



Little Man, What Now?

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Eight years ago, the deserving Sellerio publishing house, republished Hans Fallada's book, released in 1932, which told the story of a young salesman, his wife and their child; a family like many of the petty bourgeoisie which found itself grappling with the growing economic difficulties and with the specter of unemployment in Germany where the rise to power of Hitler was imminent.

Behind the seemingly simple plot - coping with everyday life, with growing poverty, with the uncertainties of the future in a mixture of helplessness and resignation - there was the dramatic social framework at a crucial moment in the history of Germany.

Fortunately, today, in Italy, the young faces of Appendino and Raggi¹ have nothing to do with the ugly mugs of those years. But helplessness and resignation can be recognised on the faces of a large part of the Italian electorate faced with long years of *economic difficulties*.

There is maybe a single element that contributes significantly to determine this *pre-political* state of mind: the feeling that the vote, even when it is clearly expressed, is then systematically contradicted by the decisions of the government .

In the almost five years since the referendum on 12 and 13 June 2011², its clear result has not found any concrete application by any of the governments from then on.

On the contrary it can be said that the initiatives of these governments were exactly the opposite of the orientation expressed by the electorate, so much so as to determine the decisive intervention of the Constitutional Court rejecting norms that were the copy, worse than the original, of those abrogated only a few months before by the referendum,

The most recent disappointment is represented by the text approved recently by the Chamber of Deputies, overturning the decree regarding the *Principles for the protection, the government and the public management of water A.C. 2212-A*.³

¹ The recently elected mayors of Turin and Rome, both members of the Five Stars movement.

² A nationwide popular referendum held in Italy in June 2011 repealing a law on the privatisation of water services.

³ A decree that establishes the rules relating to water management, planning, management and financing of water service and provisions relating to the integrated water service.

And then we see that today, in major Italian cities, there are elected mayors who have explicitly rejected the multi-utility companies listed in the Stock exchange model, stubbornly proposed by government forces.

Milan is a special case. The Milan aqueduct is *encysted* from 2003 within the Metropolitana Milanese SpA (100% owned by the Municipality of Milan) on the basis of an agreement expiring in 2027. Metropolitana Milanese does not seem to harbor any *hegemonic interest* in the water business, concentrating instead in carrying out well their work.

A different story applies to IREN⁴ and, above all, to ACEA⁵. It will be extremely interesting to follow the initiatives of the ladies recently elected as mayors of Turin and Rome.

For those who want to follow the process of remunicipalization underway around the world can visit: <http://gala.gre.ac.uk/13265/> (2015-04-W-OurPublicWaterFutureFINAL.pdf).

The mayor of Naples, De Magistris – reconfirmed in recent elections - was, until now the only administrator who has attempted the arduous process of post referendum republicization – or more properly of remunicipalization- of water services despite the presence of a particularly adverse economic and regulatory framework.

A brief recap of the facts: in November 2011, the neo-government led by Luigi De Magistris, with Alberto Lucarelli as councilor, started the transformation process of the Arin SpA in the Special Common Good Water Napoli (ABC), appointing to the Board of Directors Ugo Mattei and Alberto Pierobon.

In July 2012 Ugo Mattei was appointed president.

It is difficult not to see that with Lucarelli as councilor and Mattei as president, the remunicipalization process was headed by two of the drafters of the referendum questions.

The new board started work by reporting to the competent authorities any irregularities detected, in prior management - reports that have resulted in the recent censure by the Court of Auditors of those in charge of ARIN.

A year after the start, the remunicipalization process came to conclusion with the birth of ABC, Common Good Water Special Company. It was not an easy process.

In early December 2012, for example, failing the trust relationship with the new company, the acting director, former director of ARIN S.p.A., was fired. Reintegrated by a judgment of the Labour Court, he was recently suspended again, following an ANAC (the national authority against corruption) formal notice and the sentence of the Court of Auditors mentioned above.

Five years from the beginning of this story, the need to create a watershed between the past administration of Arin and the new management of ABC, which seemed to have subsided, has regained strength.

Meanwhile, the Campania Region has issued, in accordance with the lines expressed by the government, a new law for the sector, with a strong privatization imprint, which some have interpreted as an anti-ABC law.

⁴ IREN, is a multiutility company listed on the Italian Stock Exchange, operating in the sectors of electricity (production, distribution and sale), thermal energy for district heating (production and sale), gas (distribution and sale), the management of integrated water services, environmental services (collection and disposal of waste) and services for the local authorities.

⁵ Acea is one of the leading Italian multiutility firms, managing and developing networks and services in the business areas of water, energy and the environment.

It is well known that ACEA is already present in the Campania region, with the water management of Benevento and 92 other municipalities within the ATO 3⁶ (a questionable management that has been challenged by citizens and movements) and that Caltagirone and Veolia control directly AcquaCampania, the concessionary of the largest regional wholesale aqueduct .

In this framework the election of a representative of the Five Stars movement at the helm of the municipality, which represents the main shareholder of ACEA introduces elements of great dynamism in the situation.

Naples is no longer isolated.

And it is perhaps appropriate that the Senate restores the prior framework of the decree regarding the “Principles for the protection, the government and the public management of water”.

⁶ The optimal territorial organization (ATO) is a territory on which integrated public services, such as water or the waste are managed.