

printflare

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Dublin Grassroots Calls European Days of Action on May Day Weekend



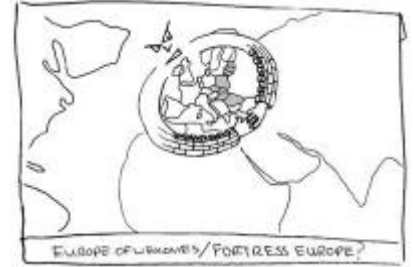
Activists from the Dublin Grassroots network are calling for a European day of action in Dublin on Saturday, May 1st, as the highlight of a weekend of action from Friday April 30th, to Monday May 3rd. In a press release, the Grassroots activists stated that “these days of action will focus on symbols of all that is wrong with the EU as it currently stands: militarism, neo-liberalism, fortress Europe and the EU police state. We are inviting people from all over Europe, and the

world, to join us in Dublin on Mayday to show our “leaders” that their agenda for EU integration, driven by the wealthy and powerful, will face resistance. We will also be using the days of action to highlight local issues and campaigns which are linked to the broader problems of corporate globalisation and the EU.

The Irish government is currently holding the rotating presidency of the EU. After almost a month of the presidency, we have a pretty good idea of what it is going to mean for us. The two ministerial meetings that have taken place so far have both been characterised by extraordinary and expensive police operations, paid for by the public and aimed at keeping the public as far away as possible from the decision makers. They have also revealed the sinister side of EU security. A well-known anti-war activist, Eoin Rice, was arrested for protesting during the EU ministerial meeting in Galway and was brutally beaten in custody. In Dublin, Indymedia reported that an independent cameraman was forcibly removed from the vicinity of Dublin castle and had his camera damaged by police. Obviously the EU leaders aren't too keen to allow critical public scrutiny of their deliberations.

The government has announced that Mayday is going to be Bertie's big day out as EU president. This is the date - traditionally workers' day - when the EU will formally expand to incorporate 10 new states, mostly from Eastern Europe. The government plan to hold street parties and other 'celebrations' for the population, while the 25 heads of state of the enlarged union are wined and dined in the plush surroundings of Farmleigh house. However, the government's celebrations to 'welcome' the accession countries are a fraud.

We anticipate that an unprecedented police operation will be put in place to ensure that the public are kept far away from the decision makers. Also, while the leaders of these countries might be



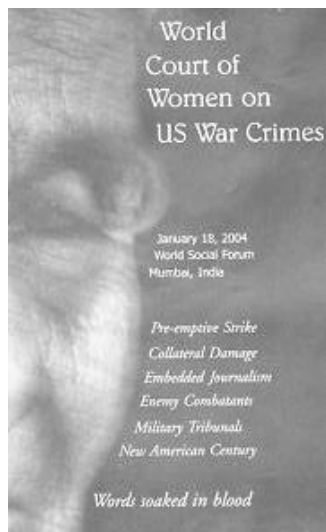
welcome in the EU (along with their farms and sweatshops), most of the current EU countries will remain closed to the people of the accession states for the next 6 years. Worse still, at the same time as the EU leaders talk about international co-operation and openness, they are actually implementing a 'fortress Europe,' a closed EU from which the inhabitants of the third world, the majority of the world's population, will be ruthlessly excluded. It is instructive that the first 'achievement' of the Irish presidency was the establishment of a 'repatriation fund,' to allow the wealthy countries to share the costs of deporting people to poor countries.

We are not at all opposed to international integration. We do not seek to defend our national sovereignty. We do not oppose the accession of new countries to the EU. We do not think that a sovereign Irish government will represent us any better than a EU government will. However, we are completely opposed to the direction that the EU is currently taking. In particular, we are opposed to the militarisation of the EU, as embodied by the Rapid Reaction Force and NATO/Partnership for Peace. We are opposed to the capitalist agenda of the EU, driven by multi-national corporations, as embodied by article 133. We are opposed to the creation of a fortress Europe, which forces borders to open for capital and builds walls against people. We are opposed to the police state that the EU is becoming, where protestors are criminalised and brutalised and EU co-operation focuses on co-ordinating spying on the public, as exemplified by the Schengen Information System. That is not the EU we want.

