

This is the FBI - we're busting you for weapons of mass communication



Friday 15th October 2004

Free/Donation

Issue 469

# INDY - STRUCTABLE!

*"Five Days after the seizures there is still an almost total information blackout from the authorities in the UK, US, Switzerland and Italy. Indymedia still has no confirmation of who ordered the seizures, who took the servers in London, why the seizures took place, where the servers are now located, and whether they will be returned."*

- Indymedia UK.

Last week internet servers in the UK hosting 21 Indymedia (IMC) sites were seized by the FBI, following a request by Swiss and Italian authorities. Hang on a minute, the Swiss and Italians ask the Americans to seize computers based in the UK? What's going on?

Welcome to the wonderful world of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) which formalises cross border policing between the UK and USA. Here the Attorney General in the US makes a request to the UK Home Secretary who either grants it or refuses it if the request is "an offence of a political character." Statewatch editor Tony Bunyan called on David Blunkett to explain himself: "Why did the Home Office agree? What grounds did the USA give for the seizure of the servers? Were these grounds of a 'political' nature?"

The FBI said that they are acting on behalf of requests by the Swiss and Italian authorities. Indymedia have been unable to get any more information as to what the exact reasons are, but this is a continuation of attacks on independent media by the US Government. In August the Secret Service tried to get records of internet addresses from an internet service provider in the US and the Netherlands before the Republican Party convention. Last month the Federal Communications Commission shut down community radio stations around the US. Two weeks ago the FBI requested that Indymedia remove a post on Nantes Indymedia with a photo of Swiss undercover police, while IMC volunteers in Seattle were visited by the FBI on the same issue.

French Nantes Indymedia, one of those affected by the raid, had pictures of the undercover cops at the 2003 Evian G8 summit on their site, and the Prosecutor in Geneva is investigating this. You can see the incriminating photos at: [www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/mtoups/nantes/copsinnantes.htm](http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/mtoups/nantes/copsinnantes.htm)

The Italian state has had a campaign of harassment of alternative media since the G8 summit in Genoa. Last year the far right Aleanza Nazionale, who are in the Italian coalition government, called for the closure of Indymedia, and Paolo Valentino, the state secretary in the department of justice, also an-

nounced possible cooperation with the USA.

The federal prosecutor of Bologna Marina Plazzi said she is investigating Indymedia because of possible "support of terrorism" and has asked the FBI for assistance. Apparently this is about people on the newswire praising an attack on Italian soldiers in the Iraq last November.

Why didn't the Swiss and Italian authorities approach the British police directly, instead of the FBI being involved? Indymedia commented: "We are concerned over the growing use of international co-operation frameworks by Governments and Law enforcement agencies which can be used to obscure clear legal process, and call for openness and clarity in international co-operation, to ensure due process and that civil liberties are protected."

## Protect and Server

The effect of the raids has been to shut down 21 (mostly European) Indymedia sites, six, including Indymedia UK, are now back on line. Indymedia UK had multiple back-ups of its files as they are all "paranoid" according to one Indymedia volunteer - and such paranoia has actually been justified as many other sites without backup have lost lots of data. There is a gaping hole on the internet where about one million Indymedia news articles, comments, photos, audio reports, and videos used to be.

The FBI has stolen an irreplaceable piece of our collective history. They've also made a direct attack on an important component of the movement against global capitalism, a part that carries messages around the globe without the corporate media telling us what to think.

Indymedia is working hard to restore sites, but about ten remain down. At least four - Uruguay, Italy, Western Massachusetts and Nantes - have lost data. "This FBI operation gives us even more reason to continue with what we have been doing," says

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For having an argument 20 years ago!

