

Report from Italy by Liliana Gorini

Communists push cost of living vote

The referendum of June 9 is designed by the Nazi-Communists to profit from the government's 'recovery' delusions.

Emerging from the night session which ended the Communist central committee meeting on the causes of the heavy electoral defeat on May 12, one of the rising stars of the Communist Party, Renato Zangheri, told the press that no agreement had been reached on anything, except on one point: the need to focus all efforts on the referendum on the cost of living escalator.

Forty-four million Italians will be forced back to the polls on June 9, less than one month after the administrative elections, in order to give the Communists a chance to take revenge against the coalition government which won on May 12. Formally, the abrogative referendum will decide whether the Italians want to stick to the government-labor agreement reached on Feb. 14, 1983, on cutting four percentage points in the cost of living escalator, or whether to abrogate this agreement.

The five parties forming the government coalition, Christian Democracy, Socialist, Social Democratic, Liberal and Republican, agreed to vote "no" in the referendum, after many weeks of attempts to avoid it by making better offers to the trade unions, which were not accepted by the Communists. The reason given by the five-party coalition is that it was thanks to the cuts in the cost of living escalator that Italy's economic situation got "better" and the inflation was "reduced."

In Italy, as in the United States, the present administration claims that

the country is in the middle of a promising "recovery," while the real economic situation is getting more and more dramatic as a result of the International Monetary Fund's genocidal austerity policy, accepted by all parties, from the Communists to the fascists.

The Communists, extremist parties, and the Greenies, who will vote "yes" to abrogating the cuts in the cost of living escalator, do not plan at all to improve the living standards of the Italian population with the referendum. They themselves admitted that even if the "yes" wins on June 9, nothing will really change for the workers, heavily hit by IMF-dictated austerity. They will get \$10 more in their June pay envelopes right after the vote, only to see the \$10 disappear in July, since the industry association, Confindustria, already announced that it will start new negotiations on the cost of living escalator at the end of June, abolishing all the agreements reached before, including the result of the referendum.

In short, the Communists are planning to buy with 10 miserable dollars the votes they could not get on May 12, and then demand again a role inside a future government, as the only ones who could impose on the cheated workers what they call "equal austerity."

The main purpose of the referendum is therefore to demonstrate that the Communists are not on their way out of the Italian political scene, as many hope, and that the vote on May 12 was only a brief parenthesis in a

long Soviet destabilization of the country. For this reason the Communist central committee decided to postpone to after the referendum, any decision on an extraordinary party congress, which was demanded by all local federations to ask for the head of General Secretary Alessandro Natta.

The internal fights which erupted after the May 12 defeat have been put aside for the moment, and an artificial unity was reached on the need to win the referendum. A few hours before the government's final decision on whether the referendum would take place or not, the Communists had already filled the walls of Rome with posters calling on the voters to vote "yes" on June 9, and a mass rally had been held in Piazza Navona in Rome on the issue.

Moreover, on May 30 the Italian press was filled with the news that the pro-Nazi MSI party of Giorgio Almirante was joining the ultraleft in urging a "yes" vote!

If the five-party government led by Premier Craxi sticks to the fairytale of an Italian recovery, and keeps accepting one after the other all the IMF demands, Italy might soon become the second Mediterranean country hit by social chaos and Soviet-run destabilization after Papandreu's Greece. Premier Craxi's party has announced that he will step down if the "no" vote loses in the referendum.

The decisions which were just taken by Treasury Minister Giovanni Goria and Finance Minister Bruno Visentini, the most loyal IMF agents in Italy, do not promise anything good for June 9: In the midst of a health red alert and the eruption of Legionnaire's disease, cholera, and AIDS cases, Goria and Visentini announced further cuts in health care and pensions, further taxes, and new increases in the gasoline price, exactly as the IMF annual report on Italy had demanded.