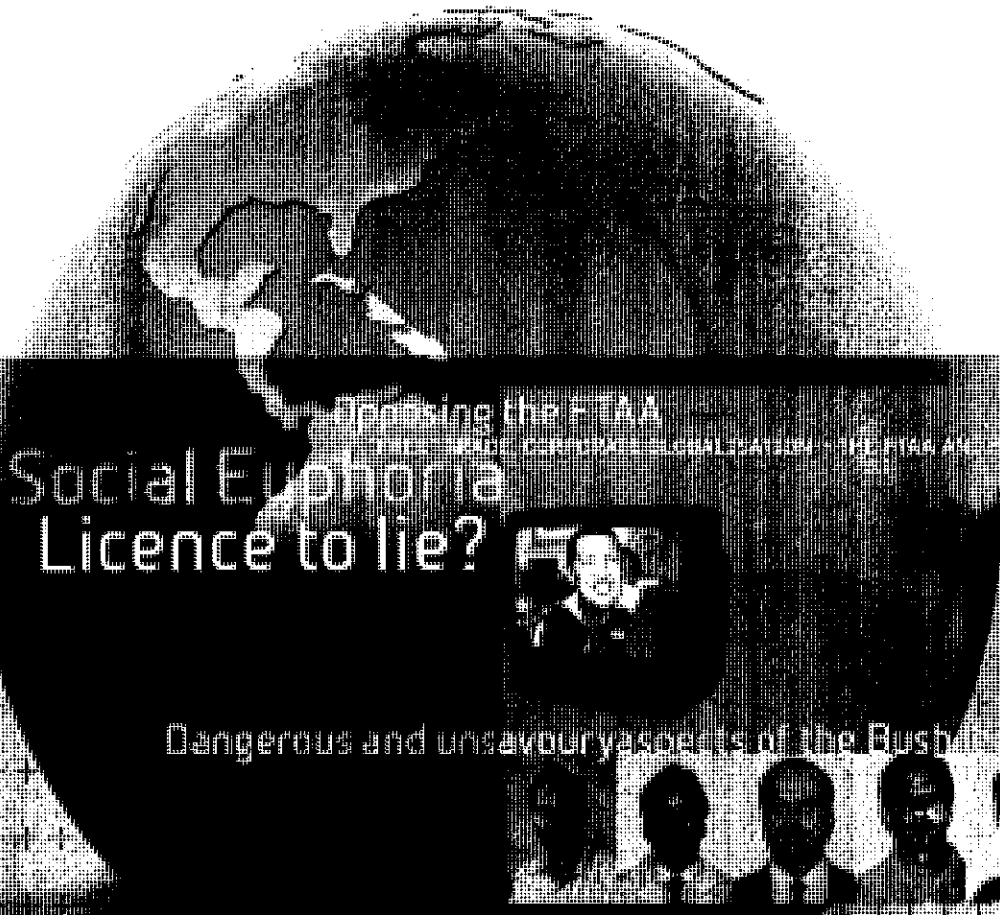


linking ireland and latin america

enlace

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Transposing the FTA
Social Europe
Licence to lie?



Dangerous and unavoury aspects of the Bush



RISE OF THE LEFT IN LATIN AMERICA

The principal LASC event since Enlace last graced your doormat was of course **Latin America Week**. Again a range of exciting events took place up and down the country – there's a full report elsewhere in this edition. Many, many thanks to all the volunteers who made it possible!



Shrine to murdered indigenous leader Marcos Verrão on steps of Brazilian embassy. "When will the Brazilian government act?"

The **photo exhibition** "Lost Rights" was on display in the Ilac Centre Library for two weeks leading up to Latin America Week, and also at the solidarity fair. The exhibition, by photographer Kevin Hayes in conjunction with the UK based Guatemala Solidarity Network, was brought to Ireland by the campaigning group "Justice for Guatemala" at LASC. It focuses on the courage of indigenous communities which suffered massacres during the 1980's and which are now attempting to bring the perpetrators of those massacres (still influential and feared figures, including former dictator Ríos Montt) to justice in Guatemala's courts. Two members of LASC who recently returned from a period of "protective accompaniment" in Guatemala gave a talk to launch the exhibition.

LASC organised a **commemoration** to mark the life of Guarani-Kaiowá indigenous leader Marcos Verrão (who spoke at a LASC/Trócaire public meeting in 2000, and was murdered in Brazil by a wealthy land-holder's gang, in a conflict over indigenous lands), followed by a **demonstration** outside the Brazilian embassy. A petition calling on the Brazilian

government to act has been signed by 400 people.

Since Latin America is a continent of joy as well as pain, LASC organised several cultural events this Spring. "**Samba Saturday**" in February helped raise funds for a **radio-documentary** produced by LASC and NEAR FM on Brazil-Ireland links, particularly the recent visit to Brazil of MaSamba, the Dublin-based Samba school and community development project (see article elsewhere in this magazine). The programme was broadcast on NEAR FM (101.6FM) in May / June, will be officially launched and rebroadcast this autumn, and will shortly be available on CD from LASC.

A fascinating **mask-making workshop** also took place, which featured on the excellent TV programme "Mono". The workshop featured input by facilitator Liz Gleeson on the role of masks in Latin American cultures, and then the opportunity to make your own mask. Three days later it was followed by a **Masked Ball**, again a lot of fun.

Meanwhile the **Thursday Night Talks** (informal action-oriented workshops which take place in LASC's centre) featured input from all over Latin America from Chile to Chiapas, including sessions on the Trade Justice Campaign and Fyffes bananas in Belize. The latter gave rise to **picketing and leafleting** of shareholders at Fyffes' AGM in the Burlington Hotel in May, which was covered by Morning Ireland and many mainstream newspapers. The Classes in **Latin American Spanish** continued to discuss issues surrounding development in Latin America with a Beginners and Intermediate group, thanks to the excellent teachers and participating groups.

A **public meeting** on "neo-Zapatismo" with Xochitl Leyva Solano of Mexico suffered a last minute change of speaker as her aeroplane failed to take off in Mexico but she was ably replaced by **Ray Kiely** of SDAS in London (School of African and Oriental Studies) whose discourse on globalisation gave all present food for thought. Thanks are due to

Kimmage Development Studies Centre. Another public meeting, with **Ermelina Mosquera** of Colombian trade union SINALTRAINAL, has kick-started the one-year boycott of Coca Cola being organised in Ireland by a group within LASC.



Comhlamb and LASC co-operated to launch Dr. Peadar Kirby's new book, "Introduction to Latin America" with the aid of Ann Daly of Esperanza productions and Donnacha O'Briain, both contributors to Enlace past and present. The **book launch** was a lively and pleasant affair.

