

# offline



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## Resisting the G8 – United We Stand

Between June 1-3rd, the G8 summit returned to Europe after the previous year's sojourn to the mountains of Canada. The new hot spot was the quaint valleys of Evian, France. As the whole area was predictably sealed off, activists called for actions, protest, counter-conferences and blockades to accompany the summit in nearby Annemasse, France and across the Swiss border in Geneva and Lausanne. Starting from May 28th to the 3rd June, protesters converged in several self-organised villages and took the streets to demonstrate their opposition to the G8 and to the lakes and pastures to discuss social change and alternatives to capitalist driven, corporate dominance. Whilst post-Iraq sentiment, terrorism and debt were issues on the corporate agendas, glibly discussed inside the concrete fortresses of l'eau sipping delegates, thousands gathered on the streets to voice the illegitimacy of the meeting and the insufficient action in addressing, and criticism in the exploitation of these issues.

The G8 has a history of deceit and failure, in Okinawa 2000 they failed to deliver on the debt cancellation promises they made the previous year. In 2001 their Genoa summit was met by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, in moments that became pitched battles that culminated in the tragic, illegal death of protester, Carlo Giuliani. In Kananaskis, Canada, last year, the "New Partnership for Africa's Development" (Nepad) agenda to provide £500million in aid and debt

relief to war-torn and AID-ridden African countries has been ridiculed as only £70 million was proffered, with the US refusing more unless African countries also accept GM crops as aid and crippling structural adjustment programs.

From previous G8 summits it is apparent that decisions made by the G8 are not implemented at summits, but reveal themselves in the boardrooms, factory floors, border checkpoints, forest devastation and on streets and villages across the globe. However the ever-present need to collectively condemn and denounce in a multitude of ways, the inherent contradictions espoused by the G8, meant that the almost weeklong actions and discussions were well attended.

The Evian anti-G8 summit mobilisation was important for many reasons not least the fact that around 100,000 people took to the streets demonstrating their opposition to the policies of the G8, and that direct action delayed the start of the summit for a few hours.

The main day of protest saw an amazing level of co-operation between different nationalities and groups. Early morning blockades, some starting at 5am, saw many roads blocked by a variety of tactics. In Geneva the main bridge roads were blocked with burning barricades, with confrontation with police kept to a minimum. Burning barricades were also set up in the countryside near Annemasse; here police fired volley after volley of tear gas, but never charged -

the barricades remained for the best part of the morning.

In Lausanne (where G8 delegates could catch a ferry across the lake to Evian) a 'pink and silver' carnival block danced its way through the streets blockading them with frivolity as riot police guarding buildings were showered in confetti and had pink hearts stuck on their riot shields. Behind the pink and silver party a more confrontational block (more akin to the black block) occupied junctions and rendered them impassable by dragging barricades across them, some petrol stations and offices also had their windows smashed.

Later as police attacked the carnival pink and silver block, the other more black block stepped in to cover their retreat, giving people valuable time to escape the gas and regroup elsewhere. Thus combined the two groups were pushed out of town by a huge number of police who constantly fired gas and concussion grenades at the crowd for over an hour. Later hundreds of people were surrounded by police at the official campsite. An amazing level of control and solidarity was displayed as everyone sat on the ground, linking arms in passive resistance, singing songs and chanting "the whole world is watching" for hours in the blazing sun as one by one they were violently dragged away by police and thrown into waiting vans. They were not under arrest, but simply being 'taken away for identification', a process that took the rest of the day and which saw some disgraceful treatment and breaches of Swiss law.

Another important part of the Evian G8 story is the failure of the policing policy in Geneva. Nearly 1000 German riot police were deployed in Geneva. In the end severe language problems between the German riot police and the Swiss riot police coupled with a severe breakdown in the chains of command left the streets of Geneva in chaos. On successive nights German riot police fired gas and concussion grenades at local Geneva residents who were watching this foreign police force militarise their streets – effectively turning the local population into what the media termed anti-globalisation rioters. These events caused outrage in Geneva, especially on the day when the local government issued a statement asking the population not to congregate in the streets and to stay indoors and let the police 'do their job' – that afternoon many residents and journalists were attacked by both riot police and plain-clothes police wearing balaclavas. The fallout from this continues

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with the local police minister heavily criticised in the press.

