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# The Precarious-Euro Insurrection

By Franco "Bifo" Berardi

Sketchy thoughts from Bifo on the current struggle and recombination in France. I think he dramatises a process that has taken its points of organisation from a far richer vein of antagonism running through French society than just recent debates about precarization or precariousness. See this comment from *the Sorbonne Occupation Committee in Exile*

'We are the heirs of the failure of all the "social movements" and not just those of the last three years (teachers, retirees, seasonal workers, high-school students), but many more dating back to at least 1986. We have learned some lessons from these failures.'

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By Franco Berardi " Bifo "

Translated by Alex Diceanu from the French translation. The French translation by Serge Quadrupani is available at <http://infos.samizdat.net/article408.html>. The original Italian text is published on the Rekombinant list.

A new European cycle

The fight of the French precarious cognitive workers can be the beginning of a new political and cultural cycle in Europe. They occupied the schools with the conscience of being together, students, cognitive and precarious workers in the fluid cycle of recomposing capital. And that represents a new fact, which was never expressed, with such clearness, in recent student struggles.

That this be quite clear: the French precarious cognitive workers raise a question which is directly European, even if it is true, as Villepin says, that the CPE is much better than the slave regulations which govern other countries, above all Italy. The Biaggi law and the Treu "package" are a hundred times worse than the CPE that the French students are fighting.

Thus it is clear that if they win, the question will be posed immediately in each European country.

If the French students defeat the CPE, this will certainly not mean that they will have beaten precariousness, this will only mean that they will have pushed back the legal formalization of precarity. And thus, they will have opened a new phase in the social history of Europe. A phase of struggle and social invention which, beyond neoliberal slavery, will make it possible to formulate new rules, new criteria of regulation of the labor-capital relation.

Black Heart

Precariousness is not a particular element of the productive relation but the black heart of the capitalist production process in the sphere of the global network in which circulates a continuous flow of info-work fragmented and recomposing. Precariousness is the transformative element # of the whole cycle of production. Nobody is outside its reach. The wages of the workers at unspecified times are struck, reduced, cut, the life of all is threatened by precarization.

The digital info-work can be fragmented as to be recomposed in a separate place of that where the work is done.

From the point of view of the valorization of capital, flow is continuous, but from the point of view of the existence and the time lived by cognitive workers, the prestation of capital has a character of recomposable fragmentation in cellular form. Pulsating cells of work are lit and extinguished in the large control board of global production. Info-work is innately precarious, not because of the contingent viciousness of employers but for the simple reason that the allocation of work time can be disconnected from the individual and legal person of the worker, an ocean of valorizing cells convened cellularly and recomposed by the subjectivity of capital.

Guaranteed income or slavery

For that, it is appropriate of reconceptualize the relationship between recomposing capital and immaterial labor, and it is advisable to obtain a new framework of reference. Given the impossibility, from now on, to reach a contractual elaboration of the cost of work by basing it on the legal person, owing to the fact that the prestation of productive abstract labor is disconnected from the individual person of the worker, the traditional form of the wage is out of play, it does not guarantee anything anymore. This is so true that the redistribution of dependent labor tends to constantly drop and slave-like working conditions tend to be reemerge.

It is true that jobs increase, but the total amount of the wages decreases.

But unemployment is much better than slavery. And this is what the rebels of the French March understand, who refuse the employers' blackmail : if you want work, accept slavery.

The fight of the French precarious puts on the agenda the problem of the wage as a total political problem, and claims with great cries a new form : guaranteed income disconnected from work.

Naturally, it will never be possible to speak about guaranteed income as long as the governing criteria of society will remain confined to the conceptual framework of the growth economy, that is of accumulation at the expense of the social interest. The bonds of growth and competition which are presented like natural laws by neo-liberal dogmatic thought (and accepted as such by the left incapable of non-dogmatic autonomous thought) are actually rules laid down on the basis of a relation of forces that digital technologies tilted in favor of capital through the deterritorialisation of work.

## Rules and power

The rules are not immutable, and there is no rule which forces us to comply with the rules.

This, the legalist left has never understood. Fixed on idea that it is The Precarious-Euro Insurrection necessary to comply with the rules, it has ever known how to carry out confrontation on the new ground inaugurated by digital technologies and the globalisation of the cycle of info-work.

The right has understood this very well and has subverted the rules which had been laid down in a century of trade-union history.

In the classical mode of industrial production, the rule was based on a rigid relationship between work and capital, and on the possibility of determining the value of goods on the basis of socially necessary working time. But in the recombining stage capital based on exploitation of fluid info-work, there no longer exists any deterministic relations between work and value.

We should not restore the rules that the right has violated, we must invent new rules adequate to the fluid form of the labor-capital relation, where there is no longer any quantitative time-value determinism and thus where there is no longer any necessary constant in the relationship between economic sizes.

## Cultural insurrection in Europe

For the elections in Italy, it will be necessary to open a cultural process of generalized insurrection against the precarious form of existence. To drive out the right will serve only to take away the instrument of political power from the hands of dangerous people but the battle will start after, and we must succeed in putting it under the banner of guaranteed income disconnected from the fluid process of cellular recombining prestation.

The fight of the French students can have an effect of revival of the European process. The French ?NON? on the referendum on the constitution was motivated primarily by the refusal of the precarisation and the devaluation of wages.

Today, we see the "proposing" face of this NO.

The European process can be controlled by the interests on capital, be it protectionist or globalist. Only labor, in its process of social recomposition can function as the source of right and of European culture.

This is another lesson of French March.

Translator's note: I am an amateur. Check with the original.