"The Human Tide Mounts High":
Indymedia Italia and Genoa's G8 in 2001

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Throughout this paper, I will focus on the media-documentation of Genoa's G8 protests in 2001. More precisely, I will delve into the role of Indymedia Italia in the development of Genoa Social Forum's Media Center, also referring to two of the most relevant videos produced by them and now collected in the online repository NGV – New Global Vision. In other words, I aim to highlight the aesthetic and political stances of a specific media collective during one of the most relevant historical events at the beginnings of the 21st Century.

INTRODUCTION: NOTES ON MEDIA ACTIVISM FROM SEATTLE TO GENOA

When we think about the protests against Genoa's G8 in 2001, we are confronted with a multi-layered historical phenomenon, which elicits vivid reactions still now. For those who were born between the Seventies and the Early Eighties, those protests represented the peak of a political militancy started at the end of the Nineties, with the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement. This social movement became widely recognizable during the so-called "Battle of Seattle". On November 30th, 1999,

> [n]early fifty thousand people took to the streets to protest corporate globalization at the WTO meetings in Seattle [...] A diverse coalition of environmental, labor, and economic justice activists succeeded in shutting down the meetings and preventing another round of trade liberalization talks (Juris 2005, 193).

During this event, a transnational movement protesting neo-liberal globalization set its agenda and its own practices of contention on a world-scale media stage. The activists fought against WTO (World Trade Organization) politics, exposing its hegemonic claims, and presented themselves as "postmodern revolutionaries" (id., 194), using digital technologies and the

Internet as means of mass mobilization. It could be affirmed that, within the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement—which, back then, was defined as "no-global", although this label is shallow and over-simplistic (Andretta et al. 2002, 80)—, "Internet-based distribution lists, Web sites, and the newly created IMC" (Juris 2005, 190) played a pivotal role. More specifically, the last acronym—IMC—referred to the Independent Media Centers, also known as Indymedia, an open-publishing online network, in which media activists could spread texts, videos, audios, and images supporting their political stances (Del Frate et al. 2021, 14).

This media infrastructure fostered multi-layered and transnational communication exchanges, through which local activists were always in contact with other global anti-capitalist organizations. Not by chance, then, during the protests in Genoa in July 2001, the Media Center of Genoa Social Forum (GSF), where the equipment of Indymedia was stocked, was one of the main targets of the state repression: during the infamous night of the "Diaz School raid", Italian policemen and *carabinieri* broke in the Diaz-Pertini-Pascoli schools, where the Media Center was located, smashing computers, Internet wires and videocameras (Bazzichelli 2006, Antonini, Barilli, and Rossi 2009; Proglio 2021, 43-47; Del Frate et al. 2021, 82-94). Taking the Media Center as one of the targets of a state-sanctioned assault had a double-fold entailment: on the one hand, Indymedia activists had witnessed police officers baton-charging the crowd with their photo- and video-cameras, and these documents represented a splinter in the eye for the law enforcement authorities; on the other, the Italian state governance—and, more broadly, the governing elites of the so-called "First World"—claimed that even independent and citizen journalists were considered part of a political problem to be solved.

In this paper, then, I will focus on the efforts of Indymedia Italia activists during Genoa's G8, their role in developing Genoa Social Forum's Media Center, and the movement's media practices. The existing literature on this specific matter mainly relates to three typologies: academic essays (or parts of them) belonging to the social movement history field (see, for instance, Bartolini 2021), to sociology (see Juris 2005; Andretta et al. 2002), and memoirs written by Indymedia members (see Del Frate et al. 2021).

From this standpoint, I will delve into the research path paved by Damiano Garofalo in the essay "New global vision: i video indymedia dell'anti-G8 di Genova", which is based on a media studies approach. More specifically, I will rely on the ecological intersections of media production, subjectivity production, and politics (Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2003; Guattari 2009, Goddard 2016)[1]. Through this methodological lens, in which media ecology studies meet social

movement history and sociology, I will describe and investigate Indymedia Italia's multimedia flow of radical communication, which took shape between July 19th and 22nd, 2001, and became extremely relevant not only to narrate the riots from within the protesters' organization, but also to ascertain facts for legal purposes and to establish memories of Genoa's G8 through media practices.