The Indymedia Centre in Geneva was raided by plain-clothes police dressed as 'rioters', masked up and wearing motorcycle helmets, while riot police fired gas and stun grenades at those outside. There were a several people beaten and a few bits of equipment destroyed, but thankfully this was not a Genoa situation, and on the whole those working in the media centre remained as calm as possible while the raid was streamed live over the net! Several arrests were made including media workers with official G8 accreditation, but those arrested were later released without charge. It seems that raiding Indymedia is almost becoming a tradition at large protests, but represents a serious attempt by the authorities to repress the freedom to communicate and must be both denounced and resisted. Indymedia will continue to report the truth!

Indeed even the Swiss Federation of Journalists denounced the policing actions, as they recorded an extremely high number of incidents where journalists were attacked by police, with several having their video footage and pictures destroyed. Guy Smallman, a volunteer Indymedia london photographer was hospitalised with a hole the size of a fist blown in his leg when police fired a stun grenade directly at him. In another very serious incident, Martin Shaw, an activist from the uk, sustained much more severe injuries when police deliberately cut the rope he was hanging from during a blockade of a high bridge. For more info see <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agg/free/evian/reports/>

Finally another significant development was the inclusion of the freedom of information as a central theme in one of the demonstrations. A 'NoBorders' demonstration about the freedom of movement and immigration and asylum issues also visited the WTO headquarters and WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) HQ. With banners reading "Open Source" and "Freedom of Information" it firmly placed communication rights and intellectual property on the agenda and represented a important new alliance ahead of the World Summit on Information Society due to be held in Geneva in December 2003 (see [www.crisinfo.org](http://www.crisinfo.org)). Next year the G8 Summit will be held in America, in 2005, it comes to the UK...

**For more Info:**

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/actions/2003/evian> and

<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agg/free/evian/index.htm>

# The Rio Group Summit "a state of emergency"

At almost the same time as the EU Summit meeting in Evian, The Rio Group Summit in Peru brought together Latin American and Caribbean leaders of 19 countries to coordinate policy positions outside the organisations of American States and the United Nations.

The summit failed to salvage the Peruvian president's popularity, indeed the whole of Peru, before, during and after the summit was in state of emergency from civil unrest and protest. While the people of Peru were attempting to challenge the legitimacy of the Peruvian governance, ironically, the Rio summit was an attempt to develop a "Latin American agenda" questioning the legitimacy of US military intervention in Latin America. Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva extended the snub of U.S. influence when he expressed his warm regard for absent Cuba expressing a desire to see Cuba attend the next meeting, "at least as a special guest."

Against this backdrop, the situation on the street of Peru had been sparked on the 14th of May, when the teachers began a strike demanding small salary increases, joined later by other state workers. As civil unrest grew, the government declared a state of emergency, by which all strikes and protests are illegal and individual rights like freedom of assembly, of movement, the right not to be detained without express order of a judge or without having been caught while committing a crime, are suspended. The army was also allowed to enter the house of any person and there was a 10pm curfew every night.



As much of Peru was under military control and tanks stood in the cities in all important streets and landmarks. Some saw this as part of a process of militarising the whole region, to prepare for future local interventions in Colombia. Governments of Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru have an immediate interest in pacifying Colombia, beaten down by four decades of conflict that threatens to spill over into their territories.

By the 3rd day of the state of emergency, more than 200 people had been arrested. These figures are rose daily according to Indymedia Peru. As teachers and state workers defied the state of emergency by continuing their strike, joined daily by transport workers, peasants, farmers, health workers, lorry drivers and also students and housewives. People demonstrated on the streets in cities and on the highways – the Pan- American Highway, which runs linking several countries in the region, was blockaded at more than 10 points. Objectives of the state of emergency were to eliminate the blockades in highways, to stop the strikes in the agricultural sector and to reopen the schools. The objective of the strikes and the protests was to demand the resignation of the president, Alejandro Toledo, after so many breaches of the populist promises he made during his electoral campaign. Political leaders from his own party had asked him to reduce his outrageous salary as it might be the only way to regain some credibility.

