

SOCIALIST VOICE

Monthly publication of Dublin District, Communist Party of Ireland

No. 64

April 2010

€1

“Lie down, stay down”

THE recently concluded agreement between leading officers of the ICTU Public Services Committee and the Government, entitled “Public Services Agreement, 2010–2014,” was more or less what the unions had put on the table before the budget in December 2009, proposals that the Government initially agreed to but were overruled by the EU Commission, which now takes a direct supervisory role in how the Irish Government shapes its budgetary priorities and strategy.

While the negotiations were presented as having been difficult and protracted, in fact from previous experience of these centralised negotiations that gave us the various “social partnership” agreements we know that while many attend, few are involved in the substantial discussions. It is all about perceptions: to give the impression to union members that it was tough going and that this is the best deal on the table.

The talks about this proposed agreement were also about perceptions: the lights on in dark buildings late into the night, selective leaks to the press that crunch points had been reached, and bags were packed, ready for walking away. Yet in the final week of March it was general knowledge that agreement had been reached and what was necessary was to get the optics and the sequence right, to get the CPSU conference out of the way, and to launch the agreement before NAMA was made public.

Elements of the trade union leadership are attempting to sell this agreement on the grounds that it would ensure the necessary savings, thereby eliminating the need for further cuts in public-sector workers’ pay and for pension levies. The agreement must now be voted on by public-sector unions.

The Government’s commitment to making no further attacks on workers’ wages and pensions is so circumscribed as to make it meaningless. Any reversal of the pay and pension cuts is dependent on the state of Government finances. This Government, and any possible future combination of parties,

have all agreed that the priority is to restore the public finances and to reduce the deficit to less than 3 per cent of GDP by 2014, under the supervision of the EU Commission and in line with the Growth and Stability Pact.

The strategy . . . has been to take maximum advantage of the crisis in a generalised attack on workers’ terms and conditions

The debts that the Government has taken on under NAMA will determine the budgetary policy for decades to come. The priority will be to service this massive debt—not public services, not job creation.

The strategy of the Government, the employers and the establishment media since the beginning of this crisis has been to take maximum advantage of the crisis in a generalised attack on workers’ terms and conditions throughout the economy, both the public and the private sector. The action—or inaction—of the trade union movement

has allowed a significant division to emerge between public and private-sector workers.

Neo-liberalism is not dead ideologically, or as an economic strategy: in fact the neo-liberals continue to take full advantage of the crisis. Not alone are they continuing to use the state as the vehicle for pushing forward their strategic goals but they have succeeded so far in shifting huge corporate debts onto the backs of workers and their families, with the state taking responsibility in the form of NAMA.

Under this proposed agreement, many rights that workers have secured, and terms and conditions underwritten by law, will be ended. The state is moving in and will attempt to remove the protections won and built up by workers over nearly eight decades. The record shows that the state sector led the way in child care, pensions, maternity leave, career breaks, shorter working week, and the regulated working week.

What has now been put on the table is that the working day will be whatever is considered necessary, and the working week will be from Monday to

In this issue

- p. 2 A very, very bad deal
- p. 2 No omelettes without cracked eggs
- p. 3 Recycled rubbish: Unemployment and emigration in Ireland
- p. 4 Have you €27,000 to give the banks?
- p. 5 Is your boss a Marxist?
- p. 6 Greece: Stepping up the struggle
- p. 7 Paraguayan farmers demand agrarian reform

“ Viet Nam was the first war ever fought without any censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind.—General William Westmoreland, US Army (Time, 5 April 1982). ”

Sunday. Shift premiums and overtime payments are all to go. Flexibility is the order of the day: you must do your own job and the work of anybody else if so required.

If this agreement goes through, the consequences will be felt throughout the state-sponsored sector and the private sector of the economy. The

employers' organisations, IBEC and ISME, have welcomed this agreement; they see the demolition of the rights of public-sector workers as a prelude to renewed attacks on their own workers. This will unleash a further race to the bottom, with workers being used against each other in undermining each other's terms and conditions.

The trade union movement now has no vision, few if any policies for overcoming the crisis, and very few ideas on how to defend its members. The ICTU in effect has replaced its campaign slogan "Get up, stand up—for a better, fairer way" with "Lie down, stay down—there is no other way."

