

printflare

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Indymedia Ireland - out of the net and onto the streets



Last week two major steps were taken in the development of Indymedia in Ireland. These steps were prompted by two major events coming up in Ireland in the next few months, the accession of the 10 new EU members on May 1st during Ireland's EU presidency and the visit of George

Bush to Ireland on June 25th for a US-EU summit. These events present a great challenge and a great opportunity for Indymedia. We can be sure that a large number of people from all over the world will come to Indymedia to find out what's really happening behind the facade of the corporate and state propaganda machines.

Indymedia Ireland has thus far been financed in an ad-hoc manner, with a small number of individuals putting their hands in their pockets to pay the bills. We have also had the problem that, beyond an occasional real-world public meeting, there have been limited opportunities for people to get involved in Indymedia who don't have regular Internet access and Indymedia has always aimed to be much more than a website.

We have produced videos, a large collection of news photography, printable PDF collections of news highlights and many other offerings, but the website is still the only thing that ties them together. In light of our desire to broaden the focus of Indymedia, away from an exclusively web-based medium, and in particular our aim to establish a physical Indymedia centre in Dublin, a group of Indymedia editors have formally established the Independent Media Support Group (IMSG), an association of those who wish to support the development of independent media in Ireland.

The second major development is the plan to establish a physical Indymedia centre in Dublin for the period around Mayday. This centre will host Another View of Europe - a week of screenings, exhibitions and workshops from the European Independent Media network. This event will include a photography exhibition, a selection of some of the best offerings from Indymedia film makers around Europe and a series of practical workshops where we will offer assistance to people in line with one of our key principles, the concept of 'Be the Media'. To this end a number of workshops will be delivered on film and video editing, the use of Internet distribution methods, creating and filing reports and using the web as a tool for social activism.

The Indymedia centre will also be used as a dispatch centre for reporting the events of the Mayday weekend in Dublin. This will involve the setting up of a computer network for the rapid deployment of news and multimedia reports from the streets of Dublin to the global Indymedia network. A team from Indymedia UK will be travelling to Ireland to lend us their experience of setting up such a centre.

The events will be concentrated on a venue in the city centre, whose location of will be confirmed shortly. This venue will act as a dedicated Indymedia space for the week around Mayday. However, there will also be events at several other locations over the week, including a workshop at the Convergence Festival in the Cultivate centre and screening in trade union halls.

In order for these plans to be successful we need people to get involved and help us out. We need people to help out in three main areas:

- **Technical Team.** If you have any experience in setting up computer servers and networks, writing code or just want to learn about it, we want you to be part of our technical group.
- **News Team.** If you want to be involved in the Indymedia reporting of the events around Mayday, whether as a writer, photographer, videographer or newsdesk editor or just want to learn how it is done, we want you to be part of our news group.
- **Event Planning Team.** If you want to help out in the planning of the events themselves, whether it be the setting up of the centre, the organisation of the exhibitions, screenings and workshops, or any of the other tasks that will be crucial to the success of the event, we want you to be part of our event planning team.

Finally and inevitably, we need to finance all of this. That means that we are asking people who support the Indymedia project to put their hands in their pockets and give generously. Details of how to donate are as follows. To donate directly to our account: Account Name: Independent Media Support Group, Branch: Permanent TSB, Henry St., Sorting Code: 990619, Account Number: 85893437

To send donations by post: Independent Media Support Group, 6 Linenhall Parade, Dublin 7.



The Freedom to Obey: practical obstacles placed in the path of dissent



Dublin City Council's recent decision to ban the posting in the city has been criticised by a variety of groups, including civil liberties advocates (ICCL), left-wing pinko political parties and NGOs, as a form of censorship aimed at curbing dissent.

The Council has already imposed a ban on anti-war posters advertising the March 20th demonstration against the war in Iraq. It said this tougher stance is merely an enforcement of existing laws and is aimed at combating Dublin's litter problem.

This argument has been rejected as spurious and the measure is being seen as a method of controlling and diminishing dissent without having to resort to overt prohibitions of political demonstrations, which would be too provocative. Dublin City Council proposed in 2001 to heavily restrict demonstrations in the Capital but had to abandon the idea in the face of heavy opposition. Last year in Galway, the Council attempted similar measures aimed at restricting political activity in the city centre, but were likewise forced to back down.

The restrictions will not apply to all political events State elections will continue to be exempt. No explanation was offered by the Council as to the what the difference between State sanctioned political events and non-state ones is.

The advantage of... a good pair of wellies. Farmers in Leitrim are protesting the closure of the Teagasc research at Ballinamore which they say will adversely affect the quality of life for the rural community in the area. The protests took the form of illegal blockades of private property and were held for four consecutive days last week. Gardai fail to intervene to enforce the law.

