

DELIVEROO ON STRIKE : A SOCIAL MIRACLE

The first Deliveroo riders wide strike had been organized the last 11th of august. From Bordeaux last July the protest movement has spread to Lyon and Paris generating interest of media.

Created in England in 2013, Deliveroo became the food-tech leader – its surplus value got over a billion dollars – and 7,500 delivery riders had been numbered in twenty French towns so far. The success of those platforms - whose development needs an impressive money supplying – is above all else linked to the fact that riders are systematically taken on under the position of self employed. Then platforms escape away from payment of employer's contribution while this work makes a whole job up for a growing part of the riders unless they don't count hours.

A realization that comes from afar

Bankruptcy of belgian platform Take Eat Easy in july 2016 had left leaving thousands of french riders when employers' insurance should have borne wages and had been a spark for the workers in that sector.. After a few fitful strikes in Marseilles and Nice, they started to organise with the creation of associations or collectives like the Green Arrows in Lyon or CLAP (Independent Riders Collective of Paris) but also join unions : besides the creation of CGT Riders in Bordeaux, some Parisian riders joined CGT and SUD Commerce.

France catches its social slowdown up then Europe is restless where in different countries held by alternative unions support riders who experienced mobilization. Therefore, English justice is called for a re-classifying an independant rider as a salaried one. Spanish riders were on strike not later than the last month.

The reasons of anger

The announcement in the middle of summer of the unilateral modification of employment contracts of riders hired before September 2016 was the straw that broke the camel's back and that wasn't a surprise. Concretely, one thousand riders got paid 7 euros per hour nowadays which added a 2 up to 5 euros bonus per ride and are required to be paid 5 euros (5.75 euros in Paris) per ride, wich means a loss of 8 to 33% depending of their work time and delisting could be used as a weapon against them.

In response of all, they defend the unifying demand of 7.50 per ride with a guaranteed minimum of two rides per hour which Deliveroo refuses to negotiate although media pressure forced them to give a response.

Nothing will be the same

On the 11th of August, it was more than hundred of Parisian riders, old contracts and new ones as well, held a rally and were joined by riders from others platforms (Foodora, Stuart and UberEats). It could seem derisory but in the middle of summer and a gathering set a few days before that rally looked like a success in organisers' eyes. Dozens of CGT, CNT, Solidaires and Social Front collective activists joined and give support to them as a couple of politicians. In addition to Jerome Pimot, former rider, who gave a speech, other CLAP members, a Bordeaux strikers' spokeswoman, the CGT Paris secretary general and a SUD Commerce member spoke too.

After the rally, a street protest drifted voicing loud towards different restaurants which accepted to block orders as a sign of solidarity (In Lyon 40 riders did the same). The next day of mobilization will take place on the 28th of August, effective date of new contracts. In the meantime,

riders look forward to increase the mobilization to more colleagues and more towns and make that date an international day of strike against Deliveroo.

Whatever the conclusion of their struggle will be, the strength of riders, who could be fired by just pressing a button, had changed many things: they dispelled the fatalism that says "independent" workers are unable to get into a collective struggle. The myths of happy uberization promoted by Macron and others, is in a bad way. Even more through his Labour Law 2 he wants to extend his "social" scheme to other workers, where contracts overshadow law. The riders' determination is an amazing motivation to struggle against that government measure from the 12th of September and beyond.

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