

The struggle to prevent the coming of an authoritarian regime in Italy

As we explained in issue 46 of “Unity & Struggle”, the Meloni government is the most reactionary government formed in Italy since the end of World War II; a government of reestablishment and fascistization of the State and society, of attacks on the rights of workers, migrants, women and young people and on political, trade union and civil freedoms, of rearmament and a war policy.

The Meloni government is the expression of an exploitative, reactionary and chauvinist minority that dominates the working majority who demand work, bread and peace.

It is a government of big capital (Eni, Enel, Leonardo, Stellantis, Terna, Poste, Generali, the big banks, etc.), of the bosses, which expresses a particular form of reaction in relation to the profound crisis of the ruling class.

Its function is to slow the decline of Italian imperialism and to stabilize the capitalist economy by intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the proletariat and the popular masses.

The policy and direction of the Meloni government are decided by the monopolies, in particular by the large energy companies and the military-industrial complex, the most reactionary and warmongering fraction of the monopolist bourgeoisie, not by the sectors of the lower middle class who voted for him in the 2022 political elections.

With the Meloni government, the bourgeois state is subordinating itself and becoming more closely linked to the ruling groups of capitalism, with the monopolies and the most powerful capitalist associations.

The Meloni government has a large parliamentary majority, but it is a minority in the country (only 27% of voters supported it). Its social bases are found above all in sectors of the small and medium bourgeoisie crushed by the crisis. It does not have a strong presence in workers' organizations, but it can count on the complicity of union leaders, especially the Catholic ones.

Today the bourgeoisie cannot be satisfied with having its reactionary political expression in an "elite" party; it must find a reactionary mass party to immobilize and disorganize the working class.

“Fratelli d'Italia” (the far-right party headed by Giorgia Meloni, which has fascist elements within it and finances openly fascist organizations), influences and organizes resentful and frustrated strata of the middle classes, sectors of the labor aristocracy and a small percentage of workers drunk with chauvinist demagogy. But it is not yet the reactionary mass party that the bourgeoisie desires. This is shown by the fact that at the electoral level it received just 14% of the voters' support.

The strength of the Meloni government lies in the weakness and divisions of the reformist and populist parliamentary opposition. But the center of the class struggle is increasingly found outside Parliament, in the factories and in the streets.

Currently the government, as a whole, is experiencing a decline in popular consensus. In particular Salvini's League is in difficulty, especially in the north. While the economic situation is worsening discontent is growing among proletariat and even among the middle strata that support the government. This is the “Achilles heel” of the Meloni government, despite the bourgeoisie's attempt to guarantee stability and firmness to its executive power.

How fascistization is advancing

Two years after taking office, the Meloni government is continuing its all-out attack against the working class and the popular masses, implementing a policy at the exclusive service of big capital and the parasitic strata of society.

The more the waters are agitated on the economic front (Italy is entering a recession) the more the grip tightens, strengthening the pressure and measures against the workers, the unions, the young people who are resisting and fighting.

At the same time, the serious internal conditions and the exacerbation of conflicts between imperialist powers are pushing the bourgeoisie and its state towards a policy of wars abroad, with the aim of defending the interests of Italian monopoly capitalism.

In this context, the fascistization carried out by the Meloni government is broad and multifaceted.

It is seen in political acts, provisions, bills and concrete measures which we will summarize below.

- The "green light" for layoffs in companies, the reduction of wages and the worsening of working conditions,
- The maneuver of division, disintegration and marginalization of workers' organizations that reject government policies.
- The continuous limitation of democratic rights, such as the right to strike and demonstrate, the repressive methods used against proletarian and student struggles.
- Cutting benefits for the unemployed and poor and refusing to establish a minimum wage,
- The continuous increase in casualization and subcontracting.
- The privatization of strategic state companies, to cover the deficit and reduce public debt.
- Economic and fiscal measures in favor of the monopolies, the rich and privileged strata, accompanied by tolerance of tax evasion.
- The attack on the reproductive rights of women, such as the right to abortion, and of LGTBQ+ people.
- The racist and xenophobic policy of persecution of migrants, which produces agreements with autocratic governments and brutal militias that carry out the "dirty work", as in Tunisia and Libya, or to create concentration camps like the one under construction in Albania, accompanied by the apology of the "Italic race" and the demagogic fight against "ethnic substitution".

