



ANGRY WORKERS OF THE WORLD

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GET IN TOUCH

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Workers demonstrate in Italy - "End casual labour"

WE ARE IN DEEP SHIT THAT'S NO NEWS

Since 2008 the financial system has been shaky, companies go bust or have to downsize, one out of seven workers in the UK have lost their job, over 40 per cent of young people in Greece and Spain are unemployed, real wages are declining, people lose their homes. Some blame the Euro, but the Pound, US-Dollar and Yen are equally fucked. Some blame the right-wing parties, but the Labour Party in the UK or the Socialist in Spain are all the same. It is not even radical anymore to say that 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer', the question is why. The shit going down in Cyprus, the direct attack on savings (which 60 per cent of people in jobs in the UK don't have anyway) show that it is not a question whether there is more trouble to come, but when - and whether we are organised for it.

It's the system, so what?

We live in a society where the large majority of the 6 billion people have to sell their time and energy every day without having a say about how, what for and for whom they work. We produce the world, but it is not in our hands. In a system which produces for money and profit, an increase in productivity through new machinery causes greater relative poverty: to cut costs people are kicked out, unemployment increases, which in turn puts pressure on the wages of those who have a job. Under different social conditions some machines might allow us to work less and have a better life, but we work more and/or exist jobless at the margins. Shrinking

profits have to be counter-acted by an increase in output of new machines, cars, smart phones, apartments - mountains of stuff no low waged bastard or unemployed person will be able to buy. There is a crisis, not because there is too little stuff, but because there is too much - just for too little profit. This rat-race would have crashed a long time ago, if there wasn't credit money. Companies and governments are piling up debts in order to keep things ticking over. But things don't. They try to turn their debts against us: earn even less, work more and work till you drop dead in order to save pension money. That's what we've been doing for the last bloody 200 years and now they want us to do it some more.

They've got no solutions, and they're getting away with it

Those in power, in management towers and government offices, attack us. They cut benefits, cram us in, they deport our co-workers and friends, they kick us out or pay us less. They say this is necessary, in order to 'get going again', to get out of this crisis. They want to flog the dead horse: even more work, more output, less wage for those who produce or who can't find a job. They do it because they have an interest, they want power and convenience off our backs. But they also don't have a fucking clue what else to do - they try to rule a world which they don't produce. Once wage, price

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and profit are the yardsticks of social well being and production, things are messed up and take on a life of their own. If a profit-system keeps millions unemployed and millions in socially unnecessary jobs like market researchers or estate agents, which people only take because nothing else is on offer, while at the same time loads of shops and factories lie empty and idle, because no one expects a profit by investing in them and everyone is fucking stressed because they're either looking for a job or are over-worked... then we can do better. But we need the means to do better and the organisation to decide, and for both we have to fight. If you say that it won't make a difference then queue up behind the 1,700 other brothers and sisters who applied for the five fucking Costa coffee house jobs paying 5.40 an hour or wait till the job centre sends you there on a work-fare program. There has to be another way.

We fought back, but how?

It's not that there hasn't been struggle against the attack, but each group of the working class has fought on its own. In 2009 Ford Visteon workers in Enfield and two other towns occupied their factories in response to management kicking them out, so did factory workers at Vestas on the Isle of Wight. They broke the law, they put quite a bit of pressure on the company, but they remained isolated. A year later public sector workers in Southampton refused austerity measures and job cuts, but again, this remained a quite exceptional case. When the trade unions finally called public sector strikes in June and November 2011 they only lasted for one day and did not help to spread local resistance - similar to the recent one-day budget strike. During the same time (school) students occupied dozens of university departments all over the country against the increase of tuition fees and cuts of EMA benefits, but the state diffused the movement by giving each university the 'choice' to increase fees or not. In summer 2011 many of the youth who had witnessed the weakness of symbolic protest marches against the cuts took their anger to the streets during the riots. The message was simple: If you try to squeeze us more, we

take what we need. But the fact that over 2,000 young working class people were arrested a week later and put into jail for a pair of trainers without major resistance showed that also them had remained isolated. Each time the state and media was able to present the resistance as 'a particular issue' of the people involved, while actually the crisis attack affects everyone.

