

Italian elections continue destabilization strategy

The neo-conservative coalition led by the Milan-based real estate and media magnate Silvio Berlusconi has won the Italian political elections of March 27-28. The results of these elections, which many have compared to the historical political fight of 1948 when the First Italian Republic was created and the Christian-oriented parties blocked the immediate communist threat, now indicate that the political system that emerged after the Second World War has been liquidated forever. This historical system was centered around the role of the Christian Democracy (DC) of Alcide de Gasperi, followed by Aldo Moro, who in the 1950s and '60s built up Italy toward development and industrialization.

Their departure left the party exposed to mere power games and corruption. Indeed, after the last two years of intense political destabilization, scandals (*Tangentopoli* or "Bribe City") and effective media brainwashing, the DC, now renamed Popular Party (PPI) collapsed from about 30% to 11% of the vote, while the four parties forming the ruling coalition of Carlo Azeglio Ciampi with the PPI, have completely disappeared. They are the Socialist Party (led by Bettino Craxi till his recent expulsion for corruption), the Social Democratic Party (PSDI), the Republican Party (controlled by the free-marketeering La-Malfa family) and the Liberal Party. They were not able to reach the 4% minimum of votes. While the Republicans and Social Democrats were always quite small, the Liberal Party was Italy's ruling party in the pre-Mussolini era, and the Socialists held enough electoral clout during the 1980s to make Craxi himself prime minister for the longest mandate of any postwar head of government.

The winning coalition led by Berlusconi, sometimes called the "Italian Ross Perot," which included his Forza Italia ("Go Italy") party, the Northern League of regionalist and separatist Umberto Bossi, and the National Alli-

ance, an enlarged movement out of the old pro-Mussolini party, the MSI, got the absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies and a large relative majority in the Senate. The coalition, called the "Pole of Freedom," won 366 seats, against the 213 seats won by the "Progressive List" led by Achille Occhetto of the PDS (formerly known as the Communist Party) and 46 of the "Pact," a coalition with the PPI. The victory of Berlusconi's coalition has been amplified by the new electoral law, applied for the first time, a combination of direct election of candidates as in the United States and the old Italian proportional system, which gives a premium of more seats to the winner.

Forza Italia, a political formation which came into being just three months before the elections, has become the first party with 21% of the votes. Exploiting popular rage and a perfectly orchestrated media campaign, Forza Italia captured the volatile sympathy of the Italians, not with ideas and programs, but with slogans. This was the same for all the other parties and candidates which tacitly agreed to ignore all the real vital issues: economic depression, mass unemployment, war in the neighboring Balkans, the British-led political and economic destabilization, forced privatizations of state-owned industry, International Monetary Fund-imposed austerity. On the contrary, all the leading political groups, beginning with the PDS of Occhetto, the Northern League, and Mario Segni of the DC splinter group, went to the City of London to get a blessing from the financial and oligarchical high priests. The same free-market liberalism which has failed everywhere in eastern and western Europe has become the driving illusion of all the politicians and candidates.

These elections have been the continuation of a strategy of destabilization. Contrary to the "stability" propagandized by the media, the future for Italy and the Italians will be one of tears. The problems which were evaded by the election campaign are there, and are going to hit very hard. If Italians do not wake up quickly, and if the neo-liberal line is not stopped, the next government will be that of the IMF and of brutal austerity.—*Paolo Raimondi*

acteristic of the nation" [retranslated from the Italian—ed.].

The *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *Cincinnati Times-Star*, the *Herald Tribune*, all praised Mussolini. At the beginning of December 1922, little more than one month after the March on Rome, the liberal *New York Times* praised the "Fascist revolution." The evaluation was that the Fascists had been the ones who guaranteed the defeat of the factory occupation, that they would guarantee law, order, and stability. Mussolini was portrayed as the savior of the country, a

man independent of the Fascist movement and its extremists, a man capable of defeating the Communist threat.

On Dec. 19, the *New York Times* wrote that Mussolini's Fascism was the "most interesting experiment in government today" in the world: It was the end of the terrible period in which the peoples of all countries were oppressed by their governments, by the lack of efficiency, by their cowardice and their stupidity.

U.S. diplomacy directly supported Mussolini. U.S. Am-