

Bologna, September 8 2007 – Mauro Gallegati

*He wanted to be here and here he is. A Professor of Economics who will be talking about work. I want you all to listen very carefully to what he has to say. Please welcome Mauro Gallegati. Come on up Mauro.*

*Is it 4-wheel drive ... is it licensed? Good then. Go ahead. Mauro Gallegati.*

I lecture at the university and I generally have a class of around twenty – forty people. To see the square so full of people, and to come here and be stopped by people saying “I am a temporary worker, thanks for what Grillo, Stiglitz and you are doing” is a truly moving experience.

In any event, until yesterday I lectured at the university but after today, I don’t know whether that will still be the case, but anyway ...

In this book, we have come to a relatively simple conclusion, namely that the law regarding temporary work is a law that has only been applied in order to reduce labour costs. In this sense: our politicians have not simply worked to reduce the salaries paid to temporary workers, which, as Beppe remarked, were already ridiculous low. It is like going into a bank to ask for a loan and saying “however, in all probability I won’t be able to pay back the loan” and the Bank Manager saying “very well, then you will be charged a much lower interest rate than everyone else”. Because paying lower salaries to temporary workers essentially means turning people into beggars for work.

The problem is not only that we don’t earn a decent salary. The problem is that the cuts in labour costs have come at the expense of welfare payments, so that we find ourselves with an entire generation of people currently living with the spectre of temporary work, earning very low salaries and, when they reach pensionable age, they will be not have enough money to survive on.

The truth is that everyone born in the ‘70s and the late ‘80s are unfortunately destined to accept temporary posts when they are young and are equally destined to one day die of starvation as pensioners. However, perhaps you will get used to it and so you carry on. Nevertheless, this is clearly an untenable situation because it is absolutely ridiculous that this situation is only being highlighted in Beppe’s book. You have no idea just how many times Beppe and I have spoken on the phone, with Beppe absolutely and rightly livid because he was accused of being a terrorist.

He may well talk a lot of bullshit, but perhaps this is not enough to make him a terrorist!

Thank you all!