The annual LASC **Dublin night course** (February – April) was more vibrant than ever with a great group of participants and facilitators – this year's addition of a **fiesta** at the end was a splendid idea as this writer's tingling taste-buds can testify (Ceviche, fried plantain and Caiperinhas, mmm!)



Thanks are due to outgoing co-ordinator **Aidan Cahill** who shortly leaves LASC for greener pastures, after three years of hard but satisfying work.

Editorial

It was a Spring dominated by the looming threat, and then the terrible reality, of war in Iraq. Back in Ireland, huge demonstrations against the war did not deter our government from supporting the violence against civilians in far-off lands. LASC played its part in supporting the anti-war effort.

Despite prosecuting a permanent and ever-spreading war of conquest in the East, the world's one hyperpower is not neglecting to look to the resources of the South. In Latin America, a more subtle invasion is taking place, which will kill, or blight the lives of, arguably many more people than the war on Iraq – the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and Plan Puebla Panama (PPP). They were the focus of the last Enlace magazine, and of this Spring's Latin America Week.

The FTAA and PPP are a vision for Latin America's future. This vision is promoted most strongly by transnational corporations, the US government, and the local elites who share their economic interests. Latin America and its population will continue to be treated as commodities, as an inexhaustible and indestructible source of profits for the few.

This strategy is not just economic – it is backed by the planet's most terrible war machine. Military aid from the US government has spiralled under the Bush administration, and the fig-leaf of tying this aid to human rights records has been all but discarded. Plan Colombia has spread out into the whole north-west of Latin America and is now known as the Andean Regional Initiative.

It behoves those who would oppose this strategy to think strategically themselves. Accordingly, LASC's strategic plan for the next three years focuses on the commodification of Latin America. The current year focuses on the consequent violations of labour rights. There is a lot that can be done from Ireland to challenge the status quo. Educational activities will be linked to campaigning ones, as the current Coca Cola boycott and recent picket on Fyffe's AGM shows.

We can also learn from Latin American social movements to oppose neoliberal policies at home, as privatisation of public goods into the hands of union-busting billionaires is pushed harder and faster by our government. Even one person alone can make a difference – speak out! Better still, organise, along with other like-minded people. It is worth making the effort to achieve consensus even with those with whose politics we may not 100% agree. The Irish Social Forum in October (<http://www.IrishSocialForum.org>) is worth checking out, to this end.

One final comment – LASC has always had a policy of distributing Enlace free of charge to those who had expressed an interest. In a changing funding landscape, however, we will soon no longer be able to do this. In order to ensure that the magazine continues to be published, LASC is offering individuals and organisations the opportunity to become ENLACE SUPPORTERS by paying €10 and €20 per year respectively. Supporter organisations will be acknowledged in every Enlace issue if they so choose. ONLY LASC MEMBERS AND ENLACE SUPPORTERS will get Enlace sent by post to the address of their choice. The magazine will be available free of charge in LASC's office. You will also be able to obtain Enlace in certain retail outlets and libraries."

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SIGNED ARTICLES BY THE AUTHORS DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF LASC



Enlace means 'link' or 'connection' and is the principal publication of the Latin America Solidarity Centre.

We hope you like our new look. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Soledad Galiana for the work she has put into the design of the magazine for the last 3 years.

OPPOSING THE FTAA

by Ian MacDonald,
Member of
Cohimlanh Trade
Justice Group.

'The people of Ireland and the People of Mexico, we have more in common than just the similarity of our flags and that we are beer lovers,' says Manuel Pérez Rocha, as I speak with him during last November's European Social Forum in Florence. 'What you did suffer, the great famine of the nineteenth century, is very similar to what is happening in the Mexican countryside.'



As a delegate representing a broad network of Mexican social movements – peasant groups, trade unions, environmental movements, gender groups, etc. – Manuel brings to the European Social Forum news from Mexico's many grassroots struggles against the agenda of Free Trade and economic liberalisation. His invocation of the Irish Famine is made in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the effects of which his organisation, the Mexican National Network on Free Trade, has been monitoring closely. I ask him what is the experience of Mexico under NAFTA.

'Very bad,' he replies. 'The peasantry in Mexico are almost non-producing because of cheap imports of basic grains.' He talks of the injustice of the subsidies paid to US producers that lead to this situation, and the resulting destruction of livelihoods. He talks of environmental degradation, and the dislocation of small businesses cut off from export processing zones. And of course, he mentions the corporations who benefit most from free trade. 'In Mexico we are exporting a lot, but it is not really we. It is the same American companies.'

From this experience, Mexico has a unique position from which to appreciate the likely effects of the upcoming Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, the FTAA – an agreement that will intensify the free trade agenda of NAFTA, and spread it to the rest of Latin America. It is the threat of the FTAA that Manuel identifies as the most urgent in the struggles of Mexicans for trade justice.

Meanwhile, looming largest on the international calendar for proponents of free trade is this September's meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Cancun, Mexico. The WTO is the body through which international trade agreements (as opposed to regional agreements like NAFTA) are negotiated and enforced. And through it, rich countries will continue to push the agenda of free trade and corporate-led globalisation, delivering freedom for multinational companies, but too often at the expense of local development, and local people.

In response, FTAA campaigners across the Americas are calling for 'hemisphere-wide protests' on September 9th and 10th during the opening of the WTO meeting, to focus on the fight against the FTAA. Grassroots social movements are already mobilising for massive protests in the tradition of Seattle and Quebec. I asked Manuel about the Cancun protests, and how we, in Europe, might play a part.

'I've heard that in Europe there are supporting groups against FTAA,' he says, 'I welcome this solidarity. A big effort must be done within Europe to not allow the European Commission to continue building up trade



pacts like, for example, the Mexican-European trade agreement'. This agreement is one that aspires to become a European version of NAFTA. But what are the alternatives, I ask?

'What I think should work on a North-South basis is many principles of the European Union. Like a basic charter of labour rights. Another thing is the concept of subsidiarity – that every decision should be taken at the lowest [possible] level of government. Which is of course very contradictory with the way the European Union is grasping power from countries, but the concept is there. So many things, like democracy, the centralisation of human rights, civil society participation, social dialogue, many things that are in the European Union charter of principles, I think they should be a condition for all the trade and investment agreements that the EU carries out with the countries of the South.

'I think it's very important that simultaneous to Cancun there must be struggles, demonstrations and campaigns... everywhere, Dublin, Brussels, Geneva. Go to your ministry of Foreign Affairs, and make a huge demonstration against the WTO... that will be the best support you can give the people fighting and struggling in Cancun.'

And even as we're talking in Florence, activists from across Europe are, through the Social Forum process that even this interview is a part of, discussing possibilities and forming plans for Europe-wide actions in the run up to Cancun.