These memories constitute a counter-archive of those days, and they are explored here in three different sections: in the first one, I will reconstruct the history of the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement and its long march to Genoa; in the second one, I will focus on GSF's Media Center and Indymedia Italia; finally, in the third one, I will reflect upon a selection of video documents uploaded on the NGV – New Global Vision[2] platform.

THE ANTI-CORPORATE GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT MARCHING TOWARD GENOA

As Andretta et al. (2002) affirm in their seminal book *Global, noglobal, new global. La protesta contro il G8 a Genova*, the end of the 20th and the beginnings of the 21st centuries were characterized, in the collective imaginary, by worldwide protests against neoliberal globalization. These protests gained public conscience in 1999, with the already mentioned "Battle of Seattle", although social movements challenging an unfair world governance were already present since the early Eighties. From 1984 onwards, in fact, counter-conferences regarding industry and trade were organized on a regular basis during elite meetings, and a global movement protesting neoliberal globalization policies took shape. Activists dared to challenge the rising social and economic ideology, whose hegemonic stances were based on the notion of global free trade as a mean to increase the world's wealth.

> From this perspective, the term globalization refers to "a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power." (Held et al. 1999, 7)

In other words, from the last decades of the 20th century onwards, we are confronted with "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens 1990, 64): a sort of time-and-space shrinkage has happened, primarily influencing "the production and reproduction of consumer goods, culture, and policing tools" (Andretta et al. 2002, 5, my translation).

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2   See https://www.ngvision.org/, last visit on February 9th, 2024.

Seattle's and Genoa's protests arose in such historical circumstances, contesting from a transnational perspective those policies that, according to the activists, were heightening the social and economic divide between the wealthy minority and the poor majority across the whole world, and institutions such as G7/G8, IMF, WTO, the European Union, NATO, OCSE, and the World Economic Forum were blamed for it. These issues were channelled through precise practices of contention, such as the organization of massive counter-meetings during the most important political summits: they aimed to show the public opinion that "another world is possible" (McNally 2001).

Genoa Social Forum meant to be the core of one of these massive counter-meetings in 2001. It was organized to coincide with the G8 summit, which would have taken place in Genoa from July 20th to 22nd. It was the second one to be chaired by Silvio Berlusconi, the prime minister of Italy, at the head of a centre-right parliament majority. On that occasion, representatives of the European Union and the governments of the USA, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France, Canada, Russia, and, of course, Italy aimed to discuss the major political issues concerning the most developed economies and, as Berlusconi affirmed a week before the summit, also to provide solutions to global poverty (Proglio 2021, 40).

On the other side, the counter-meeting capitalized on the previous mass mobilization in Prague (September 2000) and Porto Alegre (January 2001) (Seoane, and Taddei 2002), in which different collectives joined together to protest neoliberal globalization, paving the way for the foundation of Genoa Social Forum and the coordination of the protests against G8 in Genoa, in July 2001. It all began in 2000, with the political convergence of many Italian social centres joining the so-called Tute Bianche ('White Overalls') movement (De Pieri et al. 2021), leftist catholic and non-religious associations and movements, non-governmental organizations, political parties such as the Green Federation and the Communist Refoundation Party, and their youth organizations (Andretta et al. 2002, 36): they drew on "the Jobs pact" signed by fifty associations (Aa.Vv 2001, 10). Between the end of 2000 and the beginnings of 2001, when GSF was officially founded, their number ramped up to 1187.

Thus, Genoa Social Forum did not configure itself as a monolithic counter-institution: on the contrary, it was a "network of networks"—a sort of 'trans-network'—interconnecting various organizations, which had never been cooperating previously. As Andretta at al. claim, GSF's structure was "segmented", formed by "groups that are born, mobilize themselves, and constantly wane; polycephalic, characterized by a collective leadership; reticular, with groups and individuals linked to each other by multiple interconnections" (2002, 37, my translation; see also Gerlach [1971]). That being stated, although Genoa Social Forum presented itself as a political "trans-network", it aimed not only to logistically coordinate the protests, but also to elaborate a full-blown counterprogram to the G8, envisaging public forums, international demonstrations, sit-ins, etc., and setting shared rules of engagement. Nevertheless, during specific events, each association adhering to GSF could freely choose how to organize street protests.