The worst clashes between police and army and demonstrators happened on the 14th of May. Soldiers ferociously attacked a march and 30 people were injured with beatings, 40 with bullet wounds, and 2 students shot dead. The Defence Minister minimised the issue by saying the shots were in self-defence

On Monday the 2nd of June the government called for a 'national agreement'. The demonstrators also began negotiating to end of the state of emergency and the beginning a dialogue with the broader government. However at a teacher's demo, one teacher was savagely wounded with brain damage by a tear gas bomb. Soon after, 30,000 people demonstrated in Lima and there were other demonstrations in over 40 cities, and another national strike was proclaimed all over the country. All this was in defiance of the state of emergency and the government. The people continue to demonstrate.

For more info see: <http://peru.indymedia.org/>

## Indigenous Communities Resisting the Plan Puebla Panama Roads

The Plan Puebla Panama is a vast infrastructure construction project that covers 9 states in south-southeast Mexico and the 7 Central American republics. It is designed to appeal directly to the pockets of big business and investors and essentially create a single trading block, from the Yukon to Patagonia, under US hegemony, to rival the European and Asian trade.

In the past two years there have been 4 regional meetings on the Plan Puebla Panama that have brought activists together from Mexico, Central America and other parts of the world, representing over 400 organisations.

One such Mexican region affected on a local scale is the Unidalgo community in the state of Oaxaca. Many of the local indigenous leaders are part of the Consejo Ciudadano de Unihidalguense (CCU) formed in Feb 03, after a conflict between Uni n Hidalgo community members and the municipal government over the suspected misuse of funds by the Institutional

Revolutionary Party (PRI) mayor, Armando S nchez Ruiz. The ongoing political struggle has led to the Oaxaca state government (known for both corruption and repression) stepping in to support the mayor - issuing arrest warrants on trumped up charges for Uni n Hidalgo residents who are active in the CCU.

On May 14th police detained CCU member Carlos Manzo on false charges, the CCU immediately demanded the mayor leave his post. Two other indigenous activists were also arrested, Luis Alberto Marin and Francisco de la Rosa also of the CCU. Manzo, Marin and De la Rosa are 3 of 37 local indigenous leaders and environmental activists who have outstanding warrants for arrest, issued by the Attorney General's office of the state of Oaxaca. The next day, in response, 300 people peacefully blocked the Pan American highway north of the town of Unidalgo, and demanded the immediate release of Manzo. At around 4 pm police forces fired tear gas on the

protesters and began to brutally beat women and children in an attempt to break up the protest.

The community is an indigenous Zapotec fishing village, as such, CCU are also direct participants in a two-year battle to stop an environmentally devastating shrimp farm from being built in Uni n Hidalgo. The industrial shrimp farm would destroy the indigenous local economy as part of Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), pushed in the region by the Interamerican Development Bank.

The proposed shrimp farm - heavily promoted by mayor Armando S nchez Ruiz - would be built on lands that are presently communal. This example is just one of the many corrupt, billion dollar packages of industrial development megaprojects connecting Puebla, Mexico to Panama. For full report see: [www.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=320997](http://www.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=320997) Background on other arrested indigenous leaders and on the Plan Puebla Panama highway, see: <http://www.asej.org/>

### IMC UK (United Collectives) Changes site design and software

During February 03 at the 2nd meeting of regional Indymedia's, it was decided to move the IMC UK website from the old "Active" codebase software to the new "MIR" software. The majority of the local IMC groups at the meeting are actively collaborating in the move from Active to Mir. The new IMC UK site is set up to accommodate every imc group in the UK.