[EMC]

A very, very bad deal

THE joint ICTU-Government proposals that emerged this month on the public sector represent a very bad deal for current and future public-sector workers. It is no surprise that IBEC and the chambers of commerce are now waxing lyrical about "agreed approaches being the best way forward." They are quite happy to exist in partnership with the unions when they can so easily push through their agenda.

Ultimately, union "negotiators" have acquiesced in the establishment's continuing economic strategy and have effectually legitimised Government actions since the start of this economic crisis.

The unions went into these talks advancing an agenda that was not just about securing but restoring pay levels. Yet in regard to protecting pay the agreement offers little. It might well say that there will be no further reductions in the pay rates of serving public-sector workers for the lifetime of this agreement (clause 15); but this is largely undermined by the spectre of clause 28, which states that "the implementation of this agreement is subject to no currently unforeseen budgetary deterioration."

Given how "unforeseen" financial problems have popped up over the past two years, this is a very nice get-out clause for the Government should it wish to pursue further cuts in pay in the near future.

There will be annual pay review until April 2011, with any such review having to take account of "sustainable"

cost savings generated from the implementation of various organisational restructuring. Yet how this review process will actually work is vague. The fact that clause 15 says that only serving public-sector workers are protected suggests that future grades will be subjected to downward pressure and further cuts.

The proposed agreement also means that unions would effectually sign away their right to strike on pay issues, given that the proposed deal includes a "stability clause," whereby no cost-increasing claims can be allowed (clause 27). Nothing has been achieved with regard to restoring pay cuts—perhaps one of the chief grievances of workers in the first instance. The proposed agreement essentially gives the Government free rein to pursue its programme of "flexible redeployment" (clauses 7–13). This is a mere euphemism for less job control and more work intensification.

In sum, sections of the union movement have ideologically succumbed to the orthodoxy of fiscal contraction. Apart from occasional pussyfooting

around "The Better, Fairer Way," the ICTU Executive have for the most part been too slow or have failed to robustly defend an expansionary alternative. They have failed to do this because they have not really wanted to get locked in to an irrevocable conflict with the Government. They have largely trodden safe ground, tailoring their demands within the parameters of Government strategy, ultimately in a bid to keep their foot in the door at Government Buildings. A post-partnership world clearly frightens them.

With the parameters of economic options being so narrowly defined, the debate was best captured by David Begg arguing over the best way to achieve cost-cutting, rather than questioning the wider establishment vision of fiscal rectitude. The logic of accepting such orthodoxy, and the wider negative consequences of economic trade unionism, have come home to roost with this proposed agreement. Public-sector workers should reject it.

[NC]

No omelettes without cracked eggs



RECENT events at the Passport Office in Dublin have, not surprisingly, descended into histrionics. The media have been awash with stories of poor souls who can't whisk off to Disneyland in Paris for the weekend or indeed jet off to Thailand for a friend's wedding. The terrible inconvenience of it all!

Undoubtedly sections of the trade union movement are concerned about the fall-out from these kinds of events. Yet the windbags who complain about having to queue in the rain for a passport not only appear to lack any foresight (we knew this action was coming for months) but, more importantly, tend to forget a number of crucial points.

First of all, we live in a largely

plural society. It's plural in the sense that there are many different social groups pursuing their own rational interests and competing over scarce resources. Clearly these social groups don't operate in a vacuum: their actions have knock-on effects for other social groups.

So, when senior executives at Dell decided that it would be cheaper to manufacture components in eastern

Europe, it discontinued operations in Limerick. Not only were workers in Dell hit by the senior management pursuing their own rational interests, in the form of profit maximisation, but so were large sections of the local community in Limerick. Indeed others in the south-west region, such as small and medium-sized businesses that supplied Dell, were also affected, as were their own workers. And so on and so on.

Indeed the effects of that management decision at Dell reverberated also on Government coffers, as it in turn lost out on the receipts from corporation tax, which could have been used to fund necessary social services.

Curiously, however, “The Frontline,” “The Joe Duffy Show” and the like were not replete with human-interest stories about how this “inconvenienced” people or the wider society. There were no sob stories about how former Dell workers might now have to wait in ever-growing dole queues to receive their benefits. Media commentators quite easily justified Dell’s action by recourse to the usual blather about lower labour costs, “We’re not competitive enough,” and so forth.

