

Some people are doing all right

Workers Solidarity Movement

1995

Contents

Thanks, you're fired!	3
Cut hours, not jobs	3
Total Annual & Public Holidays	4
Annual Working Hours	4

Bosses Get

- Highest Growth Rate
- Highest Productivity

Workers Get

- Shortest Holidays
- Second Longest Working Hours
- Highest Long Term Unemployment

IRISH WORKERS enjoy fewer holidays than anyone else in the European Union, work longer hours than workers anywhere else apart from Britain, and suffer the highest rate of long term unemployment in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD).

Yet we are told that we must keep making sacrifices to become more “competitive”. We are expected to put up with wage restraint, redundancies, de-skilling, and worsening conditions. The more we give the bosses the more they demand. Showing weakness only encourages a bully.

After all the sacrifices, all the years of wage restraint/no-strike deals (PNR, PESP, PCW), all the “rationalisations”, all the cutbacks, the bosses should be happy. Ireland has the fastest growing economy in Europe, productivity shot up by a massive 50% between 1987 and 1993. Ireland broke all previous EU records when industrial output in 1994 increased by 11.2%.

Thanks, you’re fired!

And what about the workers? In payment we got nothing unless you count yet more closures, threats and management aggression like has happened at Silverlea, Sunbeam, TEAM, Dunnes Stores and a multitude of other employments.

With 50% of the unemployed out of work for more than one year (the official definition of long term unemployment), Ireland has condemned a higher proportion of its workers to a poverty line existence than any of the other 23 countries in the OECD. At the same time the economy is doing very well for most employers.

Cut hours, not jobs

In Ireland we work an average 53 hours longer in a year than the EC average. Even if only those extra hours worked by the 200,000 industrial employees were distributed among the unemployed there would be 10,600,000 additional work hours available each year. At the average 1,813 hours worked in the EU this would mean almost 6,000 new jobs.

Irish workers produce all the country’s wealth. We should seek to win further reductions in the working week, without any loss of pay. Ultimately, however, we will be stuck with the contradiction of a rich economy but a poor workforce until we get rid of the present system and set about reorganising society in the interests of the great majority. Anything less than that

combination of socialism, freedom and workers control (what we call anarchism) will leave our living standards at the mercy of employers and state bureaucrats. The reality of capitalism is the best argument for its abolition.

Total Annual & Public Holidays

Germany	40
Belgium	38.5
Spain	38
Luxemburg	37
France	36.5
Greece	35
Denmark	35
Portugal	35
Italy	33.5
Netherlands	32.5
Britain	31
Ireland	29

Source: Dept. of Enterprise & Employment, Holiday Legislation Discussion Document

Annual Working Hours

Belgium	1,692.26
Italy	1,744.05
Denmark	1,746.00
Germany	1,746.80
Luxemburg	1,770.62
France	1,774.59
Netherlands	1,792.70
Spain	1,802.64
Greece	1,822.50
Portugal	1,858.50
Ireland	1,866.48
Britain	1,987.72

Source: Eurostat 1/95, Working Time in the EU

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