In July 2001, then, a multitude, in the sense developed by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (Hardt and Negri, 2004), flooded Genoa's city centre. First of all, there were those groups and collectives coordinated by GSF (Proglio 2021, 40-47)—for instance, the Lilliput network (catholic and voluntary associations, moderate environmentalist groups, etc.); the Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions and Citizen's Action (ATTAC); leftist associations, parties, youth organizations, and unions; several NGOs; the Tute Bianche movement; and the Global Rights Network, which was composed by social centres often critical to the GSF organization. In addition to them, there were those anticapitalist and anarchist collectives that considered GSF's ideology and political requests as merely reformist (Andretta et al. 2002, 39), and were keener on violent protests, adopting tactics such as the black bloc one (Albertani 2002).

All these heterogenous parts of the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement were equally stroke by the state-sanctioned repression during Genoa's G8. In that moment, activists gave rise to a cohesive political body, which requested to be represented by the movement's media, from within the movement. From this point of view, the role of GSF's Media Center and Indymedia became pivotal.

LIKE A SWARM IN THE STORM: INDYMEDIA ITALIA AND GSF'S MEDIA CENTER IN GENOA

In the essay "The New Digital Media and Activist Networking within Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement", activist and scholar Jeffrey Juris writes about his experience in Genoa. More specifically, he offers brief insights into the hectic activities of GSF's Media Center at the peak of the protests in Genoa, on July 21st, when nearly 300.000 people rallied in the streets of the capital of the Liguria region denouncing

> The murder of a young Italian activist [Carlo Giuliani] killed the previous day. The center was teaming with protesters when we arrived, writing e-mails, conducting interviews, and posting audio and video clips. Pau, from the Catalan Movement for Global Resistance (MRG), was still connected to the Internet via laptop sending out real-time updates, as he had been the entire week [...]. Indeed, we had spent much of our time during the past two days running from baton charges and tear gas. Fortunately, protesters shot reams of digital footage documenting police abuses, which were compiled, edited, and uploaded at the Independent Media Center (IMC) [Indymedia] on the floor above (Juris 2005, 190).

In this short excerpt, a precise image of the Media Center comes to mind: media activists running all over the place, trying to find a spot where to connect their laptops, and informing their fellows about the riots in the streets. During the anti-G8 protests, they used various communication forms, modalities, and techniques, feeling evenly comfortable with digital video-shooting and editing, electronic text writing, and the Internet, because, as a matter of fact,

they were part of a generation of activists who embraced the digital revolution and appropriated new technologies bending them to their specific needs. At the same time, as Naomi Klein has brilliantly stated, the use of digital media, especially the Internet, was "shaping the movement on its own web-like image" (Klein 2002, 16), with hubs and spokes "that link to other centers, which are autonomous but interconnected" (16).

Within the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement, then, a mutual interaction took place between its inherent subjectivities and the digital technologies appropriated by media activists: not by chance, the motto of the most important independent media network, Indymedia, was—and still is, although the whole project declined during the 2010s— "Don't hate the media, become the media". Back then, "becoming the media" meant primarily to exploit the technical innovations brought by the digital revolution: the so-called new media and their languages (Manovich 2001) were becoming prominent, and political collectives quickly learned how to handle them and to intrude themselves into the "Network Society" (Castells 1996) from the back door.

Grassroots networks such as Indymedia played a major role in this process. Its members, for instance, were organized in media collectives, and their activities were based on interlinked websites, each constituting a zonal node. The first one was seattle.indymedia.org, which was put online on November 24th, 1999 to cover the protests against the WTO Conference in Seattle (DeLuca and Peeples 2002; Adler 2021). After this event, the nodes proliferated worldwide (Mamadouh 2004). At the end of 2000 there were thirty of them, while in 2001 their number ramped up to seventy: among them, there was also the Italian one, italy.indymedia.org[3].