So if Dell executives are logically and rationally pursuing their interests, and their behaviour seems to be largely legitimated by those in the media, why

shouldn’t CPSU workers at the Passport Office be allowed to do so as well? And why so much hysteria over a few delayed passports, when the actions of other social groups have often put people on social welfare or into near poverty?

But apart from this argument, there is another reason why the CPSU’s Passport Office action needs to be put in context. Again this comes back to the fact that we live in a largely plural society that is complex and inter-related in its make-up. Those workers at the Passport Office have fallen foul of a Government campaign of cuts that has, in many respects, affected their livelihoods—and in a wholly disproportionate fashion. Given that we allegedly live in a democracy, various social groups have the right to express and to pursue their particular interests within such a democracy.

With the centrality of work to many people’s lives, and its significance in shaping life’s chances, democracy is probably most fundamental to the work-place. While there is no positive right to strike in Irish law, labour law protects workers in withdrawing their labour. In fact in the face of a recalcitrant employer this is frequently the best way that workers can secure their interests; their labour is their own only resource in negotiations. To curb this

or to try to undermine this action is to curb democratic freedoms and to curtail one of the strongest planks workers can use in pursuing their aspirations in a so-called democracy.

However, it would seem that some sections of the public, and most sections of the media, would rather ride roughshod over workers’ rights and livelihoods so that they can grab their cheap flights on Ryanair and go on holiday.

One of the continuing problems of our society is that a lot of people, workers included, display this consumerist mentality. While this poses as being apolitical and harmless, it imposes a right-wing discourse on society. In effect it says, “There is no society, there’s only me and my consumer interests.”

Yes, there is a “public relations” campaign to be won. But why should the labour movement pander to this bankrupt and rotten ideology? The union movement in general needs to hold its nerve. It needs to begin to challenge more effectively the dominant anti-worker, anti-union discourse that has run rampant since the recession. Constantly apologising for a few cracked eggs will not create the steely resolve that is needed to meet the present challenges.

[NC]

Recycled rubbish: Unemployment and emigration in Ireland

ISSUES such as this are rarely revisited by the mainstream media, for one reason or another, but it is recent coverage by the said media that made a compelling case for this article.



obvious that conditions are quite different from previous times of economic severity, like the 1980s, for example, which would suggest that there may be a different outcome this time.

Ireland has gone from boom to bust in a remarkably short period, and in doing so displayed starkly who really benefited most during that time. Even with the dramatic

decline, people’s aspirations are greatly increased as a result of the boom years. Having a job was no longer seen as a privilege but a simple expectation, and many saw themselves living very comfortable life-styles indeed.

Most people’s life-style “adjustments,” resulting from cuts, levies, taxes, and of course unemployment, are unprecedented in Irish society, on many levels. Even so the media continue to propagate the idea that we are entering an era of mass emigration once again, which so far is untrue, with relatively small numbers leaving the country compared with, surprisingly, the “Celtic Tiger” era.

It’s not clear if this is a determined effort or shoddy journalism, but it’s obviously seen as the only solution in their eyes, ahead of really radical and outlandish ideas, like—let’s see—creating new jobs.

It’s become apparent that the Government is making a real effort to force another generation to the four corners of the world by targeting the

Since the beginning of capitalism’s latest crisis the media have stuck to what they know, their collective “common sense,” if you like, resulting in journalists peddling the same line as has been used before without any real thought. With some rudimentary analysis it is pretty



young with brutal welfare cuts in an attempt to make it unattractive and difficult to stay in one's own country. The young have borne the brunt of this recession so far, with the *Irish Times* reporting before Christmas that unemployment among the under-25s was reaching 27 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for the rest of the population. For young men the situation is even worse, with one in three in their early 20s out of work.

The major flaw in this traditional view is that, for now at least, the entire western capitalist world is in the midst of the very same crisis as we are, and Ireland's traditional destinations for exporting its young, such as Britain and America, are in particularly bad shape.

The European Union and the euro zone are not doing very well either and appear to be heading for more trouble, with the euro faltering and the re-emergence of market turmoil.

This has led to serious speculation by some economists that we will see a further recessionary dip in the near future, with others warning that the EU's economic future may now be decided on the streets of Greece.

