

WHY? SORE OF EUROPE DO WE WANT?

The groups and individuals involved in this Grassroots Network are united by a vision of a better future, one without bosses or governments, be they in Dublin or Brussels; one in which all local communities are directly run by the people living in them and all workplaces by the people working in them; a future in which everyone has control over their own lives and an equal say in the decisions that affect them.

We are talking not just about receiving an equal share of what is produced, but also transforming the quality of life, doing away with long working hours and increasing free time. We struggle for a genuinely sustainable economy and an end to environmental policies in which every 'solution' must be corporate-led and profit-driven.

People like you all over Europe are fighting for the same things. We are taking to the streets not only to build our resistance in Ireland but to forge links throughout Europe. Tens of thousands of people in Ireland have already been involved in resisting the race for wealth that is capitalism, which robs so many of us of our voice, our dreams and our aspirations.



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WEDNESDAY MEETING

ACTIONS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE EUROPE

All welcome, young and old - do your bit for an alternative Europe.

Apertif

Critical Mass - mass cycle and walk through the city
5.30 pm, Fri. April 30th, Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Sq

Entrées

No Borders Morning - actions against fortress EU
10 am Saturday May 1st, Civic Offices, Wood Quay

Reclaim The City - anti-privatisation actions
2.30pm Saturday May 1st, Grafton St. (at Stephen's Green)

Main Course

Bring The Noise - March to Farnleigh House to let the EU heads of state hear us - bring pots, pans, whistles...
6pm Sat. May 1st, Phoenix Park (Parkgate St./Benburb St.)

Dessert

No Borders Camp - Act in solidarity with immigrants
11am Sunday May 2nd, Custom House Quay

Digestif

Reclaim The Streets - Street Party for a better future
3pm Mon. May 3rd, Ambassador Cinema, O'Connell St.



Dublin Grassroots Network

Dublin Grassroots Network is a network of activists who come together to fight for a better future, based on the Grassroots Principles (see over). We are part of the Grassroots Gathering and the Grassroots Network Against War. We operate in an open and democratic way, where everybody has an equal say. If you want to get involved, get in touch.

Phone: 087-2820906 **Email:** grassrootsdublin@yahoo.com

Web: <http://grassrootsgathering.freeservers.com> **and**
<http://struggle.ws/eufortress> **News:** <http://www.indymedia.ie>

WEDNESDAY

DUBLIN 2004

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE EUROPE

Irish people have generally seen the European Union as a good thing, for reasons that include investment in infrastructure and farm subsidies.

But increasingly the EU is an excuse for privatisation, for shifting the burden of taxation onto you and for Ireland's increasing involvement in military adventures.

We are struggling with others across Europe for a different type of Europe, one that puts people before profit and does away with top-down decision making. Join these protests in the struggle for an alternative Europe.



<http://www.geocities.com/eufortress>

FOR PRESS EUROPE

In advance of joining the EU, the 10 accession countries have had to open their borders to the flow of money, but the movement of the peoples of these countries is to be limited for up to seven years. We welcome the admission of the people of these countries, but the governments of the EU want to keep them out as long as possible, all the while using them as cheap labour - profit before people.

Beyond Europe, many countries have been forced to open their markets to European capital and to low-wage, European-owned factories. European corporations want to use the EU as a common front to force these harsh neo-liberal policies on the third world. Yet the people of these countries face fences and walls if they try to enter Europe. Many are forced to make desperate boat journeys around these barriers.

The EU's repressive anti-immigrant policies claimed the lives of at least 3,000 people between 1993 and June 2003, people drowned in the Mediterranean, electrocuted at the Channel Tunnel or suffocated in Wexford. This is 10 times as many as were killed at the Berlin Wall during its 30-year history. These policies are designed to make immigrants illegal and force them to survive in a precarious, hunted position, or live on short-term visas, dependent on work permits held by their employers. In both cases they are vulnerable and open to extreme exploitation as cheap labour. They have little access to health and safety enforcement, as shown by the tragic deaths of 19 Chinese people at Morecambe Bay this year.

