

# 15 October national strike in the State School in Italy

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## **15 October in Italy: 30% of workers of State School on strike and one hundred thousand in the streets.**

Teachers, staff, students, parents and workers of other fields demonstrate in defence of State School as a Common Good

A really great day for the fight to defend a crucial common good which is State School for all people. Figures show us that 30% of workers were on strike, which is an extremely important result considered that our plea to all unions to call a strike together had not been answered and that the responsibility for the initiative bore all upon our shoulder. At least one hundred thousand demonstrators- teachers, staff, students, parents, factory workers and labourers of other fields joined in regional demonstrations called by COBAS, with particularly high presence in Turin (about 20.000) Rome (15.000) Naples (15.000) Palermo and Cagliari (7.000) and Pisa (6.000).

Strike and marches were against cuts of hours and subjects at school and loss of jobs (140.000 loss in 3 years)and pointed out the fact that the impoverishment of state school is a process which has been going on for 20 years and that both centre-right and centre left governments are to blame for that but at the same time the current policy of cutting represents a quantitative leap which makes us fall down the precipice of a "misery -school" without funds and hopes.

What prevailed in the demonstrations were requests such as the cancellation of all cuts, the hiring of temporary teachers on regular contracts, a massive funding according to average European standards, the full retrieving of seniority increases and contracts for teachers and staff to make workers ward off the loss of on average 40-50 thousand euros.

It is a source of satisfaction that in the streets with teachers, staff and students there were also factory workers in the engineering industry , from Fiat especially, civil servants and also committees of casual workers and parents who oppose the "misery-school" of Gelmini-Tremonti but that do not forget the negative role played by centre- left parties which were in dominant position during Prodi government.

In Turin, in the framework of the general Provincial strike, with teachers, staff and students there were

FIAT workers and chemical and mechanical factories ones, civil servants and national health service workers.

In l'Aquila, in the streets with "the people of State School" there were SEVEL-FIAT workers and a lot of townspeople who protested against the dishonest and scoundrel handling of the "reconstruction" which has not even given the tormented city its schools and universities back.

At Adro COBAS demonstrated at the side of colleagues who proudly did something that no public authority had done: stopping the expropriation of a school undertaken by a political faction, the

disruptive “leghismo” that would like a school to be divided into ethnic groups and religions and to be handed over to private groups and political parties.

In Rome the police stopped the demonstrators who had been demonstrating by the MIUR for hours from heading for the Parliament but the demonstration took place anyway in the city centre that the Mayor Alemanno would like to be off-limits for marches.

In Naples as well the police action affected the demonstration, where Pomigliano Fiat workers were present, charging at part of the demonstration and causing injuries and provisional arrests.

Great participation in Palermo, Cagliari and Pisa at regional demonstrations and at the provincial one in Catania; demonstrations took also place in Bologna, Bari, Genova, Perugia and Venezia.

Now the struggle will go on with the Campaign Against Collaboration and Illegality at School which has already blocked hundreds of schools extra activities, projects, school trips and all that is not a teaching activity or a contract compliance besides crossing all illegalities (not calling substitute teachers, putting together different classes, asking families for financial contributions etc) carried out daily to hide the pothole of the “misery-school”.

**Piero Bernocchi**

National spokesman of COBAS - Italy

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