So where does that leave Ireland? It would appear that high levels of unemployment are here to stay, for a while anyway, and any talk of "turning corners" and "green shoots of recovery" is folly at best. It will not be until unemployed workers realise that the vast majority of them could be without work for quite some time yet that the trouble will begin, as most people have been led to believe that this is a short blip.

Get the latest news and information . . .

- Connolly Youth Movement: www.cym.ie
- Cuba Support Group: www.cubasupport.com
- International Brigades Commemoration Committee: homepage.ntlworld.com/e-mckinley/ibcc.html
- Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign: www.ipsc.ie
- James Connolly Education Trust: www.iol.ie/~sob/jcet
- Latin America Solidarity Centre: www.lasc.ie
- Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA): www.pana.ie
- People's Movement: www.people.ie
- Progressive Film Club: www.progressivefilmclub.ie

In this scenario the young may become the problem, which could explain the Government's actions, as emigration has served as a successful release valve for this state time and time again. Apart from the usual issues of anger, frustration and impatience generally associated with being young, they were promised much by a political class that has failed them.

This is given credence by an opinion poll of young people in the *Sunday Independent* on 7 February that reported that "more than three-quarters of people say that they have no confidence in the political system to solve the economic crisis."

It's easy to see why, with the Dáil reduced to a talking-shop and none of the parties within offering a viable way forward, happy to score points on people's misery. However, this opinion poll didn't question what they would like to see take its place.

This is just an alternative view on mass unemployment and its potential effect on Irish society. Is it un-

reasonable to suggest that, faced with long-term unemployment, people will not become increasingly angry and frustrated? And that they may want to have their say and to change things dramatically?

The question is realistically whether we will see dramatic change or simply moderate reform, such as a historic election result for the likes of the Labour Party, seeing them finally break the stranglehold of Civil War politics. Such a result would do much to alleviate the symptoms but not tackle the root problem: capitalism's greed.

Unemployed workers face great difficulties, regardless of elections, as it is only in organisation and empowerment that they can take control of their own destiny.

Alas, few parties, including smaller leftist groups, are interested in this, as they see it as their job to represent people's views rather than to organise and empower.

[BH]

Have you €27,000 to give the banks?

"THE banks played fast and loose with the economic interests of this country," Brian Lenihan stated. And to punish them he then outlined the most generous welfare scheme ever attempted by this state.

A conservative estimate (taken from Enda Kenny, leader of Fine Gael) is that the welfare cheque given the banks on 30 March will cost every home €27,000. The Labour Party spokesperson on finance, Joan Burton, said the transfers of money from the state (i.e. the taxpayers) to Anglo-Irish Bank alone will cost every family €22,000. The likely figure and cost is far higher for every working family as we suffer attacks on our jobs, pay, and pensions.

On top of the €4 billion already given to Anglo-Irish, €8.3 billion was

committed this month, with a possible additional €10 billion necessary in the coming years. And that's just one bank!

It would be easy to almost laugh away what appear to be make-believe figures; but when the problem is explained as the equivalent of every family handing a cheque for €22,000 to the bank, the grim reality hits home, and the unashamed support for a failed system from a failed Government is revealed.

In addition to this, AIB will require, and get, €7.4 billion, Bank of Ireland €2.7 billion, Irish Nationwide €2.6 billion, and the EBS €875 million.

As has been argued on these pages for some time, we are witnessing a massive and unprecedented transfer of wealth from working people and their families to monopoly capital and in

particular to finance capital.

The bail-out of the banking system is part of a strategy to save the existing establishment but more fundamentally to sustain the foundations on which profit in the capitalist system is obtained: financial services.

For Cowen it appears this simple: "Capital had been wiped out, and we need to put the banking system back into place." But this totally denies the reality that for the last thirty or forty years profits from financial services have grown out of all proportion to any real value they create for society.

Financial services have become the main source of investment, and profit, for capital accumulated in the system. We have arguably witnessed the bizarre scenario whereby money makes more money without any product or

For the latest news and information
visit
www.comunistpartyofireland.ie

service in between (as outlined in a previous issue of *Socialist Voice*). Capital created more capital by means of a range of financial products and mathematical formulas.

Coupled with the housing and mortgage bubble, now suffering from a crisis of overproduction, this created a mammoth sector completely out of proportion to its required size as part of any sustainable economy.

Many establishment critiques of both the NAMA project and the recapitalisation being pursued by this Government are convinced that these projects will at least double our national debt while also making state borrowing from some sources costlier, and they could even bankrupt the state within a few years.