OUR PRINCIPLES

We believe that people should control their own lives and work together as equals. This means:

- * Rejecting top-down and state-centred forms of organisation.
- * Calling for solutions that involve ordinary people controlling their own lives and having the resources to do so
- * Organising for control of the workplace by those who work there.
- * Calling for the control of communities by the people who live there.
- * Arguing for a sustainable environmental, economic and social system, agreed by the people of the planet.



MILITARISATION

The foreign policy of the European Union is based on satisfying the interests of Big Business, irrespective of social cost. The militarisation of the EU is evidenced in the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Rapid Reaction Force (the European Army). These are the EU's tools to promote the global interests of European multinationals. Again profit before people.

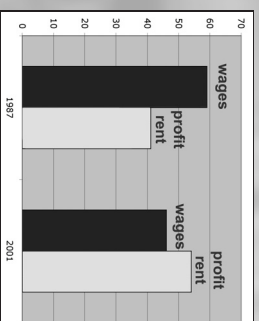
Bertie has waffled on about protecting Irish neutrality, yet he ignored 100,000 protestors when he allowed the US to use Shannon Airport as its major air stopover for US troops on their way to Iraq. In 2003, 125,000 US troops passed through Shannon en route to the Iraq war. Munitions of war, including Tomahawk, Cruise, and Patriot missile components, as well as napalm, passed through 'neutral Ireland'. Considering this support for the war effort of a country that is not even an EU member, can we believe one word Bertie says about defending Irish neutrality within the EU?



UNFAIR TAXATION & BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The Irish government has used EU policy to transfer the cost of public services from the rich to the poor. Chief amongst the methods used has been the introduction of high levels of local taxation, disguised as the bin tax. Environment Minister Martin Cullen has indicated that he hopes to get the bin charge up to €700 a year and the Government plans to introduce other new charges, such as a water tax. In 10 years, such local charges are expected to total €1000, which would mean people on low incomes paying 5% of their income on service charges and the very wealthy paying 0.5%.

Between 1987 and 2001 the proportion of GDP going to Irish workers (measured as wages) fell and the proportion going to Irish bosses (measured as rents and profits) shot up.



PRIVATISATION & THE LISBON AGENDA

The Irish government's official EU website declares that "the Lisbon strategy is a major priority for the Irish Presidency". The Lisbon Agenda specifically targets "gas, electricity, postal services and transport" for privatisation. Water, health, education and social services will be next.

The first step in privatisation is forcing people to pay for public services to make them profitable and attractive to investors. We can see this here with the bin charges, the back-door reintroduction of third level fees and the threatened privatisation of Dublin Bus and other public services. Privatisation invariably results in worse working conditions, greater inequality of services, lay-offs and wage cuts as bosses seek to cut corners to maintain profits.

So who set the Lisbon Agenda? Who decided that this is how the European economy should be run?

It is estimated that Brussels hosts some 500 industry lobby groups, employing some 10,000 professional lobbyists. Corporations that spend millions 'lobbying' the EU make no secret of the influence this brings. One of the most powerful is the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), which brings together more than 40 "European industrial leaders." Ireland is represented by Michael Smurfit, while most of the other corporations are household names across Europe, such as BP, Unilever, Carlsberg, Fiat, Vodafone, Volvo, Philips, Nokia, Renault and Shell.

The ERT has boasted that "at European level, the ERT has contacts with the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament ... Every six months the ERT meets with the government that holds the EU presidency to discuss priorities ... At national level, each member has personal contacts with his own national government and parliament, business colleagues and industrial federations, other opinion-formers and the press."

Baron Daniel Janssen of the ERT boasted that it was "very much involved in the preparation of the [Lisbon] Summit." In Lisbon EU policy was shaped by the 40 "industrial leaders" of the ERT and not by the 50,000 demonstrators outside the summit building or by the needs of the people of Europe. Now we are all required to dance to the ERT tune.