This is in sharp contrast to demonstrations at Shannon where dozens of people have been arrested for peaceful civil disobedience. The comparison with the recent anti-bin tax blockades in Dublin is even more striking. There the courts and their enforcers the Garda Síochána insisted that demonstrations could not continue and were prepared to jail people if they refused to comply with their orders. Also 17 Builders picketing at the Park Motors site on the North Circular Road in January 2003 were arrested.

Farmers have a history of taking action when unhappy, the most notable of recent times was their sheepish occupation of the Department of Agriculture on Kildare Street their blockades of meat-processing plants when prices were unfavourable to them, and the plain theft of foreign produce in Dun Laoighare supermarkets.

It's undoubtedly the case that farmers receive an easy ride from the state compared to their more lefty/anti-war cousins. Their strong links with establishment parties is one plausible reason for the lenient behaviour of the state towards them. Another related reason is that they're basically conservative

and unlikely to develop in a threat to the political system. Whatever the reason, the stance of the authorities calls into question the objectivity of the justice system in Ireland.

Restrictive Abortion Info Legislation Jeopardises Women's Health

'Alliance For Choice' publicly broke the 1995 Information Act outside the Department of Justice in Dublin on Monday 8th March, which was International Women's Day. The 'Regulation of Information (Services outside the State for Terminations of Pregnancies) Act 1995' or more commonly known as the 'Abortion Information Act 1995' severely restricts Irish people's access to information about abortion services abroad. The legislation has serious implications for the protection of women's welfare when they are faced with a crisis pregnancy. The Act sets out the conditions under which information (the names, addresses and telephone numbers of abortion clinics) may be given, by individuals or agencies, on legal abortion services available outside Ireland. Under the terms of the Act, information can only be given in the context of face-to-face counselling. It is illegal for a doctor to make an appointment with an abortion service on behalf of a pregnant woman, even if her health is at risk.



Commenting Níav Keating said: "By restricting Irish people's access to information about abortion services abroad, the Irish government is placing unnecessary stress and strain on Irish women. This form of censorship cannot be allowed to continue. Irish women must be able to obtain information easily in order to allow them to make informed decisions when facing an unexpected pregnancy. Despite the difficulties caused by the Act, more than 6,000 women per year have abortions in Britain. We demand that the 1995 Information Act be repealed so that women can obtain information with anonymity and ease. We also call for the regulation of all agencies offering pregnancy counselling. We will be publicly distributing leaflets that include the names and telephone numbers of clinics in the United Kingdom and Europe on International Women's Day. We see this action as an act of civil disobedience similar to the actions of the women involved in the Contraceptive Train who in 1971 travelled to Belfast and purchased contraceptives. On their return to Dublin they challenged the customs officers at Connolly Train station by openly declaring their illegal imports."

Clare Lee added: "The Crisis Pregnancy Agency, established by the Irish government, are currently engaged in a nationwide 'Positive Options' campaign that tells us that "the positive way to deal with a crisis, is to consider your options". However, only 3 of the 6 organisations listed by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency will provide Irish women with information about all their options - adoption, abortion and parenting. Non-directive counselling is only offered by the Irish Family Planning Association, the Dublin Well Woman Clinic and Cherish. At present, counselling services in Ireland are not regulated which means that any individual or group can establish a counselling service and this is an outrageous situation."

Attempted Eviction of Dublin Squat



At approximately 10'45 am, 3 officials from Dublin City Council attempted to get entry into a house on Dublin's Leeson St. They tried to forcibly enter the house with crow bars

hammer and axes, first through the front door and then through the basement - which was an attempt at illegal entry. Upon realising the building was occupied the police were called.

An impromptu solidarity protest of over 30 people from the neighbourhood, people who use the house and friends formed on the stairs outside. Gardai left and so too did the council officials -after repairing the damage which they had caused to the basement door.

In the 7 months that the occupants have been there, they have transformed what was once a derelict and neglected building into a home for 11 people and a community space. They converted the weed covered back area into an organic garden, created a library, and provided social space for language classes, knitting circles, food not bombs and bike workshops.



There is no facility or amenities for these types of activities in dublin at the moment. The astronomical expense of buildings means that there are limited spaces for people to live affordably and very few spaces to socialise. Rent across the city is exorbitant while derelict buildings are purposefully left abandoned.

The squatters intend to stay here for as long as possible, they say "we have put in time, energy and 100's of euros into fixing up this building. This is our home and we won't abandon it. We brought a derelict building back to life and we won't see it die."