In opposition to the current EU of the rich and powerful, we propose a grassroots Europe. A Europe united through empowered communities taking decision making power back into their own hands. A Europe without borders, internal or external. A Europe where wealth is equally shared and everybody has the same opportunities. A Europe where our resources are spent on education, health and sustainable development rather than war and capitalist profiteering. This Europe cannot be formed from above, but needs people to stand up for themselves and say 'no' to our corrupt and greedy leaders. The time to start is always now.”

Mary Kelly Addresses 'World Court' at the WSF in Mumbai

Peace activist Mary Kelly, currently awaiting a retrial for her hatchet job on a US warplane at Shannon Airport last year, received a warm welcome when she spoke at the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai (Bombay), but was surprised by the refusal of Mary Robinson to support the "upholding of international law".



Addressing the "World Court", she told the assembly of her direct actions against the US war machine. "Shannon is the 'welcome mat' for US troops en route to Iraq, and the entry point to the Middle East. This 'welcome mat' was NOT put there by the Irish citizens, but by a Government that continues to ignore the will

of its people. Faced with the mounting evidence of US and British determination to attack Iraq in spite of worldwide opposition I felt obliged to take direct action.

One immediate result of my action and a similar action a few days later by 5 Catholic Workers, was the pull out of 2 military carriers from using the airport. This temporary withdrawal, although a success, was not a triumph. Numerous US air carriers continued to use Shannon for refuelling facilities, and hence the Irish Government continued to fuel the war. This refuelling continues today, and I am here to call for an International campaign to support those of us in Ireland who are engaged in this fight.

Our actions achieved three things: 1) The use of Shannon airport by the US military inescapably captured the media headlines and alerted Irish people to the realities and seriousness of Ireland's incorporation into the build up to an illegal war 2) It struck a serious blow to the confidence of the US military security at the airport 3) It inspired Irish anti-war activists. The biggest demonstration ever against US military aggression happened two weeks later in Dublin, our capital city, where over 150,000 people marched, while other marches happened throughout the country.

By the time of my trial in June, however, the anti-war feeling of Feb 15th was shown to be mere sentiment in the face of persistent scare-mongering about US disinvestment from Ireland and consequent economic collapse. In spite of this huge opposition on Feb 15, only a small number of people stood in my support outside the courthouse in June. Yet my trial featured such international figures as Ramsey Clarke, Scott Ritter, Dennis Halliday and Michael Birmingham. I faced a virtual media blackout and practical desertion by the popular movement, including the Left. Fortunately, the Arabic TV station Al Jazeera were there to document the whole trial.

My experience has taught me that one of the biggest weapons of Imperialism facing us in Ireland is its ability to anaesthetise the public's conscience and there is no doubt that the last 10 years of Ireland's economic boom – popularly known as the Celtic Tiger – has done just that. The Celtic Tiger, almost entirely a US dollar creation, has coincided closely with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of the Project for the New American Century. Shannon airport, the closest European international airport to the USA, is being privatised. It is now clear that Shannon airport is to become a major US military airbase as part of the US conquest of the Middle East, Eastern Europe and ultimately Western Europe. The Celtic Tiger was the price of the conscience of Ireland."

High-priest Cu Cullen wants to dig up Hill of Tara!

The self-described 'Soldier of Destiny', Waterford property developer Martin Cu Cullen (aka 'Cu Cullen') has big plans for himself and the Hill of Tara, which lies disgracefully underdeveloped in County Meath. Soon he will build a 680 million euro motorway, and then they will come. They will know. "Toilets, for boys and girls, videos, sweets, parking lot attendants, contracts, sub-contracts, burgers, hotels...you name it, we got it!" howls Cu Cullen gleefully.