However, he warns, 'to convince governments, you don't do it only in the streets – that's social pressure, that's important, this might be the most essential thing – but to really convince them you must lobby them, oblige them to listen to you. In Mexico we do that a lot, because they have to be well informed.'

And this is exactly what the newly formed Trade Justice Ireland (TJI) coalition is organising in the build-up to Cancun.

On May 14th, TJI invites everyone in Ireland – regardless of experience, age, or politics – to come to the Dáil so that together we can lobby our elected representatives to demand justice in North-South trade relations.

The basic questions that need to be asked are simple. TJI has prepared four points questions that need to be asked of your TD.

WE MUST ENSURE THAT OUR VOICES ARE HEARD IN THE NORTH, SO THAT THE VOICES OF THE SOUTH CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRADE JUSTICE IRELAND, SEE WWW.TRADEJUSTICEIRELAND.ORG, OR CALL 01-661 0949.

An International Tribunal

by Gearoid
O'Loingsigh

Southern Bolivar is a region of Colombia characterized by the violence that has marked all aspects of Colombian life and society. Although it is a relatively isolated and underdeveloped region, it has by no means been forgotten by the State. Not that the State has any plans for improving the lot of the inhabitants. However, given the nature of the conflict in the region and the struggles of the local people the Colombian State does not get the opportunity to forget Southern Bolivar, it has to consciously choose to ignore it or to openly intervene through its armed forces or its extra-legal wing, the paramilitaries.

There are many incentives for the Colombian State to intervene here, not least the vast reserves of gold, reputed to be the largest in the world. Such are the gold deposits that the State has introduced a new mining code, not once but twice, in order to put a legal veneer on the expropriation of small mines by the paramilitaries. It has been estimated that just one of these mines, the mine the Illera Palacio family has tried to take over in conjunction with a number of multinationals, would generate a gross income of \$68 million per day. A further incentive is, of course, the fact that this region is also headquarters to the second largest guerrilla grouping in Colombia. But with or without a guerrilla presence the local inhabitants would have come under attack. The map of paramilitary positions in Colombia does not match that of guerrilla positions, as would be logical if it were a case of one existing to fight the other. The map of paramilitary positions does however match that of gold and mineral deposits. If we throw in other resources, the maps almost become one and the same thing.

The region has suffered more than its fair share of violence and has for the last three years suffered under the yoke of a military/paramilitary blockade which restricts the importation of food and vital medicines. Numerous leaders have been assassinated or disappeared, including those who negotiated directly with Pastrana in 1998 when 10,000 small farmers converged on the city of Barrancabermeja. At that time, then President Pastrana publicly recognized that in the region there was a 'public, open and permanent

presence' of the paramilitary groups and that despite two decades of public denunciations of the massacres the crimes remained unpunished. Nothing has changed since then. Faced with a lack of action on the part of the judicial authorities, the communities of Southern Bolivar have decided to hold an International Tribunal of Opinion in November 2003. This tribunal is to be made up of international lawyers, public personalities, trade unionists etc. The communities will present evidence, eyewitness statements of the various crimes committed by the Colombian State against its own people.

They are not proposing a judicial tribunal. The justice system in Colombia has repeatedly failed its own people as even Andres Pastrana, the former president acknowledged. Nor are they seeking redress through international legal mechanisms (though some cases have already been presented to such bodies). As its name suggests, this will be a tribunal of opinion. Many of the crimes carried out in Southern Bolivar have remained in absolute impunity because the functionaries in charge of the investigations 'share the political ideals of those who carried them out, diverting the investigations through straightforward corruption, looking for evidence where none exists and refusing to go after the truth which exists in the banished memory of the victims or their relatives and the witnesses who are forced to live in silence; it is in the mass graves and the anonymous graves; ... it is in the tears shed behind closed doors and in the tense muscles of throats that wish to shout out but cannot; it is to be found in the corners of the slums where the displaced wander... it is to be found in the dream of a tomorrow built according to the ideals of those who were trampled under by terror'.

The Tribunal will be an expression of solidarity with those who are struggling for a better world and paying a high price for daring to oppose the plans made for them by the Colombian elites and the US government. An opportunity for the real 'International Community' – i.e. the community of progressive forces – to give their opinion on the practices of a country engaged in terrorism against its own people.

The communities of Southern Bolivar are asking for the Irish people to lend their voice to this tribunal. For trade unionists, artists, activists to speak out because they can and because in many ways they struggle for a better world for all.

THOSE INTERESTED IN WORKING ON THE ISSUE OF THE TRIBUNAL, OR ON THE ISSUE OF THE LAWSUIT BEING TAKEN AGAINST COCA COLA BY ITS COLOMBIAN EMPLOYEES WHO ALLEGE INVOLVEMENT BY THE COMPANY IN COLOMBIA'S DIRTY WAR, SHOULD CONTACT LASC.



INTERVIEW > Jose Alberto Prieto

Interviews by
Iñaki Irigoien,
LASC member.
Translations by
Carmen Paredes
and Kay Mulhall.

Can you tell us your name and why have you come to Ireland?

My name is Jose Alberto Prieto and I have been here invited by LASC. They invited me to do a tour in Ireland and talk mainly about the Free Trade American Agreement, and also Plan Puebla Panama, Globalisation in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean Countries.

What is the Free Trade of American / Globalisation image or American in the case of Cuba?

Cuba is not included, once more Cuba has been discriminated against, but we are very pleased about it. Since we knew it came from American transnational, it won't be any good for Cuba.

The effect is not direct against Cuba but it would be affect tremendously the Latin American and Caribbean countries. They are making legal and irreversible the process of Colonization. They have lasted for more than 500 years already. They want to make the colonization process legal.

The idea is that the blockade is for once helping Cuba, are you afraid of it? If that blockade is lifted that will change the whole hip of USA and European big multinationals. They are going just to flood Cuba, the same as they have flooded any other country in the area.

No, we are not afraid, so far the blockade is very strong, it is affecting us very much. They are pressing every single country that would like to have relation with Cuba. As you know after Socialist Black and the Soviet Union, we lost over 85% of Cuba International on Economic Relations over night in a period of three months. We lost everything that we were doing. We need to have new economic relations; they were made with Western Unions with capitalist countries like Canada, Spain.

Cuba is not against Free Trade; we are against American Free Trade Agreement, that is nothing to see with Fair Trade. We have now more that 400 agreements with capitalist companies. These agreements have been done very carefully. They respect our positions, demands, rights and so on. We can try with capitalist countries but we should know how to trade, we are not afraid of the blockade. The blockade is criminal, it is an economic war.

What have you learnt from your experience in Ireland? It is your first time here?