All the sites shared the same graphic design, with a three-column Home Page dedicated to the most important sections of the news repository: there was— and still is for those sites that are online—a central section named "Features", in which we could find "texts discussed in a mailing list group" (Del Frate et al. 2021, 15, my translation); another section titled "Newswire", which consisted in a "live update of all the contents uploaded by the users" (15, my translation); and a third section composed by links to other nodes in the network.

The Italian node was developed in 2000, mainly on the initiative of a philosopher, Matteo Pasquinelli and Void, an activist from ECN – European Counter Network (51). Later on, they managed to involve other activists and collectives, who formed the Autistici/Inventati group between 2000 and 2001 (Beritelli 2012, 49–83) and, as media activists, took part in protests such those in Prague at the end of 2000 (Del Frate et al. 2021, 79). Ten months later, they constituted one of the cores of GSF's Media Center (Rossini 2021), two school buildings entrusted by the local administration to Genoa Social Forum and transformed

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3   See https://archive.autistici.org/ai/20210701082026/https://italy.indymedia.org/, last visit on February 9th, 2024. The Indymedia Italia site has been put online in 2021 once again, although its last update dates back to 2006.

into huge media rooms, where the editorial staffs of radio stations such as Radio Gap, weekly publications such as *Carta*, newspapers such as *Liberazione* and *Il manifesto*, and other media collectives worked side by side. Indymedia was assigned an entire floor, where the Italian crew and international members of the network teamed up.

Since their arrival in Genoa, they established a specific working routine. After having wired the buildings of the Diaz-Pertini-Pascoli[4] schools (Beritelli 2012, 116–17), they planned to hold several assemblies every day to coordinate the coverage of the street demonstrations. These meetings included the international Indymedia members, who were supposed to update their nodes. At the same time, it was decided that other groups would have stayed

> at the Media Center, to do translations, to publish information that arrives via text message or phone. Those who remain in the Media Center coordinate with the national chats [...] Then there is the Radio channel, because there are Indymedia nodes in the world that are making broadcasts, web radio and in some cases even FM, in which they tell what is happening in Genoa [...] Moreover, we have to write the Features [on the Indymedia sites], keep up with the Newswire, and hide the posts that are clearly provocations, or spam [...] To sum up: assemblies are held before the demonstration, people are placed in various squares. There are also meetings within the working groups [...] then we leave, we call, we send text messages. Those who are standing in front of the computers make the first updates, coordinate with others, and set up the first information, listen to the radio and transcribe what it is said, and upload the radio's mp3s. Then, many people go back from the square to the Media Center, upload the updates, and go back to the square once again. And it goes on like this until night (Del Frate et al. 2021, 85-86, my translation).

This workflow could have been effective only if the sets of policies adopted by the Independent Media Centers were respected. As Victor Pickard's research on Indymedia has demonstrated, these policies called for a "radical democratic way" of collaboration (Pickard 2006, 22–23): they dictated "a consensus decision-making model, in which all of the nodes in the network have to be in agreement concerning important decisions that need to be made" (Atkinson 2017, 132). Of course, this "radical democratic" method had pitfalls and shortcomings—one of them was that many "unspoken rules" (id., 133) remained in the shadow, becoming "'tyrannies'" such as "rigid ideologies of activists, elites masked by the lack of structure of the network, and tensions associated with vague editorial policies featured on the main website" (133).

That being stated, on the ideological side of the matter, Indymedia activists were thoroughly attached to their "radical democratic" method, which envisaged

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4 Journalists and media activists were hosted in the Diaz-Pertini school, while the operative rooms of the Media Center were located in the Pascoli school.

a peer-to-peer organization, rather than a top-down structure. The latter suited better the needs of Genoa Social Forum, whose coordinators aimed to compose a political multitude through the principles of democratic representativity. Inevitably, disagreements arose during the protests. Some Indymedia Italia activists claimed that, although GSF presented itself as a political trans-network, it was stuck to hierarchical forms of organization. On the contrary, Indymedia was open to everyone: each person

> had the same voice, we thought that everybody could take part in their own way to the demonstrations, respecting the other's way of protesting [...] they [GSF's delegates] did not want there to be an open space where everyone could come in and post their information [...] Had it been up to them, they would have given accreditations only to well-known people and only these would have had the computers available (Del Frate et al. 2021, 94, my translation).