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Bill n. 1660 against rights and the workers

The law containing "Provisions relating to public safety, etc.", currently being approved by Parliament, increases the penalties for street demonstrations; makes blockades of road and railways a criminal offence, aggravated if they are committed "by several people gathered together" and with "one's own body" (i.e. during strikes and workers' pickets); further increases the penalties for contempt, resistance and injury (even very slight) to a public official; makes revolt in prisons and migrant camps a crime, extended to passive resistance and even to the families of prisoners; makes it possible for public security agents to carry private weapons; puts public administrations and publicly-held companies at the service of spy agencies; revokes the obligation to postpone the carrying out of a sentence for pregnant women and for mothers of children up to three years old.

With an amendment presented to this Bill by Salvini's League, very heavy penalties are foreseen, up to 20 years in prison, for those who oppose "major works" such as the TAV (high speed train) or the Messina Bridge, even with symbolic acts.

Those affected by the measures of this bill are the workers' pickets, the blockades of roads and railways – which have always been one of the forms of struggle of the workers' and trade union movement –, the protests of the unemployed, the sit-ins of the students, the demonstrations for peace and in solidarity with the Palestinian people, the mobilizations against the construction of new military bases, the protest actions against the eco-climatic crisis and environmental devastation, the occupations of vacant homes, the protests in concentration camps and overcrowded prisons.

At the same time, full impunity is guaranteed for the "enforcers of order" for their increasingly frequent anti-worker and anti-popular abuses.

A vast front of social, trade union and political opposition is developing against this bill that aims to create a police state.

At an institutional level, the reactionary policy of the Meloni government hinges on some key laws and measures:

- The direct election of the prime minister to strengthen the power and authoritarianism of the executive.
- The disruptive regional autonomy, to divide workers and abolish national employment contracts; with this law the Regions will become a form of "small states" with their own healthcare, their own education, etc., destroying any solidarity redistribution of the wealth produced towards the weaker regions.
- The abolition of the crime of abuse of office, to favor the mafia, thieves and corrupt officials.
- The separation of careers between magistrates, judges and public prosecutors, creating the basis for the subordination of public prosecutors to the government.
- The control of the public TV networks, news agencies, radios and other important media.
- The attack on every agency that controls government operations.

In foreign policy:

- The warmongering policy which becomes concrete in the sending of weapons, missile systems and funds to Ukraine, in the sending of thousands of soldiers, land vehicles, planes, ships, to the "eastern flank" of NATO and the Indo-Pacific, in support for Zionist Israel, in the rearmament and militarization of society.
- The launch of the "Mattei Plan" to expand the sphere of influence and the robbery of raw materials in Africa, especially in Niger, Libya, Tunisia, Burkina Faso and the Horn of Africa.
- The participation in more than 40 military missions abroad involving approximately 12 thousand Italian soldiers.
- The "coming together" of the state apparatus with companies of the military industry is also continuing, through coordination between the military industry and a select government committee, for the identification of countries to direct the export of armaments and military equipment, keeping in mind the ambitions of Italian imperialism.

All this means the continuous increase in military spending, which will amount to about 30 billion Euro this year, to the detriment of social spending.

On an ideological level, the Meloni government is intensifying the spread of chauvinist, racist and fascist ideological poison, the denigration of anti-fascism and the falsification of history.

The political project of the far right

The laws and bills approved and presented, the measures and provisions adopted, show that the objective of the government, led by far-right forces, is to create an authoritarian regime characterized by anti-worker, anti-democratic and warmongering politics.

It is a regime that deprives the proletariat of the rights and possibilities necessary for the struggle, in order to place the entire weight of economic stagnation, debt and imperialist war on the shoulders of the working masses.

The process of fascistization of the bourgeois dictatorship is proceeding in parallel with the decline of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, which affects the whole state apparatus.

The specific causes of this process which is advancing, between conflicts within the ruling class and clashes within the governing parties themselves, must be identified: in the strengthening of the domination of the monopolies, which aim at the liquidation of bourgeois democracy using formulas and instruments that are considered more effective; in the exacerbation of inter-imperialist contradictions and the participation in the warmongering and anti-worker policies of the USA, NATO and the EU; with the fear of a vigorous rise of the movement of the exploited and oppressed masses, who are now disillusioned with the bourgeois parties and institutions.

