

# THE STRUGGLE

of the Immigrants and Refugees Movement

## ROSARNO CASE

### New problems, but the same old story

Everybody knows what happened in Rosarno few months ago. Television showed many images and newspaper dedicated a lot of articles to explain what was going on: two African boys were shot, immigrants workers organized a demonstration, and Rosarno people reacted to that demonstration attacking black workers and forcing the Government to bring immigrants away.

But why? As usual journalists didn't show the full truth. It is not enough to tell what happened, it's important to explain also *why* things happened.

Rosarno's violence in fact shows clearly what is really happening in Italy regarding immigrants and their job exploitation. It doesn't matter that certain politicians like to say to Italian people that immigrants are criminal, it becomes every day clearer and clearer that this is not true.

Firstly, immigrants are in Italy to work and very often the real criminals are the Italians who are exploiting them. Secondly, immigrants in Italy are not a problem but something Italian people need. Let's think about the farm job, like oranges and tomatoes gathering: no Italian like to do that kind of job anymore because the work is hard and the payment is very low.

Thirdly, Italian politicians know very well that an immigrant with *permesso di soggiorno* is an immigrant who can defend his human rights, and so they prefer to keep him irregular, not giving him *soggiorno*. In this way that immigrant can not react to the job exploitation and he must accept the low payment that the padron gives him.

This must not surprise you: as Immigrants and Refugees Movement we believe that Rosarno is not an unusual fact, but the prove that African people exploitation never ended. It's going on, in different ways, but it's still going on.

The European economic system did always behave in this way: to exploit Africa's resources in order to accumulate richness. Europe started long time ago, when European countries went to Africa to colonize it. The reason was that Africa was full of goods that in Europe were not existing: like gold, diamonds, minerals, coffee, cacao and

so on. And even Africans themselves in those days were considered goods, and because of this a lot of Africans became slaves. In this way European countries for many years have been accumulating richness and African countries were stolen of all their possibilities to develop and improve their life conditions.

During last century, one by one, African countries finally gained their independence. However, many people don't know that European countries did not stop exploiting Africans.

In our days, we know, slavery is not legal anymore. And so European countries had to invent a system to keep Africans in slavery conditions, but in a hidden way. That's why they invented that paper known as *Permesso di Soggiorno*.

Every immigrant wish to have a *Permesso di Soggiorno*, but what they don't know is that there is nothing more unfair than that paper. In fact a human being is supposed to have his own human rights by

his very nature and not because his holding a paper in his hands! By inventing *Permesso di Soggiorno* European countries divided immigrants in two groups: those with rights and those without rights. In this way the European economy can still have a large number of slaves to use in hard work (like farm workers, builders, welders...).

In order to understand this, let's try to imagine if all the immigrants who were working in Rosarno had a *Permesso di Soggiorno*: everybody would have had the right to report to police the padron who didn't want to pay,

the payment for one day job would have been higher, and everybody would have had the right to ask for a regular contract. But this, if you think, would have been the very end of oranges business! If every immigrant were paid 50 or 60 euro a day for the oranges gathering, in spite of the usual 20 euro, the cost of the oranges would have been much higher in the shops, and the Italian people would have had to pay double to buy a kilo of oranges. That's why, in order to keep the price of oranges low, Italian economy needs to have a large number of African immigrants without *Permesso di Soggiorno*.

What happened in Rosarno is the prove that our struggle must go on, because until even one single immigrant is kept in slavery condition by not giving him *Soggiorno*, we have the duty to fight for him. (Gian-Luca)



# Abahlali baseMjondolo

## From South Africa to Castel Volturno, united by the struggle for freedom



"We are poor not stupid!" This is one of the most powerful slogan that Abahlali baseMjondolo uses to repeat to the world since five years ago they started their struggle against oppression.

Abahlali baseMjondolo ("Those who live in shacks" in IsiZulu) is the strongest social movement of South Africa totally organized and directed by poor people who live in slums.

Abahlali has come to the conclusion that only if they take seriously their lives, only if they stop believing in someone who will come to save them, something will change. That is why they decided to struggle. And struggle is not easy, maybe is the most difficult way to freedom but it is also the only real way. People of the Abahlali movement have been beaten, arrested and someone has even been killed. Anyway, struggle is a school where is possible to learn how to be a better human being.

It sound strange that the black people of South Africa is still forced to struggle. When in 1994 Mandela became the first Black president a great hope was in people's hearts. Black people thought that a real freedom could be enjoyed and that the goods of the country could share among all the people. Unfortunately politicians decided that rich must become richer and poor poorer. The struggle is not over. Once they struggled for freedom and today they struggle for development.

Abahlali refuses to be ladder for politicians and they have decided to boycott general elections. They have realized that no one politician is going to change their destiny, and they have realized that it is only through self organization and autonomy that they will succeed in changing poor people's life. they have decided that it is time for the poor to govern themselves.

