

Goodbye Rai Corporation: Laid-Off Workers Protest and File Suit Against Company

Francesca Giuliani (April 27, 2012)



Rai Corporation closed and its assets will be auctioned next week. The laid-off workers, left without health insurance and compensation, are protesting in front of the Italian Consulate on Park Ave. In the meantime, Rai transferred the news correspondents to AP through expensive subcontracts.



This morning, the laid-off workers of [Rai Corporation](#) [2] are protesting in front of the Italian Consulate on Park Avenue, giving out flyers to the passers-by that describe their situation: they have been left without a job, health insurance and unemployment compensation.

They are 38 in total. Some of them had been working for the company from its early years of activity.

Rai Corporation was founded on January 20, 1960, and has been a witness of the American life for the Italian audience ever since. While the company's assets will be auctioned online from May 2 to May 3, there is no final decision on the destiny of Rai Corporation's video archive.

Heritage Global Partners, the company managing the auction, warns on its [website](#) [3] that the facility, located on the 25th floor of the AT&T Building in Tribeca, must be cleared by May 14.

Many of the workers have also lost their legal immigration status, as they were hired with work visas sponsored by Rai Corporation, which officially closed on April 12.

The protesters are wearing the red t-shirts from the [Nabet CWA](#) [4] union, whose lawyers have filed against Rai at the [National Labor Relations Board](#) [5], for anti-union behavior.

The protest will continue with a bigger demonstration planned for May 1st, a date that in Italy marks the [National Workers Day](#) [6], celebrated with public events and concerts throughout the country.

"It will all end up in a long court battle which will be entirely paid for by Italian tax-payers," says Lorenzo Piccolo, former video-editor at Rai Corporation, to the [Corriere della Sera](#) [7] New York correspondent Alessandra Farkas. Rai is in fact a state owned public service broadcaster, funded with public money and only partially with advertising revenues.

The decision to dismiss the foreign bureaus of Rai is motivated with the need for budgetary cuts by the Administration Board, which also closed offices in Montevideo, Los Angeles and Canada. However, a corporate statement the Rai Corporation workers received last January reassured them of Rai's intention to strengthen its network in North America, by opening another bureau in Washington, DC.

The only individuals exempted from the restructuring are the newscast correspondents Dino Cerri, Gerardo Greco, Giovanna Botteri and Olga Cortese, who were transferred to Associated Press. "They are working through an expensive subcontract with the service provider 'Media Kite,' owned by Francesco Malatesta, former Rai Corporation employee and husband of a Rai journalist," the laid-off workers told the Italian press, alluding to a conflict of interest.

The former employees crafted their own rescue package for Rai Corporation which proposed a plan that avoided closing the New York office. Cameraman Tony Cerullo told [America Oggi](#) [8] that the plan would have saved to the company even more than what they are spending now through AP.

"Rai's lawyer left that meeting saying that the company didn't want to discuss with us. They raised a wall. Rai Corporation is a product of Rai, but they are treating us like Martians."

"This is Rai's way to thank us for our professionalism," say the protesters to [La Stampa](#) [9]'s reporter Glauco Maggi. "During the Gulf War they asked us to sleep in the office to give the news earlier than Mediaset. Now Rai is leaving the US while Mediaset wants to open offices in New York City and Washington DC."



workers-protest-and-file-suit

Links

- [1] <http://italy.org/files/raicorpprotest1335541418jpg>
- [2] <http://www.raicorp.net/>
- [3] <http://www.hgpauction.com/?auctionid=202>
- [4] <http://www.nabetcwa.org>
- [5] <https://www.nlr.gov>
- [6] http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festa_del_lavoro
- [7] http://www.corriere.it/esteri/12_aprile_26/rai-licenzia-dipendenti-new-york_eb0f4416-8fec-11e1-b563-5183986f349a.shtml#.T5qT2KY6B-0.facebook
- [8] <http://www.americaooggi.info/2012/04/25/30394-la-protesta-dei-licenziati-da-rai-corp-fanno-lavorare-gli-illegali>
- [9] <http://multimedia.lastampa.it/multimedia/nel-mondo/lstp/138184/>