Caroline Levett was nabbed after getting confused when asked by US immigration officials whether she had ever been convicted of a crime involving 'moral turpitude'. Just about to start her dream holiday, and unsure what exactly 'turpitude' meant, she admitted being arrested for damaging a former partner's property during a row, 20 years ago. Obviously turpitudous in nature, the crime led to her deportation and being escorted to the plane by two armed guards.

an activist from Italy Indymedia. "The interruption of Uruguay Indymedia comes at a bad time with the elections coming up," Libertinus, an Indymedia volunteer says "Uruguay has a long history of media repression. We don't have the money to pay for web hosting, so we rely on the solidarity of other countries. Actions like this make the whole world insecure for free media."

Indymedia has called for solidarity actions and has received many statements of support. Aidan White, General Secretary for the International Federation of Journalists said "The way this has been done smacks more of intimidation of legitimate journalistic inquiry than crime-busting." Tim Gopsill of the National Union of Journalists said: "If the security services of the UK or US can just walk in and take away a server, then there is no freedom of expression."

Indymedia is consulting the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) on how to prevent further government attacks on free speech. "EFF is deeply concerned about the grave implications of this seizure for free speech and privacy, and we are exploring all avenues to hold the government accountable for this improper and unconstitutional silencing of independent media," said EFF Staff Attorney Kurt Opsahl.

It's ironic that the seizure of the servers comes just before the Communication Rights and Tactical Media Production conference - of which Indymedia is a part of (see [www.efcr2004.net](http://www.efcr2004.net)). As the conference blurb says "As Governments and corporations increasingly base their authority on the ownership and control of information - a closer look reveals these areas as the landscape in which crucial struggles are being played out. 'Communication Rights' is at the heart of these struggles." The attacks by the US, UK, Italian and Swiss governments on Indymedia are a direct attack on these Communication Rights.

The servers have now been returned - but Indymedia still don't know who took them in the first place and what action to take in the face of these illegal seizures!

For updates about this, as well as the ESF see [www.indymedia.org.uk](http://www.indymedia.org.uk)

## SchNEWS 10th Birthday Party

This Saturday at the Coronet, Elephant and Castle, London in conjunction with Brighton based sound system Innerfield, also ten years old. Line up: Freq Nasty (Legendary breakbeat producer), Top Cats (UK's finest Ska band), VJamm Allstars (live Audio-Visual) featuring Matt Black (Coldcut), Babyhead (Ska/Hip-hop); Plus in the Circle Bar: Flannel (anarcho-funk-punk), Chris-T-I (man with guitar singing clever, funny, angry songs), Don Bradmans (chap rock). Friends of SchNEWS and Innerfield playing music to get drunk to. 10pm till 6am. £10 on the door/£8 ESF delegates.

NEW BOOK 'SchNEWS At Ten' OUT NOW

Available from Oct 16th at SchNEWS Conference & Party and other ESF events. Or order yours from us for £9 inc p&p



## Wrong side of the track

Michael Mungovan was a 21 year old student earning some extra money working on the railways when he was hit by a train and killed. Not trained or qualified to do the work and without proper supervision Michael had found himself working on one of the most dangerous tracks in Britain. He was employed by McGinley Recruitment Services a contractor for Balfour Beatty Rail Infrastructure Services, part of Britain's biggest construction consortium (SchNEWS 356).

The case recently came to court, and corporate killers Balfour Beatty were given a slap on the wrist for their part in his death, being fined £150,000 for 'exposing their workers to risk'. £150,000 might seem like a lot to us, but it's a small dent when you've earned £2 billion in the last six months like Balfour Beatty have. The fine is so small because it is in proportion to the turnover of the company which employs the workers rather than the parent company.

It's not as if this kind of thing hasn't happened before, Simon Jones was killed at Shoreham Docks in 1998. Simon worked for SchNEWS and we helped launch a campaign of direct action to get justice for him and to expose casualisation. Simon's mother Anne, spoke of the frustration of trying to talk to a government who won't listen or learn and don't appear to care: "For five years I've been hammering it into Government ministers that they must put an end to agencies pretending the workers they send out are "self-employed" and so avoiding doing a risk assessment for the job and walking away scot free when things go wrong."

