

On the constitutional referendum of March 22–23 in Italy

In an authoritarian-style power grab, the Meloni government — after forcing a judicial counter-reform through parliament via a “vote of confidence”— has set the date for the constitutional referendum to ratify this law for March 22 and 23, 2026.

The referendum date was hastily set by this government led by the far right in order to gain an advantage in the campaign for the law’s approval by manipulating and influencing public opinion.

The government can indeed count on its control of the mainstream media, as well as the financial and technical support of social media capitalists, advertising agencies, banks, and industrialists who seek a “change in the justice system” favorable to their interests. It is also conducting an election campaign entirely based on demagoguery and lies, clientelism and corruption.

The referendum on March 22–23 has a clear political character, just as the counter-reform of the justice system is an exquisitely political matter.

In reality, the vote will not be on “improving the quality of the judiciary” or on “separating the careers of magistrates,” as government propaganda claims.

The aim of the law is not to improve the efficiency of bourgeois justice, but to constitutionally redefine the balance of power between the judiciary and the executive, weakening the former and strengthening the latter, thereby increasing political control over judges.

This increased political control will determine a justice system more subservient to bourgeois politicians, industrialists, landowners, bankers, speculators, the wealthy, and their profits and privileges. Consequently, it will be a justice system that is harsher and more intransigent toward workers and their rights.

The counter-reform of the judiciary is one aspect of the process of fascistization of the state being carried out by the Meloni government, serving the objectives of the domination of big capital.

This process, which will have severe consequences for the living and working conditions of the working masses, also includes the immediate introduction of a new “security” package and will have as its next steps the approval of a new electoral scam law and the establishment of an open presidential autocratic system, in place of the existing formal parliamentary one.

This reactionary scheme aimed at strengthening the arbitrary power of the far-right clique in government fits into a context of imperialist aggression driven by Trump’s U.S., in a period fraught with conflicts, militarism, and threats of war, which benefits the forces of conservatism and reaction.

The “NO” campaign in the referendum we are waging does not lie in the illusion of “equal justice for all”. We know that the judiciary is an apparatus of the bourgeois state, whose fundamental function is to dominate and oppress the subordinate classes.

But we cannot ignore the political issues and the current political struggle, the concrete stakes at play in the referendum.

As comrade Dimitrov taught us, it would be a grave and dangerous mistake to “underestimate the importance for the establishment of the fascist dictatorship of the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie, which are today being strengthened in the countries of bourgeois democracy and suppress the democratic freedoms of the workers, distort and restrict the rights of parliament, and intensify repression against the revolutionary movement.”

To ignore the referendum, to remain indifferent, would mean doing the capitalists and their reactionary government a great favor.

It is therefore in the interest of the working class to take action to defeat this counter-reform sought by the owners of capital and their reactionary and fascist servants to strengthen the dictatorship of a minority of profiteers who want at all costs to protect and save a rotten system.

The NO to the counter-reform of justice that we express is a class-based NO. It is a rejection of the entire domestic and foreign policy of Meloni's reactionary and warmongering government, which is part of the struggle to break the capitalist-imperialist system.

It is a NO to authoritarian drift, to arrogance, to repression, and to fascism.

A NO to starvation wages, to precariousness, to the worsening of working conditions, to cuts in healthcare and public education, and to pensions.

A NO to austerity and war policies, to complicity with Trump and Netanyahu, to rearmament and "security" laws.

A NO to the environmental disasters ignored by those who govern the country, to corruption directed by big capital in all sectors of economic and social life.

It's a NO for bread, peace, and freedom!

It is therefore a clear message of social protest — not only against the judicial counter-reform and its fraudulent mechanisms, but also against the establishment of a reactionary regime of big capital and the fascist aim of eliminating workers' rights, such as the right to strike.

Voter turnout for the referendum will be low (this is the current trend in all types of election), but no quorum is required. The outcome is uncertain. What is certain is that a massive "NO" vote in the March 22–23 referendum — without ceasing for a single minute to fight in the workplaces and on the streets — will thwart the drift toward authoritarianism and have the effect of a political earthquake with its epicenter in the Government Palace.

A massive "NO" vote will help shift the balance of power, bring about a positive change in the mood of the masses, weaken the government, and place the workers' movement in a more favorable position.

New sectors of workers will feel encouraged to confront the bosses' government, and more favorable conditions will be created to oust it through struggle in the factories and in the streets.

Therefore, let us vote and mobilize others to vote NO on March 22 and 23, while we continue to mobilize, unite, and organize for the interests and freedoms of the working class, to break the yoke of capitalist exploitation, and for a workers' society.

"Scintilla" editorial board, march 2026

Ps: The "NO" won with 53,7%, the people defeated the reactionary government and a new season of struggle is approaching.