The decision for a new codebase was taken because the old software is getting old and slow as posted to the site will testify to !!! The server for imc sites using "active" is overworked, so sometimes it went on strike. Mir is better for multimedia uploads and regional imc pages can share one newswire and admin interface

Indymedia UK is quickly developing into a network with many collectives in different cities. These new imc-groups run their own local pages. The new software MIR gives us this option to collaborate on one project rather than few people working on many different projects. We encourage people to help report any bugs or make suggestions to the imc UK tech list at: imc-uk-tech@lists.indymedia.org For info on the move see the Indy Documentation Project:

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/MovingToMir>

### Solstice: On land and sea

Many fairies, pixies and waterbabies decided to celebrate the Summer Solstice (June 21st) by stomping turf and surf at the various solstice parties. Traditionally, many went to the mystical megaliths of Stonehenge where pagans have celebrated the summer solstice for thousands of years.

This year however they came to dance, sun worship AND protest at English Heritage's decision to open Stonehenge on the wrong day! Campaigners are demanding full restoration of their traditional rights of free access to Stonehenge and provision of land for camping while attending the Midsummer Solstice Celebration (21-23rd June). For info and photos of the celebration see:

<http://indymedia.org.uk/en/2003/06/272813.html>

Elsewhere, on London's Thames South Bank, hundreds of people saw in the solstice at a Reclaim the Beach party. With soundsystem, DJs and fire jugglers, many trod the surf until sunrise and morphed into beach clean-up crew as the tide came in at 6:00am. For more info see: <http://www.swarming.org.uk/recl/reclwer.htm>

### Itoiz is being evicted to build a water reservoir

After 15 years of non-violent resistance against a proposed hydro-electric dam, 30 residents of Itoiz, (Basque Country- Euskal Herria) who refused to leave their village were arrested by the Spanish Civil Guard. Itoiz lies in the heart of the Longuida Valley in northeastern Spain. Both the Spanish government and the regional government of Navarre want to flood the valley in spite of strong local opposition. The arrests in Itoiz follow an eviction two months ago in Nagore in which a family and its cattle were kicked off land they had inhabited for generations. Those being targeted are a symbol of resistance to neoliberal land reforms and the displacement they cause.

Resistance against the building of the Itoiz dam has been apparent since the project initiative was introduced during the reign of the Franco's dictatorship. In 1985 a platform called "Coordinadora de Itoiz" was created in order to avoid the building of this dam. While the "coordinadora" was undertaking a legal fight, activists founded "Solidarios con Itoiz" that started a campaign of demonstrations and nonviolent direct action. In 1996 they cut down the cables needed to transport building materials. A consequence of this action is that work on the Itoiz dam was stopped for almost a year. One person, I aki Garcia Koch, was arrested and is still imprisoned for that action. He was accused of kidnapping; as in order to do the action, a dam employee was tied up to prevent him from stopping the action. A support action was later undertaken in London during October 1999, where an international group of dam campaigners (including those against the construction of the Narmada Dam), climbed the newly built Millennium Wheel in London, and unfurled banners in protest. For more information visit IMC Euskal Herria: <http://euskalherria.indymedia.org/fr/2003/06/7728.shtml> Solidarity with Itoiz: <http://www.sindominio.net/sositoiz/> The anti-dam struggle: <http://www.narmada.org/resources/links.html>

### French workers striking out against pension reforms

French public service workers staged major strikes during May and June and over 1 million demonstrated on May 26 in response to a call for a general strike. The strikes continued and street demonstrations grew more confrontational. The uprising was in response to the



government's proposed restructuring of the public sector. The Proposed reforms to the pension system would increase the retirement age by forcing people to work 40 years or more, to receive a full pension. The current requirement is 37.5 years. Other reforms include decentralising the public education system forcing the privatisation of many schools.

On June 10, 200 000 people marched to the National Assembly where the government was debating the reforms. The protest ended in confrontations between police and protesters with police using CS gas, stun grenades, water cannons and pepper spray. Around 65 people were arrested, 2 received 4 months in prison for allegedly throwing paving stones. Supporters held solidarity demos outside the court and in Burgundy one group occupied the local state television station interrupting the 1:00pm news and staying to prevent the 7:00pm broadcast.