It's my first time here. I have been very much impressed. I have been in different places around Ireland and I found that a lot of people are very interesting in helping countries in Latin America. Many people are in solidarity with Cuba. I met Cork's Major. He was very interested in Cuba issues.

What can you teach and show us to the people in Ireland coming from Latin America? LASC tries to do it, bring people from Latin America and see how Ireland and Latin America work and learn from each other.

We can learn many good things here, like people's participation, regulations and so on. But regarding our perspective about American Free Trade we want to express the following: Communicate to the rest of the population the injustice American Free Trade agreement, which is very asymmetric.

Communicate to Latin American and Caribbean countries resistance to the proposals and create an alternative to choose and decide according to our rights.

There are different movements in LA they are struggling for their rights? Are they affecting Cuba?

No, they are not; we are working for them too. We have groups of doctors in Salvador, Chiapas and Venezuela working for free. Our Medical School Havana receives 5000 people from LA and Caribbean countries, poor people, they do not pay any education fees, and most of them are indigenous. However, they are asked to work back in their own communities.

We support LA countries in their struggles. We are concerned for the popular movements, like in Colombia, people that are fighting for their basic human rights.

INTERVIEW > Carlos Beas Torres

What is your name and what organization do you represent?

My name is Carlos Beas Torres and I work as a Coordinator of the Union of Indigenous Communities in the North Zone of Thueantepec Oaxaca, Mexico.

What is the relation between you and the Zapatista Movement and what are the objectives en relation to same?

My region is close to the State of Chiapas; our communities have maintained territorial control, while the communities of Chiapas have been displaced violently to the jungle. Our situations are different but we have many similar problems. We share solidarity and sympathy and we support their struggles.

When the Zapatista Rising took place on January the 1st 1994, our communities expressed solidarity blocking militar trucks on the way to Chiapas, we also helped with food and actively participated. I participated as an assessor in the Zapatista dialogues that took place.

What was the reaction of the Government towards support of the Zapatista Movement?

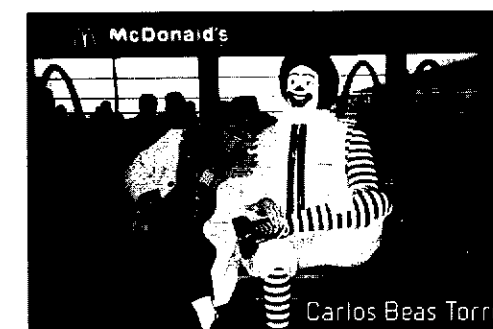
Well, there were two political responses: first the militarization of the Indigenous Areas and the Mexican Army grew more than 30%. Secondly, resources were channeled for development project to leaders and some organisations, that happened over a five year period.

What is your evaluation of the Indigenous Law?

In 2001 the law recognized the fundamental demands of Indigenous people, Autonomy. In that sense the Zapatista struggle was a failure.

So the Mexican Indigenous still do not have the right to their own lands?

The majority of the community has the legal recognition since the Revolution of 1910. At the same time in 1992 conditions were created to allow the privatization of lands and speculation on the part of large corporations.



Carlos Beas Torres

How did the Communities suffer under the PRI Government?

The communities were subjected to control groups, to power groups. The power groups known as "Caciques". The Caciques exploited and punished "rebels". They negotiated and made deals with business people.

I would like to speak about Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca Indigenous Regions, which have a relation with Central America and the imposition of Puebla-Panama Plan. It is an investment plan of public resources with the view to extending and modernizing infrastructures and means of communication.

It is a project worked out with the World Bank and InterAmerican Development Organisations.

What is the benefit or the disadvantages to the Indigenous Population?

Many communities will be displaced, others will be divided, and many of the motorways will be transporting only merchandise for big corporations.

What is the work of the Europeans business?

European business are promoting this project, so they can make their own investments they also facilitated the privatization of many companies for example electricity.

Do you think Europeans are better than Americans in relation to investments?

No, I do not think so. Everything revolves around competition and who can gain the most, and use cheap labor.

Are there any groups of resistance to Privatization in Mexico?

In the last two years there are a lot of Social Movements of Human Rights for the Indigenous Communities. It is also true that in some countries such as Ecuador, Venezuela and Brazil, Popular Movements have gained ground. In Mexico that has been virtually impossible because of our geographical position relative to the USA.

Dangerous and unsavoury aspects of the Bush legacy

by Simon
McGuinness,
activist for the
Miami 5 Campaign.

'I am certain in my heart I will be the first American president to step foot on the soil of a free and independent Cuba.' – George Bush Snr

This is the other unfulfilled ambition of the first Bush administration. Invasion is once again on the agenda of the rogue superpower.

According to a new book by award-winning investigative journalist (and no friend of Fidel Castro) Ann Louise Bardach, strong links exist between the criminal Cuban exile community and the Bush family. The book is *Cuba Confidential*, currently available in hardback and due out in paperback later this year. George Bush Junior came to power after a marathon election count culminating in the Florida courts denying validity to votes cast in favour of his opponent. This after his brother, Governor Jeb Bush, had hand-picked members of the Florida Supreme Court and after massive 'adjustments' to the voter registration procedures in Florida which (according to knowledgeable local political observers) denied voting rights to many natural Democratic voters. But vote rigging is the least of the charges laid against the Bush dynasty.

Soon after George Bush Senior retired as head of the CIA to take up the Vice-President's job in the Reagan administration, Jeb began a close association with Camilo Padreda, a former intelligence officer with the Batista dictatorship in Cuba which was overthrown by Fidel Castro. Jeb Bush was then the chairman of the Dade county Republican party and Padreda its finance chairman.

Padreda had earlier been indicted on a \$500,000 embezzlement charge along with a fellow exile, Hernández Cartaya, but the charges were dropped, reportedly after the CIA stated that Cartaya had worked for them. Padreda later pleaded guilty to defrauding the housing and urban development department of millions of dollars during the 1980s. In 1985, Jeb Bush acted as a conduit on behalf of supporters of the Nicaraguan contras to provide free medical treatment for the contras via a company called International Medical Centers, run by Miguel Recarey, a prominent Cuban exile implicated in CIA-backed assassination attempts against Fidel Castro. Recarey was later charged with massive Medicare fraud but fled the US before his trial and is now a fugitive.

Add fraud and embezzlement to the list. It was Jeb who asked then President George Bush Snr to release the convicted Cuban exile terrorist, Orlando Bosch, in spite of the protests of his Justice Department who had evidence connecting him to more than 30 terrorist acts including firing a rocket into a cargo ship en route to Cuba and blowing up a Cuban civilian airliner. He had been convicted of terrorist offences and was serving an 11-year sentence in the USA.