This is not only the case in the UK. Workers in other countries which had been hit harder by the crisis, like in Greece and Spain, realised that symbolic one-day marches or one-day-public sector strikes alone won't actually put enough pressure to stop the avalanche of cuts and redundancies. People started to occupy town squares for days in order to meet and coordinate. In France we saw the emergence of 'open strike assemblies', which included workers and students from all sectors. In Greece workers occupied companies that had been shut down and in some cases re-started production without management. In Spain hundreds of people were kicked out of their homes each week due to not being able to pay their rent or mortgage, - during the square occupations structures developed to defend people against evictions. All this is not mainly a question of good will: "let's all come together". To make a protest effective and to break out of isolation takes some effort. The labour law will tell us to keep our protest symbolic, the trade union set-up might turn it into a single-company or single-sector issue. To defy evictions means to defy a law which puts money over the need of people for housing.

In order to drop our wages and make us work harder they will use divide-and-rule tactics. Those who defend their wages and conditions, like at Royal Mail or other permanent workers, will be labelled as 'privileged workers' or 'gold plated'. Those who try to resist benefit cuts or refuse work-fare will be called 'scroungers' or 'dole queens'. Those workers who resist being pushed into the 'illegal' low wage sector or out of the country will be branded as 'illegal migrants'. So pressure on our wages is put from top and bottom of the wage scale: the wage cuts of permanent workers will further increase downward-pressure, so will the 'work-fare' programs, which send unemployed to work for mere benefits. The recently announced 'benefit curb' for migrant workers is an attempt

to blackmail them into accepting any conditions on the job - which will undermine conditions for all. In contrast, those who work for minimum wage are turned into an invisible labouring mass, so that no one hears that it is a rather miserable way to survive - so that no one thinks about fighting for more, And if you do, they'll name you a 'trouble maker' or 'not living in the real world'.

In order to get our heads around all this and to decide ourselves about what to do we need to talk, starting where we meet every day, be it at work, at the dole office, in the playgrounds. We need an exchange of experiences: what have people tried to do together to defend themselves or to improve their situation, what worked, what did not work. In the current situation many of our steps will be small such as working together to refuse unpaid overtime or to defend a tea-break, but they are important starting points. To discuss and coordinate will depend on us, no politician or other so-called leaders will do it for us - at least not in our interest.

So what is this about?

With this publication we will try to support the exchange of experiences - from the perspective of workers who look for self-organisation of our struggles against the attack and for a different society. We will talk to our friends and fellow workers about their experiences at work or on the dole, we will try to talk to brothers and sisters who have struggled, who have won or failed. As well we will publish some relevant experiences of workers in other countries. In this issue you can find a report of a friend who works in a bigger warehouse (Tesco, ASDA etc.) in West-London, situated next to the TNT distribution centre. His report will be contrasted with an interview with workers from North Africa in Italy who went on strike against IKEA and TNT management.

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SERIES: DIE WORKING OR LIVE FIGHTING IN LONDON (1)

Our working life is boring, so why talking or reading about it? Because it is our life and we should resist turning it into a low-paid waste of time. Once we accept the mixture of boredom and stress we turn into the same miserable grey grump-face like our fellow worker next to us. To do something about it is no rocket science. If we stick together we can open some breathing space at work. Space enough to think about how to resist 'more work, less workers, less money', which they try to get down our throats. We don't need no personal heros for this. The bosses hate it if they don't know who to single out. Use your loafs, have a good time, fight back - and let others know about it.

Warehouse Worker in Wembley - Tesco, Sainsburys, Asda

The conditions described in the interview with the striking work-mate in Italy are not so different from the conditions of workers here in London. Modern warehouse systems are very similar all over the globe, production is closely linked to transport, and warehouses. ASDA, Tesco and other major super-market chains use outsourced warehouses like the one our friend works in, where people work 12-hours shifts on minimum wages - while Tesco announced in March 2013 that it will close down their distribution centre in Harlow, which will kick out 800 workers. These workers have shown that they don't need pity, they work in the supply-chain of a billion-Dollar making retail system, and they can use their position to break this chain - for an attempt see video-link about Walmart workers in the US below. We can question whether it is necessary to fly in beans from Kenya and why this is done - as in the case of the work of our friend. We can definitely say that most of the 12-hours shift-work of the 100 workers in this warehouse is utter non-

sense: putting stickers of different super-market chains on the already packaged beans won't make them taste any better! This is bullshit-work and in a society not dominated by wage, price and profit we would not have to do this and could do more pleasant and interesting things. For the struggle in the here and now, as the conversation with our friend shows, the starting point would be to talk to each other, if not at work, then afterwards. If you want to discuss about organising struggle in this or similar situations, get in touch. Video link to US Walmart strike below: <http://bit.ly/ZfTj96>

