

Italian “left” supports new Prime Minister Mario Monti

Marc Wells**18 November 2011**

The appointment by ex-Stalinist state president Giorgio Napolitano of technocrat Mario Monti for the post of premiership, supported by the “left” parties and trade unions, pave the way to unprecedented attacks on the working class and the possible installation of an authoritarian regime.

Mario Monti, an economics professor, was appointed to the post of European Commissioner in 1994, by right-wing premier Silvio Berlusconi—whom he is now replacing as prime minister. He was confirmed in 1999 by then Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema, an ex-Stalinist, now a Democrat. His loyalty to the financial oligarchy is the reason why he’s been selected to run a post-Berlusconi government.

Monti’s job is to ensure that the financial imbalances of the state budget will be charged on workers, leaving the capitalist elite responsible for the economic crisis untouched. The foundation of his work was laid by the Berlusconi government’s last act, the Stability Law, based on his letter of intent to the European Union (see “Italian government prepares historic attack on workers”). It passed with no opposition from the “left.”

Monti’s installation bypassed democratic procedures; it was not the result of a popular vote, but of the reaction of Italian bourgeois parties to movements on the financial markets. Monti declared he will rule for no less than 18 months—that is, until the next regularly scheduled elections. The new government is very weak and unstable, however, entirely lacking popular support.

Financial circles initially responded enthusiastically to his appointment, with stock markets rebounding worldwide. Such joy was short-lived, however, and banks soon bid up bond interest rate levels to alarming heights after Monti’s nomination.

Monti’s rise to power would not have been possible

without the support of the so-called “left.” In his speech announcing successful consultations with all parties and social partners, he praised the cooperation of the “left” for “offering concrete contributions by way of possible sacrifices.”

The Democratic Party (PD) has spearheaded this development. PD Secretary Pier Luigi Bersani confirmed his “full and convinced support to Monti’s effort and attempt.” In fact, he “encouraged Monti to pursue with determination and speed without time limits.” His enthusiasm parallels that of neo-fascist Gianfranco Fini, leader of the Third Pole, who finds Monti “determined and conscious of the necessity to act quickly and well.”

That ex-Stalinists and neo-fascists find themselves aligned is not a coincidence. To counter the rising tide of working class opposition and the current government’s fragility, the bourgeois establishment is scavenging for a possible coalition. These two seemingly opposite poles find themselves in fundamental agreement on the fact that, if needed, they will rule jointly to suppress workers and won’t exclude authoritarian forms.

A grand coalition is being openly discussed. PD leader Anna Finocchiaro, an ex-Stalinist, declared: “we will have to find new tools for rapprochement and comparison among political forces. We will have to experiment a new phase from which a more mature bipartisanship can be forged.”

The PD has pursued this policy for some time. A year ago, Bersani presented what he called a “democratic platform,” a coalition vehicle offered to the Third Pole, as reported by *La Repubblica*, “not against Berlusconi, but beyond Berlusconi.”

The collaboration of ex-Communist Party elements like Bersani with bourgeois forces in the 1990s was

fully responsible for 17 years of Berlusconi's dominance and now for a technocratic government. One such figure is Nichi Vendola.

Secretary of Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (SEL—Left, Ecology, Freedom) and governor of Puglia, he has come out openly in favor of Monti. Vendola is a renowned supporter of the European Union and its free market diktat. On his web site, he states that: "Monti is certainly correct when he declares that there can't be many disagreements on what needs to be done." Moreover, he pledged his support for "a purposeful government as the [finance] world is distressed by the conditions of the Italian debt."

Vendola is fully aware of what he is facilitating but acts like Pontius Pilatus: "I don't even want to imagine a technocratic government supported by PD and Third Pole because it risks completing what Berlusconi was not able to." Conscious that the "left" to which he belongs is preparing conditions for the emergence of ultra right-wing, anti-proletarian forces, he admits that it would be "a government that encourages the right to refurbish its virginity and the left to commit suicide."

What remains of *Communist Refoundation* (PRC) continues to play the same treacherous, anti-working-class role as when it participated in the 2006-2008 Prodi government. At that time, it helped Prodi cut pensions and welfare, and backed imperialist interventions in Afghanistan and South Lebanon.

PRC Secretary Paolo Ferrero illustrates the hypocrisy with which his party has betrayed workers time and again. He echoed Vendola's vernacular about renewed "virginity of the right," and at the same time made an appeal to the very forces that seek an alliance with the neo-fascists: "I make an appeal to the center-left, from Bersani to Di Pietro to Vendola, so that they decide before too late that immediate elections based on a democratic front are the only way to defeat the right and exit Berlusconism."

The Pabloites of *Sinistra Critica* "want to be clear from the beginning: the fall, or better the ousting [by European bankers] of Berlusconi and the end of his career are sacrosanct objectives. Period." Their narrow objective was Berlusconi's overthrow, a task they trusted the bankers, not workers, to carry out. For them, Berlusconi's government "represents the ferocious and immoral face of liberal policies."

Whatever superficial and toothless criticisms it makes

of neo-liberal policies, *Sinistra Critica*'s effectively justifies support for Monti or any other bourgeois politician capable of ousting Berlusconi at the behest of finance capital.

Their solution has definite ends: "We try, from the students demonstration on November 17 to the national protest for the defense of water and public assets on November 26 in the hope of a real general strike." These spineless actions are merely intended to allow some steam out and make sure the protests are confined, posing no threat to the system.

As for the trade unions, CISL has enthusiastically supported Monti's nomination, which the union's Secretary Raffaele Bonanni finds "reassuring for workers." In fact, his prescription is "austerity, to keep the situation from deteriorating."

The ex-Stalinist CGIL Secretary Susanna Camusso expressed her approval, declaring that Monti "is showing willingness to work not on the emergency but on the reforms this country needs." Like in Greece, those "reforms" will destroy the lives of millions of workers, while the "left" and trade union bureaucrats will assist and speed up the process.

For the last two decades, this "left" provided to be instrumental in immobilizing the working class and allowing Berlusconi to stay in power. Now, its political bankruptcy also allows neo-fascistic elements of Berlusconi's party and the xenophobic Northern League to pose as populist opponents of Monti's policies. It is precisely the subordination of the "left" to the capitalist class that creates the conditions for the emergence of these ultra-right-wing forces.



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