Yorkshire would be needed by US missile control. When US cruise missiles were stationed in the UK in the mid 1980s hundreds of thousands of people protested across the country, and the new plans could attract similar protests.

[For more information: www.indymedia.org.uk]

10 things you should know about food and the way it is produced

1 It costs Thames Water £2 million a year to remove about 40,000 fat blockages from sewers under London. The most severe blockages are found under fast-food outlets. (1)

2 The average Briton now has approximately 300-500 extra chemicals in their bodies which were not present 50 years ago. Many are agricultural chemicals. (2)

3 Lindane - an organo-chlorine linked with breast cancer - is banned in several countries but remains legal in the UK. It is commonly detected in meat and dairy produce. (3)

4 Studies show that vegetables grown at the time of World War II were more nutritious than they are today. (4)

5 In the UK strawberries are sprayed an average of nine times with methyl bromide - an ozone-depleting chemical which is banned in many countries. (4)

6 By the end of the year 2000 an estimated 50,000 tonnes of antibiotic drugs had been used on humans and animals throughout the world. (5)

7 The USA uses 6.9 kilograms of corn and soy to put one kilogram of pork on the table. (7)

8 To produce the red meat and poultry eaten each year by an average US consumer uses the equivalent of 190 litres of fuel to produce it. (7)

9 It has been estimated that around half a million cows infected with BSE were eaten in the UK before the 1989 ban. (8)

10 "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself". US President F.D. Roosevelt

Sources:

(1) Ed Dox in the Express

(2) Doctor Vyvyan Howard - Senior Lecturer In Foetal And Infant Toxicopathology At Liverpool University

(3) The Sunday Telegraph

(4) MAFF Working Party on Pesticide Residue (1996)

(5) Geoffrey Cannon (author of Superbug)

(6) The Vegan Society

(7) Alan Durning & Holly Brough (authors of Taking Stock: Animal Farming and the Environment)

(8) Factory Farming and Human Health, a report by Dr Tim O'Brien