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Italy

Black Lives Matter mobilisations in Italy

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The demonstration called in Turin, in solidarity with the African Americans in revolt over the murder of George Floyd, seemed to be one of those routine solidarity actions which we do because we feel we have to, but too often do not really have much of an impact with local people.

Black Lives Matter in Turin

Almost unexpectedly the square filled up with thousands of very young people, many of them second-generation Italians of ethnic heritage, mostly with self-produced signs, who had responded to the appeal launched by "No justice no peace" and the "Rete 21 marzo", which Black Out publicised.

The home-made posters not only highlighted the denunciation of the brutal murder committed by the Minneapolis police against George Floyd, but also the racism that is definitely present and rooted in our country. Many placards, in fact, remembered Soumaila Sacko, the farm worker shot dead exactly two years ago in the plain of Gioia Tauro. [\[1\]](#)

Speakers who had experienced racism on a daily basis condemned the institutional violence that many young people are forced to endure on a daily basis and which worsened during the "lockdown".

The sit-in then turned into a beautiful procession that criss-crossed the centre of Turin. We were not going to let the streets be owned by the right and the racists

The comrades of the Anticapitalist Left of Turin participated providing a food stall and taking part in the parade, trying to talk to a new generation, which, although distrustful of the organized forms of politics, began to grasp the link between racism and capitalism.

We are faced with a movement that is crossing the borders of the United States, and which must be followed with attention.

As an old revolutionary used to say, the old mole continues to dig into history despite the fact that it seems to be sailing in other directions...

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And elsewhere

Demonstrations were also held or being organised in Milan, Bologna (where it seems the Sardines played some role), Rome, Florence, Palermo, Udine, Genova, Bari, Mestre (Venice), Montepulciano, Catanzaro, Catania, Messina, Parma, Brescia and Pisa. There may be other actions not reported to this source. The ones in Bologna, Milan and Rome were thousands strong. In Rome the Piazza del Popolo was full.

Other issues raised by the demonstrators not mentioned above were:

" the notorious *ius soli* controversy where children born in Italy of migrants do not get automatic citizenship and have to go through a process when they are 18

" Salvini's infamous security decree which attacked migrants rights and has still not been entirely repealed even though he is no longer in the government

The so-called centre left or 'progressive forces' have been very poor on these issues. It was a Democratic Party (PD) minister who brought in the law to curb migrants coming from the African coast by helping Libya to take people from the sea and dump them in terrible camps which have been denounced in the press and by human rights organisations. The PD is totally driven by electoral considerations and has been terrified by Lega leader Salvini's racist populism. Former PD prime minister, Renzi, who now has his own Italia Viva party even bailed out Salvini the other day by not voting for him to go to trial over the despicable refusal to allow a shipload of extenuated migrants dock in an Italian port.

During lockdown people woke up the fact that the food chain depended on the starvation pay and horrendous conditions of migrant rural workers. The PD/Five Star Movement government has put forward a timid temporary regularisation of the sector. Demonstrators called for full labour and citizen rights.

One positive development at the moment is a growing expression of solidarity with Black Lives Matters from entire first division football teams and from prominent stars. Football in Italy has lagged behind the British experience (which is not exemplary either) in this respect.

This new movement will need to link up with incipient mobilisations to defend working people from current and upcoming job cuts and to force the government to adopt a truly green recovery plan that both engages with inequality and environmental needs. Neither the current trade union leaderships, the official left of centre parties or their satellites are likely to fight for such an alternative - they are all committed to some sort of national social contract or 'estates generales'.

If there is no mobilisation and if the mainstream left of centre maintains its line then the risk is that the hard right will possibly win the next election. Polls show a decline in Salvini's support but his party still just has the highest poll rating. The overall right wing score would constitute a majority. Worryingly Meloni's neo-fascist Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) is on 16% and her personal rating is today higher than Salvini, whose anti-migrant bombast did not work so well during the pandemic and after losing the interior ministry.

Translation from [Sinistra Anticapitalista](#) and further reporting by Dave Kellaway for **International Viewpoint**.

PS:

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[1] He had been organising the super-exploited migrants who can work up more than 12 hours a day for 3 euros an hour. [Translator's note]