The Tories cut health and safety enforcement budgets by 25% in 1996, and Neo-Labour, despite many promises over the years, has failed to introduce a law on corporate manslaughter. The Health and Safety Commission, recently dropped their demands for a corporate manslaughter, after a 'note' from the Confederation of British Industry was circulated at one of their meetings. Privatisation, deregulation and 'casualisation', have seen the replacement of professional, unionized workers with casual labour supplied by agencies as and when required. This is the enlightened idea of big business directors trying to shave a few more pennies off their costs.

\* Anne Jones and Edgar Paez, international secretary of Columbian trade union SINALTRAINAL (who are spearheading the coca-cola boycott) will be speaking on "Our lives, their profits - how we fight exploitation" at the SchNEWS conference this Saturday in the Camden Centre 2pm.

### SchNEWS Conference

**"How Direct Action Can Save the World"**



Active, popular opposition to oppressive rulers has been the force of change throughout history. Find out first hand, how to get involved, organize, plot and discuss resistance to the onward goose-step of capitalism.

\* 2-3pm: **WORK:** Our lives, their profits - how we fight exploitation.

\* 3-4pm: **WEATHER:** Climate change - capitalism's legacy to the world.

\* 4-5pm: **WAR:** The warmongers and how to oppose them.

\* 5-6pm: **WINNING:** How direct action can save the world.

Saturday 16th, The Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, (nr. Kings Cross) WC1. [www.schnews.org.uk/at10](http://www.schnews.org.uk/at10) And it's FREE!

\* This is also the launch of our new book

## Trident Meditation

On Monday 18 people from Trident Ploughshares and Theatre of War locked themselves into a 45-foot model Trident submarine outside the gates of No.10. They were calling on the government to uphold international law and disarm the submarine, in compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been signed by 187 countries.

Cherie Blair's Matrix Chambers has just published legal opinion which says that Britain will be in breach of the treaty if it renews the 1958 nuclear cooperation pact with the United States later this year. Both leaders are about to sign the pact. Where Bush goes, Blair will follow, this time armed with Nukes, hovering around Iran, Syria and North Korea.

Rupert Read, on behalf of the activists, said "While Iraq has now been conclusively shown not to have had any Weapons of Mass Destruction, Britain has them aplenty, and — in flagrant disregard of international law and treaty obligations, like an outlaw state — is doing nothing to rid itself of them."

So Blair & Bush are breaking international law, ripping up international treaties, attacking other countries for supposedly doing the same and making a massive profit to boot. Pissed off with the warmongers and want to know how to oppose them? Mark Curtis, director of the World Development Movement and author of *Web of Deceit*, Ewa Jasiewicz, human rights activist and journalist recently imprisoned in Israel and Jo Wilding, activist, writer and witness to the siege of Falluja will be at the SchNEWS conference this Saturday at 4pm.

## True to D-Form

Last weekend the D-form festival in Barcelona, a celebration of music and art from the alternative culture, was dawn raided by riot cops. Crushing sculptures, the kids space, a skate ramp, the café and the bar, which were all built from recycled materials, the police moved through the festival site chucking what they could into bin lorries. The festival had been set up to showcase genuine grass roots art from all over Europe, without sponsorship or state funding, using underground decentralized networks to communicate.

In stark contrast, Barcelona's council wasted millions of euros earlier this year on the European Forum of Culture - a massive and expensive flop, badly attended and widely criticized for its hypocrisy. A forum for peace, art and sustainability was sponsored by among others INDRA, Spain's biggest weapons manufacture and Coca-Cola who recently used para military forces to kill trade unionists in Columbia; the "sustainable transport" stand was sponsored by Toyota! Supposedly to promote cultural diversity, the Forum hosted a "gypsy week" which was built on a spot from which a big camp of er, gypsy families were forcibly evicted to make way for the sleek Forum venue.

Not ones to give up easily, the would-have-been-festival-go-ers threw a big loud peaceful protest, which took over the centre of town. More than three thousand people danced through the streets while Ojos de Brujo, a local hip-hop flamenco band played on the back of a truck.

