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Green Party accepts neo-liberal agenda

IT has been said of the Labour Party that it wrestles with its conscience and its conscience always loses when it goes into government to prop up the establishment. The same appears to be true of the Green Party, which recently became one of the legs of the three-legged stool of a coalition Government, the other legs being Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats.

The Green Party agreed a programme for government with the main party in the coalition, Fianna Fáil, which covers in the main environmental issues. The party got two full and two junior ministers, while the PDs got one full minister.

The main policy areas that the Greens secured in the programme for government were

- a carbon tax and the target of a reduction of 3 per cent per year in greenhouse gas emissions
- the establishment of a commission on climate change
- a commission on tax reform
- new building standards to ensure increased energy-efficiency
- an increase in the use of alternative energy sources
- a reform of local government
- an independent electoral reform commission.

At the meeting of the Green Party membership that voted to go into government, many of the proposals in the programme for government were presented as victories. But policies in areas that the Greens had argued before the election were priority issues were couched in such terms as “will be considered,” while Fianna Fáil’s policy

objectives are carved in stone.

Issues that failed to be included in the programme for government include any change in the use of Shannon Airport by the US military, the Corrib gas field and the struggle of the people of Rosport, as well as such issues as the M3 motorway, political donations by corporations, and, most importantly, the policy adopted by the outgoing Government of building private hospitals on public hospital lands.

The Green Party has bought in to the neo-liberal economic agenda being pursued by the political establishment and the European Union

In relation to “extraordinary rendition” flights passing through Shannon Airport, the Government would “encourage and support” the Garda Síochána to investigate this. Perhaps they will provide better training for the Gardaí in spotting people in chains on

aircraft landing at Shannon.

The main plank of the previous Government’s transport policy remains intact, with its heavy emphasis on roads and motorways. Public transport, either bus or rail, is not a priority. The re-opening of existing railway lines, never mind the building of new ones, is not a priority either.

Trevor Sargent stated during the election campaign that he would not lead the Green Party into a Government headed by Fianna Fáil and would sooner resign as leader, yet during the debate he welcomed the agreement with Fianna Fáil as a historic development and subsequently became a junior minister—surely a transition from the sublime to the ridiculous.

What emerges from the whole process is that the Green Party has bought in to the neo-liberal agenda being pursued by the political establishment and the European Union, with its heavy emphasis on the private over the public. The programme for government has exposed the Irish Green Party, just as it has done throughout Europe, where Green Parties have entered governments that are not anti-capitalist or anti-monopolist but rather reinforce most of the individualism and fragmen-

“ There is observable among many, a false sensibility that prompts them to remove those evils, and those evils alone, which by hideous spectacle or clamorous outcry are present to their senses, and disturb their selfish enjoyments. Other miseries, though equally certain and far more horrible, they not only do not endeavour to remedy—they support, they fatten on them. Provided the dung-hill be not before their parlour window, they are well content to know that it exists, and that it is the hot-bed of their pestilent luxuries . . . The merchant finds no argument against it in his ledger; the citizen at the crowded feast is not nauseated by the stench and filth of the slave-vessel; the fine lady’s nerves are not shattered by the shrieks! She sips a beverage sweetened with human blood, even while she is weeping over the refined sorrows of Werther.—Samuel Taylor Coleridge (*The Watchman*, no. 4, 25 March 1796).

tation that flow from the imposition of neo-liberal policies.

It appears that the democratic collectivism and social solidarity inherent in the politics of the labour movement run counter to accepted Green

philosophy. Many of the important questions—such as Shannon Airport, Rosport, public ownership of natural resources, and public versus private medicine—are add-on policies and are not central to their ideology.

For the latest political news, and information about coming events, visit: www.comunistpartyofireland.ie

Republicanism tripped up by the national question

THE fall-out from the failure of Sinn Féin to make an electoral breakthrough and the loss of an important Dáil seat in the Dublin area continues to rumble on and to cause much debate within the republican movement.

Sinn Féin had hoped to capitalise on the momentum following its success in the Northern Assembly elections and the re-establishment of the Executive. The peace process provided Sinn Féin with great photo opportunities for leading individuals, particularly Southern personalities. They had easy access to the Taoiseach's office, as well as to Downing Street and the White House.

