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## Ambush in Shannon as the “leader of the free world” arrives in Ireland

The assembly point for Saturday’s demo was to be Bunratty castle, this we had chosen in order to have a publicised fall back for both the Friday night Anti War Ireland demo and the Saturday Ambush demo, should there have been the massive exclusion zone talked about. One suggestion had been a red zone stretching from Clarecastle to Cratloe. That morning in the peace camp there were two simultaneous meetings, one an assembly of all campers and the second a meeting of delegates from Galway Grassroots, Dublin Grassroots, and the bike tour.

We had appointed these delegates with the specific task of mapping out a route for the march, and then seeking general approval for it. The latter was forthcoming from campers for an assembly point at the camp and for marching up the N18 north - westward in the direction of the section of the N19/N18 blocked off for the Bush entourage. If seriously stopped the plan was to pick another access way to Shannon warport.

This meant that we had chosen as our route the same pathway as Bush et al. Thus we were aiming to simultaneously disrupt the summit, highlight the use of Shannon airport as a pitstop of death, and to challenge the state’s security zone, it’s supposed right to impose authority on us. Something for all the family as it were.

To do so we had to not take the state approved road into Shannon, which we had taken at the previous night’s demo. In regard to organisation, flexibility and a system of decision-making on the day was the only possible way to go, as we never know before hand what we are going to face.

For instance widely discussed in the run up to the Ambush was such possibilities as a far wider exclusion zone, our buses being stopped and turned back, and a far larger turn out of protesters. So decisions had to be made on the hoof. We had to have contingencies and flexibility.

So we assemble at the peace camp at the Clonmoney fly-over, the head of the march formed by the Mid-west Against Military Aggression banner, next a cluster of red and black flags, and alas but a solitary green and black. Heading off up the open road with energy and enthusiasm, a zeal only slightly tempered with a little trepidation, the stock of hooters recently acquired from Catalonia added a celebratory cacophony to the chants of ‘Whose Streets? Our Streets!’ As we advance up the Dual Carriageway a desultory attempt is made to stop us, police hurriedly erecting a steel crowd control barrier. A few people run to it’s sides, a few more run to it and hop over, or push it

aside, and we are through, the path cleared for the main body of protesters.



As we approach the junction and flyover of the N19/N18, the section of road reserved for the leaders of the free world, a more serious attempt at blocking our path is made. About one hundred riot cops sealed off both lanes of the road. We fan out across both lanes. Here we drum, dance, do street theatre, or wander about confusedly while probes are made into the adjoining fields. They had little capacity there to stop us on the Shannon side, but advocates of this route didn’t get a critical mass for such an attempt.

At this time the phones of the spokespeople start buzzing – ‘Why are you blocking the media?’ It appears the American press corps was re-routed from Ennis to Drumoland along our road. This being a means of avoiding the Dublin Catholic Worker/Galway Drummers performance of Macbeth, the various autonomous actions, and the IAWM protest, all taking place in Clarecastle. As it happened the media that went through Clarecastle, according to today’s Independent, were delayed for all of 30 seconds, those that took the detour ran straight into the ambush.

The Prime Time special live from Drumoland showed the American press corps running to take their seats, and this was the headline news across the United States i.e. protestors delay summit press conference, with mentions elsewhere, e.g. Lebanon, Turkey, Mexico, Portugal.

Now as riot police resolutely blocked our path, as had previously been agreed it was time to find an alternative route. We turn; head back down the N18 in the direction from whence we had come, back towards the peace camp. At Ballycasey Beg, we turn and go cross country through wasteland at the rear of the industrial estate at Smithstown, and reaching a Lufthansa building ran straight into two Irish Army armoured cars. Breaking through the so-called “security cordon”.



Refusing to be intimidated by armour or lines of balaclava clad riot cops, the mood was festive and celebratory as well as defiant. We expressed our feelings about the ridiculous coercive

apparatus unveiled by the Irish state by surrounding and blockading the two armoured cars. Finally making our way down to Drumgeely, we were somewhat parched, bedraggled and tired from the day's, weekend's, week's or month's exertions. The mood was one of exaltation and excitement. Probably the best demonstration in Shannon since the mass trespass on October 12th 2002, or perhaps even the best.

The political context in which this took place restrained the repressive capacity of the state – it was clear police had softly softly orders – and this was only because of the extent of popular support the protests had.

This support didn't translate into as high a turn out as could have been for the protests at Shannon, admittedly Friday had a decent enough turn out by Shannon standards, all things considered, but Saturday's ambush didn't – in any case this was probably a good thing as larger numbers could well have been beyond our organisational capacity (read: one megaphone). The action worked because it wasn't planned, pre-announced, or organised. Accidents, spontaneity and general chaos produce results.