Is this guy for real? Oh yes. This is no accident of fate, but the culmination of a life-long campaign, hatched by Cu Cullen when a youth, after he ate some old tuna fish and learned that the Ark of the Covenant was buried at Tara. He headed straight for politics as a means of using OPPM



(other peoples public money) to achieve his divinely appointed destiny. And now he has mighty powers. Planning appeals are made to disappear, into thin air. New ones appear, just as magically and 'Hey presto!' they are passed. Money seems to flow in from bottomless wells in all directions for The Party. And everybody wants to take his picture!

Cleverly disguised as the Minister for the Environment and Heritage he has assembled a boatload of spanking new road building machinery, which is now being tested out on his other pet road 31 million project in Waterford. "The town has never been the same since Henry II took off with Strongbow, never to return. We are thinking of naming the motorway after him. He would be so proud of us." Gone are the days of hitching a lift up the dark old Dublin road. "Welcome to Cullen Country!"

In a press statement, Vincent Salaifa of the Save Tara/Skryne Valley campaign demanded that Martin Cullen place a preservation order now on all National Monuments of Ireland. "All interference with national monuments of Ireland is now presumed illegal and must cease immediately, until the Government has passed valid regulations governing such action. No Ministerial order, or grant of planning permission, authorising interference with a national monument, can be justifiably relied upon. Any attempt to disfigure any national

monument, particularly the Hill of Tara, will have to answer to the citizens of Ireland, in their Courts.

The High Court has declared the system regulating destruction of national monuments unconstitutional, since it did not comply with the National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended). The 'technical glitch' mentioned by Judge Kearns referred to the Government's attempt to dilute the protections contained in Section 14 of the Act, governing Ministerial Consent, not the Act itself.

The 1994 Amendment to the Act, drafted in response to Wood Quay, was designed to avoid the exact scenario we face today at Carrickmines. It required three state agencies to make the important decision to interfere with a national monument. By reducing the requirement to two actors by statutory instrument in 2002 the Government ignored the central democratic principle of checks and balances within the Act. When these two actors failed to perform their duties properly, there was no third actor to check it.

One cannot help but wonder if the drafting of the 2002 statutory instrument was linked to the 'sudden' closure of Dúchas, The Heritage Service, in 2002? If so, it would appear that our own Government unconstitutionally conspired to dismantle, by stealth, all legal protections for heritage, long before Carrickmines Castle blew up."

Protests Greet EU Ministerial Summits in Galway & Dublin

The first major protest of Ireland's EU presidency took place in Galway, with a number of groups speaking out on issues ranging from racism to fishing in Connemara. They coincided with a meeting of employment/social affairs ministers in a city-centre hotel. The largest demonstration took place under the banner "Another Europe Is Possible", in Eyre Square, close to the venue, and was attended by around 400 people.

Gardai were present in large numbers, and a helicopter hovered overhead. Two people were arrested in a car-park for "obstructing traffic" late on Friday evening. Eoin Rice, a well-known activist, was arrested on Saturday morning, and



was allegedly beaten while in Garda custody. In a statement made later that day, he detailed the alleged assaults. "One man stood on my neck as I lay on the ground while several others kicked at me and one man struck me across the legs repeatedly with a telescopic baton which had a large ballbearing on the end. At least a dozen uniformed Gardai stood by watching this scene".

Fintan Lane, PRO of the Irish Anti-War Movement, "unreservedly condemn(ed) the heavy handed approach taken by Gardai in Galway". Edward Horgan of the Peace and Neutrality Alliance called for an "urgent independent investigation of these complaints against the Gardai". The Garda press office confirmed that Eoin Rice had been arrested and is due in court in February. They declined to

comment on the allegations of a beating in custody but said that there are "several channels open to him if he wishes to make a complaint". Eoin was examined by a doctor at the Garda station and, on his instigation, was taken directly to Galway Hospital where a wound to his head was stitched, his arm was x-rayed and bandaged and anti-inflammatories and painkillers were administered. According to Conor Cregan, an anti-war activist who was present at the arrest, all of these injuries were caused after Eoin had been taken away by Gardai. Eoin Rice, Conor Cregan and a third activist (from Spain) confirmed to an Indymedia Editor that they have already lodged complaints about the incident with the Garda Complaints Board.