They now find themselves in a situation where the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive continue to take root and are bedded down, leading to fewer political crises that could propel them into the limelight and give them the opportunity to appear to be central to any solution.

Their strength in Dáil Éireann is reduced, and the technical group that gave them a platform in the last Dáil is now obsolete. Fianna Fáil was clever enough to mop up the independents to make sure that minority parties will have little or no say.

Sinn Féin will now have to operate in a more hostile corporate media environment, with photo opportunities becom-

ing few and far between and with less access to the Taoiseach's office and Downing Street. There is the likelihood of becoming just another small party, receiving little publicity and with invitations to appear on television beginning to dry up.

Republicans need to address the nature of opportunism and what gives rise to it

As we have pointed out many times in *Socialist Voice*, the political establishment, both in Ireland and Britain, was not unduly concerned about republican weapons and their decommissioning but was more concerned about securing the decommissioning of radical republican politics.

The comment reportedly made by Pat Doherty, that there was "too much ideology" in Sinn Féin, will come as a surprise to many within that party. The leadership are clearly attempting to circumscribe the nature and the extent of the debate allowed and the conclusions and lessons to be learnt from the debate now under way.

Judging by some statements by leading republicans, they would have settled for a similar deal to that secured by the Green Party, with a "green paper" on Irish unity thrown in. In the majority of constituencies where Sinn Féin did badly, left-wing independents polled well. Many working people were not impressed by talk of being "ready for government." They have had the experience of the Labour Party being ready for government for years, promising everything and delivering little.

People understand politics from their own immediate experience and demands. What may be a priority for one person or group or a particular section of the population may not automatically translate itself throughout the country. Nor can one political strategy cross over where there is a different set

of problems and demands that require a different political strategy. The national question is more than just partition, and progressive forces need to take a much broader approach to its resolution.

Simply having a strategy for getting into and staying in government, regardless of what you stand for or do while in government, will lead only to growing opportunism, demoralisation, and defeat. The left has to get back to radical street politics, with the mobilisation of working people, uniting them on clear demands and goals.

Republicanism is a limited ideology if it is not connected to the transforming of society and the empowering of working people. It is empty if it does not address both political and economic democracy. Fianna Fáil can call itself a "republican party," but we know that there is little of republicanism within its ideology.

Republicans are faced with a dilemma. You can't be in government in the Northern Executive implementing conservative policies while in the South be engaged in making radical demands and taking radical political actions. Is not the point of being in government fighting for and, more importantly, implementing people-centred policies, providing the means to broaden out the struggle and building the potential forces for progress? It is not less ideology that we need but a deeper understanding of the nature and course of the struggle.

The national question, as the CPI has argued for decades, requires a more sophisticated political strategy, centred on the interests of working people. This will require the unity of all progressive forces, united in joint action. It will take time and patient political coalition-building.

The over-emphasis on electoralism fosters a false sense of politics and in many instances disempowers people and reduces them to mere election fodder. Republicans need to address the nature of opportunism and what gives rise to it.

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CPI seeks left unity

AT the 23rd National Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland last November, delegates discussed the importance of building unity among left and progressive forces throughout the country, north and south. In subsequent meetings of the National Executive Committee, left unity was further discussed.

In June, following the outcome of the general election in the Republic, the CPI sent letters to a number of parties on the left requesting a meeting to evaluate the political situation and to see what areas of co-operation could be built.

Communists are aware that the course of building unity will be difficult and not without setbacks, but nevertheless we feel that it is absolutely necessary. The CPI will also be reaching out beyond the traditional parties on the left and seeking meetings with trade unions, social, cultural and environmental organisations, and people's campaigns. It is hoped to have the initial meetings held by the early autumn.

Other initiatives taken by the CPI recently included initiating the public lobbying of all the left and radical parties, including the Green Party, that had representative in Dáil Éireann, as well as independent TDs, in relation to the formation of a new Government. We called on political activists, regardless of their affiliation, to lobby to ensure that a number of areas would be treated as principled priority areas and would form part of any programme for government, including ending the use of Shannon



Airport by the US war machine and taking into public ownership the Corrib gas field.

