

Mafia Children Are Being Removed From Their Families in Italy

news

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In Italy Mafia children are being removed from their families

Italy has expanded a program called “Liberi di scegliere” (Free to choose), aimed at removing children from mafia families in order to “break the cycle of generational criminality”. Initially operating in Calabria, the program will now be extended to Sicily and Campania — regions associated with the main Mafia criminal organizations, the “‘ndrangheta” in Calabria, the “Cosa nostra” in Sicily and the Camorrista Mafias in Campania. The program allows authorities to remove children only if they can prove they are at risk of family criminality. So far, under this scheme 150 children have been removed and placed in foster homes in secret locations^[1]. The project has been praised for fighting the mafia, but also criticized by those who claim that even mafiosi have the right to be parents. According to the magistrate, «exposure to the youth is the best way to eradicate the mafia phenomenon in our society».^{[2][3]}

Rather than viewing the Mafia and organized crime as the result of the actions of individual families or individuals — which is a bourgeois approach — Marxist analysis argues that they are derived from capitalist society and its economic relations. Capitalism itself creates conditions conducive to the development of organized crime because it generates social inequality and poverty, which becomes fertile ground for the formation of criminal organizations that threaten the working class, trade unions and their activists. Corruption and impunity of the authorities also contribute to the flourishing of mafia organizations by providing them with protection. The lack of alternative paths to social mobility for many people leads them to seek success through criminal acts. Although the mafia may have its roots in the lower strata of society, such as the working class or the lumpenized proletariat, its goal is not the liberation of the working class. On the contrary, mafia structures often seek to emulate or ally with the ruling class by seeking power and wealth through illegal methods, as in their context this is the only available way to achieve this goal.

Although the “Liberi di scegliere” program bills itself and its intentions as “fighting the mafia”, it doesn’t address the underlying problems of the economic system. Removing children from families does not address the root problems, but is only a temporary and limited way of dealing with the symptoms without addressing the very capitalist social order that creates the conditions for the emergence of criminal structures. Moreover, such programs not only don’t solve the root problems, but often even increase them. By taking children away from mafia families, the authorities often contribute to the growing reaction of this organized crime and the pressure on the working class.

The Italian Mafia has historically been used by the state as a tool to suppress trade union and communist activity. It acted as a force that threatened the working class and maintained the status quo, favoring the interests of the elite and ruling elite circles. This created conditions for close cooperation between the mafia and various spheres of state power, including the government, the police and political parties. Against this background, official statements about the desire to get rid of the mafia seem hypocritical, since mafia structures and other criminal organizations have proved to be convenient instruments of control and manipulation in the past and will continue to be so in the future, when they become useful for maintaining power and deterring, by terrorist means, any possible threats from the exploited class or political opponents.