"I arrived in London in 2011. My first job here was refuse collection for a small company. It was a day job, the other workers came from Romania and Poland. The owner gave us 40 quid for the full working day. I then found a job in a hand-car-wash, I saw the ad on Gumtree. There were only six guys working, they came from India and Pakistan and Algeria. I worked for some days, but they did not pay me, they said it was a trial period. Then they said that they would pay 100 quid a week for a full-time job, which is about 2 quid an hour. At least one of the workers slept on the company premises. I stopped washing cars and got a job in a laundry instead. I found the job through an internet job-search site. Other people from Eastern Europe either have already relatives and friends here who help with job hunting or they are directly hired by agencies when they are still at home. I don't have family here. The laundry company had two branches, one near Kings Cross, the other near the new Arsenal stadium. The laundry collected towels from posh gyms near Oxford Circus and other places and washed them. they also washed for private customers. There were only half a dozen workers employed, from Brazil, Poland, Mauritius, Greece and the Philippines. It was a six days a week job, paying the minimum wage. I left it after some weeks, after wages were delayed. The job centre then sent me on an English course, they said that they would pay for the transport costs. The course was not very helpful, but I went

for eight weeks.

I then found another job in a warehouse near Vauxhall. I went to the job centre and asked about the expenses for transport, which was at least 5 quid a day, more than half of the dole money. They said that now that I have a job they will not be able to back-date the payment for the transport costs. The warehouse job started at 4pm and finished at 1pm. By the time you finished the last tube was gone and you had to spend ages crossing London on night-buses. It was a small warehouse, may be 20 to 30 workers, again from Poland, Morocco, Portugal, India and Sub-Saharan Africa. It was a warehouse for food, all kind of fruit and vegetables, some exotic stuff. We worked in teams of two, taking the order list, picking stuff from the shelves manually and putting it on pallets. The orders would then go out to restaurants and canteens. Only one day off per week, often over-time, but only minimum wage. With the transport costs there was not much left. Most people worked there since some months, a guy from Nepal over a year. The supervisors were either white-british or from India. Some of them would use the fork-lifts, apart from that there was no machinery in the warehouse. In the breaks people would separate into their language groups. Workers sometimes complain about the payment, but not openly. Maybe in their language groups people complain more openly. It is not that people can't speak English, everyone speaks well enough to have a conversation.

I found a job closer to home, through the Monster website. Again a warehouse, near Wembley, a bigger one this time - around 100 workers in total, working on two 12-hours shifts. We work three or four days and then have three days or four days off. Some workers work five days in a row. If I work three days I earn 190 pounds a week, if four days then 250 a week. I pay over 80 pounds for my room, plus over 5 quid transport costs every day. Again, this is the minimum wage and it is hardly enough to sustain yourself - and I don't have kids to take care of. My working-days are



long, I get up at about 3:30 am, I have to be in the warehouse shortly before 6 am, we have two fifteen minutes and a half an hour lunch-break. We are supposed to finish at 6 pm, but often have to stay longer to finish orders. Which could mean 7 or 8 pm. I reach home at 7 - 7:30, or later, according to overtime. I eat and can go to bed again. I wonder how the women survive who have to take care of children and husbands, too. Out of 50 workers about 15 to 20 are women originally from India. Other workers are from Sri Lanka, Latvia, Hungary, Poland.

Most workers work on conveyor belts. There are 6 conveyor belts with about eight workers each. The team-leader loads the belt with already packaged vegetables. I work on the bean-line. Beans come from Kenia, Egypt, Guatemala, they have just arrived at the airport - the packaging has probably been done in Africa or latin-America. Then people at the lines put stickers on different bags with beans. Stickers of Tesco, Sainsburys, Cooperative and Asda. Different types of qualities. I work at the end of the line and have to put the packages in baskets, the baskets on pallets. they are then dispatched, either directly to supermarkets or to their distribution centres, I am not sure about that. The trucks carry the company logo. The work-flow is constant and fast. I cannot talk to anyone at my line, I can't leave my work-station. I sometimes talk to the supervisor, he is from Italy. The supervisors check the quality of the beans and make sure that the order is complete. Some women are supervisors, too. Recently someone forgot a knife in a basket for Sainsburys, a knife used for cutting pallet tape. There was a big outcry, management said that we might lose the contract if Sainsburys would reject the order. There is a canteen, but they offer no food. there are no shops in the area, so you have to bring your own stuff. People normally sit in their language groups. The women from India sit amongst themselves, sometimes women workers from Poland sit together with them.