The CPI has also decided to convene a meeting of left and progressive trade union activists from all over the country, north and south, in the early

autumn to begin the process of rebuilding the left within the trade union movement.

■ *Participation in this meeting will be by invitation only; contact the CPI at cpoi@eircom.net for more information.*

Where is the labour movement going?

FOR the last twenty years the trade union movement has been involved in a consensus and “social partnership” arrangement with the Government and employers’ organisations at the national level.

The problem now is that the trade union movement has been institutionalised and incorporated in the state apparatus and has lost the political will and confidence to act in an independent or campaigning way. It is unable to put forward any political challenge to the “social partnership” concept.

The ability of the trade union movement to campaign on issues was very evident in the recent Irish Ferries dispute, when more than 100,000 workers demonstrated in Dublin and thousands more in Cork, Limerick, and other centres. The result of these demonstrations was

● a huge awareness by the general public of the gross exploitation involved and a massive amount of good will in society in general for the trade union movement

- an increase in the size of the Labour Inspectorate
- proposed legislative changes in areas covering the terms and conditions of employment.

During the recent general election there were no statements and no involvement by the trade union movement in the debate

A number of lessons can be learnt from the Irish Ferries dispute and the mobilisation of workers in that dispute.

1. The mobilisation and good will were not captured and built on by the

movement.

2. It is the trade union leadership at a particular level that is institutionalised into the state apparatus. Some even attempted to block the mobilisation at the last minute in an effort to immobilise the movement. They were forced by the outrageous behaviour of the employers to give a lead, and when they did, workers responded.

3. It is obvious that the legislative and other changes were brought about not by “social partnership” but by workers using their industrial muscle to effect change. It is also clear that since the pressure created by that mobilisation has been challenged into safer waters for the establishment, attempts are being made to pull back on commitments given regarding the legislative change.

“Towards 2016” is the current national agreement, which gave a 10 per cent pay increase over twenty-seven months. We said at the time that this increase would hardly compensate our members for inflation, let alone improve their living standards; and now we know we were right.

But before a head of steam built up on this issue the general secretary of the ICTU issued a statement saying that “Congress calls for action to ease the impact of inflation.” It states that if something cannot be done on inflation the Congress will have to “ask” the employers and the Government to advance the date for negotiating the next pay module of the “social partnership” agreement. Straight away the Taoiseach proposed an early meeting with IBEC and the ICTU to discuss inflationary pressure. Result: the head of steam dissipates.

To illustrate further how depoliticised the Congress has become with regard to any left-wing challenge to its behaviour, during the recent general

election in the Republic there were no statements and no involvement by the trade union movement in the debate at all: no appeal to members to vote for parties or candidates that oppose privatisation or the “co-location” of private hospitals—all central issues facing workers, and areas in which the trade union movement has very detailed policies.

It is increasingly the belief among some workers in the private-sector unions that public-service unions have too much influence in the trade union movement in the South, that they are institutionalised into the state apparatus and will berate anyone who has the temerity to challenge their position regarding “social partnership.”

One possible reason for their excessive influence is the fact that union organisation in the private sector is weak, now standing at between 18 and 20 per cent. The failure of the unions to recruit or seriously campaign for new members, to encourage organisation and activism, has weakened its political and

industrial clout.

For all those concerned about the future of our movement, we need to seriously address the question of arguing for and working towards building an independent trade union movement with a campaigning strategy.

To this end, the Communist Party will host a national meeting in mid-October in Dublin of left-wing and progressive people, north and south, who are active in the trade union movement. It is now time to build unity among all those concerned about the independence and the future of our movement. The time is now right for them to come together and discuss, to build and to win support among the grass roots of the movement for an alternative to the cul-de-sac that our movement is being corralled into.

■ *Contact the CPI for further details of the conference; or if you would like to register now to take part send us an e-mail message at cpoi@eircom.net.*

Russian union leader seriously injured by employers' thugs

ON Thursday 7 June, Mikhail Chesalin, chairman of the local branch of the Dockers' Union of Russia in Kaliningrad, was savagely stabbed and beaten outside the union office.