The premise upon which NAMA operates is that property prices will rise by at least 10 per cent in the coming years. However (again as described in previous issues), for this to happen Irish banks must release credit at a rate seen during the boom years.

This is not just unlikely but impossible, given their debts to international creditors that the banks need to pay off.

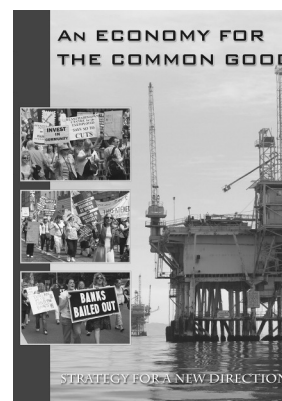
So are the billions being handed over really going to release credit to the system, or will they be used to pay for the unsustainable short-term drive for profits at any cost witnessed over the last few decades? Are the policies being pursued really about the "national interest," or are they about the interest of the system itself?

It is worth noting in addition to all the figures mentioned above that unemployment, by its narrowest definition, increased in March to 13.4 per cent.

The source of profits in the capitalist system cannot be returned to where it was, in financial services and property. But this is not our problem to deal with. We have to demand and fight for an alternative people-centred economy, as outlined in *An Economy for the Common Good*.

[GM]

An Economy for the Common Good



An analysis of the economic crisis and a strategy for a democratic alternative.

*€4.50 (postage free within Ireland), from Connolly Books, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2.

Is your boss a Marxist?

IS your boss a unitarist,^{1,2} a pluralist,¹ or a Marxist^{1?} These are the three main analytical ways of viewing industrial relations. How your boss interprets industrial relations in your work-place has a major effect on how they behave and how they expect you to behave in turn.

The unitarist-type management views the work-place as a team or community.³ In other words, your employer makes statements such as "We are all part of the same team," etc. Conflict is seen by your boss as both unnatural and unnecessary.⁴ The management try to convince you (and themselves) that "team" spirit and management authority co-exist for the benefit of all.⁵ Conflict, therefore, is blamed on personality clashes, poor communications, bad attitude, or the work of agitators. Individuals who are "difficult" or have a political "axe to grind" need to be disciplined, or even dismissed.⁴ Therefore, if conflict cannot be suppressed, the management believes it should be dealt with by their authority: management coercion.

The unitarist employer rejects trade unions as a historical carry-over, brought into existence during a time of unenlightened management practices.⁶ "Custom and practice" or union rules are irritating to this type of management.⁷ Indeed this unitarist ideology seeks to portray trade unions as a sectional greed with little grasp of economics, the "national interests," or even where their own interests lie.⁸ This is also the dominant ideology in much of the media and in conservative and right-wing political parties.⁹

Even if a unitarist employer is eventually forced to recognise a trade union for collective bargaining, they

will try to limit the scope of negotiations to pay and other employment conditions that are at best reviewed annually, biennially, or triennially. The unitarist employer will resist employee representatives having any say in the day-to-day assignment and performance of work tasks etc.⁹ in the ever-changing work-place.

Pluralism, on the other hand, accepts that trade unions have the right to challenge the management's "right to manage."¹⁰ History has demonstrated that greater stability is achieved by collective bargaining than by outlawing trade unions.¹¹ Enlightened managers with a pluralist approach recognise that conflict exists in the employment relationship over the "wage bargain," the "effort bargain" (be it physical, intellectual, or emotional), the "imbalance of power in the work-place and labour market," and the "commodity status of labour."¹² In the wage bargain the more wages a worker receives the lower the employer's profit, and vice versa. The conflict over effort is how much open-ended effort a worker must increasingly perform in return for a fixed wage. The imbalance of power causes conflict, in that the employer can generally do without any one worker, whereas the worker's livelihood depends on their continued employment.

Finally, workers are not com-

modities, in that they have human needs (physical and emotional) that will change throughout their working lives and indeed working day, unlike a machine that can be unplugged.