Abahlali baseMjondolo movement believes that everyone is important in the struggle, that there are not enlightened people who have received the task of leading people. In the movement it is said that "a good leader must learn to be led by the people". Every person matters and every opinion is valued and listened to. The movement knows that poor people are the real expert of their own suffering and that no one from outside can

tell people what to do. Poor people are the experts and professors of their suffering and they know how to fight poverty.

2010 for South Africa is a very important year, it is the year of FIFA World Cup. The eyes of the whole world are watching the country. Unfortunately, poor people of South Africa will not enjoy this historical event. They cannot even afford tickets to watch the matches. In the shack settlements they do not even have electricity to watch matches on TV. Worse of all, the government do not want tourists to see slums and poor people and It is evicting them to the periphery of the towns.

Abahlali baseMjondolo is fighting against this politics. They say and claim the right to the city. To be poor is not a crime. People are evicted and their shack demolished so that tourists will might have a very peaceful holiday in South Africa. That is why the movement has

proclaimed 2010 the year "free from eviction, free from shack fires and houses for all!". The struggle continues!

Three activists of Abahlali baseMjondolo movements will be in Italy from the 18 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. They will come also to Caserta on the 19<sup>th</sup> on May, to meet the

Immigrants and Refugees Movement. They will talk to us about their struggle, especially in this moment of deep suffering for poor people of South Africa, and they will listen to Immigrants struggles. It will be a great opportunity to raise our voices against oppression, violence and racism.

In 2008, when some South Africans were killing immigrants from other African countries, Abahlali wrote a very powerful document where they said: *"There is only one human race. Our struggle and every real struggle is to put the human being at the centre of society, starting with the poorest. An action can be illegal. A person cannot be illegal. A person is a person where ever they may find themselves. If you live in a settlement you are from that settlement and you are a neighbor and a comrade in that settlement"*. This is a good reason to participate and to struggle for every human being in this world. (Filippo)



### JUST FOR FUN...

#### ITALIAN CRIME...

DON'T WORRY, THEY WILL  
BLAME AN IMMIGRANT  
ANYWAY!



#### LIFE IN ITALY...

AT LEAST YOU, MY  
FRIEND, DON'T  
LET ME DOWN!



# THE MOVEMENT WE BELONG

## A look back to remember who we are

The Immigrants and Refugees Movement based in social centre of Caserta had been comfort and hope for thousands of immigrants and refugees whose hearts and faces were marked with pains and tears because of the various categories of documents and of inhuman activities of their lives in Italy.



The above movement came to power in the year 2000, and serves as a light and a flag of hope for most immigrants and refugees in all over Italy. 2002 had brought together thousands of refugees and immigrants all over Italy to be

enlightened about their rights and dignities in the land of Italy. The entire candidates of this very movement had embraced the main vision of "STRUGGLES FOR YOUR RIGHTS". In 2004 the movement carried this very struggle to Rome and thousands of immigrants and refugees all over Italy crowded in the heart and the various squares of the city for 3 days. They demonstrated and expressed their pains and suffering to the government and to the entire Italian nation. Instant respond was granted to our cries and petitions on the desk. Many were regularised with good categories of *permesso di soggiorno* and so they finally had chance to find better job conditions as a result of this demonstration under the struggle.

2006 also saw the joy and happiness of a multitude of people under this movement. People who didn't get opportunity to receive any type of *soggiorno* out of the 2004 demonstration.

2008 also brought great achievement into the lives of many brothers belonging to the movement after the peaceful demonstration in the streets and at the front of the Questura of Caserta. 2009 again called for massive assembly in Rome for 3 days. A struggle that gave to the movement the opportunity to have a meaningful negotiation with the Interior Minister's Department, and our petitions on the desk were highly considered. This created a great chances for the various categories of *soggiorno* to retain.

Beside the above achievements, the movement also serve as a centre where morality and other status of Italy is thought.



Page could not permit me to fill in all we achieve from this very movement.

The struggle has become a great hope to the hopeless and flag to the discourages. We see this flag and we live again.