An unknown number of assailants attacked him when he got out of his car at 10:30 a.m., stabbing him numerous times in the spine and beating him severely about the head. He was left lying face down, unconscious, in a pool of blood.

Chesalin's colleagues believe the attack was orchestrated by Vladimir Kalinichenko, general director of the Commercial Seaport, where the dockworkers' union is at present running an organising campaign. The union has been in a bitter fight with him for ten years, after Kalinichenko made it his personal goal to destroy the union, following its strike in 1997.

Their battle and the workers' determination have become a symbol of Russia's young, struggling independent trade union movement. Since April the union has been conducting an unprecedented organising drive among the workers in Kaliningrad port to change a miserly and arbitrary wage system and win respect and a voice on the job.

Kalinichenko has tried to break up every union event by sending his personal “security” forces, together with local thugs, to spy on and intimidate workers.

Mikhail Chesalin is known throughout the region, the country and the



world as one of Russia's foremost defenders of workers' rights. The dockworkers' case has received the attention of the International Labour Organisation, the European Court of Human Rights and, most of all, the residents of Kaliningrad, who voted for Chesalin when he ran directly against Kalinichenko in 2006. With thirteen times less money, Chesalin received four times the votes of Kalinichenko to be elected as a deputy to the regional

parliament. In that sense this attack is not only on free trade unionism but on an independent governmental representative.

For twelve years the Dockers' Union of Russia, with a vigorous and committed membership and under Chesalin's dedicated and principled leadership, has stood for fairness and dignity for Commercial Seaport workers. For this, union members have lost their jobs, their livelihoods, and their families, but they are free men. For the first time in this battle the port has crossed the line to violence and attempted to silence a great leader of workers.

We, Chesalin's union members and colleagues, call on our brothers and sisters around the world to raise their voices, and their considerable strength and solidarity, to communicate to Russian employers and the Russian government that an injury to one is an injury to all, that this threat to justice here is a threat to justice everywhere, and that workers around the world will not stand by as their brothers and sisters are denied basic rights.

■ *For more information, and to sign the international petition in support of Mikhail Chesalin, visit www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/20060715.cgi.*

The much-trumpeted “compromises” are just a smokescreen Nothing has changed, and the EU constitution remains intact

Dutch concerns

The German presidency offered national parliaments extra time to scrutinise legislative proposals made by the European Commission. This has been extended by two weeks; however, as before, the Commission is obliged only to “consider” submissions from national parliaments, not to act on them.

Voting system

“Compromises” were circulated to the Polish delegation to meet their concerns about the loss of voting weight. They were offered a retention of the existing voting system under the Treaty of Nice until 2014. Poland was also offered extra seats in the European Parliament. So, good for Poland!

Free-market principles

In a sop to France it was agreed to remove a phrase referring to “free and undistorted competition” in the operation of the single European market. However, any attempt to subsidise state

companies, for instance, would still be open to referral to and interpretation by the European Court of Justice. Given its penchant for expanding the powers of the Commission in particular, it is unlikely to backtrack on its present policies.

Foreign policy

The title of “EU foreign minister” would be deleted from the New EU Constitution. Instead the EU head of foreign policy would be called “high representative of the European Union.” This person would combine the jobs of the foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, who reports to EU governments, and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who controls the aid budget and external relations staff. They would chair meetings of EU foreign ministers and would head an external action service, drawing on national and EU diplomats.

So, as Bertie Ahern rightly says, “It’s the original job as proposed, but they just put on this long title—High Repre-

sentative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and also Vice-President of the Commission. It’s the same job.”

The justice opt-out

A compromise was drafted to meet British concerns that its common law system could be undermined. Britain would be able to opt in to new EU justice proposals that it supported but also to withdraw from those it did not agree with.

Ireland will also be offered the compromise but will probably not decide to accept it until an intergovernmental conference in the autumn. But of course, given their ardent desire to be “good Europeans,” it is unlikely that the Government will ever invoke the opt-out.