## SchNEWS in very brief

Next Thursday (21) G8 'Trapeze roadshow' will be at Brighton's Cowley Club talking about climate change, oil, war and civil disobedience using workshops, short films and a pub quiz that aim to stimulate debate about the G8. Starts 6pm 12 London Road 01273 696104 [www.cowleyclub.org.uk](http://www.cowleyclub.org.uk) \*\* It's **anti McDonalds day** this Saturday (16) in Brighton people will be at London Road McDonalds from 1pm. [www.mcsportlight.org](http://www.mcsportlight.org) or 020 7713 1269 \*\* For hundreds **more party and protest** dates check out [www.schnews.org.uk/pap/guide.htm](http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap/guide.htm)

## Triple Road Bypass

In time honoured corporate style, Neo-Labour has put UK plc firmly back on the route to more road building. Their mates at the Confederation of British Industry have convinced Blair that they need to get their hands on the £20 billion in profits that congestion supposedly costs the country each year. And to help company bosses jet around to extract cash from every corner of the world, airport expansion plans are aplenty.

From the Aberdeen western bypass to the Weymouth Relief Road, protest camps against road building projects are constantly fighting eviction. There'll be a gathering in Nottingham at the Sumac centre between 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> November to look at what's being built, where, by whom and what we can do about it. There'll be some planning of actions, discussions on the role and support of camps and building networks to support local campaigns. Booking's essential. 0845 345 1998 [www.roadalert.org.uk](http://www.roadalert.org.uk)

And, in yet another shameless plug for the SchNEWS direct action conference Rising Tide, the grassroots network that takes action on the root causes of climate change will be speaking about capitalism's legacy to the world at 3pm.

\* The Earth Cymru will be taking the Energy Beyond Oil workshop on tour next month, looking at energy use, the impending oil crisis and some alternative energy solutions. For tour dates 01558 685353 [ecnl@fraw.org.uk](mailto:ecnl@fraw.org.uk)

## Positive SchNEWS

The Freecycle Network is a grassroots movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns, each being run by a local volunteer moderator. If you want to get a few useful bits and bobs, de-clutter your life and save stuff going into landfill at the same time, check out [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

*...and finally...*

Starbucks have got the hump over a website belonging to the Vacuum Cleaners. The spoof website shows how to subvert their brand by filling in a few choice letters on the Starbucks logo and magically transforming it into the words "fuck off". Starbucks claims that it "tarnishes" their brand and "goodwill". (Does anyone give a crapaccino?) And what was that about goodwill? Starbucks, the coffee shop equivalent of McDonalds, loads up its coffee drinks with rBGH (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone) tainted milk, and "buys coffee and chocolate produced under exploitative labour conditions, and in the case of cocoa plantations in Africa, workers who are actually slaves." It also uses prison labour for its products.

Although Starbucks exploit a broad range of workers they don't appear to have a broad sense of humour. Starbucks had infamous political prankster Reverend Billy banned from every Starbucks coffee shop in the world! Prior to the ban, Rev Billy and the church of Stop Shopping could be found preaching within the ('arty' and 'atmospheric' haha) interior of Starbucks all over America, humouring customers with comedy sketches. One sketch mirrors the brainwashing powers of multinationals as 3 actors sit around a cup of frappaccino and become euphoric as though it is a hit.

\* Make your own Fuck Off cup: [www.starbuckscoffee.co.uk](http://www.starbuckscoffee.co.uk)

\* Reverend Billy [www.revilly.com](http://www.revilly.com)

Why not register a domain name of your own? ([www.starbucksatemyonkey.net](http://www.starbucksatemyonkey.net) [www.fuckstarbucks.com](http://www.fuckstarbucks.com) and many more are still up for grabs, use your imagination!) They might try to take your website off you like the Vacuum Cleaners but you shouldn't be too worried about any letters they send.

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all party-goers our puns are indy-scriminate and indy-scribable but are sometimes a bit indy-corous ... Honest!

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