Meanwhile in Dublin, a short street theatre play marked the start of a series of anarchist actions for the EU presidency. Approximately 100 people showed up in front of the Central Bank on January 22nd, for the first public performance of "No Justice, No Peace!", organised by the autonomous anarchists in Dublin. This was held to coincide with the EU Justice Ministers summit meeting in Dublin Castle.

The play focused on issues of State brutality in Ireland in recent years. In three acts, the play touched on the Garda assaults on Reclaim The Streets in May 2002; the McBrearty affair in Donegal; the continued use of Shannon airport by the US Military; and finally the way the State uses prison and the conditions within Mountjoy.



The crowd attempted to march onto Dame Street straight from the Central Bank but was stopped by the Garda as a motorcade (presumably one of the EU Justice Ministers) was escorted past. They marched onto the street near the Georges St junction, and attempted to walk to the gates of Dublin Castle. There was a heavy Garda presence (roughly 100 uniformed Gardai in the vicinity, three mounted police, a helicopter flying overhead, special branch members mingling in the crowd, motorbikes and vans, and also an unconfirmed report that two vans of riot police were waiting on standby in the cobblestone street opposite Burdoch's chipper).

The Gardai prevented the crowd from getting further up Dame Street than the Parliament Street junction. An amplifier was set up on the road and the narrator announced the beginning of the play - but the Gardai then cleared the road using physical force and steel crash barriers. One of the organisers said that they intended on having the play in the street itself, but if the performers did get pushed back, then the green opposite the Olympia theatre would be an ideal place to put the play on as a fall back.

The crowd circled around the performers, who dressed up as Gardai (with pig noses, batons, and ridiculous camp hats), Bertie Ahern, a US Soldier, and a High Court judge.

Unique urban culture of Barcelona under threat

IMC Barcelona: From May 9th to September 26 of 2004, Barcelona will host the "Universal Forum of Cultures," one last spectacular international event while it is still eligible for EU development funding, before the EU turns its development money to its newer members from eastern Europe. The predicted total cost of the Forum 2004 is about two thousand million Euros (about 2.5 billion dollars). Of these expenses, only 319 million Euros will go to the actual contents of the forum; the other 1,740 million will go to "urban renewal" which includes expropriating public land and homes that belong to Barcelona residents, as well as evicting numerous squats and social centers, to make room to put in luxury housing, hotels, shopping centers, office buildings, and information-technology infrastructure. Numerous real-estate speculators and "development" corporations have already bought the seized land.

Despite the "15 days of occupation" from September 26 to October 10, 2003 in which over two thousand squatters from across Europe gathered in Barcelona to participate in creative actions to defend the threatened social centers, many of Barcelona's oldest and most prominent social centers, including Les Naus, Casa de la Muntanya, la HAMSA, and the Ateneu de Korneya, have been evicted or are threatened with imminent eviction. Happily, Can Masdeu, a long-squatted permaculture community and environmental education center, has won its recent court case and will not be evicted. Immigrants and activists have come under especially harsh police repression and raids, as the city attempts to "clean up" its streets in expectation of the half-billion tourists it expects the forum to attract.



This event's pretension is impressive, when you read the number of visitors that Barcelona hopes to welcome in the months between May and October 2004: more than Rome during the jubilee - the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ. According to the Forum's promoters, about a half billion people - one twelfth of the world's population - will be "sensitized by the Forum's arguments," even though they themselves cannot all come to visit Barcelona. We're not wrong to discount these declarations as mere delusions of omnipotence. Basically, the Forum will be: "El Grec" theatre festival, the Merce music festival, and the normal Barcelona summer activities, ending with the Festival of Saint Eulalia; it is possible that more tourists may come than in other years because of the presence

of international artists and because of the enormous flood of propaganda that we are already witnessing, but Barcelona has always been a city that is rich in cultural activity, without needing any Forum to bring culture to it.

