

Socialist Party

GAMA SCANDAL



THE REAL FACE OF CAPITALISM

The struggle of the Turkish and Kurdish workers at GAMA Construction exposed the level of exploitation going on in Ireland today. These workers fought against the type of slave labour conditions that were supposedly abolished years ago. Some were paid as little as €1.85 an hour and worked over 80 hours every week. On GAMA sites the management operated a system of intimidation and fear and used the government's work permit scheme, where the boss holds the permit, as a way of pressuring the workers to accept the conditions or be sent home to mass unemployment and poverty.

Socialist Party Councillor Mick Murphy uncovered the scandal. After hearing rumors of mis-treatment we leafleted the workers in Turkish and outlined their rights and asked them to come forward if they wanted to fight back. Joe Higgins, Socialist Party TD, exposed the scandal in the Dail and that forced the Labour Inspectorate to investigate the company that the state had previously gone out of their way to facilitate.

GAMA used expensive legal procedures to delay the pub-

lication of the Labour Inspectorate report by getting a High Court injunction. The laws of the land are more geared to assisting GAMA hide its robbery than helping the workers achieve justice.

The GAMA workers were on strike for eight weeks. The Socialist Party, in particular Joe Higgins TD, played an essential role in their struggle. Their action has had a dramatic impact on Irish society. It has demonstrated the willingness of migrant workers to struggle and that well organised struggle can win against the state and vicious bosses.

In April GAMA was forced to pay the €40 million from the secret bank accounts in Holland back to the workers. They have also been forced to cut the working week and pay the registered pay rates on their sites. Finally at the start of June they were forced to pay each worker who maintained the strike, €8,000 for overtime for each year of service and a special payment of over €2,500. This struggle has transformed the lives of hundreds of these workers. A GAMA worker with 3 years service in Ireland has won close to €70,000 as a result of this struggle.

Leaflet issued by the Socialist Party - Join us 016772592

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SLAVE LABOUR SCANDAL OF MASSIVE PROPORTIONS

GAMA has been given major state funded road, infrastructure and house building projects. The GAMA scandal is at root linked to the drive to maximise profits. The way GAMA is operating is also a serious threat to Irish workers, particularly in construction. Given the way the capitalist market operates, low pay inevitably will lead to attacks on the wages and conditions of construction workers generally from companies in competition with GAMA.

The government and the state encouraged and facilitated GAMA to operate in this country. In line with their record of being more concerned with profit levels than the rights of the workers, they were happy that GAMA was able to undercut all other companies and never seriously checked the conditions and the wages of the Turkish workers. GAMA operated a dictatorship of fear and intimidation on the sites and in its accommodation compounds. They were facilitated in this by the governments work permit scheme which gives the permit to the company and not the worker. That GAMA was able to get an injunction to stop the publication of the report of the Labour Inspectors investigation into the company, which was initiated after the Socialist Party exposed the conditions in the Dail also shows how the system is biased against workers.

SUPPORT MIGRANT WORKERS

GAMA did everything in its power to resist the workers demands. It is vital that the trade unions and Irish workers help migrant workers to organise and fully get behind these workers so that the proper rates and conditions are enforced in the construction industry. It is in the interests of all workers that the exploitation of migrant workers is seriously tackled. There are many bosses in Ireland who would like to attack wages and conditions. The difference between GAMA and the Bank of Ireland, who make a profit of €4 million a day but are planning to maximise their profits and increase exploitation by throwing over 2,000 workers on the dole, is only one of degree.

The drive of bosses and the capitalist market to create wage competition amongst workers must be resisted industrially and politically as it represents a race to the bottom for all working class people.

A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

Solidarity with migrant workers is not enough. As long as the wealth of society is owned and controlled by a small capitalist minority, profit will also come before the needs of people. This leads not only to the exploitation faced by the GAMA workers but also to war and environmental destruction. More and more, working class people have affirmed their desire for an alternative to capitalism.

The Socialist Party and Socialist Youth believe that working class people not only have the power to take on employers like GAMA but to abolish the entire capitalist system. We stand for the creation of a socialist society where the world's wealth and resources is democratically owned, controlled and planned by workers in order to provide a decent standard of living for all. If you agree with the work that we have done in GAMA, and want to help us to change society, join us!

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WE DEMAND

★ **The unions to organise on all Gama sites to ensure the slave conditions never return.**

★ **Immediate implementation of the full trade union rates of pay for all Gama workers.**

★ **39-hour week with a maximum of 9 hours overtime.**

★ **Scrap the work permit scheme that facilitates the exploitation of migrant labour.**

★ **For a massive recruitment drive by the trade union movement amongst migrant workers.**

★ **Reclaim the unions - for fighting democratic unions that campaign in the interests of their members.**

I want to join Socialist Youth / Socialist Party

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Return to Socialist Party, PO Box 3434, Dublin 8. Phone 01 6772592