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Italy's new "security" law

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

15 May 2009

On 14th May, Italy's lower house passed a bill on security which for the first time establishes the legal basis for new discriminatory policies in all levels of civil society against other human beings and workers who emigrate to Italy in their search for a better future.

Despite the protests from civil society, despite the voices of common sense from people involved in the sector, despite the attempts to take the edge off some of the harshest parts of the new law, the introduction of the new crime of clandestinity effectively sanctions the enslavement of women and men who live in this country, depriving them of their most basic rights and handing them over to the international criminal organizations that control this huge market in manpower.

The huge security business that affects Italy's towns, neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals, families with carers, and factories will soon have parliamentary legitimacy and will legally open hunting season on all those who are marked out as enemies of the Italian people just because they are guilty of being clandestine. Without papers, because they arrived on ramshackle boats and dinghies and not airline flights; with out-of-date residence permits, because the economic crisis

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means they no longer have the jobs which the permits are linked to or because they are the victims of bureaucracy; “illegal”, because they are forced to work in undeclared jobs; invisible, because they are the children of clandestine immigrants; all potential enemies of the Italian people. And all this when it is thanks to them that there is money in Italy’s state coffers...

Now it will also be a criminal offence to “aid and abet clandestinity” by acting to show solidarity with immigrants without residency permits, to give them jobs, to treat them medical assistance, to welcome them into schools. So the witch-hunt will also hit all those who fight against discrimination, racism and the poison of neo-fascism that is slowly spreading through the neighbourhoods of our towns, those who refuse to accept this new barbarity that is being presented as “common sense”.

What is at stake is control of the territory, not only on a level of police repression, but also on that of ethnic segregation, of recourse to fundamentalist ideologies (neo-fascism, clericalism, militarism), of benefits to business and capitalism (abandoned buildings, clandestine immigrants homes and markets), all without the annoyance of dissenting voices. Now this control is being expended to the Mediterranean, to Libya, and the new method of expulsion^[1] and clandestinity is established in international waters. But are Italy’s patrol ships not “Italian soil”?

Immigrant working men and women are now the first to pay the price. Each new security wave will have the official sanction of Parliament and will spread fear under the threat of expulsion or 6 months detention in the new, “comfortable” detention centres run by Catholic organizations and Coops.

This terrorist-like control-made-law comes in addition to many other laws throughout the world which have the aim of keeping the world’s working class weak, in an attempt to hide the fact that it is the crisis in the economy and the creation of

zones of savage exploitation that is driving migrants to seek better living conditions.

Capital's ferocious economic exploitation fears no-one; it is unconcerned about the colour of your skin or which religion you are; it targets above all the weakest layers of the population, for the very reason that they can be blackmailed and thus more easily exploited. Yesterday it was Italian, Irish and Hispanic workers in the USA — today it is African, Eastern European and Middle-Eastern workers in democratic Europe.

Separating (political and social) rights from nationality, for the freedom of movement and choice of residence, is one way of combatting this tendency in capitalism.

These are the walls we have to knock down, by means of cosmopolitan grassroots bodies made up of Italians and new citizens, to fight together against discrimination and for full citizenship at every level, starting with the struggle for social security, for the right to housing and a decent job, for education and healthcare open to all.

In this struggle we should remember that not only do we have to worry about underhand institutional forms of repression (for example, the *ronde*, or vigilante patrols), but we also have to face up to the racism of today's neo-fascist groups that are infesting the country thanks to the institution's turning a blind eye to them.

We therefore need to build mass anti-fascist, anti-racist networks that can unite the cultural battle and protection of the memory of working-class struggles with campaigns to be able to act freely in our communities. These networks must be able to widen and spread the practice of direct solidarity so as to weaken these racist laws and the this poisoned climate as much as possible.

Together with the struggle for full citizenship, we need to encourage the direct participation of migrant workers in today's labour, social and community struggles, against the repressive, criminal, discriminatory and exploitative

logic that the government of this country is increasingly capable of demonstrating. We know that any reduction in our rights serves to weaken every form of dissent and alternative, always.