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Mayday 2004 and why we still need to resist the EU project

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People like us 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.”

(hierarchical, authoritarian, expert-based, Leninist etc.) We try to sustain a network that's open, decentralised, and really democratic.

- *Calls for solutions that involve ordinary people controlling their own lives and having the resources to do so: the abolition, not reform, of global bodies like the World Bank and WTO, and a challenge to underlying structures of power and inequality. Organises for the control of the workplace by those who work there.*
- *Calls for the control of communities by the people who live there. Argues for a sustainable environmental, economic and social system, agreed by the people of the planet.*
- *Works together in ways which are accessible to everyone, rather than reproducing feelings of disempowerment and alienation within our own network."*

"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.

With the European Central Bank in partnership with the IMF taking over the running of Ireland's economic policy and hence social policy for the next few years we thought it timely to revisit the weekend of Mayday 2004 when Dublin saw major protests against the EU summit and the neo-liberal policies that were being adopted. This is not an article about how "right" anarchists were about the EU, but we thought it timely to remind people of the biggest, openly organised weekend of protest against hierarchy, power and capitalism Ireland has so far seen. It includes a 30 minute documentary that shows the highlights of the weekend that we think has not yet been put online.

In Mayday 2004, WSM members, along with many many others people working under the banner of Dublin Grassroots Network, (DGN) organised a "NoBorders" weekend of events to coincide with an EU summit held in Farmleigh House. Its almost 6 years and 5 months to the day when Ireland saw the biggest anti-authoritarian events in the history of the State and was perhaps Ireland only international summit protest. The organisers and participants of the weekend of resistance were demonised as terrorists and all sort of crazy stuff by the mainstream media, fed by government sops and "unnamed" gardai sources. Indeed so obviously biased was the coverage that it now is part of curriculum case studies on many Irish and European journalism courses. You can here more about how the media reports public dissent here from our Radio Solidarity broadcast earlier this year.

For an indepth look at where DGN came from, and how the weekend was organised check out Learning from Mayday. Briefly though the weekend of resistance was based in direct opposition the the summit, with a vision for an entirely different type of society. Whilst it was explicitly anti capitalist, we chose four main areas that exemplified the type of Europe capitalist government where shaping in the EU project.

1. The racist nature of the entire EU project.

Fortress Europe now is a reality with the quasi militarist Frontex organisation now responsible for ensuring poor people and people of colour cannot cross the borders to improve the quality of their existence. In essence the EU is a project that seeks to redefine some human beings as legal and others as illegal. We reject the possibility of any human being being “illegal”. It is, as Dr Spock would say “illogical” that humans are subjected to laws that make them subservient to economics.

2. Privatisation and the Lisbon Strategy.

The entire history of the spread of capitalism is tied to the enclosures of common and public arenas, be that land, property, our labour and our public services. Under the guise of progress, the masters of the EU sought to privatise public services such as water, health, education, electricity, natural resources, telecommunication etc. The list is endless and built upon the ideology that the only value that social organisations have is to make profit for the few.

3. Unfair taxation.

Well you get the deal on this unless you’ve been to holiday on Mars for the past 2 years. For a really interesting read on how government policy differs very differently from what the population think take a look at the poll from the Community Platform. Needless to say the increase of billionaires and millionaires across Europe continues as we suffer.

4. Militarisation.

For a recent look at the continuing Irish state’s role in supporting militarisation of Europe against the wishes of the people.

Both the methods of organising this event, and its key messages still stand as useful for us today. With the refusal to be led by any party that runs for elections, and with organising principles that sought to embrace in practice the idea that we are all equal, those looking to build open inclusive social movements could do a lot worse than look at the history of anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist organising. 6 years ago was not that long, but it was before Web 2.0, social media networking etc etc, and the easy access to film and recording. Because of this there is not much history of this movement online. We hope that this upload can give some insight and encouragement to those who take to the street now. However we do note, there is more to changing our world than bringing it to the streets. This is essential, but we also need to educate ourselves and each other, show solidarity with others in struggle, seek out new ways of working together that don’t replicate the issues that we are trying to change.

Some more info in DGN

What did DGN believe in?’

“We believe that people should control their own lives and work together as equals. This means that we aim towards a network which:

- *Is based on the principle that people should control their own lives and work together as equals, as part of how we work as well as what we are working towards. Within the network this means rejecting top-down and state-centred forms of organisation*