I've worked there now for over four months, people don't actually come and go, most people work there for a while. People say that we would need

at least two to three pounds more per hour, but there is no discussion how to enforce this. To talk at work is difficult, the breaks are short, the other shift we only see for five or ten minutes. Most workers live in the area, though, it was a pre-condition to get the job, given the working-hours. People live in Wembley or Southall area. There would be a chance to meet after work, but people rush into their free days to catch up with sleep. I was ill for three days, they did not pay me, There is no sick-pay. We are not the only warehouse workers in the area. In the vicinity of our company there are warehouses of Tesco, Sainsburys and TNT. I often see the same faces early morning in the bus, leaving into their separate concrete halls.



ANGRY NEWS FROM LONDON

Women's Library occupied - On 8th of March 2013 people occupied the Women's Library to resist closure down due to lack of funding. Unfortunately we were not able to keep it open - too many (low-paid) bouncers sent down by management to kick people out. Read more: www.feministfightback.org.uk/

Parts of Sussex University occupied - In early February 300 studenys and university staff occupied parts of the Sussex university to protest against privatisation: <http://libcom.org/news/against-privatisation-statement-sussex-university-occupation-08022013>

General Meeting of London Coalition against Poverty - a direct-action mutual support group against evictions and other attacks on our livelihood. The meeting took place on 9th of March 2013, check out contacts and web-sites of groups involved.

Hackney Housing Group & Welfare Action Hackney:
hackneyhousinggroup@gmail.com

Haringey Housing Action Group:
www.haringeyhousingaction.org.uk

Islington Poverty Action Group:
islingtonpovertyactiongroup@gmail.com

Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group:
kilburnunemployed@gmail.com

London Boycott Workfare:
www.boycottworkfare.org

In Camden there has been lively meetings against the introduction of the bedroom tax, after Camden council announced that they will relocate over 700 families to far-out places:
<http://camdenfed.org.uk/>

SERIES: ANGRY WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD (1)

Since the onset of the global crisis in 2008 we have witnessed an increase in workers' struggles everywhere. While the crisis is global, the struggles are often still trapped within their sectoral, regional or national boundaries - which is one of the reasons why our class has difficulties everywhere to fight against the austerity attacks. Company managers are organised globally, so is the political class - we will be forced to do the same. Sometimes struggles leap over and influence each other, e.g. the uprising in Tunisia in 2011 triggered the revolt in Egypt which led to Mubarak's fall. Other connections are less obvious, for example the increase of workers strikes in the globally connected logistics sector, facing similar problems when organising, be it on the US West-coast or northern Italy. We document some of the struggles, because we have to learn from them. We focus on struggles where workers develop new forms of self-organisation, where they directly take over means or space to improve life for everyone or where their struggle takes on an international dimension. At the monthly meetings we will try to discuss some of these struggles in more detail.

Strikes of Migrant Logistic Workers (IKEA, TNT) in the North of Italy

During recent months migrant transport workers in the north of Italy have enforced significant improvements of their working and living conditions through hard strikes. Usually they are not directly employed, but through subcontractors, which are registered as so-called 'cooperatives'. If there are any problems or workers try to struggle against precarious conditions, these 'subcontractors' just change their official company name and status - and workers are left alone with their demands. The strike of workers at the biggest Ikea warehouse in Europe, which is situated near Piacenza, became the most famous of these struggles, partly because many people of the left and of social centres have supported the workers.

The following interview reflects this situation. It also asks the question how we can struggle without some individual people sticking their heads out - because if the company is able to pick out some and sack them, then our struggle will be reduced to fighting for them to be re-instated, instead for better conditions for everyone. We have to ask the question why workers decided to blockade the gates, which makes them more likely to be attacked by the police. Normally workers have many hidden, but coordinated ways to mess up work on the shop-floor itself in order to put pressure on management, which is less risky. But maybe our work-mates in Italy had tried that and then decided for a blockade as last resort...