For more info visit: <http://paris.indymedia.org> and <http://lille.indymedia.org>

### Iraq, Ya Basta (Enough is enough)

During June, a delegation from the Italian activist group Ya Basta, together with local representatives, were repeatedly refused entry into Iraq. Their aims were to greet Iraqis and construct projects of solidarity and grassroots cooperation, record video and establish links between elements of civil society in Iraq, Palestine, and Europe.

Timed to coincide with the G8 Summit, the delegation was told they would be shot if they didn't return to Jordan immediately, despite this threat the activists staged a sit-down protest. The American soldiers then violently dragged them onto the rear of a lorry, injuring nine. Full report see:

<http://uk.indymedia.org/index.php3?resist=global>

## Hundreds of Free Radio Stations off the Air

As the Dutch government decides to sell as many radio frequencies as possible, the impact on political and cultural spheres results in more and more free radio stations having to go off air. Hundreds of pirate radio stations will be eradicated because, although many are long-standing cultural institutions air since the 1980's, the authorities do not recognise them. In protest, radio makers demand more FM frequencies stay open for free local radio stations and want to legalise up to 1300 pirate radio stations. Despite the fact that many fulfil important social functions in their neighbourhoods, the economic rewards of frequency

commercialisation outweighs the social benefits and the government continues to actively hunting down pirate radios.

In Ireland, like the Netherlands, persecution of free radio has also been rapid, with a recent, almost unprecedented crackdown on unlicensed Irish broadcasters. Unlicensed broadcasting has been a strong independent movement in Ireland since the 1970's, when a court ruled that the broadcasting monopoly held by public broadcaster Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE), only applied to national broadcasting. This left a path open for pirate music and community radio stations to evolve. A major

crackdown in the 80,s saw many well loved independent stations raided, such as Radio Nova in May 83. Since then, In 1988, legislation was passed to create an independent local radio system in Ireland, with a government-backed body dishing out licenses to those they thought „valid%. However, those stations that did not have licenses still fought for the airwaves.

Raids in May 2003, by staff of the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg - [www.comreg.ie](http://www.comreg.ie)) accompanied by the Garda (the Irish police) have silenced many of the remaining stations, which jointly accounted for 7% of total radio listening in

Ireland. It was reported on Indymedia Ireland, that 11 locations were raided by Comreg and the Gardaí on Tuesday and Wednesday (20th and 21st May) across Dublin. Equipment was seized in 9 of these locations. The Garda press office later denied any knowledge of the operation, but a spokesperson for ComReg said that prosecutions were pending.

List of Irish free radio stations:

<http://www.radiowaves.fm/index1.shtml>

Info on the raids:

<http://www.mw.nl/realradio/features/html/ireland03052.html>

Ireland Indymedia:

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

Netherlands Indymedia:<http://indymedia.nl/>

# Resisting Corporate Domination Of The World's Food Supply

Actions from the World Agricultural Forum & the US Ministerial Conference on Food and Agriculture

The Biodevastation 7 conference began on May 16 in Monsanto's home town of St. Louis, USA, coinciding with the World Agricultural Forum (WAF), an exclusive meeting of industry and private agriculture interests. The Biodevastation (Biodev7) conference featured workshops, forums and speeches by conscientious scientists, farmers and other critics of agriculture-for-profit, genetically modified foods, and agriculture industrialists like Monsanto.

On the same day (16th) the St. Louis Police Department supported by federal agents raided the Community Arts and Media Project (CAMP), and the Bolozone, a collective housing project. 15 activists were arrested in the raid and 3 were arrested outside the CAMP building. The Bolozone housing collective was condemned and boarded up immediately. Concurrently St. Louis Police arrested 9 cyclists for "biking without a license."!! The charge was later changed to "obstructing the flow of traffic." A van carrying participants was stopped, searched and towed away. The driver of the van and a speaker at the Biodevastation conference was arrested. Many others reported being stopped and questioned by police because they were biking or walking in groups and or "looked suspicious". Police also confiscated 20 bicycles, camping gear, puppets, construction materials, tools, circus equipment and many more items from CAMP and Bolozone. Throughout the day many of the arrested were released or bailed out by the community. Seven circus artists chose not to post bail and were released at 6 am the next day.