These potential and actual conflicts need to be managed by the different sources of authority and influence within the work-place and society. Therefore, pluralism views trade unions and collective bargaining as a necessary balance to management authority if conflict is to be properly managed for the benefit of all. Pluralist managements accordingly believe they "can only regain control by sharing it."¹² However, it is not pluralism but unitarism that "in various guises is back on the employers' agenda."¹³

The Marxist approach to industrial relations accepts that conflict exists but that at present there is little balance between organised labour and capital, especially in an era of globalisation.¹⁴ When there is a huge difference in power between different groups in society, including the work-place, the group with the greater power rarely has to use it. This is because excessive power regularly transforms itself into a legitimate authority in the thinking of those it seeks to control. Therefore workers often come to believe that there is no alternative to the way their world is. The status quo becomes legitimate, and workers come to accept that "what is" means "what must be."

	Unitarist	Pluralist	Marxist
Assumption	Common interests and values	Different interests and values	Inequalities in society (wealth, power, risk)
Role of unions	External interference Historical anachronism Accepted only in economic relations (if forced)	Legitimate voice of workers Can be a positive influence in regulation of conflict	Workers' natural response to capitalism Potential source of class-consciousness Potential source of political mobilisation
Role of management	Single source of authority and loyalty	To recognise (formal and informal) subgroups that compete for authority and loyalty	The capitalists (or their agents) are capitalism personified
Resolution of conflict	Management authority	Compromise and agreement	Change society

Marxism disagrees with the pluralist analysis that collective bargaining levels the playing-field between management and unions. Marxism accepts the need for trade unions and is obviously supportive of the trade union struggle but recognises that unions conventionally challenge the existing structures of society only at the margins.¹⁵ If and when an agreement is reached, the management still commands; workers are still obliged to obey.¹⁶ Otherwise those in power, if seriously challenged, would deploy their full power resources and “would destroy at once the illusion of a power balance.”¹⁴

However, the Marxist view of industrial relations sees capitalism not as a natural phenomenon, like gravity, but merely as a way society is at present organised; and society—unlike gravity—can be changed.

Critics of Marxism say that “it’s fine in theory but not in practice.” But these are two sides of the same coin. Theory is nothing more than the realignment of thought with reality, and

practice is nothing more than the realignment of reality with thought. To leave such realignments to others means it is their practices and ideas—i.e. their political interests—that will shape your life.

What way does your boss expect you to participate and think about industrial relations and politics?

[JC]

1. Patrick Gunnigle, Gerard McMahon, and Gerard Fitzgerald, *Industrial Relations in Ireland: Theory and Practice*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995; Joseph Wallace, Patrick Gunnigle, and Gerard McMahon, *Industrial Relations in Ireland*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2004; Alan Fox, *Beyond Contract: Work, Power and Trust Relations*, London: Faber and Faber, 1974; Richard Hyman, *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*, London: Macmillan Press, 1975.

2. Paul Mooney, *Union-Free: Creating a Committed and Productive Workforce*, Dublin: Liffey Press, 2005.

3. David Farnham and John Pimlott, *Understanding Industrial Relations*, London: Cassell, 1995.

4. Howard F. Gospel and Gill Palmer, *British Industrial Relations*, London: Routledge, 1993.

5. Alan Fox, *Industrial Sociology and Industrial Relations* (Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers’ Associations Research Papers, 3), London: HMSO, 1966, p. 12.

6. Alan Fox, “Industrial relations: A social critique of pluralist ideology,” in John Child (ed.), *Man and Organization*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973.

7. Howard F. Gospel and Gill Palmer, *British Industrial Relations*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 186.

8. Howard F. Gospel and Gill Palmer, *British Industrial Relations*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 190.

9. Mike Salamon, *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice*, London: Prentice-Hall, 1998

10. Hugh A. Clegg, “Pluralism in industrial relations,” *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, November 1975, p. 311.

11. Daryl D’Art and Thomas Turner, “Independent collective representation: Providing effectiveness, fairness, and democracy in the employment relationship,” *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, vol. 15, no. 4 (December 2003).

12. Allan Flanders, “Collective bargaining: Prescriptions for change,” in *Management and Unions: The Theory and Reform of Industrial Relations*, London: Faber and Faber, 1970, p. 172

13. William K. Roche, “Industrialisation and the development of industrial relations,” in Thomas V. Murphy and William K. Roche (eds.), *Irish Industrial Relations in Practice*, Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1997.

