

2010 Regional elections: The usual winner

FdCA statement on the recent Regional Elections in Italy

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

12 April 2010

It doesn't need to stand for elections, be they national, regional or European, itself. It knows it will win anyway. From elections, it expects the State and local government system to be put at its disposal. From coalitions it expects the electorate to be divided by the various programmes and parties on geographical, language, religious, ethical bases (even ideological if necessary), as long as citizens' class interests are hidden from view.

It is content for even its worst enemies, the self-proclaimed anti-capitalist parties, to stand at elections so they can help demonstrate its strength and their electoral inconsistency. And as usual, they fall for the trick.

It wins with Obama and Sarkozy, with Berlusconi and Zapatero, with Cota and Polverini, with Vendola and Errani¹. It — capitalism — wins because it cannot be defeated in any election. Even the mass abstentionism that affected all participants (even the Northern League lost almost 150,000 votes compared to 2009) does not weaken the political significance of elections for the capitalist system.

It is confirmation of its power.

The struggle against capitalism takes place every day on other battlefields, where the weakness of the workers' movement is a much more worrying question than the Left's electoral defeat.

Wages frozen and stagnating in February, unemployment at 8.2%, youth unemployment at 28%, half a million workers removed from production and another 800,000 receiving Integrated Earnings Fund benefits², a €3.4 billion deficit in the national health system, the effective cancellation of Article 18 of the Workers' Statute³, education and pensions suffering from constant cuts... with all this, the workers are increasingly left abandoned, with only a few sectors of the trade

¹ Roberto Cota, Northern League MP elected as President of the Piedmont region. Renata Polverini, ex-Secretary General of the right-wing UGL trade union, elected President of the Lazio region. Nichi Vendola, spokesperson of the left-wing *Sinistra Ecologia Libertà* party, re-elected President of the Apulia region. Vasco Errani, Democratic Party, re-elected President of the Emilia-Romagna region.

² The *Cassa Integrazione Guadagni* (CIG) is a fund where the State covers part of a worker's wages while the worker is temporarily laid off.

³ Article 18 provides for protection from unfair dismissal for workers in companies which have more than 15 employees and its absence in smaller companies is one of the main reasons for the poor union membership of these workers.

union movement — those still open to class conflict — still willing to listen to them and support them.

Neither the 7.1% increase in abstention nor even the Five Stars Movement⁴ will be able to find jobs for the 130,000 unemployed workers in Piedmont, those to whom Cota and the Northern League will now have to provide answers. Nor will the 6% increase in abstention provide any answers to the 47,000 unemployed workers in the Veneto region, those to whom Zaia and the Northern League will now have to deal with.

These answers can only come through struggle from below, through the self-organization of the workers, the unemployed, the casually-employed and migrant workers, struggling together to demand recognition of their rights. Some think they can (and indeed at times they do) defeat the centre-right by voting for people like Vendola or even Grillo, but to really win we have to forget the electoral short-cuts, the game of percentages. We need to work every day towards the recomposition of the workers movement on the basis of our own immediate interests and our rights, which are also opposed to those of the ruling class, both national and regional.

This is our terrain. This is the terrain where we can build an anti-capitalist left in the struggle to build a self-managed society, starting right now.

⁴ The *Movimento Cinque Stelle* is an anti-party party inspired by comedian and blogger Beppe Grillo. Its candidate won 4% of the Piedmont vote (the right-wing Roberto Cota beat centre-left candidate Mercedes Bresso by only 0.4%).

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