Finally the 3 people in a boat, who breached the security cordon according to Garda, plus the woman who was to play Lady Macbeth and was arrested on a harassment charge, as well as one person arrested on Friday night in unclear circumstances, all these people will need support. Our naval unit makes it's next court appearance on July 9th.

## Bush Protests: An Appraisal



The presidential re-election visit to Ireland of the world's most hated man was a failure for Bush. As importantly, the extravaganza backfired on the Irish government. Bertie Ahern played the part of a lapdog to great

affect, and nobody in Ireland liked it. Unusually, the media in Ireland refrained from assisting the government from putting a positive gloss on an unpopular action (given the depth of opposition to Bush, it couldn't do anything else), and the Bush administration was made acutely aware of the deep-felt opposition to the US president and his "War on Terror". The Carol Coleman interview with Bush allowed us all to witness the Texan cowboy squirm when confronted with his unpopularity amongst the Irish.

The demos against Bush should not be measured solely by the numbers in attendance. The quality of the various protests was heartening, and each was highly effective. The Anti-War Ireland demonstration in Shannon included a substantial contingent of Shannon residents, one of whose number spoke from the platform – something that augurs well for the future of the anti-war movement in its campaign to demilitarise Shannon Airport. The mood on every demo was upbeat, and the media was captivated. Consequently, people across the country approved of and applauded the demos. Numbers, though not the be-all and end-all (at least, they shouldn't be) are nevertheless important.

Though the turnout never approached that of February 15th 2003 (AWI never expected anything approaching such a turnout), the various demonstrations were nevertheless well attended.

The Anti-War Ireland demonstration in Shannon attracted 1,200: a good turnout given the obstacles of a Friday demo in a town besieged by the state and under the shadow of a media-generated fear of trouble. The attendance came close to the turnout of the last big demo in Shannon (1,400: Saturday March 1st 2003), was nearly a four-fold increase on the most recent demo there (350: Saturday December 6th 2003), and can be favourably compared to the last national anti-war demo in Ireland (2,500: Saturday 20th March 2004). It should be remembered that any previous Shannon demo would have been the only demo taking place on the day in question, whereas Friday's Shannon demo was only one of 4 or 5 demonstrations in Ireland against Bush.



In Dublin, around 15–20,000 marched on the Stop Bush Campaign demo – a very good turnout (when Reagan came in 1984, the largest demo attracted 10,000). Elsewhere – notably Galway – good crowds attended protests. To return to Shannon and Dromoland, the Stop Bush Campaign and Ambush protests on Saturday were well attended and very effective. In addition, the Ambush Peace Camp proved an effective and attractive focus for both protestors and the media.

The extraordinary and excessive security operation at Shannon – which virtually depicted protestors as an equal threat to Al Qaeda – has been exposed as state scare-mongering. Of course, the turnout at protests – particularly in Shannon and Dromoland – was severely depleted by this exercise in black propaganda. Nevertheless, the impression gained by people in Ireland (and the media) must surely be that these protests were never going to be anything but peaceful, and that the government and gardai clearly exaggerated the potential for trouble.

The anti-war movement is now at something of a crossroads. The popular perception of the war in Iraq is set to change with the US "handover" of power to a puppet government. The violence seems set to continue, but we can't say for sure how the US will operate in the new scenario. Its preference seems to be for a gradual "disengagement" (as in Afghanistan) from day-to-day security operations, in favour of an "Iraqi-isation" formula (as implemented – with mixed results – in previous colonial conflicts, eg. Vietnamisation, Ulsterisation). The US, it seems, may not be afforded the luxury of "disengagement", but only time will tell. If the US forms the opinion that the problem is intractable, it will cut-and-run (regardless of Bush's tough-guy, stay-the-course stance). Equally, the US may become permanently embroiled in the conflict (though this seems less likely). The key issue for the anti-war movement is how it operates as perceptions alter.

Finally, the anti-war movement in Ireland must recognise its own limitations (those imposed by objective conditions, and those self-imposed). Bush presented us with a brief moment of

glory. But every high – the drug counsellors remind us – is inevitably succeeded by a low. As always, a sense of perspective can help us make sense of what's possible in the next period. I sense that now is very much a moment for reflection on what to do next.

## Feds called in to nail St. Patrick's Day 4

Four Ithacans (New York) accused of pouring blood on property at a military recruiting station during a 2003 antiwar demonstration learned on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> of June that they face prosecution in a US federal court. "We are willing to testify to what we know and what we've done, any place at any time," said Clare T. Grady, 45, a defendant.