■ *The final text of the proposed New EU Constitution will become available on the conclusion of the intergovernmental conference, probably in October.*

International

Divide and rule

TWO years ago, Israel, the European Union and the United States were demanding that the Palestinian people be allowed to vote to form a new government that would reflect their wishes. They presumed that the Palestinians had taken such a beating that they would be demoralised and broken as a result of the onslaught of the Israeli occupation forces and that they would elect a government that would sue for peace at any price.

Unfortunately the Palestinians did not read the script properly and did not follow what the “international community” wanted them to do. Instead they elected a government led by Hamas—not the outcome that was expected or required. What the result showed was that the Palestinian people were not broken or defeated by the Israeli occupation but were sick of the corruption of leading circles of Fatah and other elements of the Palestinian elite. They wanted peace with justice, not surrender.

Recently, friends and supporters of the freedom struggle of the Palestinian people watched in disbelief at the seemingly endless destruction, infighting and descent into chaos that the political forces representing the Palestinian people appeared unable to overcome and to end.

Within the space of one week a series



*Part of the huge demonstration in Dublin on 9 May
in support of the Palestinian national liberation movement*

of seemingly unconnected events took place that may have a long-term effect on the Palestinian freedom struggle. Firstly we had the defeat and the expulsion of Fatah fighters from Gaza, resulting in Hamas assuming the dominant position in the area, while the daily incursions by the Israeli forces of occupation continued to wreak havoc on the people.

Shortly after Hamas took control in Gaza they claimed to have unearthed evidence in the vacated headquarters of Fatah of collaboration between elements of Fatah, the CIA and the Mossad (Israeli secret intelligence), claims that have yet to be repudiated.

Secondly, no sooner had Hamas routed its Palestinian opponents from Gaza and assumed control there than the Palestinian president, Mahmud Abbas (a man who wrote a book about Palestine that never once described the

Israeli army as an army of occupation), dissolved the elected Palestinian Authority and replaced the democratic government with a technocratic one, in effect creating two Palestinian entities, Gaza (controlled by Hamas) and the West Bank (controlled by Abbas and Fatah), with the people left confused and angry at the activities of their leaders.

The dissolution of the elected government and its replacement with an unelected one was immediately welcomed by the “international community”—i.e. the United States, the European Union, and Israel. All agreed to release money withheld illegally from the ousted Hamas-led government. If the stick wasn't working, maybe a bit of carrot might help the Palestinians see the error of their ways. If elections deliver the right result, that's fine; if not, they must be set aside.

A third event, apparently unrelated,

was the announcement that Tony Blair, the retiring British prime minister, would be appointed a “special peace envoy” to the Middle East on behalf of the “international community.”

All these events happened within the space of week or so, all apparently unrelated and unconnected.

It is tragic to see the Palestinian people divided among themselves at a time when they need even greater unity as the forces of imperialism and those of religious fundamentalism attempt to corral them within their agendas for the Middle East.

Progressive and secular forces appear to be impotent, unable to give effective leadership to the democratic struggles of the people.

The old colonial tactic of divide and rule is still operational and being used with great effect against the Palestinian people.

Film review

Black gold

“TRADE precedes the flag and has outlasted it. Giant European and North American companies continue to dominate the economies of fledgling African states. The new word for this is neo-colonialism. It is much the same as informal empire: the invisible empire of trade and influence that had preceded the scramble.”—Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*.

Once in a while a film comes along that is a little less like the expected. In all kinds of genres we've had some real gems in the last few years. *Good Night and Good Luck* and *The Fog of War* looked at the lives and legacies of two extraordinary American men—the reporter Ed Morton and the politician Robert McNamara—and in doing so raised ethical questions that are even more pertinent now: the role of the media and the politics of war. *The Corporation* examined how exactly the law protects the predatory actions of transnational corporations in their psychopathic quest for ever-increasing profits, with the destruction of the environment and abuses of human rights part and parcel of their modus operandi. Michael Moore's exposés are well known—so much so that any documentary-maker since *Bowling for Columbine* cannot escape being compared with him.

If a documentary can present the facts of a situation that is unsatisfactory and demonstrate how things can be different then it's empowering the viewer with a choice to do nothing or to participate in some way in positive change.