The revolution in logistics

Mohamed Arafat has worked at TNT for six years in the logistical sector of the Piacenza region in northern Italy. He went to Italy from Egypt after graduating in social work and worked in an orange factory in Sicily before moving to Piacenza. He did not migrate to escape poverty: 'my father is an engineer and my mother a teacher. When I graduated I wanted to have my own life and meet other people and learn other languages: I thought paradise was here but after a month of being in Italy I already wanted to go back to Egypt. In the south I came across brutal exploitation and hunger, the master does what he wants. In the north it's no different, like at TNT: you go to work for eight hours and they let you go after two, you end up with 200-300 euros a month. This is not the Europe we thought we would see when we took all those risks to leave our country'.

The struggles at TNT start in the summer of 2011. The first problem was how to unite all the workers of the company and fight fear together, fight the blackmail of a low income and the threats of losing the job, a constant pressure that has made many of us ill. To rule, they pit us against one another, Italians against foreigners (who are 90 per cent of us), Egyptians against Moroccans:

'if you keep quiet I'll pay you more, don't get involved, that one is a spy, etc.' But the mistrust the master built over years, we managed to destroy in a matter of months. A Moroccan said to me: 'I would have never thought I'd trust an Egyptian'. Another: 'It's not only the rights I bring home that interest me, the most important thing is that now I sit at the table with you and we share everything'. Now we know that if workers are divided the master rules. A family was created through this struggle: now when they touch one of us they touch us all. Eventually, even the Italian has become an immigrant, they now get the same salary, but in the struggle these divisions were neutralised. We managed to unite against the master for a dignified income and a better life for everyone.'

What were your working conditions before the beginning of your struggle?

Everyone was pushed to work faster. There was a supervisor who, day and night, shouted: 'come on, come on, come on', like a broken record! 200 people did the work of 500, so they saved the costs of 300 people. For five years, TNT enjoyed the best productivity levels in Italy but no one went to see under what conditions. The masters reaped great profits and the workers were badly treated and becoming ill. It's a mode of slavery. When I suggested to people that we should say no, they would say they couldn't for fear of losing their job.

At TNT and other companies in logistics, the supply of labour is managed by a consortium of cooperatives. . .

Initially there were four, now two. The system of cooperatives is a huge problem: every two years they change name so as to not pay tax and trick the workers. For 10-15 years the consortium at TNT has been the same, but with different name lenders, they find owners who are 80 years old and cannot be prosecuted. If they change the cooperative we are at risk of losing the job. We want first and foremost to get rid of the system of cooperatives. It's better to deal directly



with the company.

How did you concretely start organising yourselves?

The initial group comprised of around twenty workers out of 380. I went door to door to explain our contract, how they had exploited us and tricked us for years, to say that we shouldn't accept this treatment any more, that it hurts our dignity. I started giving workers tasks to broaden the group and got a call from the managers to warn me that they knew about the meetings at my house. So why not do it in public, around town, to convince everyone? I went to 50-60 houses and in the days that followed there was a glimmer of hope at TNT. Many came to tell me that exploitation and the pain were shared, and that they wanted to join the struggle. Occasionally, to make the organisation grow, you have to tell a 'lie' to give courage: when there were twenty of us I would say that the others were behind us even if they didn't participate, that there were a hundred of us, and then in two or three days this became true!

Not a lie then, just an anticipation. . .

Yes, we got there although we didn't think we would. One must believe in what one does and be honest, without personal interests.

Did you look for a union to go on strike?

We didn't even know what a union was: we only knew about it because of the renewal of the permits, to bring families back together or fill in a form, we knew of it as a service agency. We never went to them to demand our rights, because when anyone complains they say: 'shut up and work'. They have forgotten about struggle. So I went around to look for a union that could support us in the struggle, done as we see them, through strikes and pickets that hurt the interests of the master. Instead of the union using the workers, it's the workers who should use the union. In July 2011 we met Cobas, and I explained that within a week we would have organised a blockade. They were available, we started and we won.

What did you achieve with the victory at TNT?

The recognition of the national contract, wage increases (before then the basic pay was 6 euros per hour), holiday pay, sick pay etc. And we regained some dignity, which is even more important than money. Before then, we used to go to work as in a prison, every day was worse than the one before; now we have won over the fear that the master used to repress all struggles. Now we know that if we don't fight to change our life, nobody will do it for us: we are the makers of our future. At Piacenza, Rifondazione [TN: an old communist party] used to hold a migrants demonstration once a year, and there weren't many. Now after the struggles at TNT we have one every fortnight. Italians should do the same, because if it goes wrong one day the migrant will leave, but the Italians will stay here! The struggle belongs to everyone.