After the Forum, when the tourists and the artists return home again, we will be left with a city transformed, a city that is ready to enter into a new phase in its history: a new dominion will have been declared, over public space and over the imaginations of its inhabitants. What remains to be seen is how the diverse actors involved in this event will play out their roles: the administrations, the multinationals, and the population of the city, and in particular the dissenting cultural and social fabric of the city. Many processes will come to a head, in 2004, and there is much to reflect upon and to debate, when considering how to act before and during the Forum. The rhetoric of "Peace" and "Multiculturalism" is extremely subtle; it creates a very strong division between those who have come to see that it is only a rhetorical cloak, and those who remain trapped by the knee-jerk reaction of spontaneous consent that the Forum's buzzwords bring about. Just as the Forum's promoters will try to capture the approval of the "anti-globalization movement" (it's no accident that they use the word "Forum," a reminder of the Social Forums in Florence and in Porto Alegre!) by inviting dissident intellectuals such as Ignacio Ramonet, Noam Chomsky or Jose Saramago, and by imitating the "alternative" style and design that are typical of Barcelona. There might even be some good concerts and debates. But the essence of the Forum can be summarized in Telefonica's advertising slogan: "Digas lo que digas, pero dilo con TELETARGETAS TELEFONICA" (Talk about what you want, but talk with TELEFONICA PHONE CARDS.)

Forum 2004. Where armed globalisation paints itself in rainbow colours.

Africa Indymedia asks for your support



IMC Africa: The imc-africa working group is seeking donations to support travel and other expenses of delegates to the upcoming African Indymedia conference in Dakar, Senegal, March 1-14. Without your help delegates from all over Africa will not be able to come to the conference.

Since 1999 when the first Independent Media Center formed in the streets of Seattle the Indymedia network has grown by leaps and bounds. Much of that development has taken place in the Global North which has a well-developed multimedia structure

that allows for quick and cheap media content. IMCs in some other parts of the world, notably South America, have grown by organizing non-hierarchically to make media, despite not having as much access to multimedia infrastructure.

On the other hand, Indymedia has grown very slowly in Africa. To give Indymedia Africa the push it needs, the imc-Africa working group, with support from other activists, is organizing an Alternative (Indymedia) Conference in Dakar, Senegal, from March 1 to 14, 2004. The main goal of the conference is to exchange organizing experiences and develop ideas for growing the Indymedia network throughout Africa. Delegates from IMCs or former IMCs in South Africa, Ambazonia (Ex-British Southern Cameroon), DR Congo, Angola, Kenya, Madiak (South Spain and Morocco), the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, UK and the USA have committed to attending. Three quarters of the delegates will be from Africa.

Unfortunately, international travel within Africa is difficult and expensive. We currently do not have the funds to support the travel of delegates within Africa, nor to pay expenses (food/lodging in Dakar) of those who cannot afford them in during the conference itself. We need your help to assure the conference will succeed.

All Donations should be sent via Paypal (<http://www.paypal.com>) to "imc-africa (at) indymedia.org", or by bank transfer to : Zentralkultur e.V, Account No: 269 35 70, BLZ/Bankcode 60050101, S.W.I.F.T-code SOLASDEST, Password: indymedia Africa, Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany.

We'll greatly appreciate any contribution no-matter how small. Thank you for your help. All current and future IMCs in Africa thank you as well. From the IMC-Africa Working group.

Mexican Army Burns Down Indigenous Village

IMC Chiapas: Mexican armed forces have attacked the Chol indigenous community of Nuevo San Rafael, burning down 23 houses and violently evicting the inhabitants, who are Zapatista sympathisers. The attack, reported variously as happening on either 19 or 22 January, took place in the remote Montes Azules jungle area of Chiapas.

Resource-rich Montes Azules has long been coveted by multinationals. As the governments and multinationals press forward with the Plan Puebla Panama and Free Trade Area of the Americas, the "war of low intensity" against the thousand-plus Zapatista autonomous communities erupts into blatant repression. The Secretary of Government of Chiapas, Ruben Velazquez Lopez, promises more evictions, declaring that land invasions will no longer be tolerated.