14. John Kelly, *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 134.

15. Alan Fox, *Beyond Contract: Work, Power and Trust Relations*, London: Faber and Faber, 1974.

16. Richard Hyman, *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*, London: Macmillan Press, 1975.

Greece: Stepping up the struggle

by Elisseos Vagenas

Head of the International Section, Communist Party of Greece

THE recent summit meeting of the European Union was presented in Greece by the government, and was considered by the media, as a great success. They cultivated the idea that the European Union had managed to protect the Greek economy through the forming of a European political mechanism jointly with the International Monetary Fund as well as the intervention of the European Central Bank.

But, on the contrary, we are not talking about a short-sighted mechanism only for Greece, but it seems that they will need this also in the future in other cases, such as for Portugal, Spain, or Italy. This political mechanism has a specific orientation. Regardless of whether the funding mechanism will be enforced, and regardless of the discussion whether a country will

remain in the euro zone, its orientation is specific: political blackmail to make the bourgeois states and the bourgeois governments comply on at least one issue with the rules of the EU market and with the global capitalist rules; to make the labour force—which is a commodity in capitalism—even cheaper so as to further steal from and suppress the people.

The big monopolies and the bourgeois governments are competing fiercely among themselves and face rivalries among themselves, but when they have to cope with the peoples and the elimination of their rights they are aligned and in full accord with each other.

It is a lie that the “stability pact” that is being introduced by the Greek



government, with the support of the ND [New Democracy] conservatives, will prevent worse for the Greek people. On the contrary, it paves the way for even harsher measures and a generalised attack. The supposed “heaven-sent” intervention of the French and Germans, which means more loans and more debt for the Greek working class and tightens the rope around our neck, guarantees only one thing: the rescue of French, German and Greek capitalists, the capitalists of Europe and exploiters of the working class all around the world.

The social democrats of PASOK [Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement] and the liberals of ND, as well as the nationalists of LAOS, together with the opportunist forces of SYN-SYRIZA, are all adopting the policy of “we should all make sacrifices, in a fair way.” They cultivate an alleged patriotism, claiming that all the Greek population, capitalists together with workers, “should protect the country from the German, French or US invaders.” They claim that “the EU and its euro zone should become stronger and protect the Greek economy.”

They try to hide the fact that the bourgeois class of Greece is playing a significant role, especially in the Balkans, and that the Greek capitalists keep their own interests, which are met with imperialist rivalries among German, French and US capital.

It is well known that the Greek government, in order to gain political or economic support or bail-outs by the big imperialist forces, has given unacceptable returns in cases like the Balkans issue, the issue of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greek-Turkish relations related to the Aegean Sea, and oil exploration, as well as the Cyprus problem. All the so-called “rescuers” of Greece follow the same line: fierce measures against the people, and new tax-free measures and privileges for the capitalists.

Even through the euro zone, or through the IMF, there is no dilemma, the people will have to cope with the same thunderstorm of austerity measures. Those false dilemmas, together with disorienting discussions about the need for the strengthening of the European Union or euro zone or for the improvement of the Stability Pact, are causing harm only to the people.

Such dilemmas encircle the peoples in the reactionary framework of the European Union, and cultivate the illusion that the European Union could be converted into a pro-peoples union; but this is impossible. The workers should draw political conclusions and realise that a merely defensive way of struggle is not adequate nowadays.

Of course the struggle will be continued. Already we have organised a new demonstration throughout the

CONNOLLY BOOKS

Established 1942
Dublin's oldest radical bookshop

- ★ Irish history
- ★ Current affairs
- ★ Marxist classics
- ★ Trade union affairs
- ★ Environmental issues
- ★ Philosophy
- ★ Radical periodicals

CONNOLLY BOOKS

43 East Essex Street
Dublin 2
(01) 6708707
connollybooks@eircom.net

country just after the Easter holiday, on 9 April, and we will do our best to step up the struggle, for new strikes. But at the same time it is necessary for the work of the trade unions that the movement be updated with today's needs.

The experience that we face is that the bourgeois class tries to convince the workers not about the fairness of the measures but for the necessity of a “single EU strategy of the capitalist road of development, that there is no other solution.”

The workers and popular strata need to form a counter-strategy that would stress that what is required nowadays is not just a change of government but a change of the character of power, another path of development that the workers could produce without the capitalists upon their heads. We must stress that the only real perspective is that the workers should rule the economy, the factories, and the wealth that they produce.

The people should reject the capitalist road of development and challenge the power of capital, fighting for another path of development based on workers' power, on socialism.

