

MOVEMENT by any **FOR JUSTICE** means necessary

Organise worker/community defence led by immigrant workers, refugees and youth to defeat the Fascists - Stop Forza Nuova! Stop Casa Pound!

Defend & extend the free movement of ALL people within & into Europe – Open the Borders of Italy & Europe! Stop the racist scapegoating of immigrants!

Full citizenship rights for ALL who live, work and study in Italy

Shut down all immigration detention centres! Abolish the Minitti/Orlando law!

Abolish the agreement with Libya that is signed in the blood of immigrants! Italian troops out of Niger!

Build an integrated, anti-racist mass movement for immigrant rights, workers rights and civil rights – For a united fight against racism & poverty!

Rome, 24 February 2018

Immigrants who have fought so hard and risked so much to build new lives in Europe, and second-generation immigrant youth who are fighting for justice and citizenship, constitute the most militant and progressive force in the Italian working class and among Italy's youth – the vanguard that can inspire and lead an integrated mass movement of all the poor and oppressed against austerity, inequality and repression. That is the greatest fear of the Italian ruling class and all its parties as they face Italy's most profound crisis since World War Two. **The movement they fear is the movement we can and must build.**

The ruling classes of Europe have no way out of the crisis produced by the failed neo-liberal economic policies that they have imposed on their own countries and, with disastrous effects, across the world. Their only response is to impose ever-increasing austerity on working class, poor and struggling middle class people of all races. In Italy, the outgoing government has cut workers' rights to the bone, the number of precarious workers has reached a record level of nearly three million, and the hopes of the younger generation are being destroyed. From the north to the south, the most militant and determined battles against precarious employment and inhuman living and working conditions, and against the racist and repressive laws, are being waged by immigrant workers and refugees - from Rosarno, Nardo', San Ferdinando and all the agricultural workers' struggles, to Piacenza, Bologna and other cities and centres of the logistics sector in the north.

To carry out their brutal policies, Italy's leading parties unite to attack the immigrants and youth whose power they fear; they militarise the borders, increase state repression, and foster racist divisions by scapegoating immigration for the poverty and insecurity that the capitalist system has created.

The fascists of Forza Nuova and Casa Pound are now the battering ram for the most reactionary elements of Italy's ruling class against immigrant communities and immigrant workers. The recent attempted massacre of African immigrants by the neo-fascist Luca Traini in Macerata, and the fascists' shameless celebration of Traini as a 'hero,' have come on top of so many violent fascist and racist attacks across Italy. They are a signal to immigrant workers' organisations and to immigrant and anti-fascist youth that **NOW is the time to build collective action for the physical defence of our communities, workplaces, picket lines, centres for immigrants, meeting places, schools etc., and to shut down the fascists' attempts to organise and recruit.** Breaking up the fascist organisations is a matter of defending our lives, our freedom, our safety.

No reliance on the bankrupt, racist political system

We have no illusions that the politicians, the police, the judiciary or the constitution will defend us. All of Italy's major parties and electoral alliances are responsible for the turn to increasingly racist and nationalistic policies. In government, the 'Democratic' Party has completely betrayed its promises to institute the *Jus Soli* for second generation immigrants and speed up citizenship for childhood immigrants; it is planning new detention centres, and its Minitti-Orlando law has abolished the right of asylum seekers to appeal against rejection or appear in person before a court; it has paid the Libyan government to accept mass deportation and detention of immigrants, leading to new slave markets in the 21st century; and it has sent Italian troops to Niger to establish a border against immigrants at the southern edge of the Sahara. And this same Democratic Party was responsible for the bonfire of workers' rights and protections in its 'Jobs Act,' for which it was hailed by the International Monetary Fund and the European Union.

The Democratic Party's despicable rightward shift has encouraged the far-right coalition of the Northern League, Fratelli d'Italia and Forza Italia to indulge in ever more racist rhetoric. Berlusconi, the disgraced Italian Trump, is staging a political resurrection with a promise to deport 600,000 immigrants – a policy that could only be implemented through the wholesale militarisation of Italian society. The so-called 'anti-corruption' 5-Star Movement has promoted racist anti-immigrant rhetoric from its inception; as the governing party in the administration of Rome, the 5Star mayor ordered the violent and racist mass eviction of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees, asylum seekers and their families at the Piazza Indipendenza, with the police following orders to "Break their arms if they resist, they have to run away".

All these parties show a tender concern for 'rights' of Forza Nuova and Casa Pound and oppose those who resist the growth of fascism. Democratic Party ministers have expressed solidarity with fascist election candidates against anti-fascist protesters.

Next month's election will settle nothing. It can only herald a period of greater instability for a politically and morally bankrupt system. We can be certain that the fascists will try to exploit this; our task will be to use the weakness of the political system to win victories for the poor and oppressed and to defeat the fascists.

A new movement is growing

Thousands of immigrants and anti-fascists demonstrated in Macerata on 10 February - a week after Traini's racist attacks – in defiance of opposition from the leaderships of the Democratic Party, ARCI, the National Association of Italian Partisans and big trade union federations. A few days before the march, growing anger forced the Government to drop its outrageous attempt to ban it. Immigrant workers and anti-fascist youth are demonstrating against the fascists across Italy. There is an increasing awareness in Italy that the fight for immigrant rights and the fight against fascism are one and the same struggle. **That is the movement represented here today in Rome.**

This movement can win because it is far bigger and represents a far greater social power than the bands of fascist thugs with their deluded ideology. We must shut down the fascists before they become more dangerous. The fascists can only hope to grow and win if we fear to mobilise our own power. We cannot afford to be held back by those who are betraying us while they pretend to give us 'friendly advice' – those who told us not to march in Macerata, who tell us to respect 'free speech' for the fascists, who say that we must limit our demands, who told us that the 'Jobs Act' would create more jobs for us. The truth is that they fear our power far more than they fear the fascists.

- We fight for **full, equal citizenship rights** for everyone who lives, works and studies in Italy. We fight for that right as the people we are - whatever our national origin, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexuality, gender etc. We are all Italy today!
- We **build action** to stop all deportations, shut down the detention of immigrants & refugees, and make the racist immigration laws unworkable.
- We fight to **Open the Borders** of Italy & Europe, because that is what hundreds of thousands of us are doing in order to resolve the real material problems in our lives. It is what thousands of Italian citizens who rescue and defend immigrants and refugees in defiance of the law are doing. The only alternative to Open Borders is a world of greater barbarism and tyranny.
- We fight to unite workers in the major trade union federations with the militant movement of migrant workers and overcome the conservative bureaucrats who have surrendered the rights of the working class.
- We fight **By Any Means Necessary** because we cannot allow the powers-that-be to determine how we fight against their oppression, exploitation and racism.

There is no progressive future for Italy except as a more diverse, open and integrated society. Anti-immigrant racism is the central political weapon of the reactionary ruling class; our struggle is central to creating the political unity of the whole Italian working class as a force that can end capitalist exploitation and rule. It is central to ending the wave of reaction that is the result of successive government policies and economic measures: the increasing abuse, violence and murder of women, the attacks on gay/lesbian people, the bigotry and violence against Muslim communities. It is central to creating a future of hope for Italy's youth of all races.

And in building this integrated, fighting mass movement in Italy we will be a powerful force to create a Europe-wide immigrant & youth led movement against racism and poverty.

Endorsed by the International Trotskyist Committee (RWL/US & RIL/GB) and the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration & Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN/US)

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