

Only striking, blocking production, can be an effective weapon against redundancies and anti-worker measures.

Following the demo on Thursday 6 November, both the “good natured spectacle” and the more or less manipulated excesses, a question has to be asked:

Who benefits from this kind of event?

On the Walloon side it's obvious that the PS, its mutualist and trade union allies, like the CDH and Ecolo, have every interest in focusing discontent against the new liberalo-nationalist government. In this way they can give themselves a bit more credibility and regain their political innocence, even though a good part of the measures that the demos are against are precisely those that the PS and its allies passed previously (increase of the waiting stage for young people, various attacks on pensions, more than 100,000 unemployed excluded in a year, graduation of benefits, changing the basket used to calculate the price index...). And what's more they are still in power in the Walloon region and in Brussels, passing budgetary restrictions and other austerity plans in these regions. It's enough to look at the policies brought in by the other European governments to understand that the left wing of capital, social-democratic or even the more radical variants, is obliged to generally take on the same type of anti-worker policies as its “enemies” of the right, the liberals, the nationalists or the neo-fascists. It's all just a question of nuances and demagoguery!

On the Flemish side, it would seem that the austerity measures are generally “better tolerated”. These measures are very largely led and imposed on the executive (at the regional or federal level) by strong and combative Flemish bosses who seek out numerous political representatives on the Flemish stage.

On another level, the NV-A, which occupies most of the key posts (defence, interior, finance, immigration, president of the chamber...) on the federal level, presses with all its weight for separatism and towards confrontation on communal questions, another way for them to focus attention on something else besides social attacks by the bosses and the government.

In the same way, the “general strike” announced (!) for the 15 December is above all a political “strike”, in the bad sense of the term, without any real concrete demands, without any roots in strikes in private companies and other places of production, and with the aim of making us believe that an alternative exists thanks to the little game of alternation between the various fractions of the bourgeoisie, of left and right. Here, the “political” character of the strike means the belief in governmental solutions which avoid direct and real confrontations between workers and bosses, without the mediation of the state and the unions.

It is precisely to avoid this possibility, that we witness preventive measures and simulations of struggle and demonstrations, so that after a spectacular workout we can again find the path to collaboration and social peace.

It is not exactly the same situation which goes on everywhere, for example at Delhaize. There, it was a matter of the boss attacking directly so as to restructure the company, that is to say closing shops, laying people off and cutting the wages and increasing the hours of those left. And even if today it's always the unions who are manoeuvring, imposing their agenda and their legalistic methods, conflict remains a possibility, in the shops and distribution centres. It's only on the terrain of the workplace that workers can regain the initiative, not just fighting when their backs are against the wall but going on the offensive for wage increases, and organising themselves directly in places of work and relying on their own strength. This is the only way to impose their demands without waiting for a miraculous and highly improbable salvation from the unions, the parties, the state or some other god!

Real politicisation, starting from the workplaces, means defending workers' interests against all those who claim to speak for them.

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