(Prosper)

## "BLACK AND WHITE"

During last elections a group of immigrants and italians tried to start something new in Castel Volturno

Recently we had elections in Castel Volturno and in many places around Italy. They are called "Elezioni Amministrative" and they determine who will govern at the municipal, provincial and regional level. Here in Castel Volturno the new major is Antonio Scalzone. He run against other 4 candidates: Letizia, Russo, Caprio and Giardina. Few weeks before the elections we have interviewed them. Unfortunately Scalzone is the one who said the worse things about immigrants. He said that immigrant are the curse of Castel Volturno, that they have contributed to the devastation of Castel Volturno and many other terrible things. If you want to watch the interview just go to [www.neroebianco.org](http://www.neroebianco.org)

Making this video has been a long process. It was not easy at all and we spent a lot of time thinking and working together. But this is our

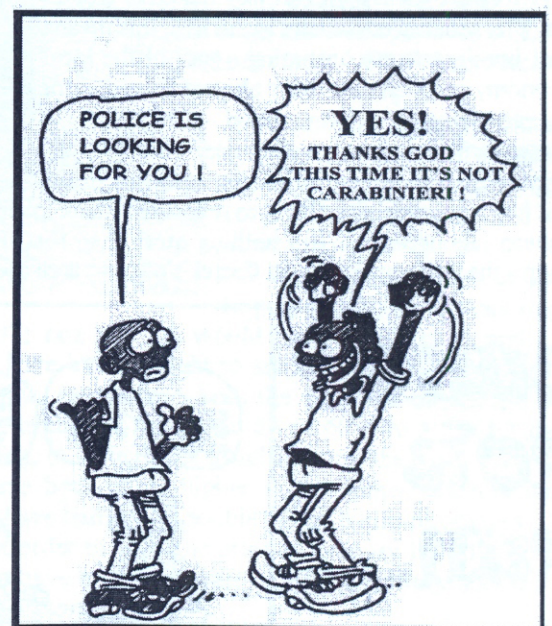
our way of working.

Our group is called Black and White and we deal above all with our web site. We hold our meeting once a week. I like this association because it has no president, no secretary but everything goes on smoothly. We share things in common and, in our deliberation, we share ideas together. In our meetings everyone comes punctual.

No one claims superior over others, we have found our confidence once more. This is a brotherly group. Our group is run on a voluntary base and every member put his or her best on the affairs and matters of the group. We try to share information related to immigration and our daily life. On our website you can see the wonderful work of our group!

In the group there are Europeans and Africans. Whoever is interested to be part of it is welcome. We meet every Thursday at 5.30 pm in the Comboni house. (Manuel)

## JUST FOR FUN...



# 30 MAY 2010

## MUSIC AGAINST RAZISM AND CAMORRRA

The 30<sup>th</sup> of May in Castel Volturno immigrants and italians will join together to organize a big musical event against razism and camorra.

Every single day local politicians like challenging us saying that immigrants are the problem of Castel Volturno, but they know very well that this is not true. The real problem of Castel Volturno has a name: RAZISM and CAMORRRA.

Camorra is a mafia style organization exploiting poor people (both white and black) and the environment's resorces to make money and to rule on the area. Very often the use illegal ways to acheave their purposes, like corruption and violence. For example, on the 18<sup>th</sup> september 2008 it was camorra who killed our six brothers, because they wanted to fear immigrants living in Castel Volturno area reminding them that Camorra is the one ruling on the area. The italians living in the area in fact they know very well what is camorra and many of them they fear it a lot. Immigrants still now that don't understand very well what camorra is, but since the number of immigrants living in Castel Volturno area is becoming very high, Camorra wanted to start fearing them by killing six innocent immigrants that were not guilty of anything. In fact camorra people are seeing that immigrants are opening their shops and creating their own form of business (for example, sending containers to Africa), this means that immigrants are becoming a part of the local economy and Camorra don't like not have control on everything happening around.

Camorra is, obviously, also very racist. Their way of making money is mainly based on exploitation, and so it's very easy for them to consider black people just "cheap labour force", and nothing more than that. For Camorra the Africans living in Castel Volturno area are slaves

for its money making system, based first of all on building constructions companies.

Everybody knows the truth, but nobody dare to spell it properly. It's too easy to keep blaming African immigrants for all the Castel Volturno's problems. That's why on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May many artists, both foreigner and italian will join together in order to celebrate our will to be united against Camorra and racism, our anger for what people are keeping saying accusing immigrants twentyfour seven. But first of all, that day of music will be the day that we will shout clearly to everybody that Castel Volturno is mad of whites and blacks, and there will never be peace on the streets untill people don't learn to accept it.



The 30<sup>th</sup> of May, among the various artists, will perform the band of the Immigrants and Refugees Movement, the *Kalifoo Ground Music System*. The band, composed by two Ghanians, one Burkina and one Italian, was born two years ago and they are becoming more and more popular in Caserta and Napoli area. In their songs they speak about immigrants' life, job exploitation, justice and human rights. Both newspapers and television have been giving attention to their performance and italian people themselves seem to be interested in listening immigrants singing about social matters and Italian politics.



Together with the *Kalifoo Ground Music System* will perform on the stage *Jolly Bou Alto*, senegalese rapper, and *C.K.Man*, Ghanian singer, and many others.

The organization of the event includes the availability of busses that will bring people from Castel Volturno, Destra Volturno and Pescopagano. It will be an *in&out* service.

(Gian-Luca)

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