Have the Arab uprisings influenced the determination of the workers?

Yes, they've shown us that nothing is impossible, that we can win. Nobody would have thought it possible that Mubarek would be ousted after 30 years. That also happened at TNT, that's why we haven't spoken about a strike, rather 'revolution'. For us it was like how it was in Egypt: TNT's revolution.

After your victory, it seems that the struggle is broadening out?

After TNT, struggles started at GLS [parcel service owned by the Dutch postal service, at Antonio Ferrari, at Bartolini]. We tried to extend the struggle in northern Italy as much as possible, like to Eselunga (supermarket chain) and in central Italy e.g. at SDA (courier service for the Italian postal service) in Rome. Now everyone knows that we can achieve better working conditions through struggle, it is an essential weapon: if we are united, we can overcome the fear and win every fight. TNT workers come primarily from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, there are Nigerians, Senegalese, Indians etc. there is no differentiation between us. At GLS there were lots of Indians, most of whom speak hardly any Italian and the employer just took advantage of that to exploit us even more. We organized assemblies with the Indian and Chinese workers, we sensed the difference between them and the Arab workers but I said: "Forget where we come

from, we are all workers here and we are all being exploited. We just need to concentrate on that."

In June 2012 the struggles against the Cooperatives of global giant IKEA began. . .

Workers employed at IKEA in Italy come from approximately 30 countries. Initially we got in touch with two Moroccan workers from TNT. We then went there every day to convince others one by one. After the first struggle we signed an agreement stating that the national collective agreement applies and the dignity of employees and their union organization are respected; thus, the rhythms of work and the activities are regulated. Previously they had increased the daily unloading target of 12 to 13 'warehouse rows' to 35. During the crisis they treat us increasingly like machines, they pressure us to raise productivity but wages always stay the same.

After a few months the Cooperative tried to go back to the conditions before the strike. It wanted to almost triple the average number of palettes; they cut most of the employees' hours to 4 hours so that they compulsorily had to stay at home two days a week and only earned 400 euros a month. When productivity fell, everyone had to work overtime. In October they locked out about 90 workers, fired 12, through a struggle we were able to get 3 of these workers reinstated, so that 9 remained fired. So we blockaded the gates every day. On November 2nd there was an extremely brutal police attack at gate 9, there were 20 people injured and 30 workers got charged, I got 6 charges. I don't know whether I'll get problems with my residents permit in the future but no struggle is without risk. The most important thing is that the struggle achieves its goal.

We've met with the company more than once but nothing ever came out of it. On December 18th, students, political groups and social centres from Bologna, organized a great picketline in front of the IKEA warehouse together with the IKEA workers. Customers acted in solidarity because they are being exploited exactly like us. In the last few days IKEA has finally given in, the 9 dismissed workers were reinstated. The employer understood that the damage for them would otherwise only get big-



ger. The battle is widening out, more newspapers from Sweden, Turkey and the Arabic world are getting in touch with me. IKEA is trying to break into North Africa so they have to be careful, their interests around the world are at stake. The employer is only looking out for their own interests and that's exactly where we have to hit them.

For years we have been discussing the effectiveness of strikes. Here is a strike that hurts the employer and is successful because it hits the strategic points of the production system. How important was the exact knowledge of the production cycle for you?

When we blockaded the gates, we chose the days that would inflict the most damage on the company. You had to choose a time and place that actually struck the interests of the employer so that they don't succeed in making up for the damage that we inflict on them. Strike when it's possible and unite the employees of the various companies. Today, when they attack the TNT workers or the workers from GLS in Piacenza, then workers from Bologna, Modena and Verona show solidarity. We have to coordinate the different struggles with each other so that the employer has no weak point that he can attack.

If you come with a flag and start a traditional strike, if you climb onto the roof, then you can stay there your whole life, you won't change anything. No more hunger strikes or things of this nature! The employer should starve! We're suffering enough every day at work!

This isn't only our struggle, it's the struggle of everyone in the crisis, so if we win in one place it gets better for us all. Comrades from other towns came to the picketline in Piacenza; they had to travel for hours to get here for 5 o'clock in the morning, in the dark and cold to support us and to link up the struggles. We have to thank them from the bottom of our hearts, the IKEA victory is also down to them.