BNP Start Irish Campaign

The BNP are starting a campaign to try and link up with racists in 'Eire' on the basis of a 'tidalwave' of immigrants entering the country.

They include a declaration on 'Building a Future for Ireland's Children' which disgustingly uses the first paragraph of the 1916 Proclamation as its introduction.

On March 8th on Today FM's "The Last Word" on Nick Griffin (BNP leader) was debating with Fergus Finlay (Labour Party functionary). Griffin was on about organising a

financial appeal so that the BNP could take out ads in Irish newspapers.

Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) sent out a press release to Today FM and others, stating that they wished to point out that this announcement from the BNP is unlikely to be anything more than their usual publicity stunt, to get radio interviews such as this one. In the past 5 years the BNP have made several threats to run candidates in various elections in Northern Ireland, but have not done so.

Two years ago the BNP attempted to make links with a racist in North Dublin, offering to support him in the establishment of an Irish party. He carried out some local leafleting with racist material. When confronted with arguments by anti-fascists and local residents in the North Inner City he fled. Shortly afterwards Anti-Fascist Action revealed this individual's details to the media and once articles appeared he went to ground and has not been seen since.

In 2003 and 2004 a BNP speaker was supposed to address debates at University College Cork. On both occasions the 'debates' were cancelled after pretty mildly worded protests from anti-racists. For UCC the BNP demanded £1,000 from the organisers so that they could provide their own 'security' for an academic discussion!. How much will 'security' cost them in Ireland's working class estates?

It would re-pay the BNP well to note that Irish people do not take kindly to Fascist pro-Loyalists attempting to import themselves into Ireland. Even the handful of Irish Nazis operating on the internet have been overwhelmingly opposed to the BNP being active in Ireland. Regardless of what the BNP say about establishing an 'Independent' Irish group, this is nonsense. Anyone they appoint as a leader will have to face a large number of Irish Anti-Fascists and other anti-racists, they will be exposed in the media and in their own local areas as tools of the BNP.

Govt Planning Referendum to End Citizenship Rights

The Fianna Fail – Progressive Democrat Government are planning a referendum to amend the constitution to remove citizenship rights from those born in Ireland. Instead citizenship will be decided by law.

Currently after the ratification of the Good Friday Agreement, Citizens are all those born in the island of Ireland, its islands, and seas. AND all those that qualify under law (such as those resident for a certain period, children and grandchildren of Irish born citizens, those married to citizens for a period of time, etc)

In Britain the birthright to citizenship was removed. Now British born people must have a parent that is deemed to be "British" or resident. If this is passed the Government will probably end the right of spouses, children, grandchildren and residents to get citizenship automatically under law.

Under the constitution citizenship cannot be removed from Irish born citizens. However it can be removed from those who qualify under law. So if this referendum is passed we will see the situation where citizenship could be retrospectively removed from Irish born people.

Genoa 2001: The State Oppression continues...



IMC Global: Supporters converged upon Genoa, in Liguria, Italy, for the mass trial of 26 activists arrested in a coordinated series of 45 home raids across Italy, on December 4, 2002, several of whom have been held in pre-trial detention and house arrest ever since. On the grounds that they were

allegedly recognized in photos from the demonstrations, these activists are charged with "devastation and looting" a vague term that carries a penalty of eight to fifteen years. One activist, Gimmy, (Francesco Puglisi) remained in prison awaiting trial for almost a year. In addition to the criminal charges, the activists also face a civil complaint filed by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice, and the President of the Council. The last, unexpected signatory to the civil suit, is the City of Genoa, in a decision unanimously approved by Genoa's center-left city government, even though two communist city council members, Seggi and Taccani, voted for a motion of shame at the decision. (Multilingual fax to protest the city council decision to file suit against the demonstrators.)

During these demonstrations, over 350 activists were arrested and as many as 500 were injured, with huge numbers critically wounded. More than 50 activists were arrested after the summit was over, for alleged activity during the G8, and Italian social centers affiliated with independent media have come under repeated attack since the summit.

As more and more reports are published of beatings and torture suffered by activists in the Bolzaneto police barracks in the days following their arrests in Genoa, prosecutors are preparing to press charges against 73 high-ranking police officers and prison staff for violations of human rights and falsifying evidence; on February 5, 2004, the Italian Supreme Court decided that the trial would have to take place in Genoa, denying the defense's request for a change of venue.

