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## From “hunt the Southerner” to “hunt the Romanian”

Control, exploitation and gender violence

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

6 November 2007

Not too long ago it was enough for someone to be a “*terrone*”<sup>1</sup> for them to be immediately branded as a mafioso, of a violent nature and inferior to the pure race of Northern Italy. If they were found “in the wrong place” looking for work in the north or having difficulty finding somewhere to live or work, they could easily be sent back to their home towns by means of an expulsion order.

Today, many of the children and grandchildren of those “*terroni*” who actually managed to find work in the North have forgotten all this, thanks also to the influence of the powers that be, and are now happily taking it out on the latest arrivals, especially those from Eastern European countries, despite the fact that many of these countries are now part of the same European Union. And the harder it gets for them to get through the month on their paltry wages, the greater the chance that people will start thinking about the enormous economic and

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<sup>1</sup> “*Terrone*” is a derogatory name for Italians from the poor agricultural South.

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FdCA Statement on the anti-Romanian witch-hunt in Italy.

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social inequalities that exist, and the greater the need to find a scapegoat.

Every time an economic crisis rears its head and large swathes of the population start to encounter economic and social problems, some new group of “*terroni*” to blame the troubles on can generally be found. Naturally, Fini & Co. are happy to fan the flames of the situation, but then they are fascists (albeit these days in white shirts and tailored suits) and so the racism that lies at the root of their ideology all too easily comes to the surface.

What is much more serious instead is exactly what has happened in recent days, though it falls perfectly into place in the current political climate where the entire political body is moving further and further to the right. A woman is assaulted by a Romanian and is lying on death’s door<sup>2</sup>. The response? A government decree examining the possibility of expelling all Romanians from the country; the shacks where various groups of individuals struggle to survive are bulldozed; vigilante groups roam the streets attacking foreigners. And these measures, as ineffective as they are demagogic, are presented as being a solution to all the problems, problems ranging from the aggressive nature of groups of social outcasts who annoy drivers at traffic lights, to the all too visible poverty on the streets. On a local level too, so many fine mayors around the country are sweeping their dirt under the carpet. With the media frenzy fed by falsified data..

It makes us even angrier when we think of all the women who have been barbarously murdered over recent months by men, husbands or boyfriends, often attributed simply as “crimes of passion”, not worthy of similar public outrage, grief or determination to stop it happening again. Second-class victims because they were killed within their families and not by some crazed murderer who could be used as a handy

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<sup>2</sup> The woman unfortunately died, as a result of the vicious assault.

scapegoat. The important thing is not to dwell too much on the growing poverty, the non-existence of social policies for supporting those in difficulty or welcoming migrants, the absence of housing policies, the dismantling of public and social services. The world of politics no longer wants to govern society except through brute force, civil society has given in to the simplistic equation that foreigners=criminals. So what do we do with the fascists who attacked some Romanians? Do we expel them from Italy or from the European Union? Do we take away their citizenship? Or are we supposed to consider them the saviours of our fatherland of Italy?

The trouble is that the call for a witch-hunt is aimed at the country's workers, who have other concerns. How many real problems lie hidden behind this problem of security, as a result of the government's desire to turn society into a single, silent, penitent flock? The rising cost of living, labour contracts not respected, ever-increasing precarity, more and more services privatized and so more expensive and less efficient, rising indebtedness, and consequently greater ability to blackmail society, more social control. More fear. Fear of the future. Fear of the bag-snatcher. Fear of anyone different...

We are in no doubt that to have safer cities, there must be less poverty in the cities. They must be cities where there is the money to provide homes for those without them; where investing in culture involves dialogue between cultures and facilitating integration in schools and not all-nighter "White Night" festivals or outdoor fashion shows; where no-one is clandestine and everyone can work legally and not be subjected to blackmail; where desperation is not an endless chain that ends up killing the weaker members of society, usually women. Not cities where children are kicked out of their cardboard shacks just because people are afraid of foreigners.

But in order for us to have the sort of cities we want, not like those they are creating for us, we need to give new life to the class struggle, we must act so that inequalities are reduced, so

that there can be renewed solidarity between men and women of all nationalities. Everyone must know the limits of this society, a society where the wealth of the few and the exploitation of the many keeps growing and where violence against women is a permanent backdrop.

**Against racist, sexist policies and the growing police state**

**Unity, solidarity, class and feminist struggle!**