

Neo-fascist Georgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy wins general election

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Georgia Meloni of the Brothers of Italy (FdI) party, the political successor of the Fascist Party of World War II-era dictator Benito Mussolini, won last night's Italian general election.

With 26 percent of the vote, she will seek to form a government with Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing Forza Italia party (8 percent) and Matteo Salvini's far-right Lega (9 percent). Due to the extra seats granted under the Italian electoral system to the party receiving the most votes, the FdI and its allies are projected to have an absolute majority in both houses of parliament. They would have around 235 of the Chamber's 400 seats and 115 of the Senate's 200 seats.

The elections saw a disintegration of the parties falsely designated by capitalist media as the "left." The Democratic Party (PD), Italy's main social-democratic party, fell to less than 19 percent, while populist Five-Star Movement (M5S) won 15.5 percent. The Popular Union, a coalition including remnants of Italy's *Rifondazione Comunista* party that was endorsed by the pseudo-left Podemos government in Spain and Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France, received only 1.35 percent.

The return of Mussolini's descendants to direct rule over Italy, for the first time since the end of World War II 77 years ago, is a warning to workers worldwide. The only way forward against imperialist war and social austerity is a break with a bankrupt political establishment and a struggle to mobilize the working class, independently of the existing parties and national trade union bureaucracies, in a struggle for socialism.

Since the 1991 Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union, European governments of all stripes have imposed austerity, bank bailouts for the rich, and waged imperialist wars. In Italy, *Rifondazione Comunista* and the PD played leading roles in government to impose these anti-worker policies. With

the COVID-19 pandemic and the NATO war on Russia in Ukraine, the bourgeoisie is shifting even further to the right. Amid rising working class anger over the global surge of inflation, the ruling class is using Meloni's populist demagoguery to try to build a police state inspired by 20th-century fascism.

Last night, Meloni began her victory speech by indicating that she saw it as a triumph of the fascist tradition. Meloni, whom official European media euphemistically refer to as "post-fascist," said, "I dedicate this victory to all those who are no longer here and who deserved to be alive tonight."

She insisted that she would lead a "responsible" government and tried to use her gender to give herself a progressive gloss. Demanding "mutual respect" from other political organizations in Italy, she pledged to "concentrate on what unites us rather than what divides us. The time has come to be responsible."

Meloni told the press that, as Italy's first female prime minister, her election was "a step forward. I defined it as breaking the 'glass ceiling,' one that still exists in many western countries, not only in Italy, preventing women from achieving important public roles in society."

Meloni also sought to calm concerns in ruling circles that she might make nationalist criticisms of the NATO war on Russia or the EU's multi-trillion-euro bank bailouts for the super-rich. She emphasized that she supported Italy's position inside the European Union (EU) and the NATO alliance, as well as the war against Russia in Ukraine.

"We will be guarantors, without ambiguity, of Italy's positioning and of our uttermost support to the heroic battle of the Ukrainian people," she said. She also backed the surge in EU military spending and the EU's cut-off of purchases of Russian natural gas: "If we had

an EU more like the one we imagine, we would have developed a more effective defense policy, invested in energy security and maintained short value chains to avoid reliance on other—often untrustworthy—countries for gas, raw materials, commodities, chips and other goods.”

PD leader Enrico Letta gave a press conference today conceding defeat. He insisted that the PD would “not allow Italy to leave the heart of Europe” and would defend “European values” as enshrined in Italy’s 1946 post-war constitution. He pledged to take a “hard and demanding position” to build majority support for “progressive and democratic values,” which Letta said his party had found impossible to do successfully during this election.

Meloni’s election victory is the product of the bankruptcy of the PD and its pseudo-left satellites. They speak not for democracy or historical progress, but for layers of the bourgeoisie and of the pro-imperialist affluent middle classes who support war with Russia, EU bank bailouts, inaction on COVID-19, and petty-bourgeois gender politics. During the campaign, they attacked Meloni largely from the right: first, claiming that she was anti-EU and pro-Russian, or “aligned on the pro-Putin front” in Letta’s words; and, secondly, that she was hostile to women.

Neither criticism proved effective against Meloni—who repeatedly made bellicose statements denouncing Russia and began her speeches with the refrain, “I am Giorgia, I am a woman, I am a mother, I am Italian, I am a Christian, and you can’t take that away from me.”

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The Italian ruling class and political establishment carefully prepared Meloni’s victory and groomed her for it. Meloni was invited earlier this month to speak to the Ambrosetti economic forum, an influential Italian business forum held on the shores of Lake Como. After a friendly election debate on September 12 between Meloni and Letta, Germany’s *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote, “no one demonizes Giorgia Meloni in Italy, not even the press. She is sailing to her election victory, at least that is how it appears.”

This is because Letta—whose party was a key component alongside Salvini’s far-right Lega and the M5S of the outgoing Italian coalition government led

by former European central banker Mario Draghi—himself has only the most limited political differences with the far right.

Among workers and youth in Italy and across Europe, however, there is deep opposition to policies jointly outlined by Meloni and Letta. Food and heating prices are skyrocketing, as energy conglomerates rake in billions of euros in super-profits from gouging consumers. With economists projecting that Italy could lose a half-million jobs or more due to energy shortages this winter, an explosive movement is being prepared.

This reality, of which ruling circles are well aware, played the decisive role in the Italian political establishment’s friendly treatment of Meloni during the election campaign. It is legitimizing fascism as it seeks to install a government that will be as aggressive as possible in waging war and repressing working-class opposition.

However, the lies of the ruling elite have not succeeded in whitewashing the legacy of Mussolini and Hitler in the eyes of millions. Today several high schools were occupied in Milan, Rome, and Palermo as students protested Meloni’s election victory.

Students occupying the Manzoni high school in Milan told the daily *La Repubblica* they opposed “exploitative and deadly temp work” facing their generation and the “dangerous and repressive political situation, given the recent electoral results.” Speaking to Meloni and the Confindustria business federation, they said, “We do not want to take more steps back, act as if nothing was happening and wait for you to change things.”

The decisive question is to orient this emerging movement of mass social opposition to the building of an international movement in the working class against imperialist war and the capitalist system.



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