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A breath of the people's fresh air

On the referendum results

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

15 June 2011

The last decade has not been an easy one. It's been one of continual retreat in the face of continuous attacks on the part of Italian capitalism and various governments on the living conditions of the Italian working classes.

The recent legislative attack on public goods such as water and the imposition of nuclear energy with the sole aim of producing profit, mindless of the health of millions of people, came as a result of the air of superiority and impunity which pervades the ruling classes, arrogantly sure of their ability to dissipate and undo what belongs to and is guaranteed to everyone, goods which are shared and available to all, safe in the knowledge that the popular classes had been brought to their knees, grappled by their throats and suffocated by the crisis, by the government's rightist populism, by the blackmail of the bosses and by the all too many trade-unionists and centre-left politicians who are ready and willing to collaborate.

The crisis in democracy that has been affecting the institutions for some time now, turning parliamentary politics into a simple

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matter of lobbies and majorities ensured by backhanders, has also been having some impact on the healthier parts of civil society, wrongly and underhandedly sending the message that all the various grassroots movements, protest committees, coordination bodies and grassroots union activities were pointless instruments of popular representation.

Instead, there has been ample demonstration that grassroots involvement and a strong desire for taking back our affairs into our own hands can be re-born from the crisis, as we have seen from the struggles against the high-speed rail link in the Val di Susa, the struggle in Vicenza against the US military base in the city, the migrants' revolt in Rosarno, the recent forms of workers' struggle and self-organization by casual workers against the crisis, and the spread throughout the country of committees against education cuts.

What had been feared in this referendum by all those who dedicated themselves to the long, hard campaign was that a quorum would not be reached and they would have to be satisfied with a huge majority of YES votes, but with an insufficient total number of votes to make a difference. Instead, we succeeded in building a vast mobilization in every part of the country thanks to the referendum committees, thanks to all those social and political forces who supported the YES vote, where for once our differences were merely bumps in the road and not obstacles. It all resulted in a united network of active and pro-active individuals spread throughout neighbourhoods, and the organized forces of anarchism were not lacking in their contribution both political and numerical on the various local committees.

For once it is good to be able to say "We won!", we managed to win the repeal of bits of laws with a clear class bias which, if passed, would have hit us badly with regard to our water, our air, our health, our wallets and our rights.

From today, we need to get back to our usual role of rising agent in the struggles and within the grassroots organizations so that

the drive from below that has been created does not dissolve with the headiness of the aftermath of the referendum, so that the laws which the people have had repealed are not seamed in through the back door in a slightly modified form by either the national government or local administrations. We should not forget the plans of the previous centre-left government and certain pink regional administrations, nor should we forget the anaemic anti-nuclear position of the centre-left and Italy's major unions... the next 5 years will by no means be plain sailing.

We never stopped struggling before or during the referendum campaign and even more so we will not stop struggling now. In our way, the way of anarchist communists, from below. Building strength from below, sowing the seeds of consciousness of what is ours and what we want as workers and as the popular classes.

Until we reach the libertarian alternative.