In other words, GSF's Media Center was based on this precarious balance: on the one hand, there was a multi-layered organization such as Genoa Social Forum, which was characterized by unstable relationships between its different groups and collectives—criticism came from the Tute Bianche and more often from the Global Rights Network—and was competing against other anticapitalist and anarchist collectives for the protest hegemony; on the other, there was Indymedia, whose members felt that the Media Center was used by GSF to pull water to their own mill (Del Frate et al. 2021, 95) and had a different collective configuration, resembling a swarm capable of self-coordinating.

This swarm-like (infra-)structure was based on molecular social processes (Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2003, 143), in which new political subjectivities were forming. More specifically, through the interaction of activists and new media technologies, heterogenous dynamics of "attraction and imagination [modelled] individual bodies and collective organisms, making them act like dynamic, changing, and proliferating subjects" (id., 144, my translation). Indymedia activists appropriated communication and information technologies, behaving like those 'collective agents of enunciation' pinpointed by Félix Guattari in the Eighties, which were supposed to allow for

> 1) *The formation of innovative forms of dialogue and collective interactivity and, eventually, a reinvention of democracy;*
>
> 2) *By means of the miniaturization and the personalization of equipments, a resingularization of the machinic mediatized means of expression; we can presume, on this subject, that it is the connection, through networking, of banks of data which will offer us the most surprising views;*
>
> 3) *The multiplication to infinity of "existential operators" permitting access to mutant creative universe* (Guattari 2009, 299–300).

In other words, during the anti-G8 protests, Indymedia aimed to create political subjects that took part in the constitution of "'a collective intelligence'

capable of autonomy and self-determination" in contrast to the "interconnected 'global mind' wired according to the power lines of semio-capitalism" (Berardi, Jacquemet, and Vitali 2003, 147, my translation). A sort of hive-mind to which semiotic operators—equipped with a video-camera, a tape-recorder, and a laptop, and acting like a swarm—could return when they had fulfilled their mission: to document what was happening in the street of Genoa during a state-sanctioned repression and to spread the information to the largest audience through the online network of Indymedia.

VIDEO-DOCUMENTING THE STORM: INDYMEDIA ITALIA IN THE STREETS OF GENOA

As it is publicly known, between July 20th and 21st, 2001, the streets of Genoa became the stage for large scale clashes between the Italian law enforcement and collectives of the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement. A violent escalation quickly occurred, and many violent events took place: for instance, in Dante square, when protesters tried to enter the so-called "Red Zone", in which the G8 delegates were meeting; in Tomaseo square, where the black bloc confronted the *carabinieri*; in Tolemaide street; in Alimonda square, where activist Carlo Giuliani was killed; in Manin square, where the law enforcement baton-charged Lilliput activists and pacifists; in Italia avenue; in the Diaz-Pertini-Pascoli schools; and, finally, in the Bolzaneto police station.

These clashes had legal consequences, leading to several trials against the protesters and the law enforcement officers. More specifically, it is to mention the so-called "Trial against the 25 activists", charged with devastation and looting, resisting a public official, injury, and damage; on the opposite side of the barricade, almost one-hundred police officers were charged for their actions in Manin square, in the Diaz-Pertini school, and in the Bolzaneto police station[5].