Interview with MOHAMED ARAFAT
- by ANNA CURCIO and GIGI ROGERO

translated by: www.wildcat-www.de

ANGRY NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Spain and Poland: Housing Struggles

Tens of thousands of people are protesting and organizing in Spain against forced evictions, which are on the rise as people find it increasingly difficult to pay their inflated rents and mortgage payments. In Spain alone, banks have carried out 400,000 evictions since 2008. The twisted logic of capital means that houses lie boarded up and empty while people are homeless. In Spain people are organising to stop evictions, forming human barriers outside homes so that bailiffs can't come in. Prioritising peoples' lives over property ownership and repayment of debt is happening in Spain, as well as Poland and is even starting to happen in Berlin and England where people have either successfully squatted buildings or delayed the eviction process through sit-ins. In January, in a show of solidarity, locksmiths in Pamplona announced they would not change the locks of anyone being evicted. Watch a film about Polish women and their families who start squatting: <http://en.labournet.tv/video/6189/mothers-strike>

Greece: Factory Take-Over

This is the first time that workers in Greece have taken over their factory during the crisis. The workers produce building materials and have been unpaid since May 2011 after the factory owners abandoned the company. Unemployment in Greece is at 30% and industrial production has reduced by almost 12% compared to two years ago. There is little hope that the government will come to their rescue. So the workers decided to set up a general assembly to make their own decisions, choosing not to rely on trade unions or political parties to represent them. They decided to occupy the factory and operate it under direct democratic workers' control. There has been lots of public support for the workers but there are major obstacles to overcome: high costs of production, near impossible access to credit and getting a share of the market in times of recession will be hard. This is not a new phenomenon, similar attempts have been made in crisis-struck countries e.g. in Argentina since the economic meltdown in 2001 and in Egypt after the uprising. These developments are important because it marks a step towards workers' autonomy and new ways of organizing what is to be done and by whom. It challenges the idea of private property, existing hierarchies of power and the logics of ownership above the right to sustain ourselves. However, these factories are still operating in a capitalist system and questions of productivity and competitiveness still need to be stuck to if they are to survive. <http://www.viome.org/>

Bulgaria: Government toppled

In February this year, the Bulgarian government was forced to resign after mass protests triggered by the soaring prices of electricity. The situation has been brewing for a while with the continuing impoverishment of the people and mass privatisations with unaccountable companies operating in a free market with little regulation. Far-right groups have tried to capitalize on the discontent with mainstream political parties. Since Tunisia, Egypt, Bulgaria, ... we have seen that it is possible to topple a government, but that little change if the government is not replaced by organs of working class rule. <http://www.criticatac.ro/21415/bulgarian-winter-between-devil-deep-blue-sea/#comment-48101>



Bangladesh: Garment factory disasters

Wednesday 24th April 2013 - Savar, an industrial suburb of Dhaka; an eight storey building collapses and later catches fire. Building collapse and fires are common in the factories and have killed 100s of garment workers in the past 30 years. The previous one in November 2012 made international news due to the over 120 lives lost. Local factory bosses routinely disregard safety rules – with the collaboration of Western buyers turning a blind eye to dangers. Exit doors are often locked, trapping workers in burning, smoke filled factories full of inflammable materials. Major Western chains such as Primark, Walmart etc demand fast delivery of clothing at rock bottom prices. The country is a major clothing exporter, second only to China. There are around 4 million workers in 4,000 Bangladeshi garment factories, 85% female, earning the bosses up to \$20 billion a year - and these profits are built on these conditions. Garment workers earn some of the lowest industrial wages in the world; yet they continue to show inspiring resistance to their exploitation with regular mass wildcat strikes and riots that have sometimes shut down the whole industry.

Full story here; <http://libcom.org/news/house-cards-savar-building-collapse-26042013>

Background info; <http://libcom.org/library/tailoring-needs-garment-worker-struggles-bangladesh>

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PO POLSKU

W czasach cięć nie jest łatwo być pracownikiem/pracownicą. Celem tej gazety jest wymiana doświadczeń i zastanowienie się, co możemy razem zrobić, by poprawić nasze życie. Będziemy polegać na naszych własnych siłach i naw solidarności z innymi pracownikami/pracownicami, znajdującymi się w podobnej sytuacji.