One such film shown recently is *Black Gold*, directed by Marc Francis and Nick Francis, which looks at how a little bean has meant huge wealth and dire poverty, north and south of the



Equator. The global coffee industry is now worth more than \$80 billion a year, yet coffee-growers in the Third World are becoming poorer, not richer—despite the hopes that “black gold” would bring untold wealth to the economies of these countries.

First cultivated and made into a drink in the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, the coffee bean was later brought to Arabia, Asia, Europe and the Americas and is now fast replacing tea as Ireland's most popular hot beverage. Coffee became a commodity as valuable as gold, and in the 1980s some governments south of the Equator were sold the idea that growing coffee as a cash crop could help

pay off their foreign debt. Of course that's not what happened, and in looking at the situation in Ethiopia the film-makers show how and why not.

This film brings us on a journey from farming co-ops in rural Ethiopia to elegant coffee-houses in northern Italy, stressed New York office workers guzzling take-away coffee from Styro-foam cups, and, most tellingly of all, the 2003 summit meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Cancún and the New York stock exchange, where coffee prices are fixed daily.

Sitting in a café afterwards, I looked into my coffee cup, and the kaleidoscope of images from the film made it seem



that choosing to drink coffee is in itself a political decision. Why am I drinking coffee? What would I drink if coffee—and tea—had never been brought to these shores?

I thought of the quiet, back-breaking work of the farmers, the buyers, the frenetic excitement of the barista competitions, the madness of the traders at the stock exchange—all to put a hot drink into my cup, whose slightly bitter taste never lives up to its delicious aroma; an addictive hot drink, with no known benefits to health whatsoever but one that many of us believe we can't get through the day without.

Two friends had seen the film with me, and, talking over what we'd seen and got from the film, we wondered about the cultivation of cash crops and possible alternatives. Coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, sugar—all grown as cash crops, with no nutritional value and all highly promoted and advertised in our culture; all addictive yet accepted as part of our daily diet. Along with cotton, all have links back to the slave trade.

The coffee-growers in Ethiopia are not slaves, yet they are enslaved by a system that keeps them living below the poverty line, with little hope of escape. The film does, however, illustrate the

fact that there is a possible alternative for the coffee-growers. By joining the union of co-ops they get a better market for their coffee, because the union bypasses the big buyers, such as Kraft, Starbucks, Nescafé, Procter and Gamble, and Sara Lee, by promoting their coffee at trade fairs and aiming at the smaller coffee companies, including Fairtrade.

Getting a few cents more per kilo for their coffee can mean the difference between being able to send their children to school and not. The question is, are we prepared to pay perhaps a euro or two more for fair-trade coffee, as opposed to the main brands we've grown up with?

There are two main problems with documentaries of this sort. One is that the viewers are left feeling that there is no way the situation can be remedied; but that is not the case with this film. Another problem is that the people affected are often portrayed in a one-dimensional manner as victims, with their innocence or simplicity being an obstacle to any change for the better. The people who suffer the consequences of injustice are rarely given the opportunity to speak to the camera, so that in the end the viewer feels little connection

to them.

Black Gold is different in this respect. To "join the dots" in the coffee industry, the film-makers travelled with a man called Tadesse Meskela as he visits coffee-buyers in London and mans a stall at a coffee trade fair in the United States. He is the representative of the Union of Coffee-Growers, and in the film we see him meet the members of the coffee co-ops, explaining how the union splits the profits equally between all member co-ops, to be used for social projects: clinics, schools, etc.

In one memorable scene the members of the co-op discuss how best to spend their money. A vote is taken, and a school is to be built. The mood is dynamic, the decision is applauded with warmth, and it's clear that there is hope for the future.

Throughout the film Ethiopians from various walks of life are interviewed. A farmer's son explains with controlled anger how he will never grow coffee, having seen his father toil for nothing; a reporter from the Ethiopian newspaper *Fortune* covers the breakdown of WTO talks in Cancún; an aid worker points out that continuing dependence on foreign aid is having a demoralising effect on the people and that trade, not aid, is the answer.