District Attorney George Dentes informed Teresa B. Grady, 38, Clare Grady, Peter De Mott, 57, and Daniel Burns, 43, that he dismissed all charges pending in Tompkins County Court as the United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York agreed to begin prosecution.

The federal court judge still has the opportunity to review the case and decide whether to dismiss it or present it to a grand jury, said Bill Quigley, a Loyola University law professor who provided legal advice to the defendants. "It's extraordinarily unusual for a district attorney to ask the federal court to take the case after admitting he doesn't think he would get a conviction," Quigley said.

The charges had been pending since a mistrial was declared in April when a Tompkins County jury could not reach a unanimous decision regarding third-degree criminal mischief charges that Teresa Grady, Clare Grady, De Mott and Burns faced. The charges stemmed from a March 17, 2003, incident in which the four defendants gathered at the military recruiting station at Cayuga Mall in Lansing to pour their own blood on a U.S. flag, posters, carpets and windows.

The four defendants, who used legal advisors as they represented themselves at the trial, relied on their own beliefs as they argued that their actions were done in hopes of ending the killings in Iraq. After the mistrial, the defendants filed a motion to dismiss the charges "in the interest of justice," Dentes said. Dentes responded by announcing that, at his request, the U.S. Attorney based in Syracuse had become involved in the case.

"He concluded that if we used the same evidence, and had the same rulings, during a trial in Tompkins County Court, we'd probably end up with another hung jury," Dentes said. Although the charges at the federal level have not yet been determined, a trial at the federal level will likely focus on the defendants' intent to damage property during the demonstration. At the federal level, the judge may choose not to allow the defendants to use their political views in testimony, Dentes said.

"We think that the jury focused on the political ideology instead of the facts in this criminal case," Dentes said. For a trial at the federal level, a jury would be convened from the area surrounding the federal court instead of Tompkins County. Although Quigley said a jury can affect a case's outcome, he added that the timing may affect it too. "I think the situation in Iraq is less popular now than it was two months ago," Quigley said.

The defendants, who have not denied that they poured blood at the military recruiting station, said even at the federal level, they

expect to focus their testimony on the suffering and lives lost as a result of the war. "If there is a trial in federal court, we will explain to a second jury why we had a right and moral obligation to take nonviolent direct action against the war," De Mott said during a phone conversation Monday.

## Garda raid the Peace House in Shannon

In the early hours of Friday morning, 25th June, a large black banner with white lettering which read "BUSH CEAD Mile F\*\*k-OFFS" was securely hung from the Peace House windows. It should be pointed out that the Peace House is located on the fifth floor of a block of flats. The gardai wandering around Lidl carpark and in the parking lot of the flats which is private property were none too pleased with the sign, it being high and very visible in Shannon town centre. By 6.00 a.m. the banner had disappeared.

So much for article 40, section 6, of our constitution guaranteeing the right of the citizen to express freely their convictions and opinions. The use of asterisks on the banner clearly indicated that it could not have been interpreted as blasphemous, seditious or indecent.

At around 3.00 p.m. five plain clothes men came into the room. Entrance to the flat is through electronic code pad on the front door, up four flights of stairs, and then a



normal front door key is needed. They never even knocked. They had a search warrant, correctly dated, of course. I had to ask them to read out the warrant as the top section detailing the powers under which the search was being conducted was so poorly photocopied as to be barely legible. They refused to give us a copy of the warrant and would not allow it out of their hands as I was not the named tenant of the flat.

Some of them donned those light blue plastic gloves to conduct the search. It being an important day for them with the arrival of their lord and master George W. Bush, they were all dressed up in their best clobber. I suspect they were trying to rival their American counterparts. It doesn't wash lads; you still looked like the Irish Special Branch. Although, in fairness, some of them had left off the brown shiny shoes for the day.

I'm not sure what they expected to find. Nothing major evidently, as they didn't bring boxes or bags to remove anything. It's just as well that we hadn't got a rocket hidden under the shower tray, like the one hidden beneath the bath in Donegal, as they never even looked in the bathroom. They were not at all anxious to identify themselves so it was just as well that they were all familiar faces, from days in court and years of general vexatious behaviour towards peace activists in the Shannon area. For me the most galling part of the visit was when on departure they said 'God Bless'. I questioned their right to invoke the name of God when they were complicit in facilitating the murder of thousands of Iraqis, through their failure to search American military planes in Shannon.

## Genoa Counter-investigation

3 years have passed from the days of Genoa G8, but the events which happened in July 2001 are still being heavily under trial. Genoa G8 days have been among the most videotaped, photographed, written upon political and mediatic events of the last years. Now the court cases are entering in their most crucial step and what is happening is exactly what all of us had foretold. The



court cases are being defined and built around videos and photos, press articles and witness report.