Add supporting terrorism to the list – a crime in every country in the world including, oddly, the USA. Indeed it is apparently sufficient reason to justify waging war on any 'dark corner' of the globe – so long as it is not Florida.

For their help, many hard-line Cuban exiles have received plum jobs in the current administration: Mel Martinez, the Orlando Republican who arranged for the shipwrecked Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez, to visit Disney World, was made housing secretary. Otto Reich was awarded a one-year recess appointment for the Western hemisphere in the US State Department (his full-time appointment was vetoed by Congress due to his known terrorist links).

Activities supported by the Bush family through their links have undoubtedly been good for their re-election campaigns both financially and in terms of delivering votes, but they have another side. 3,478 Cuban citizens have been killed at the hands of these terrorists and their political masters in the past 40 years and 2,099 men, women and children have been maimed. This is more than the total of all deaths in terrorist acts in Northern Ireland over the same period, yet they are not afforded the same importance by the international media.

One such death was that of Italian-Canadian tourist, Fabio Di Celmo, in a hotel bombing in Havana in 1997. As his brother Livio wrote in March, 'my brother was the innocent victim of this terrorist act planned, financed and fomented in the United States (Florida in particular). A Salvadoran mercenary was arrested and confessed to this crime. That he was on the payroll of the notorious terrorist, Luis Posada Carriles, whose terrorist activities had been supported and financed by the Cuban American National Foundation and had other

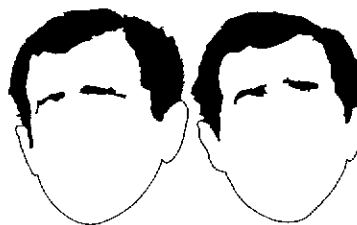


connections to several terrorist groups of right-wing Cuban elements operating from the United States, has been proven beyond any doubt.'

These are the reasons why 5 Cuban agents were sent to infiltrate the terrorist groups in Miami. They did; they succeeded in getting 4,000 pages of evidence sufficient to prosecute the terrorists and handed this over to the FBI. But, instead of arresting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the five agents and threw them into jail on trumped-up charges of espionage. These are the Miami Five.

'Every hour that these five men spend in jail is an insult to my brother's death as well as an insult to all victims of terrorism whether it be those of September 11, 2001, or any other terrorist act throughout the world.'

The Irish Free the Miami Five campaign can be contacted at freethemfive@eircom.net. Further information on the case is available from www.freethemfive.org and the official Cuban site www.antiterroristas.cu. Free campaign updates are available to anyone who emails a request to the Irish campaign.



'Every hour that these five men spend in jail is an insult to my brother's death as well as an insult to all victims of terrorism whether it be those of September 11, 2001, or any other terrorist act

WORLD SOCIAL EUPHORIA

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL, 27 JANUARY 2003

by Annalisa Murphy
(Trócaire's
Programme Officer
for Brazil and
Bolivia)
and Lorna Gold
(Trócaire's Policy
Analyst)

The feeling was electric - after five days' exposure, we were enthusiastic carriers of the highly infectious AWP virus (Another World is Possible). 'But there's no way something like this could happen in Dublin,' I thought, as we watched the world go by at the closing event of the 2003 World Social Forum (WSF). One hundred thousand people streaming good-humouredly along O'Connell Street in protest at the current world order? Not in my lifetime.

This year's WSF was the third global gathering of people who believe in a world with a more human face, where humanity's quest for a better life is not dominated by corporate interests. In contrast to the exclusive gathering of heads of state and eminent economists at the World Economic Forum (WEF), the WSF is a friendly and chaotic people's forum, where some of the world's most prominent social thinkers share ideas and get involved in debates with ordinary members of the public.

The WSF began as an attempt by the left in Brazil to transform the 'anti-globalisation' movement and its agenda, which had become increasingly polarised in the late 1990s, into a positive popular event leading to mobilisation for change. 'Another World is Possible' says it all: the aim is to create an open forum for debate about the critical issues of our time, in order to work on possible solutions.

For Trócaire, the WSF provided a valuable opportunity to gain a strong sense of what issues Southern advocacy groups are working on. We focused on topics of importance to Trócaire's advocacy agenda and events organised by Trócaire's partner organisations.

One of the success stories of the WSF is the 'Solidarity Economy' movement, which has developed linkages between twenty international networks working on fair trade and ethical financing and national and local networks of cooperatives and micro-credit schemes.

This is a practical expression of a new economy based on solidarity and cooperation.

A workshop on 'Beyond Neo-Liberalism' by Prof. Jean Ziegler, Professor of Sociology at the University of Geneva, was representative of a more radical approach to changing the current world economic order. Professor Ziegler contrasted the WEF, a private club of around 1,000 of the most powerful people in the world, with a membership fee of \$110,000 per annum, with the WSF and its \$1 entry fee. According to Prof. Ziegler, the dominance of speculative capital is the main cause of financial instability and persistent poverty, as it locks the main actors into a spiral of profit maximisation with no clear outcome for the common good. Change can be brought about through a global justice movement which is articulated at national level and which reaffirms the central role of citizenship. Prof. Ziegler's call for a revolution may not appeal to everyone, but many people will identify with his conviction that we need to overcome complacency in Northern consumer societies.

The WSF, the only open forum for global civil society, has become a global reference point for people who are thinking about and taking action to develop alternatives to the current status quo. Its success so far is due to a great extent to the positive alignment between a growing number of radical intellectuals, think-tanks, social movements, networks and media. Another obvious strength of the WSF is the space it has generated to gauge current thinking on global

issues and evaluate the contributions of the organisations and networks participating in the event. It has led to the creation of new alignments and coalitions of civil society groups and it offers a unique experience of an emerging alternative global culture which is rooted in citizens' participation, solidarity, respect for diversity and human rights.

However, there is currently a lack of clarity in terms of who speaks on behalf of whom and what the WSF wants to say, except that it is opposed to war and US imperialism. The domination of the far left in the headline events was another potentially divisive feature of this year's Forum: the language being used in the large public events - imperialism, anti-capitalism, revolution, anti-American - was mainly just rhetoric; there was no real debate or dialogue. Much of the interesting debate was relegated to the smaller conferences and workshops.

Trócaire will be encouraging our partner organisations to bring together a broad range of representative views for effective debate in the next WSF in Mumbai (Bombay), India, in January 2004. We are keen to investigate if African movements and networks, which were noticeably under-represented this year, can relate to the event and feel a need to be involved. Other ideas are to promote Irish involvement in the next WSF by participating in the proposed Irish Social Forum and by encouraging TDs and young people to participate in the Parliamentary Forum and the International Youth Camp in India. We are also planning to encourage the Irish media to take a greater interest.

