

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8249>



Italy

Three deaths at work per day on average

- IV Online magazine - 2023 - IV584 - September 2023 -

Publication date: Tuesday 19 September 2023

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In Italy, data on fatal accidents at work provided by INAIL (National Institute for Accident Insurance at the Workplace) and the Observatory on Safety at Work paint a tragic picture: 358 deaths were recorded between January and May 2023, with the monthly average rising from 66 to 71 deaths every 30 days, or 17 per week.

The expression “white deaths” used in Italy to indicate that the deaths occurred in the workplace is misleading. It aims to depoliticize and individualize these tragic accidents inherent in capitalism. In the majority of cases, there are indeed guilty parties and clearly identifiable causes: the race for profit, the pace of work and appalling working conditions.

The coldness of the figures and statistics often conceals the experience of hardship. This was the case of Gianfranco Corso, who died in Brescia after a week of agony. On 30 August, the 50-year-old drainage worker found himself trapped 9 metres down a well. Corso had climbed down the shaft through a trapdoor to help a colleague who had felt ill because of the presence of gas, but he in turn fell ill when he breathed in toxic fumes, in particular hydrogen sulphide emissions.

The very young and foreigners among the worst affected

Another worrying fact to emerge from the Vega Observatory is the occupational death rate among the very young (aged 15 to 24). This rate has increased by 100% compared to the 25-34 age group.

Overall, the age group most affected by fatal accidents at work remains the 55-64 age group (101 out of a total of 271).

The number of women who lost their lives at work between January and May 2023 was 16, while 11 lost their lives on the way to and from work. The situation is also very bad for foreign workers, for whom the risk of fatal accident is almost double that of Italians.

Italy at the bottom of the European average

According to Eurostat data, the country with the highest number of accidents in relation to the employed population is Cyprus, followed by Bulgaria and then Italy, with 3.39 per 100,000 employees, while in France the rate is 2.541.

There are increasing questions about the possible correlations between the reorganization processes following the Covid crisis and this upsurge in work-related fatalities. The resumption of production activity against a backdrop of economic crisis could well be the underlying cause of this new spiral of accidents.

Voices raised against injustice and contempt

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Giorgia Meloni's neo-fascist government thinks it can solve the crisis with "bonuses". The state has paid out €270 billion in economic bonuses and various contributions. This is how it is trying to anaesthetise social tensions, not by solving the problems but by thwarting the self-organization of the masses at the hottest moments. Individual one-off payments, bonuses are not collective rights and are distributed with the aim of destroying and hindering any process of building a class for itself.

Although fragmented and heterogeneous, a few dissenting voices are standing up to this wave of injustice and contempt. In Naples, those who had received the citizenship income organized themselves into various committees. The state is offering them a subsidy of 350 euros a month (less than the citizenship income) for 12 months only, provided they register on an electronic platform and take a training course. We should follow developments in this movement of unemployed workers in southern Italy, whose politicization could give impetus to the struggles of wage earners.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).*

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