International



Paraguayan farmers demand agrarian reform

ON Thursday 25 March thousands of farmers marched for agrarian reform in the Paraguayan capital, Asunción. They were demonstrating to demand that President Fernando Lugo keep the pledges he made during his election campaign.

Lugo had promised wide-ranging agrarian reform. Among the pledges he made was one for the redistribution of land to poor farmers, alongside access

to health care, education, and better homes and roads in rural communities.

However, despite eighteen months in office he has made no moves to keep

these promises. 80 per cent of the fertile land in Paraguay is still under the control of 1 per cent of the population, with 85 per cent of small

Women and the European Union



The talk by Deirdre Uí Bhrógáin to the Desmond Greaves Summer School, September 2009, now in booklet form. *€2.50 (postage free within Ireland), from Connolly Books, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2.

farmers owning only 6 per cent of the land. 38 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

Of particular worry to the farmers who were marching is the soy industry. This is a rapidly growing business in the country. Its expansion has led, and is leading, to displacement and marginalisation. Small farmers are being driven from their land through violence and intimidation by large soy-bean producers. To make matters worse, the soy producers are using toxic pesticides that are poisoning water supplies and killing cattle belonging to the small farmers, not to mention the effect they have on the people, in particular children.

In response to the demonstration Lugo stated: "Unfortunately we haven't been able to execute agrarian reform at

the speed that we hoped to, but it is moving forward at a slow speed, and we have prioritised these demands."

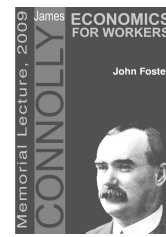
For now, small farmers in Paraguay remain unconvinced. It is what they have been continuously told for the last two decades. They will continue their protests, with the occupation of farm lands and blockading of highways the likely next step.

Opposition to US bases grows

On 30 October 2009 Colombia signed a ten-year agreement with the United States, giving it access to seven military bases in the country. Though the United States has continuously spouted the usual lies about needing to have a military presence in Colombia to fight against narcotics trafficking and guerrillas, the truth is quite different.

A leaked US Air Force document clearly states that the agreements allow the United States "a unique opportunity for conducting full-spectrum operations" against various threats, including "anti-US govern-

Economics for Workers



Economics for Workers, the James Connolly Memorial Lecture, 2009, by John Foster, is now published in booklet form. *€2.50 (postage free within Ireland), from Connolly Books, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2.

influence, interference and occupation are no longer welcome.

State terrorism increases in Honduras



On 23 March a prominent member of the Honduran National Resistance Front (FNRP) was murdered in cold blood while at work as a teacher in front of a group of his students. Professor José Manuel Flores, a social science teacher, was shot by plain-clothes men with bal-clavas at close range. Flores was well known throughout Honduras

for his actions in opposing the US-backed coup in his country. He was heavily involved in organising and participating in protests, as well as publishing many articles criticising the leaders of the coup.

While the murderers have not been identified, there is little doubt that this was a state-sponsored assassination. It is just another example of the continuing state terrorism in Honduras, where the US-backed tactics of the 1970s and 80s are being used to silence any opposition to the leaders of the coup. Flores is only the latest of the scores of FNRP members to be murdered by Honduran government death squads.

Despite the continuing illegal detentions, intimidation and murder the FNRP is continuing to struggle against the coup.

[JM]

Join the struggle for socialism! Join the CPI.

Please send me information about membership of the Communist Party of Ireland.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Phone:

E-mail:

►CPI, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2

►CPI, PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR

ments." It is clear that these bases have little to do with dealing with internal Colombian problems but much to do with strategic control over Latin America.

Every single country in South America, other than Colombia, is opposed to the United States having bases there. President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela has gone as far as to claim that the "winds of war" are blowing throughout the region as a result of this, while adding that "Colombia decided to hand over its sovereignty to the United States. Colombia today is no longer an independent country, it is a kind of colony." The President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, responded by saying the agreement "constitutes a grave danger for peace in Latin America."

While great hopes were held for Obama taking power in the United States, it has become clear that his similarities with Bush far outweigh the differences. These bases are a threat against all the governments and more importantly all the people of Latin America. They must be opposed, as US

SOCIALIST VOICE

43 East Essex Street · Dublin 2
(01) 6708707

www.communistpartyofireland.ie