In times of recession and war, the bourgeoisie must consolidate its rear. No ruling circle can think of firing workers, further reducing wages, further cutting public services while billions are wasted on the war, while other benefits and relief are granted to the rich, without harshly repressing the workers, the young, the women who fight, without criminalizing and squashing social protest.

The political tendency of imperialism is towards violence and the exacerbation of reaction in every field, towards the liquidation of bourgeois-democratic freedoms and rights.

This corresponds to the interests of big capital which penetrates and places under its dependence all the institutions of the bourgeoisie, to impose a policy at its exclusive service both inside and outside the country.

It is an imperialist, corrupt, parasitic and anti-popular bourgeois policy, which in certain conditions, connected to serious crises, can lead to fascism, the open, terrorist dictatorship of finance capital.

This outcome, however, should not be confused with the ongoing process of fascistization, which is preparing it, even if it is not inevitable. Today we are not under a fascist regime, although there are fascist elements in government. Stating the opposite only leads to demoralizing the masses and not fighting against the authoritarian project, the reactionary and anti-worker measures that favor fascism coming to power.

The unity of action of the proletariat can block the way to the reactionary plan

Who can stop the reactionary plan that is advancing on many fronts today? Perhaps the bourgeois "constitutional opposition"? But it is precisely the denial of this phenomenon of reaction and its causes by this false opposition, which defends the interests of the monopolies by trying to "limit the

damage” they cause, which supports the policy of war and the attacks on the proletariat, which is always ready to reconcile with the far right in order to encourage reactionary and warmongering tendency and plans.

The liberal-reformist leaders avoid any serious mass struggle against the development of fascistization for fear that such a struggle will increase the revolutionary movement against the bourgeoisie. For them the struggle against the Meloni government is not a struggle against Italian imperialism, but a struggle in which the working class is only an ally of sectors of the ruling class affected by the far right government.

In reality, it is the continuous capitulation and divisions imposed by the leaders of social democracy and collaborationist trade unions, the populists, the policy of sabotaging the class struggle, the opposition to the united front for the mobilization of the working masses, which opened the door to the Meloni government, that favor reaction, fascistization and fascism.

Maybe the EU can stop it? But it is precisely the anti-worker and war-mongering policy of the EU that provides lifeblood to reaction on all levels, as well as supporting ultra-reactionary regimes such as that of Orban and Zelensky.

The speeches of those who support these solutions to "save bourgeois democracy" are nothing more than fraud and deception, because they are props of the rotten bourgeois regime.

To defeat the reactionary plan and bring down the Meloni government, unity of action of the proletariat is essential for the uncompromising defense of its economic and political interests, of the rights won through very hard struggles.

On this basis, a fighting alliance must be established, led by the working class, with the popular masses crushed by big capital, with the authentic democrats and anti-fascists, directed mainly against the imperialist bourgeoisie, against the monopolies.

The reactionary offensive is destined to encounter growing resistance from the working class and the broad popular masses who demand the satisfaction of their urgent and vital needs: defense of employment, increased wages, shorter working hours, better working conditions, more rights and safety at work, stop precariousness, safeguard public services (health care, school, transportation), fight against inequality and poverty, defense of peace.

In the current situation, the resistance to repression, to rampant authoritarianism and reaction, to war politics, the ability to reject attempts at the intimidation of struggles and class solidarity, the protests and strikes that occur in every sector are important and must be supported.

The reformist and opportunist leaders who oppose this line must be exposed and fought mercilessly. But this is still not enough.

The question that arises today is to include the fight against authoritarianism, militarism and the fascistization of the State, the fight for bread and peace, in the radical criticism of the capitalist-imperialist system, developing awareness of the need for revolutionary rupture with the bourgeois order, for the transfer of power from a minority of exploiters and oppressors to the majority of the exploited and oppressed.

This brings the question of the Communist Party to the fore. Only with its own independent and revolutionary party will the working class be able to conduct a consistent policy capable of opposing militarism, fascistization and fascism; only with this party will it advance in the struggle for the seizure of political power.

This is the knot that communists and advanced workers must untie, uniting and organizing themselves to form the embryo of a revolutionary party that relies on the workers' movement and places itself at its head in the fight for socialism.

The example that Communist Platform and Tuscan Communist Militancy are offering, carrying forward the process of their fusion into a single communist organization, will serve to give impetus to the struggle for the Party.

The sharpening of all the fundamental contradictions of our era, the inevitable development of the class struggle, will contribute to the developments that we are fighting for.

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