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Errico Malatesta
This Is Your Stuff!
1920

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From a few places around Italy, where rebel hearts beat harder, we hear rumors of a madcap notion.

Of the destruction of the crops.

Only recently in the Novara area the peasants maimed oxen just to spite their bosses; and we were reminded of the husband who maimed himself in the nether regions just to punish his wife.

Such acts would be understandable at a time when workers had no hope of imminent liberation, when the slave, having no way of freeing himself, looked for a moment of bittersweet delight by taking his master with him when he died.

But these days, such acts would look more like a suicidal mania.

Today the workers stand on the brink of becoming the masters of all they have produced; today the revolution is hammering at the gates and we should be sparing with all products, especially foodstuffs, so that we may assured of survival and success.

Or is there anyone out there who thinks that, come the revolution, the need to eat will be no more?

The destruction of goods would be tantamount to making it impossible for us to pull off a revolution that brings benefits; and, at the time, since the goods of only a few bosses would be destroyed, that would be playing into the hands of other bosses who would profit by the growing shortfall and would sell off their products at higher prices.

Rather than thinking about destroying stuff, the workers must get used to the idea that everything that there is, everything that is produced, is theirs, in the hands of thieves today, but to be wrested back tomorrow.

It never occurs to any robbery victim to destroy his possessions just to spite the thief, when he knows that he will shortly be getting his stuff back.

Rather than toying with the idea of destroying things, the workers should keep an eye out that the bosses do not waste it; they should prevent the bosses and the government from letting products go to ruin through speculation or neglect, from leaving the land untilled and the workers jobless, or engaged in the churning out of useless or harmful goods.

Starting right now, the workers should think of themselves as the owners, and start acting like owners.

The destruction of stuff is the act of a slave—a rebellious slave, but a slave nonetheless.

The workers today do not want and do not have to be slaves any longer.