St. Louis Police Chief Mokwa tried to justify the police repression of peaceful dissent, by claiming that those arrested were planning violent attacks on the World Agricultural Forum. Mokwa based this accusation mainly on "weapons" found in the raid on the Bolozone housing collective, that is undergoing rehab work: a box of roofing nails, a bag of stones to build a retainer wall and three circus whips. As a "smoking gun" the police touted empty bottles they had stuffed with rags to present them as "molotov cocktails" and a lone slingshot.

Leading up to the raids, police and corporate media had nourished fear and hysteria by claiming that "50,000 Seattle anarchists" were about to descend on St. Louis, whereas Biodev7 organisers estimated that about 300-2,000 would travel to the conference. St. Louis police officers were issued new 220V tazer guns specifically for the World Agricultural Forum protests and wrote about looking forward to using them on protesters in an online discussion forum. Posts pertaining to the WAF protests were later deleted by the moderator, after their content had been posted on the IMC newswire.

Despite the recent police harassment, Biodev7 participants and local activists remained determined to non-violently strive for peace and justice. To honour this commitment a "Rally for Safe Food and Family Farms" was held Sunday, May 18th at the local Centenary Methodist Church.

Following the Biodevastaion conference, many participants geared up for the US



Ministerial Conference on Food and Agriculture in Sacramento, California held on June 23rd to 25th. The U.S. government, including the US State Department, invited delegates from around the world to hear why they need biotechnology, food irradiation and other industrial agricultural technologies that harm people and the environment. These discussions directly impact the farmers and consumers, yet were not been invited. Farmer movements across the world have said that they do not want biotechnology, yet the US still push biotech on the rest of the world with the help of the WTO. However less than half the WTO member countries accepted the invitation to attend, showing tepid support for the U.S. corporate agenda. This is positive also in light of Colombia's recent ratification of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms, resulting from modern biotechnology and assists and enables countries to demand proper notification and risk assessment of GM crop imports. It is also presents a basis for countries to deny such imports.

Activists from around the country and the world converged to add their voices of opposition. In the initial day of protests, police presence was heavy, with vehicles stopped and occupants questioned regularly. The Second day started with an attack on activists provoked by corporate media, the detaining of a protester bus, and the launching of Sacramento Resistance Radio. In the afternoon, over a thousand people descended on downtown and executed roving, decentralised actions converging at the Convention Centre, where the WTO trade show was happening. The building was briefly surrounded and all traffic in and out halted. Fences were pulled down, dumpsters pushed into the street, and political messages tagged on walls and windows. Police became violent during arrests outside an IMAX theatre

where WTO delegates were planning to attend a showing. By late afternoon, most people gathered at a local community garden that was threatened by private development. Twelve activists locked down around an apricot tree and were eventually removed by police using pain compliance. The last day of the conference saw a variety of creative actions such supermarket theatre for raising awareness and 3 forest activists locked down at UC-Davis Life Sciences building to bring attention to GM tree research, they have since been charged with felonies.

June's month resistance to corporate domination of food also coincided with the recent dawn home arrest of Jose Bove, the controversial figurehead of France's radical farmers' union, the Peasant's Confederation, on the 22nd June. The French police whisked Bove away to prison and within 40 minutes he was behind bars to begin a 10-month sentence for helping destroy genetically modified crops. His incarceration, five months after his sentence was confirmed by judges, sparked immediate protests from politicians, unions and his supporters and calls for a presidential pardon. Justice Minister Dominique Perben defended the "commando-style" measures at a news conference, saying the surprise raid was necessary in order to avoid confrontation with Bove supporters. The sentence he began serving on Sunday was the accumulation of two convictions, 4 mts for destroying a stock of GM seeds at a site in France owned by Swiss biotech giant Novartis in 1998 and 6 mts for ruining GM rice plants at a laboratory in Montpellier in 1999.

Visit Indymedia biotech: <http://www.biotechimc.org/>  
<http://stlouis.indymedia.org/> & <http://portland.indymedia.org/>  
For info on Jose Bove:  
<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0622-02.htm>  
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety:  
<http://www.biodiv.org/biosafety/>