

Report from Rome by Antonio Gaspari

LaRouche slate tilts Rome elections

The electorate set the Greens back and rebuffed the traditional parties. "Freedom for LaRouche" ran its first slate.

Three days after the Oct. 29 municipal elections in Rome, precise figures on the percentages and preference votes cast were still not available. National dailies that came out on Tuesday, Oct. 31, with banner headlines promoting the victory in Italy's capital city of the Christian Democracy and the five-party ruling coalition, soon were reporting on polemics, charges of fraud, and uncertain figures.

The Communist Party, which had at first howled over the fact that some 33,000 votes had been mistakenly assigned to the Christian Democrats, has gotten very quiet. Now, the Christian Democracy accuses the board of elections of being some kind of "Communist coven" run by a Communist with an ultraleft past.

If the figures currently available stand up, all the parties, except for the Socialist Party, both in the government and the opposition, should be worried. The analysis of the vote shows an obvious disaffection on the voters' part. If one looks at the vote not from the standpoint of the percentages, which have grown thanks to the smaller number of voters, but in absolute numbers of votes won with respect to the last municipal elections in 1985, the protest is loud and clear.

The largest party, the Christian Democracy, has actually lost about 60,000 voters, and another 40,000 have dropped away from the smaller Republican, Social Democratic, and Liberal parties, adding up to 100,000 votes lost, or 6% less, for four of the five parties that make up the present national government. The Socialist

Party, thanks to the decline of the Communist Party, and to its own hefty financial resources, is the only one that gained 50,000 votes—not enough to outweigh the loss of the other members of the five-party coalition.

The Communist Party-led opposition also declined. Despite a shrill and aggressive campaign, the environmentalist, anti-working class New Communist Party of party boss Achille Occhetto lost 110,000 votes.

There was also a setback for the Greens, who ran for office with the backup of an alliance with the Radical extremists and the top leadership of "Proletarian Democracy," a left split-off from the Communist Party. Their top candidate, Gianfranco Amendola, had released statements to the daily *La Repubblica* where he claimed to expect over 10% of the vote. The slate did not even reach 7%, which means a loss of 45,000 votes in Rome in comparison to last June's European Parliament elections.

The "Anti-Prohibition League" headed up by Radical Party leader Marco Pannella, campaigning for drug legalization, was also trounced, and may not have attained the minimum to seat a single candidate.

The mood of citizen protest expressed itself in not voting (there was a 20% abstention rate), blank and spoiled ballots, which were 92,000 (about 5%), and in smaller formations which collectively garnered some 53,000 votes.

A good result was obtained by the 220-candidate slate called *Pensionati—Libertà per LaRouche*, (Retir-

ees—Freedom for LaRouche), running for the first time in the notoriously difficult, polarized Roman electoral contest. The 5,000 votes given to this group are important, considering that parties with representation in Parliament and a national daily paper, such as Proletarian Democracy, only got 10,000 votes.

The slate is a coalition between the LUPA, a retirees party begun in 1979 by attorney Mario Raccagna, collaborators of Lyndon LaRouche in Italy, and others sharing the principles of freedom from injustice, economic austerity, and cultural decadence; candidates ranged from journalists, teachers, and musicians, to bus drivers. Its vote may be compared to the 800 votes the LaRouche-linked European Labor Party had received in the last local elections held in Rome in 1985. This fivefold gain was despite the presence in the race of five "senior citizens" parties; the other four had been created by the big parties, and received a lot of help, money, and television coverage, in order to split and dilute the vote of Rome's 600,000 retirees.

The vote breakdown is very interesting since people had to choose both the municipal representatives, and the district ones: *Pensionati—Libertà per LaRouche* got almost 1,000 votes more in the districts than in the City Hall race. This means that people voting traditionally for the big parties at City Hall, voted for "Libertà per LaRouche" in their local districts, showing in this way a recognition of the candidates personally.

Moreover, the great merit of the electoral decline of the Greens must be ascribed to the Freedom for LaRouche movement. It was the only slate to denounce the fraud of so-called environmentalist parties, with its posters, "No to Ecological Taxes," pasted up all over Rome.