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Capitalism takes our lives and reduces us to merchandise

Let's take back our lives and abolish capitalist
exploitation!

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

16 September 2009

Maybe it was desperation that led the INNSE workers in Milan to climb up onto a crane in an attempt to avoid the closure of their company and the sale of its equipment. Maybe it was desperation that also drove the LAMSE workers in Melfi and the CNH workers in Imola to do the same thing, or the Alcatel workers in Battipaglia who locked themselves into their factory and surrounded themselves with tanks of petrol.

Maybe it was desperation that forced these workers to put their own lives at risk.

But what kind of misery drove 23 France Telecom employees to commit suicide when they discovered they had lost their jobs, or drove the 32-year-old man from the Chloride factory in Bologna to hang himself on 24th July 2009 because he had been made redundant?

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What kind of misery lies behind the household tragedies involving unemployed or recently dismissed workers that fill the “crime” pages of the newspapers every day?

What will become of all the casual workers in the public and private sectors, once their ability to make money by selling their labour has been taken away?

Capitalism has turned us into merchandise, buying our labour and transforming our existence into a life that only has value if one has an income, if one works. So when our labour is no longer required because profits can be made elsewhere or in some other way, they take it off us, thus taking value from our lives. Because they know that if we are no longer human merchandise, we are no longer worth anything.

Lack of work produces lack of income, and a lack of money forces us to accept worsening working conditions just so that we can go on producing, even if it means putting our lives in danger.

So capitalism takes our lives away twice over, it kills us twice over.

The total unhappiness and alienation that we are driven to by capitalism (taking advantage of this period of economic crisis which is hitting employees above all, is not a condition that we can get out of alone.

Behind every struggle to save a factory, equipment or jobs there must be a network of collective, class solidarity, there must be a labour organization willing to stand up and fight and not bargain for lesser unhappiness or alienation, there must be grassroots, self-managed struggle to save our lives from capitalism, a struggle for the abolition of exploitation and wage labour.

We must reject any attempt to introduce forms of co-management and participation by workers in the company as they only serve to hide yet another trick to keep the workers under the yoke of exploitation. It is no longer a matter of saving the national bargaining system or what remains of union democracy in the workplace. What we need now is a new phase of

conflict which centres on the social and solid nature of work, freed from waged exploitation.

Each struggle needs to stop the destruction of production sites, each struggle needs to face the possibility of workers taking the work into their own hands, self-managing production, transport and distribution, setting up autonomous councils and cooperatives to run everything, to demonstrate the uselessness and harmfulness of the capitalist system and its forms of domination.

It is essential that every single local, regional and national element within radical syndicalism, the libertarian and anti-capitalist left, from the individual to the group to the federation, act and coordinate to fight this struggle for life, for our lives as workers, exploited and alienated!