As I strolled along O'Connell Street during the Peace March on the 15th of February, I suddenly felt a shiver. Around me, one hundred thousand people were spending their Saturday afternoon taking part in a peaceful protest against the war on Iraq. Clearly, I had underestimated the power of the AWP virus.



WANTED - ENLACE SUPPORTERS!

LASC has always had a policy of distributing Enlace free of charge to those who had expressed an interest. In a changing funding landscape, however, we will soon no longer be able to do this. In order to ensure that the magazine continues to be published, LASC is offering individuals and organisations the opportunity to become ENLACE SUPPORTERS by paying €10 and €20 per year respectively. Supporter organisations will be acknowledged in every Enlace issue if they so choose. ONLY LASC MEMBERS AND ENLACE SUPPORTERS will get Enlace sent by post to the address of their choice. The magazine will be available free of charge in LASC's office. You will also be able to obtain Enlace in certain retail outlets and libraries.

SINGING ON SEPTEMBER 11TH 2003?

'AN UNFINISHED SONG - A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF VICTOR JARA'

The National Concert Hall, Dublin
Thursday 11th September 2003

An Evening Of Music, Poetry And Song Featuring:
Cormac Breathnach, Donal O' Kelly, Michael D Higgins,
Tomas McSimoin, Joan Mc Dermot, Hada To Hada, Tommy
Sands, Jayro Gonzalez, Eric Fleming

Tickets Available At E25, E15
From The National Concert Hall, 01 417 0077 www.nch.ie

SEPTEMBER 11TH?

Apart from the more recent events, 11th September 2003 is the 30th anniversary of the coup in Chile which brought Pinochet to power.

HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO MUSIC?

During the coup, one of Chile's leading singer/songwriters, Victor Jara, was brutally tortured and murdered. A national hero, Victor Jara, sang and campaigned about social justice and change.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN IRELAND?

All over the world, events are taking place to mark 11th September. In Ireland, the Latin American Solidarity Centre (LASC) is organizing a concert to mark the date, to celebrate the life of Victor Jara and the power of collective cultural expression. Proceeds of the event will support LASC's continuing work in campaigning solidarity, education and culture, linking Latin America and Ireland.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE EVENT?

Sponsorship deals start at €50 (an ad in our special programme) and go up to €1000. Volunteers are welcome to get involved in planning the event. Spread the word about the event and come along on the night.

For further information contact the Latin American Solidarity Centre on 01 676 0435/lasc@iol.ie, www.lasc.ie

THE RISE AND RISE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN LEFT

by Hugh
O'Shaughnessy,
award winning
journalist and
broadcaster who
has covered Latin
America for nearly
four decades and
author of "Pinochet:
The Politics
of Torture".

DO YOU REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS WHEN WISEACRES WENT AROUND SAYING THAT A GENUINELY POPULAR GOVERNMENT COULD NEVER TAKE POWER IN THE LARGEST COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA? DO YOU RECALL HOW PEOPLE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES AMONG BRAZIL'S RICH WOULD SOMEHOW, BY HOOK OR BY CROOK, PREVENT LUIS INÁCIO 'LULA' DA SILVA EVER BECOMING PRESIDENT? AND IF HE EVER GOT THE TOP JOB, THEY USED TO SAY, HE WOULD BE FORCED OUT BY SOME ECONOMIC CRISIS THE FOREIGN BANKERS COULD CONVENIENTLY ORGANISE.

Well, after the spotless elections held last year President Lula has been in power since New Year's Day and is hard at work on his strategic plan to abolish hunger among the country's 180,000,000 inhabitants in double quick time. And he's just increased the minimum wage. It now stands at the massive monthly figure of a bit more than 66 euros. The bankers and businessmen who threatened to overthrow him with a banking cataclysm were thronging round him like lap-dogs at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland within a few weeks of his taking office.

In April last year President Hugo Chávez of VENEZUELA looked destined followed the fate of the late Salvador Allende in CHILE – to be overthrown by the usual coalition of disgruntled army officers and right-wing politicians held together with help and encouragement from Washington. Well, Chávez is still there. The State Department and Dr Dennis McShane, the British junior minister at the Foreign Office who is an enthusiast for President Bush and who prematurely welcomed Chávez's overthrow by some unelected local businessman, have made fools of themselves.

In BOLIVIA Evo Morales, a man who sought the presidency last year on behalf of the small farmers who grow coca bushes, came within a whisker of winning the presidency from his conservative rival Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada. Morales got the vote to many who see their livelihoods taken away by a futile world-wide campaign against drugs led by governments that are very slow to move against the purveyors of much graver threats to the health of mankind, viz., tobacco and alcohol.

In ECUADOR, another Andean country, Lucio Gutiérrez came top of the poll in November backed by peasant groups and trade unions. Intense US pressure has forced him to accept a previous government's arrangement which gives Washington landing rights for its warplanes at the base at Manta but he is attempting to carry out the rest of the electoral promises he made.

One of the most unusual and heartening political developments has been the re-emergence of the FMLN guerrilla front in EL SALVADOR. The world remembers the acts of terrorism against civilians carried out in that country by the army and its US backers. Archbishop Oscar Romero was the most prominent of tens of thousands of victims. But the guerrillas fought their opponents to a standstill and a decade ago won for themselves a place in civilian politics. In mid-March the FMLN came out top in the local and parliamentary elections winning 31 of the 84 seats in the legislative assembly.

The increasing power of the left throughout Latin America will come as no surprise to anyone who examines the UN statistics about the region, which is getting poorer and poorer and where no one is doing anything effective to spread the wealth more fairly. (Ireland is not the only place where the rich are getting a bigger proportion of the cake than are the rest of the population.) Latin Americans saw their own incomes fall by nearly 2 per cent as the world economy slowed down and they had to pay the equivalent of 38 billion euros – or nearly 2.5 per cent of its annual income – to lenders and investors in the rest of the world. The number of people living in poverty grew by seven million.

Overhanging the whole of Latin American society is the lack of justice. Not only social justice but also civil justice. People do not expect to pay for their crimes – not for murder or torture or swindling or any major offence. And that state of affairs is backed by the powerful countries which are constantly monitoring Latin American nations' observance of the rules of the market and adherence to 'financial orthodoxy'. The present invasion by fire and sword and the occupation of Iraq by the US, Britain and Australia to punish Saddam Hussein contrasts with the extreme patience those three countries extended to such as Pinochet who still hasn't been brought to justice, the murderous generals of Argentina, the military tyrants in Brazil and those responsible for the killing of 200,000 people over the years in Guatemala.

Could that be explained by the fact that we have a grotesque case of double standards?