... czy nie otrzymaliśmy pensji za naszą pracę lub jest ona za niska, aby godnie żyć?

... czy aby związać koniec z końcem jesteśmy zmuszeni pracować na nadgodziny lub dorabiać?

... czy mamy problem z urzędem pracy, bo nie możemy znaleźć pracy, której i tak nie ma?

... czy właściciele mieszkania lub władze grożą nam eksmisją, bo nie stać nas na rosnący czynsz?

... czy policja nęka nas, bo zamiast siedzieć samemu w domu czy w przepelnionych mieszkaniach, wolimy spędzać czas na ulicy?

... czy policja imigracyjna siedzi nam na karku, bo według nich człowiekiem jest się tylko wtedy, gdy ma się papiery?

... czy mamy dość wyścigu szczurów o pieniądze i posady, z powodu którego nie mamy czasu wolnego i który tworzy podziały między nami?

W innych państwach Europy, gdzie bardziej odczuwa się kryzys, ludzie szukają nowych sposobów walki. Od tworzenia grup przeciwko eksmisjom w Hiszpanii, po okupację i samorządne zarządzanie zamykanymi szpitalami i fabrykami w Grecji. To od nas zależy, czy będziemy gotowi zrobić to samo.

Napisz do nas [po bengalsku lub po polsku]:
angryworkersworld@gmail.com

আর্থিক সংকটের সময়ে মজুরি শ্রমিক হিসেবে থাকাকাটা বেশ কঠিন একটা ব্যাপার। এই সংবাদপত্রের লক্ষ্য হল আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতাগুলোর আদানপ্রদান করা এবং আমাদের জীবনকে উন্নত করার জন্য সবাই মিলে উপায়গুলোকে খুঁজে বের করা। আমরা নির্ভর করবো আমাদের শক্তি আর আমাদেরই মতো পরিস্থিতিতে থাকা অন্যান্য শ্রমিকদের সংহতির ওপরে। ...আমাদের মজুরি কি আমরা পাই না বা সেটা কি একটা সম্মানজনক জীবন চালানোর পক্ষে নিতান্তই কম? ... কোনরকমে জীবন চালানোর জন্য বা ঠিক কাজটা ধরে রাখার জন্য আমরা কি অনেক বেশি সময় কাজ করতে বাধ্য হচ্ছি? ... আমাদের কাজ দেওয়ার কেন্দ্রটিরই কি সমস্যা, কেননা কোনরকমে যে কাজগুলো টিকে আছে, আমরা কি সেগুলো খুঁজে পাচ্ছি না? ... বাড়তে থাকা ভাড়া দিতে পারছি না বলে আমাদের বাড়িওয়ালা বা কর্তৃপক্ষ কি আমাদের ঘর থেকে লাগিয়ে বের করে দেওয়ার ভয় দেখাচ্ছে? ... একা একা বা ফ্ল্যাটে বন্দী থাকার চেয়ে আমাদের বাইরে ঘুরতে ভালো লাগে বলে কি পুলিশ আমাদের হয়রানি করছে? ... কাগজপত্র নেই বলে আমরা মানুসই নই, এরকম ভেবে মাইগ্রেশন পুলিশ কি আমাদের পিছনে ভাড়া করে বেড়াচ্ছে? ... টাকা আর কাজের ইঁদুরদৌড়ের বাতাবরণের মধ্যে থেকে, আমাদের সমস্ত সময়কে খুঁয়ে ফেলে, নিজেরা বিভক্ত হয়ে গিয়ে আমরা কি অতিষ্ঠ হয়ে গেছি?

ইউরোপের অন্যান্য দেশে যেখানে সংকটের আক্রমণ আরো অনেক তীব্র, সেখানে মানুষ প্রতিরোধের নতুন নতুন উপায় বের করেছে। স্পেনে ফ্ল্যাট থেকে উচ্ছেদ রুখতে বা গ্রিসে বন্ধ হাসপাতাল বা কারখানা নিজেরাই তদারকির জন্য গ্রুপ তৈরি করার উদাহরণ রয়েছে। এরকম প্রস্তুতি আমরা নেবো কিনা, সেটা আমাদেরই হাতে রয়েছে।

বাংলা বা ইংরাজীতে আমাদের কাছে লেখা পাঠান। আমরা মাসে একবার সাক্ষাৎ করি। আমাদের ওয়েবসাইট দেখুন—