The grim example of one farmer's lot rang alarm bells. He told how he had taken the difficult but inevitable decision to destroy the coffee trees he had spent years cultivating and replace them with a bush that produces leaves that are used as a narcotic, called chat. Third-World economies are increasingly dependent on the growth and sale of narcotics, such as opium, coca, and marijuana. The irony is that as long as they remain illegal in the west, control over profits remains with the Third World farmers who have been left with no other option. "A hungry man is an angry man," sang Bob Marley several decades ago; and the anger of the representatives of the poorer countries is all too evident when they are interviewed in Cancún.

This is a film that does much to connect two very different worlds and points to possible solutions, and the

Some facts about Ethiopia

- Ethiopia is
 - as large as France and Spain combined
 - the source of the Blue Nile
 - an independent republic
 - one of the few African countries never to lose its independence.
- In 1974 an almost complete hominid skeleton was found in the north of Ethiopia and named Lucy (named Dikenesch by Ethiopians, meaning "you are wonderful").
- The ancient city of Axum in the north was the capital city of the Queen of Sheba in approximately the 10th century BC.
- The country's high altitude means that its climate is temperate and moderate, even chilly.
- The official language is Amharic but there are eighty-three indigenous languages, while English, Italian, French and Arabic are all widely spoken.

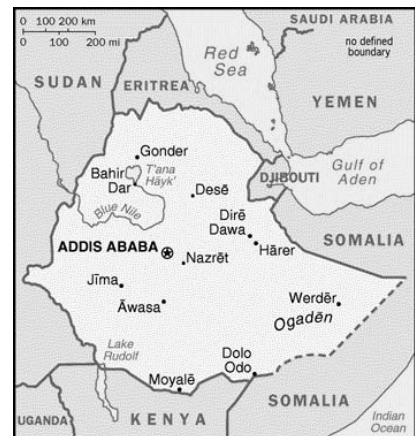


figure of Tadesse Meskela emerges as an example of what's needed: vision, determination, energy, and, as his wife says, love. "He loves his farmers, and he works hard to get a good price for their

coffee so they can improve their lives." The makers of this film have set up a web site (www.blackgoldmovie.com) that provides information on related campaigns, such as last year's lobbying of

Starbucks to allow Ethiopian coffee farmers to trademark place-names that have given their name to a variety of Ethiopian coffee beans.

[MNM]

Revolutionary songs

We Only Want the Earth

James Connolly

From Songs of Freedom by Irish Authors (1907)

Some men, faint-hearted, ever seek
Our programme to retouch
And will insist, when'er they speak,
That we demand too much.
'Tis passing strange, yet I declare
Such statements give me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are:
We only want THE EARTH.

"Be moderate," the trimmers cry,
Who dread the tyrants' thunder.
"You ask too much, and people fly
From you aghast in wonder."
'Tis passing strange, for I declare
Such statements give me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are:
We only want THE EARTH.

Our masters all—a godly crew,
Whose hearts throb for the poor—
Their sympathies assure us too,
If our demands were fewer.
Most generous souls! But please observe,
What they enjoy from birth
Is all we ever had the nerve
To ask: that is, THE EARTH.

The "labour fakir," full of guile,
Base doctrine ever preaches,
And whilst he bleeds the rank and file
Tame moderation teaches.
Yet, in his despite, we'll see the day
When, with sword in its girth,
Labour shall march in war array
To seize its own, THE EARTH.

For labour long, with sighs and tears,
To its oppressors knelt,
But never yet, to aught save fears,
Did heart of tyrant melt.
We need not kneel, our cause no dearth
Of loyal soldiers needs,
And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be WE WANT THE EARTH!

"... no revolutionary movement is complete without its poetical expression. If such a movement has caught hold of the imagination of the masses, they will seek a vent in song for the aspirations, the fears and hopes, the loves and hatreds engendered by the struggle. Until the movement is marked by the joyous, defiant singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the most distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement; it is the dogma of a few, and not the faith of the multitude."—James Connolly

**Join the struggle for socialism!
Join the Communist Party**

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membership of the CPI.

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▶CPI, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2

▶CPI, PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR



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SOCIALIST VOICE

43 East Essex Street · Dublin 2
(01) 6708707

www.communistpartyofireland.ie