



a socialist world is possible

www.socialistparty.org.uk

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The 2004 European Social Forum has assembled thousands of people who are angry about the occupation of Iraq, the policies of the multinationals, widespread attacks on workers' living standards, environmental degradation, and many other aspects of capitalism worldwide. Across Europe, workers have moved into action against attacks on jobs, pensions, benefits, public services, and working hours and conditions. Tens of thousands of German workers have been demonstrating in recent weeks against unemployment benefit cuts and other attacks which make

up the most brutal package of counter-reforms for many decades. In Italy, millions of workers have repeatedly demonstrated and taken strike action against attacks on pensions and other cuts. Large anti-cuts protests are taking place in the Netherlands, British civil servants are balloting for strike action against massive job losses...few European countries are untouched by struggles! Every government is trying to drive down the living standards of millions in defence of the super profits of big business, and unfortunately trade union leaders across Europe are unwilling to organise the necessary decisive response.

We fight:

- For a united struggle by workers throughout Europe against the bosses' attacks!
- For a European day of action against public sector cuts and job losses
- For a shorter working week with no loss of pay
- Against attacks on pensions. For a living pension for all in retirement
- Against racism and islamophobia. For the right to asylum
- Against the bosses' EU
- For voluntary, democratic, socialist federation of Europe!

socialist party rally

sponsored by: International Socialist Resistance, Committee for a Workers' International, Socialist Party, Socialist Students

saturday 16 october - 6.30-8.30pm - friends meeting house, euston road, london - speakers include: JOE HIGGINS TD (socialist party MP in S. Ireland) & socialists from Russia and Germany. translation to french, russian, spanish available

ESF workshop: Socialism - a viable alternative to capitalism

hosted by The Socialist newspaper and International Socialist Resistance
1-3pm - friday 15 october. see ESF programme for venue

for a socialist europe in a socialist world...

Is it possible to have a fairer, 'nicer' capitalism – through regulations to shift the balance away from the profit motive and towards the interests of ordinary people? It's no use hoping that capitalist European or international institutions, such as the EU, the UN or the WTO, can make a real difference. They are all directly or indirectly under the direction of imperialist powers and the multinationals, whose driving force is to maximise profits. The entire capitalist system is based on exploitation of the huge majority by a small minority who own the top companies. The only way to wrest significant concessions from the ruling class is not through capitalist institutions, but through mass workers' protest and action.

However, the gains achieved by mass pressure are limited by the nature of the capitalist system, and for as long as it remains, they can be taken back at a later stage, just as many of the gains of the post-war period are now under threat throughout Europe. So to change society fundamentally, it's necessary for workers in each country to remove capitalism completely, replacing it with socialist, democratically planned economies with public ownership of the main industries, land and banks.

Instead of the anarchy of the market economy and ever increasing inequality, under socialism it would be possible to use all available resources for the benefit of everyone. Genuine socialism would be nothing like Stalinist Russia or the so-called 'socialist' countries in Eastern Europe in the decades following the second world war. In these cases, absence of democratic rights resulted in repressive, bureaucratic regimes and also undermined the benefit of having planned economies. Full democracy would be essential at every level of a socialist society. It would also be needed at international level, for cooperation, economic planning, and the protection of the environment.

ESF London

While the 2004 ESF is a welcome forum for hundreds of campaigning organisations and thousands of visitors, unfortunately it can't be said that its preparation has been democratic. Decisions have often been forced through meetings by a small group of organisers (mainly representatives of the Greater London Authority – GLA – backed by members of the Socialist Workers Party), using the 'principle' that no votes should be taken and that decisions should be made by consensus.

Another limitation is the ESF's near-exclusion of political parties. There is widespread workers' anger across Europe towards the main capitalist parties in each country, which are all supporting or carrying out privatisations, cuts and other neo-liberal measures. Most, whether traditionally right-wing or social democratic, are suffering low votes, such as the

17% achieved by the ruling UMP party in France in the June European elections. It is one thing for the ESF to exclude those parties that act staunchly in the interests of big business, but to also exclude anti-capitalist parties is a mistake which largely prevents socialist ideas from being raised and discussed.

It is also a hypocritical position, as the chief financial backer and decision-maker of the London ESF is the GLA, headed by Ken Livingstone, who is a member of New Labour, a party at the forefront of neo-liberal attacks in Europe. Many of the main ESF speakers – including Ken Livingstone – are presented in the official programme as representing various campaigning organisations, while it deliberately fails to mention that they are also members of political parties!

A Socialist Alternative

It is an achievement for the social forum movement that this London ESF is the third ESF to take place. However, a question asked by many participants is: "Are we just discussing, or are we actually building something?"

The Socialist Party (England & Wales) and its sister parties in the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) believe that workers involved in struggle and participants of the anti-capitalist and anti-war movement should unite to formulate a strategy and programme for taking the workers' movement forward and for victories against the many attacks being made. New mass workers' parties need to be built to link struggles together, develop them, and to challenge the rule of the capitalist parties. Armed with a socialist programme, these parties could challenge the rule of capitalism and imperialism worldwide. The CWI is organised in 40 countries and in every continent, with our largest sections being in England/Wales, Nigeria and Sweden. We have a 30-year record of developing Marxist analysis, promoting socialist ideas and actively supporting workers' struggles. CWI member Joe Higgins, a member of parliament (TD) in Southern Ireland, was recently jailed for a month for participating in a battle against new charges for rubbish collection. Recognition of the role played by Irish CWI members in this campaign and in others came last June when the number of elected Socialist Party councillors doubled from two to four. Three CWI members have also been elected as socialist councillors in Germany during the last four months, and two re-elected in Coventry in England. If you are interested in joining the CWI to help build the forces of revolutionary socialism, please visit one of our ESF stalls, come to one of the meetings advertised on this leaflet, or visit websites:

www.socialistworld.net

www.socialistparty.org.uk

I am interested in joining the Socialist party / Committee for a Workers' International I would like to find out more

Name

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