In trials against demonstrators, the most common, and most serious, charges, such as "criminal association" "subversive association", and "devastation and looting," carry penalties of up to 15 years and have their basis in Italy's anti-mafia law, which appears to be part of an attempt to justify mass arrests and to criminalize groups of activists on the basis of political association. Several Italian activists have already been tried and sentenced on more minor charges, but have not yet been sent to prison. For the 93 activists beaten and arrested in the Diaz School that activists were using as a place to sleep, all charges have been dropped. Valerie Vie, a 38-year-old French mother of three who came to Genoa as a secretary of ATTAC, had her trial on February 10, 2004; she was charged with assaulting several police officers and destroying public property (the wall surrounding Genoa's "Red Zone") when she entered the restricted "Red Zone" on July 20, 2001. She will have a second evidentiary hearing on April 23. After the G8 summit, Ms. Vie and two groups within the Genoa Social Forum had filed an appeal against the legitimacy of the Red Zone on constitutional grounds; however, the High Court upheld the Red Zone wall as being necessary to protect "public security". Genoa prosecutor Giancarlo Pellegrino has already announced that he plans to send 50-70 more activists, including the Publixtheatre Caravan, would be prosecuted.

Hunger strike asylum seekers close to death



IMC UK: Three Iranian Kurdish refugees, who have been refused asylum in Glasgow, Britain, are on hunger strike. The Three men, Faraq Haidari, Farnborz Gravindi and Mokhtar Haydari, have now been on hunger strike for about 3 weeks. They have apparently now stopped taking fluids, and are in a really bad way. Last Friday, two of the men blacked out and were admitted to hospital.

The men are faced with a harsh choice, as once refused asylum they have no right to work, housing or benefits of any kind. They must choose whether to return to Iran and face arrest, imprisonment, torture - perhaps death, or stay and starve on the streets of Scotland.

Around 200 people attended a hastily organised solidarity demonstration last Tuesday evening, outside the city chambers (council offices). In a statement read out to protestors, the men say they would rather die than return.

Supporters say they are close to death. Faraq Haidari, Farnboz Gravindi and Mokhtar Haidari are getting weaker by the hour. This case gives the lie to the British government's insistence that it only deports people who are safe to return to their countries of origin. Why would these men risk permanent injury - such as loss of sight - and even death if it were not for their terror of returning to face an Iranian state which is notorious for its human rights abuses against the Kurdish people?

Pacific Solution - No Solution

IMC Sydney: "Flotillas of Hope", a seaborne protest, will set sail from Australia mid-May, arriving on Nauru on the 20th June (World Refugee Day). Despite much publicity highlighting the ongoing dilemma for hundreds of asylum seekers (a quarter of them children) on the tiny Pacific Island of Nauru, conditions remain difficult.

The Flotilla will also draw attention to the drastic economic, social and environmental problems which led the Nauruan government to accept \$31 million over two years. Conditions are not only difficult for the mainly Iraqi and Afghani asylum seekers, but also the local population.

After years of phosphate mining, the island has become denuded of its vegetation. Locals are at a loss to know how to cope with the island's cash strapped economy. There are reports of difficulties even paying for imports of diesel to power the desalination plant for Nauru's water supply and to generate electricity.



It is because of the island's ongoing economic troubles that led it to quickly accepting Australia's financial aid incentives to detain asylum seekers. Since the inception of the so-called Pacific Solution in 2001, the Australian taxpayer has been meeting virtually all costs. The asylum seekers are housed in an isolated and rundown camp managed by the International Organization for Migration, an organisation dedicated to 'managing migration for the benefit of all'.

Anti-Rape Protestors Target Police

IMC Aotearoa: A protest descended on Wellington Police Station yesterday, in the wake of allegations of cover-ups of police rape and the deportation of a 16 year old sexual abuse survivor. The mixed group of women and men used drums, metal drums, pots, pans, whistles and musical instruments to create a 'noise barrage' outside the station in civil disobedience against the New Zealand Police.

One organiser said "This is a chance for women to express their rage about police rape, and cover-up. It is the police's job to protect us from rape, not perpetrate it."

Recent allegations brought against three policemen include Assistant Commissioner, Clint Rickards, who are said to have gang-raped Louise Nicholas and been involved with rape or sexual misconduct with other young women.

The protest also drew attention to the plight of the 16 year old Sri Lankan sexual abuse survivor, deported by the New Zealand Government. The women organisers said that they were angered by a government that does not rate sexual abuse as a serious violation of human rights, and will not take steps to protect a child.

Protestors connected the two situations, saying that in both cases the state has knowingly allowed and sanctioned the rape of young women. In the police rape scenario, the Prime Minister was made aware of the allegations years before the current media frenzy, and has only chosen to act on them following public scrutiny.

The action was supported by Wellington Independent Rape Crisis, whose paid worker attended the demonstration.

During the action two women performed a 'rap' / rhyme about the issues, and chants included: "Stop police brutality", "You are not above the law", and "Stop rape, smash the state"!

