
Towards a European general strike!

Across Europe, governments, whether "left" or "right", have launched a series of reforms designed to make workers pay for the crisis and aimed at back-tracking on labour laws and social rights: drastically cutting wages and civil servants' jobs, creating job insecurity, increasing indirect taxation (VAT, petrol, etc..), postponing the retirement age, reducing State benefits ...

An unfair austerity policy has imposed a 2% increase in VAT on the Greek people, as well as a 15% cut to civil servants' salaries and pensions, and an increase in the number of years people are expected to work, up to 65; in Italy, Berlusconi's government has decided to freeze civil servants' wages for three years and has reduced Ministerial budgets and finance to local government by 10%. It's the same story in Spain, Portugal, France and Great Britain, where reforms of the so-called "Welfare State" intend to increase the age of retirement to 66, to stop universal family allowances and to cut 490,000 civil servants' jobs. In the East, the situation is no different: the Romanian people have suffered a 25% cut in wages and a 15% decline in pensions.

All these reforms are aimed at reducing the deficit of the European states by cutting public spending. But in fact, this deficit is not due to excessive spending: it is due to the lack of income caused by massive unemployment, low wages and a continual reduction of taxation on financial transactions and capital income. We must find money exactly where it is concealed: in managers' and bankers' pockets!

Wages must be increased, redundancies prohibited, means of production given to the people, and civil services expanded. In a word, wealth must be shared fairly! In response to belligerent bosses, to governments of all kinds, to the European Union and to the IMF (who all want to force their austerity policies and retrogressive social measures on workers) popular movements have been born and are growing all over Europe.

In Greece, six general strikes took place in spring 2010; Italy is experiencing a wave of industrial strikes (in the steel industry on 16 October 2010) and white-collar strikes (25 June 2010 and 27 November 2010); Spain was paralyzed by a general strike on 29 September 2010 which was a day of demonstration organised by all European trade unions; Romania was shaken by a general strike in June, and England has just joined in. But whereas trade and financial exchanges know no borders within Europe, national self-centred trade unions fail to globalize social struggles.

In response to global capitalism, struggles must be international!