

## **Lebrija. A town organizes itself and fight against unemployment**

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Alasbarricadas.org went last Friday to Lebrija, a Sevillian locality of 26.000 inhabitants, to be present at the demonstration of this day in the town and to meet the 35-year-old comrade Victoriano Vela, construction worker and one of the driving forces, as a militant of the local Union of the CNT, of the mobilizations which have taken place since last week to demand a Labour Exchange under people's control that employs workers without job in the town.

We transcribe the interview with him.

### **1- How does this mobilization arise and which are the demands?**

Well, everything started in October, when some comrades came to the union local talking about the hiring problem in the jobs for the Town Council, the shameless political favouritism only gives these ones to people related to the PSOE (Social-democratic Party).

It is known that only 20 of 500 labourers passed the examinations announced by the town council. It is absurd that construction workers have failed a test for labourers, being skilful in their jobs, which should be asked and no more. The question is that most of the people who did the examination could hardly do it well, because I can be good with a trowel, but it is possible I can not write a novel. What does the town council want from a construction worker: to construct a building or write Don Quixote? This system is completely illogic; it is designed to leave out the whole people and employ for the jobs only the followers of the municipal government. The people know it and because of it they are pissed off.

A commission in the Union was created to deal with investigating the situation and trying to find a way of creating a fair labour exchange and prevent the string-pulling. The topic was discussed and it was agreed it would be better to create two Labour Exchanges, one for the Agrarian Regime and the other for the General one, the latter divided into trades (painters, steel frame workers, bricklayers...), under supervision and control of the Town Council and the Union. The contracts would be for 3 months in case of the official ones, instead for 6 like till now, in order to distribute fairly the work. The economic standard of living of every family would be taken into account by the Exchange. The idea is that every work commissioned by the Town Council has to be in the Labour Exchange and the work fairly distributed, always taking it in turns.

On January 31 we call for an assembly to discuss the matter in the *Casa de la Cultura* of the town. 250 persons come; the place became very small and the people decided to demonstrate the same day at the Town Council.

The following day was the same thing, but this time there were not 250 persons, but 300 and more people joined. Last time there were 500 persons. Today, as you could see, we were 2500 people. The mayoress cannot continue longer turning a deaf ear and refusing to listen to the voice of the people.

### **2- Have you thought about taking other measures, besides demonstrations and gatherings in front of the Town Hall?**

Yes, in fact if the mayoress does not meet the demands of the people before February 18, we will call for a General Strike which paralyzes all Lebrija and shows her what the people want, just in case she still has not realized.

### **3- How can we support your fight from other places?**

A very big problem that we have is money. With the membership fees and the extra contributions we do from time to time, we scarcely pay the rent of the union local and the whole infrastructure which we need to support this struggle: megaphone, chairs, tables, posters, stickers, pamphlets... So that it would be very helpful any economic contribution to the following account, which is that of Lebrija's Union:

2100-2615-11-0110294467

And certainly send us supporting messages. That cheers us up enormously.

### **4- We are in the beginning of a serious economic crisis that is going to hit strongly into hard-working families, and in fact it has already started to do it. What do you think the best way to attack the effects of the crisis in our homes is?**

There are no universal recipes, and probably what we are doing here in Lebrija is no use for a city like Madrid, where local bosses are not the problem, although of course it could be a good example for other towns in Andalusia which are in the same situation.

What is clear is that workers have to be organized, that we need to join in strong, independent, combative unions, where we take the decisions ourselves. It is necessary to take the initiative, forget the fear and act. If workers join together to solve our problems, nothing and nobody can stop us and we can get what we want.