Indymedia tried to influence many of these trials, circulating materials that could help the protesters, and, more broadly, its members attempted to "affect the 'media trial' to which [the movement was] subjected in the days immediately following the events" (Garofalo 2021, 184, my translation). First of all, there were clips uploaded on the Indymedia Italia site, in the "Video" section. These materials were based on the relentless activities of Indymedia operators in the streets of Genoa. They appropriated new technologies in all its forms and tools, from MiniDv video-cameras to laptops and computers, from digital photo-cameras to software for online data transmission: these devices, most of them

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5   Copies of the documents concerning these trials are preserved in the GSF Legal Support Archive, housed in the Francesco Lorusso Archive at Vag61 social center, in Bologna. These documents are accessible via request to the archive managers, whom I would like to thank.

belonging to the consumer realm, were bent to semiotic counter-production and the creation of an alternative information network. It can be observed how IMC crews used digital technical objects in a video published by Indymedia's Facebook profile on the twentieth anniversary of the "Battle of Seattle"[6]—and the same happened in Genoa: a room full of laptops streamed on the Internet, while, due to technological limitations, digital videos were selected, cut into 30-seconds/1 minute fragments, and only then uploaded—longer videos were circulated only through a VHS delivery system[7].

Other reportages and documentaries were developed drawing on those clips and the MiniDvs' raw footage in the weeks and months following the G8, and they are now digitally accessible on the NGV – New Global Vision[8] platform, which presents itself as an online repository hosting independent media materials. Among them, there are the most relevant Indymedia Italia video-documents, mainly referring to two different text typologies: on the one hand, there are raw-footage compilations, on the other, we have fully-fledged reportages, in which interviews to activists, lawyers, or intellectuals provide context to the raw footage. In the last part of this section, then, I will provide two examples of these text typologies.

Concerning the first one, I will focus on *L'assalto alla Diaz* (*The Diaz Assault*, 2004)[9]. As Damiano Garofalo observes, the enunciation effects of such a document are strictly intertwined to the video format employed while shooting (Garofalo 2021, 182). Because of their easy-handling, lightweight devices such as MiniDv cameras allowed activists to smoothly shoot a video about what was happening around them, adopting a specific "man-machine" configuration: hands on a videocamera; eyes on its built-in screen. This has relevant textual effects: in the assault to the Diaz-Pertini school, everything is displayed through a "first person shot" (Eugeni 2013), and the operator "is transformed into an integral part of the video-text" (Garofalo 2021, 182, my translation). In other words, we feel a "presence effect" concerning the body of the operator; they were right there, right in the moment when the police entered the school buildings, watching the events from the windows of the nearby Pascoli school, where the headquarter of Indymedia was located, and, later, walking through the corridors of the Diaz-Pertini school. At the same time, the user/spectator's eyes are aligned with the operator/enunciator's ones, and the former can experience the same shock

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6   https://www.facebook.com/indymedianetwork/videos/indymedia-network-20th-anniversary/2644407005653227/, last visit on February 16th, 2024.

7   See the Indymedia Italia site, where it was possible to fill a form and request specific video-cassettes: https://archive.autistici.org/ai/20210620161937/http://www.italy.indymedia.org/video/, last visit on February 16th, 2024.

8   Founded in 2002, it is a video-archiving project that aims "to create independent online video channels by building a network of FTP servers and a peer-to-peer file-sharing system" (Garofalo 2021, 180). Web hosting is curated by Isole Nella Rete (ecn.org) and autistici.org/inventati.org.

9   See https://www.ngvision.org/mediabase/336, last visit on February, 18th, 2024.

as the latter regarding police brutality. An interesting reversibility takes place between the enunciator and what is enunciated, and between the enunciator and the receiver.

Contrary to what Garofalo claims, anyway, there are not two scopic regimes—the first one tied to a participatory feeling, and the second one to a "helpless and voyeur-like posture" (id., 182, my translation) —, but just one: not only when the user/spectator watches the shaky camera footage of the raid's aftermath inside the school, but also when the footage taken from the windows of the Pascoli school is displayed, they can empathize with what they see, having a hint of the police brutality through the eye/camera of the operator. This kind of alignment between the operator and the user has a deep meaning: whether they want it or not, while watching the video, the user/spectator shares the same social and political space of the operator and they establish a common enunciation ground with each other.