BOOK REVIEW

by Mark Godfrey, journalist

Exclusion and engagement: social policy in Latin America

Edited by Christopher Abel and Colin M. Lewis
Published by the Institute of Latin American Studies,
University of London, 2002
Price £17.95

Post-stabilisation politics in Latin America: competition, transition, collapse

Edited by Carol Wise and Riordan Roett
Published by the Brookings Institution, 2003
Price \$22.95.

Recent events mean that Latin America will continue to be looked to as the lab rat of neo-liberal economic adjustment. Argentina has become the poster-child for all that's bad about IMF management rules. Amid the savage economic flagellation being meted out to a relatively prosperous society, it's some relief to see two of the West's most respected Latin America scholars inking pens to co-edit Exclusion and engagement: social policy in Latin America.

Christopher Abel is senior lecturer in Latin American history at University College London, Colin M. Lewis is senior lecturer in Latin American economic history at the London School of Economics.

Divided into four sections – concepts, models, and practice; health and social security; education; and household and community – the book explores the functions of social policy and the prospects of its being given a more substantial role in Latin American economies. Nothing if not timely, this chunky tome (534 pages) will give students of Latin American studies as well as commentators and policy makers something to wrestle with.

Slotting contemporary social policy into an historical perspective, the authors study the connection between growth and welfare, before considering the record of state action in the social sphere from both macro and micro perspectives. Throughout the course of the book's well-written chapters, the authors brush against the question of the social contract between state and citizen. This contract has been badly battered in IMF-steered Latin economies and has jeopardized the very democratic nature of society. Ideally the exercise of citizenship connects society and state, but in Argentina's case for example the role and potency of democratic citizenship has been hugely diminished.

Abel and Lewis have written widely on various aspects of Latin American society. Exclusion and engagement is a worthy successor to their last collaborative effort, Welfare, poverty and development in Latin America. The new book offers readers a brave and complete reappraisal of social policy in response to the scale of the challenges confronting Latin America.

More sympathetic to the case of IMF and World Bank reform agendas is Professor Carol Wise of the University of Southern California, who teams up with John Hopkins University scholar Riordan Roett to co-edit Post-stabilisation politics in Latin America: competition, transition, and collapse.

This new volume focuses on the effects of market reforms on domestic politics in Latin America. Taking civilian rule as a constant denominator, contributors examine six countries that moved variously towards neo-liberal democracy in the 1980s. Exploring the variation in domestic political responses to these reforms in the six countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela – the authors focus on how reforms like liberalization, privatization and deregulation have produced mixed results. Well, that's been obvious to every mildly-informed world citizen. What's interesting here however are three principal trends identified by the contributors. In Argentina and Chile implementation of market reforms and increasingly competitive politics have gone hand in hand, while in Brazil and Mexico market reforms catalyzed transitions from entrenched authoritarian rule. Meanwhile in Peru and Venezuela, traditional political systems have collapsed, and civilian rule has been repeatedly challenged.

Over the last twenty years, argue Wise, Roett et al, Latin America has seen a definitive shift toward civilian rule. 'Significant trade, fiscal, and monetary reforms have accompanied these changes, exposing previously statist economies to the forces of the market,' claim the editors in their introduction. 'Despite the conventional notion that liberal economic reforms sprang out of necessity, as opposed to an enlightened set of policy choices, the combination of civilian regimes and market-based strategies has proved to be remarkably resilient.' The dual themes of open markets and liberal politics dominate, and will continue to do so, the co-editors conclude, though economic hardships and political unrest may remain. The extent to which Latin Americans and alternative political actors can withstand the pressures of such hardship and unrest will decide whether or not this conclusion holds.

WORKIN' WITH THE PADRE

Of the six and a half million people who live in Honduras, over 40% are under 14 years of age. Of these, 70% don't complete primary school. Without this basic education, many children end up living on the street or in street gangs, becoming victims of 'social cleansing'. This is a country where the number of homeless young being killed is increasing alarmingly, with over 800 street children being murdered in just the last four years. And we can't blame hurricane Mitch for that too.....

Honduras, like many other poor but not conflictive countries in Latin America, has a large number of NGOs and humanitarian organisations operating in the country. This number is even larger now since hurricane Mitch devastated the country in 1998. Much of their work, which began as emergency aid, has, after four years, become a permanent 'emergency' aid, almost replacing the state in its social functions.

In the capital, Tegucigalpa, we spent a couple of weeks visiting some of the projects run by ACOES, headed by the Spanish priest Patricio Larrosa who, together with many collaborators, volunteers and donors, in Honduras and abroad, (all known to the priest within '7 degrees of separation') have managed since 1996 to build and run...

**72 HOUSES WITH ROOFS;
2 HEALTH CLINICS WITH A DOCTOR AND DENTIST;
2 SCHOOLS WITH TEACHERS AND SCHOOL MATERIALS;
7 COMMUNITY CRÈCHES OFFERING FOOD AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.**

Over 4,000 children benefit directly from these projects, through the collaboration and effort of many people. (In Spanish, ACOES stands for 'Asociación Colaboración y Esfuerzo'). The objective is to minimise social exclusion, by preventing many of these children from ending up on the streets sniffing glue and to create an extended network of solidarity by forming generations of volunteers who will give continuity to this work.

All in all, the aim is to develop a sense of community in the widest sense. Much of the help for the projects comes from abroad in the form of food, clothes, medicines, school materials and financial contributions. There is also a scheme whereby children are sponsored from abroad for the school year. Most of this aid comes from word-of-mouth groups in Spain and Canada, with some sponsors also coming from Italy and Ireland.

That this work has been done with so little money would make one question the administration of resources of many 'multinational' NGOs based in Honduras.

So, if anyone would like to contact the padre, they can email him at patricioarrosa@yahoo.es.

by Carol Arcos,
former member of the
LASC Committee and
currently travelling
in Latin America.

INTUNE WITH BRAZIL

In his nasal drawl, Carioca Carlos Sandroni, pronounced that music was the most powerful motivator of people in Brazil. This musicology professor I was interviewing in Rio then substantiated his claim – all over Brazil, samba and funk schools generate income to fund education, music is used by communities in preventing involvement in drugs and crime and over the years, even governments have used music to foster a sense of Brazilian nationalism. It made sense then that maSamba, a Dublin project using Brazilian music in community development work, were on a study and performance trip in Brazil. Accompanying and recording them were two of us LASC people, Rachel and Colette, working on an educational radio programme financed by the National Committee for Development Education.

by Rachel Dempsey,
LASC Education
Officer.