Genoa history - our own history - is being judged and court evidence are the thousands eyes of the g8 days. they are not impartial images: the prosecutors use them for their own purposes and to prove their thesis. Our lawyers need to use the same tools. Indymedia was there in Genoa.

And after Genoa it has been victim of a known series of raids where a lot of materials have been seized; this documentation is being used as evidence during the court case, together with thousands of hours of footage: surveillance cameras in supermarkets and banks, televisions, police, carabinieri cameras, short-circuit in shops, ecc. From all of these facts, we want to learn.

The lawyers of Genoa Legal Forum have a huge archive of documentation in audio, video, images and texts. This archive is practically impossible to use, because it has not been organized neither fully used. Italy Indymedia decided to take it to the field.

From June to October 2004 we will be back again in Genoa. 4 people will be working full time on the G8 archive, trying to make it a tool fully usable for legal work and to make it available for the sake of having a collective historical memory. Apart from these four people, dozens of people will contribute their voluntary work from their home, supporting the people in genoa and trying to make the Genoa dossier grow.

We decided to launch a campaign to finance the expenses of the people working there and the technical materials needed to proceed with the work of research and archival in the GLF office in genoa. It's the first financing campaign we are doing and we need your help as well. At short notice we will update this page with details about that financing campaign and with the status of the work on the archive and links to the latest news about the trials.

Do you want to help us? please visit our information site at <http://italy.indymedia.org/controinchiesta.php>

## Another of the weekends demos - Solidarity in Palestine

I went to a demonstration on Saturday June 26<sup>th</sup> against the Apartheid Wall that is about to be built through the middle of A Ram, just outside Jerusalem. Ar Ram will soon loose 6500 dunums (4 dunums = 1 acre approx) of its lands, which will be isolated behind the Wall, and stolen for planned settlement expansions.

The Wall through Ar Ram will pass along the middle of the main road, separating the two sides of the street, and cutting Palestinians off from each other - those on the Jerusalem side from the West Bank, and those on the West Bank side from Jerusalem. The Wall will also destroy a road which has historically been the main artery

linking Jerusalem to northern Palestine, as well as to the rest of the Arab countries bordering Palestine to the north.

The Wall in Ar Ram will place sixty thousand people in a hanging ghetto, linked to Ramallah by either a bridge or a tunnel. With all of its lands confiscated or isolated, there will be no viable space left for any form of natural population growth in the area.

So there's a rough idea of what's going to happen.. Anyway the demonstration was organised as a joint Israeli and Palestinian move. 5 coaches of Israeli peaceniks came and the two groups marched towards each other from opposite sides of the village and when they met in the middle there was much hugging and crying. It was a very moving and powerful moment..



So we all turned and marched to the site where the wall is about to be built and found a heavy presence of border police and army without provocation they began to fire teargas grenades into the crowd, targeting the areas where most Jewish demonstrators had gathered, then came the stun grenades. We were all shocked but especially the Israelis. Some had brought dogs and kids and many were very elderly and no-one had expected the army to attack.

Most of the Israelis dispersed. I was hiding in a shop after being badly gassed. I came out and found myself with the remaining Israelis. A water cannon was brought in to disperse them and when some still remained the army came in to arrest them. I saw 3 women being arrested and they had the worst beating I've seen, and these are Israelis being beaten by their own security forces, unbelievably vicious.

When the army attacked first and most of the Israeli moved off then the youths (shebab) had started throwing stones from a distance, but they were well out of range to hit the army. Once the majority of Israelis had been dispersed, gassed, beaten, arrested then the army charged in firing rubber coated steel bullets and live ammunition. Journalists were also targeted. A friend of mine from spanish tv had gas fired directly at his head and was beaten and had his tv camera thrown to the ground and damaged. Medical personnel were also targeted. Tear gas was fired from virtually point blank range through the rear window of an ambulance. The end result was over 50 people injured by rubber coated steel bullets including religious leaders and several hundred people suffered from tear gas inhalation. I was gassed twice and believe me it's not nice.



The Israeli peaceniks believe, as do I, that the demo was attacked precisely because Israelis were demonstrating with Palestinians, and the powers that be don't want any sort of co-operation between the peace movements on both sides .. there were undercover Israeli forces in the crowd .. known as mustaribeen they disguise themselves as Palestinians .. one is pictured in the attached photos .. we saw the boy with him on the ground and we thought this guy was helping him cos he'd been shot but when we ran to help myself and a swedish girl had a gun stuck in faces and told to piss off.. so we did .. very quickly.