The fate of the inhabitants of Nuevo San Rafael is unknown, as the army is preventing reporters and human rights observers from entering the area. Local indigenous Chol, Josue Jimenez Cruz, has been arrested, and is apparently imprisoned in the town of Ocosingo. International solidarity activity is vital, declare Zapatista solidarity groups.

According to the testimonies obtained by The Human Rights Centre Bartolome de las Casas, 23 houses of the community were burned and at the moment 40 Marine and Police officers remain in Nuevo San Rafael. The inhabitants of this community, also known as Ignacio Allende, are indigenous Choles, refugees who had to flee from Calvario, municipality of Sabanilla in the north of Chiapas, two years ago.

The Human Rights Centre "wholeheartedly condemns the way in which the communities are being held incommunicado" and the "violation of the right to travel freely in the Montes Azules region" by the state authorities and the Marines. The Chiapas State forces have also evicted hundreds of peasants in the OPEZ organisation from 2 occupied estates in Suchiate, near the border with Guatemala. The Mexican daily La Jornada reports on 25 January:

"The high season for the eviction of campesinos has begun. The government of Chiapas has resolved to persecute land invasions, even those going back as far as 11 years, as happened yesterday in the estates Los Cerros and Los Cerritos in Suchiate, near the border with Guatemala. The lands were returned to their legal owners, that is the real estate company Las Cruces and the private persons Guadalupe Barrios, Arturo Barrios and Roberto Ocampo."

"The (Chiapas) Secretary of Government, Ruben Velazquez Lopez, the author of this escalation, declared yesterday that "this government will allow no more invasions", but he pointed out, "it will excel in guaranteeing that human rights are respected" during the evictions." See http://chiapas.mediosindependientes.org/print.php3?article_id=107125

In the nearby village of Nuevo San Isidro, also in Montes Azules, indigenous Tzotzil villagers fear an imminent eviction attempt and are mounting guard, day and night. Military planes and helicopters fly overhead. "We do not want anything from the bad government. Here we are going to resist. We are ready to spill our blood for the sake of our children," said one of the men of the village.

On the village jetty - these remote parts are only accessible by boat or by helicopter - are two signs. "Community in resistance" and "Entry Forbidden to Government Officials". While not formally part of a Zapatista autonomous municipality, the villagers are sympathisers with the rebel movement. In Montes Azules 110 Zapatista villages and settlements are threatened with eviction. The Mexican government cites conservation concerns in the Biosphere Reserve.

The real reason is the economic and strategic interests of transnational corporations and the USA and Mexican governments - the Plan Puebla Panama aims to "develop" southern Mexico and Central America, exploiting natural resources like biodiversity and hydro-electricity and driving peasants off their land into sweatshops.

Aboriginal activist doesn't want Australia on UN human rights body

IMC Adelaide: An Australian Aboriginal activist says he's launched an international campaign to prevent the Australian government getting a seat on the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations.

"Given Australia's human rights history, they do not deserve this right," said Michael Anderson, facilitator of the Gumilaroi/Euahlayi Aboriginal Nations. They're one of the largest Australian Aboriginal groups, numbering 15,000 people. "Australia is yet to admit to its racist past and accept responsibility. Their constant denial of what they did to us, the Indigenous people, is in fact a crime against humanity that also disqualifies them from sitting in judgment on any other regimes of the world."

Anderson said in a statement issued here that "the childish outburst of the Australians" over the conclusions of the UN's Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), ECOSOC and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) when it was found that the 1998 Native Title amendment were racist, clearly demonstrated that Australia were out of touch with reality.

More recently, Australia's treatment of refugee boat people, the continued imprisonment of illegal immigrants and the constant debate about the separation of children from their parents in these institutions did nothing to promote Australia as a deserving member of the UN Human Rights Committee, said Anderson.

Anderson, a claimant to land in northwest NSW and southern Queensland, was one of the handful of activists who set up the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972.