Trying to capture on mini-disc the socio-musical worlds of Rio required stamina and stealth – try learning to dance samba with the feisty locals with recorder and mike concealed under your clothes for safety purpose. Many such nights took place in the vibrant cultural haven of Lapa, in the dilapidated colonial part of Rio. Here bohemian musicians, street vendors, posers, working people and students gathered along the windy narrow roads until dawn, listening to rhythms from early samba to banging funk on huge sound systems. One Lapa saxophonist and music student, Samuel, was active in a university outreach project involving local favela dwellers in recapturing their communities 'musical memories', and thus valuing their own cultural heritage, often Afro-Brazilian. As we were learning daily, music in Brazil is much more than entertainment. This is a country where the Minister of Culture is Gilberto Gil, a Brazilian John Lennon. Basically, 'without samba Brazil would die', according to Daniella, the samba dancer who gave us a lesson in the local park.

This life and death emotion in samba was palpable at the massive street rehearsals we attended. The air throbbed like the skin of a drum as hundreds of percussionists marched passed us in fluid symmetry, sounding ecstatic, a celebration not of aspects of life, but of the raw beauty of life itself. This samba was a sonic symbol of generations of struggle, the beating and hammering echoing the physical labour the not so distant ancestors of the players endured under slavery. Ironical then perhaps, carnival samba is a multi million euro industry. It is also an exportable symbol of 'Brazilianness', adopted by the elites due to its common European and African influences, to perpetuate a mythical image of racial democracy, of a tropical land of happiness where race relations are not an issue. In the 1930s the military leader General Vargas courted Hitler with some samba recordings, while at home dictated that all sambas recorded or broadcast had to exemplify the glories of Brazil, a land of order, progress and racial harmony. Meanwhile, there was a drive to encourage white migrants, whose blood and genes would improve the Brazilian race.

THIS LIFE AND DEATH EMOTION IN SAMBA WAS PALPABLE AT THE MASSIVE STREET REHEARSALS WE ATTENDED. THE AIR THROBBED LIKE THE SKIN OF A DRUM AS HUNDREDS OF PERCUSSIONISTS MARCHED PAST US IN FLUID SYMMETRY, SOUNDING ECSTATIC, A CELEBRATION NOT OF ASPECTS OF LIFE, BUT OF THE RAW BEAUTY OF LIFE ITSELF.



After ten days in Rio, the tour continued northeastwards to Olinda where maSamba had been invited to perform for the pumping carnival throng. The North East was very different - in Rio we had met migrants who had told us about the lack of work, drought, hunger in the area. I was to see this at an 'occupation', a large field where hundreds had arrived late on a November Friday night with all their possessions. Informed of their rights by the housing movement Moradia, they have now settled there, surviving in hot and dirty conditions under plastic bags and bits of cardboard. One father said he would die if he could not feed his children, so is often forced to beg as chronic underemployment and low pay prevents him from earning enough. The Moradia movement activists are angry about the system that perpetuates this injustice, but are also hopeful that things may slowly change in Brazil with the new leftist President, Lula. A short step up the accommodation ladder, were those who lived in precarious hillside dwellings of various degrees of permanency. The housing around a street project in Olinda, CAMM, which we visited with maSamba was of this type.

A local taxi-driver introduced us to this street children project, where we found ourselves sipping coco water and talking to a Dutch-looking Brazilian woman Barbara, who fifteen years ago, started giving food to hungry children. They now have a large space where kids living in the local area came for meals and also to participate in art, music, dance, play and sporting activities. Barbara's teenage daughter, who is

half-black, described being treated with suspicion in shops where her white mother was welcomed, and also talked to us about the music project she ran. Many of the children at the project are Afro-Brazilian and are great-grandchildren of slaves, 3.5 million or so of whom were brought to Brazil. The children in CAMM performed local African influenced rhythms for us, the younger ones practically buried by the drums they played. Then maSamba, until then shy to play the rhythms of the local area, gave us some maracatu on newly fashioned wide wooden drums, to the bemusement and delight of the kids.

The above and other aspects of the themes music, marginalisation and multi-culturalism are explored on a 3 part radio programme. This programme will be launched in Dublin at the end of September and will subsequently be broadcast by Near FM and other community radio stations around the country. Please contact LASC for details of the launch, which will feature workshops on the issues raised in the programme and on Brazilian music. Additionally, copies of the programme will shortly be available on CD from LASC.

THE LASC WORD

There has been a lot of controversy recently about violations of the Geneva Convention during the Gulf War II. It has particularly focused on the parading of prisoners of war on Iraqi television. Those pundits who have pointed out that it is in contravention of the aforementioned conventions to point a camera in the direction of prisoners of war were generally silent about the pictures of masses of Iraqis who had been taken prisoner. But then as the US pointed out, it was the pain and suffering caused to the families of US soldiers that was most annoying. Iraqis do have television, but given the state their infrastructure was left in, maybe there was no fear of their families seeing their loved ones surrendering, or maybe the Geneva Convention is only for the white folks and those of a darker complexion in their service.

Of all the Geneva Conventions, it is the one on prisoners which has been most regularly enforced. During World War II the convention was applied both to allied and axis POWs, even when bomber Harris committed mass murder through the aerial fire bombing of Dresden, a city which at the time had little military significance and was made up of refugees fleeing the conflict. Now, I am not saying that POWs shouldn't get the benefits of the conventions, because they should. I just feel it's all a bit of a farce.

The deliberate killing of civilians or deliberate disregard for civilian life would also be a violation of the Geneva Conventions. The attacks on infrastructure which is not part of the war, e.g. hospitals and schools, would also be in breach of the said conventions. Yet we know only too well that in every war that has ever been fought the Geneva Conventions have never been applied to civilians, hence the outrage when their application in relation to POWs is violated.

Cluster bombs fall like bunches of grapes, so they say, spreading out over the land and effectively becoming land mines as many lie there waiting for some civilian to stand on them. These grape-like bombs are a bitter fruit which bring in their wake only pain and destruction. There will be no wine pressed from them for the celebrations the military and the oilmen will have, just more dead Iraqis.

Such conventions serve only as moral reference points. They have never been applied, they are a fiction to be used and abused as the West sees fit. They are as mythical as the 'International Community' itself. Just another bland justification for whatever, and a useless piece of paper written by the great to show off their great moral commitments as they go about dropping their cluster bombs.

Fine words, but no action unless you are a US soldier. But then that has always been the case with international law, it was never meant to be applied to the imperial powers only their subjected peoples. It is a fiction worthy of the Booker Prize. International law is like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Garrod O'Loughlin

LASC MEMBERSHIP

LASC very much welcomes the support of members to help the work which it carries out from year to year. We ask members to subscribe €25, or €10 (unwaged) for a year. If you are not already a member of LASC and would like to contribute to the solidarity and campaigning work that links Ireland and Latin America, please send back this form. LASC members are entitled to vote at our AGM.

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