

Whirlpool workers in Naples struggle against factory closure

Since March 2019 over 400 of our brothers and sisters working at the washing machine factory near Naples have been fighting against the closure of their plant. They blocked the Napoli-Pompeii-Salerno motorway, organised short strikes and central demonstrations together with Whirlpool workers from other factories in Italy. They organised a symbolic occupation of the airport, but no real occupation of their own factory. Their struggles achieved at least a postponement of the closure, though the 'truce' was used by the company and management to soften workers' resistance. During this struggle they faced various problems:

* A problem is to struggle against a multi-national company on a local level. Whirlpool sent washing machines to warehouses in Poland.

* A problem is to expect from your politicians that they will sort things out for you. Even the so-called 'rebels' of the Five Star Movement didn't do anything once in government. Neither Macron nor Le Pen stopped the closure of Whirlpool in Amiens, France.

* A problem is if you think that 'your productivity and quality' will save your job. In the end the only chance we have is to threaten bosses and politicians that closures will create social unrest.

The crisis will hit harder here in the UK, as well. Our fellow workers at Rolls Royce and British Airways already feel the pinch. At British Airways we could see how one union branch sells out the other. In the end the only solution to job cuts and deepening crisis is to take over the factories, transport networks, power stations and other essential industries ourselves.

In order to prepare ourselves we have to be organised independently, across contracts, professions, sectors and borders. As a network of workers in Bristol we want to exchange information about local and global struggles and about the situation in our workplaces and unions. We want to support each other in day-to-day struggles.



If you have only been hired recently and don't yet know if you will have work at Whirlpool after Christmas or you have been here for years - get in touch if you see things similarly!

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