These elements are also present in more structured reportages such as the different versions of *Aggiornamento 1* (*Update 1*, 2002-2004)[10], in which Indymedia activists aim to give a proper context to Genoa's anti-G8 protests, showing the polyvocality and the complexity of the whole movement. In this reportage a pivotal role is played by the acts of selecting and editing the footage: as many Indymedia video-documents, *Aggiornamento 1* is, in fact,

> *sectioned into ideal chapters […] the beginning of each one is marked by the presence of explanatory intertitles with a black background and white text. The text inside the intertitles performs, first of all, an informative function: that is, it pinpoints the geographical and temporal parameters of the events, providing the images with a precise historical context. Secondly, it is used to fill in the blank spaces of the story, not occupied by the images. Despite the fact that these videos are produced and edited close to the events that took place, this audiovisual material takes on an immediate historical value, which indirectly affects even the narratives of the most traditional media* (Garofalo 2021, 183, my translation)*.*

Moving beyond the formal and enunciation side of the matter (well-analyzed by Garofalo), a relevant thematic issue comes to the fore: Indymedia Italia activists aimed to elaborate a different movement's representation than the one provided by the mass-media, which was characterized by well-identifiable images—the black-hooded activist throwing a brick at police officers, for instance. On the contrary, *Aggiornamento 1* firstly displays a colorful demonstration, suddenly interrupted by an intertitle claiming that troops of policemen have baton-charged the rallying activists without a proper reason. From this moment onwards, the user/spectator watches moving images of the riots in the street of Genoa, from the clashes in Tolemaide street on July 20th to the assault to the Diaz-Pertini-Pascoli schools during the night between July 21st and 22nd, mixed

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10   See https://www.ngvision.org/mediabase/15, last visit on February, 18th, 2024. See also https://www.ngvision.org/mediabase/333, last visit on February, 18th, 2024.

with interviews to activists.

The ideological standpoint of Indymedia is crystal clear: the anti G8 protests in Genoa were peaceful and legitimate until the law enforcement unjustifiably began a violent repression. A twist in the course of the demonstrations took place, and police officers were brutal in their improper conduct, causing injuries and the death of Carlo Giuliani, whose corpse is visible in several shots. These statements are reinforced by interviews to activists, who tell what happened to them in the Diaz-Pertini-Pascoli schools. The police assault is considered part of a precise repression strategy, as it is claimed in an intertitle: "Hitting the Communication System: the first objective of any military operation".

CONCLUSIONS

Both *L'assalto alla Diaz* and *Aggiornamento 1* configure themselves as successful examples of counter-information. While many journalists underscored the inherent violence of many activists (and the naivete of the others) in the mass-media, Indymedia's members highlighted the responsibility of the law enforcement, shedding light to their real purpose: the repression of the movement as a whole, in order to state that 'another world was not possible'. In doing so, Indymedia gave rise to a complex media ecology, which was deeply intertwined to the social and political environment surrounding it.

In order to describe this interaction, I did not choose to focus only on media production, rather I opted for "a holistic mode of comprehending media practices in the context of their aesthetic, social, political, and subjective surroundings of which the fragmented and fragmenting categories of producers, institutions, audiences and the phases of media production, and consumption are incapable" (Goddard 2016, 13). This overarching perspective helped me to shed light on Indymedia's media practices, which were crucial for the whole Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement, and not only for those groups and collectives coordinated by GSF: media activists pointed their finger at state-sanctioned repression, showing that the riots were first of all a reaction to police brutality, which mirrored the violence of the neo-liberal governance.

Not by chance, then, the independent media documentation of Genoa's demonstrations proved to be as important as the demonstrations themselves. It became a matter of occupying a symbolic space of representation, extending the movement's influence far beyond the physical urban environment. It was a semiotic conflict, in which the G8 governments—and especially the Italian government—could be protected by friendly corporate mass-media, but, at the same time, could be exposed by information activists belonging to independent online networks, who acted like a swarm.

In waging this semiotic war, Indymedia managed to keep an intersectional balance in representation, giving voice to a plurality of social and political subjectivities, as stated by Sandra Jappesen (2021). This last point appears to be crucial for Indymedia during the anti-G8 protests, when it was extremely

important to show the world what was happening in the streets and to correctly represent a global movement that drew its strength from the interaction of different groups: although they were very often in competition with each other, they wanted to collectively affirm that, contrary to what Margaret Thatcher claimed in a famous speech, "there is another way". Indymedia provided them a global voice to shout it.

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