

Borradori: “We need Italy, but...”

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Piazza Riforma is the centre of Lugano. Here there are three banks, café Caruso, the signs of a Chinese restaurant over the historic Café Federale, the tables of the Argentinian restaurant Tango. You can feel the soul of Lugano simply looking around. Then, from the same square it is possible to reach **Palazzo Civico**, which is, during these days, the place of what is called political “tsunami” of the canton. **The voting of the last council elections delivered the town to the League of Ticino** inhabitants, an historical turning point after almost thirty years of administration with an only mayor, the liberal **Giorgio Giudici**. Today his role is of **Marco Borradori, former State councilor and leading representative of the party founded by Giuliano Bignasca**. We have met him the day after his oath of allegiance, institutional act that precedes the assignment in the city hall.

Borradori, the electors voted for the change after a political age that lasted 29 years. What most impressed you of this electoral result?

“Unlike Italy, where this isn’t possible, in Ticino it’s not unusual that a mayor has ha this position for so long. However, there are systems to allow the protection of the institutional framework to avoid personal choices. People vote all the member (the equivalent of Italian council member) and they come from different parties. Regarding Lugano, I think that I received a big responsibility. The town chose a change, and now we have to shape this necessity.

Lugano is a constantly growing town. In the past years you saw the effects of the aggregations and the interventions on town planning, but you also invested massively on the cultural sector. Do you think that this is still a priority?

“Culture is important because it can be an important draw factor for a town like Lugano, which is situated along the route Zurich-Milan, and represents a match point between two different focal points. Today what we are doing in the cultural sector is expensive and demanding. A cultural centre is being built with an investment of almost 200 million Francs. Considering also the overhead (around 15 millions), it’ll be important follow excellent programmes to draw the audience from all of the North Italy

and the other parts of Switzerland.”

How would you describe Lugano today?

“Our town has been bustling for a long time. In the past the financial place was a very important title, just think about that until seven years ago this sector, for the council revenue, produced an income of almost 55 million Francs. After the crisis it is reduced to 16, so we must find other solutions, like the cultural one.”

Lugano is also a cosmopolitan town. Only 60% of the citizens are Swiss...

“Of course, whoever says that Switzerland isn’t an open country, is wrong. There are schools in the Canton where 120 different languages are spoken. Also this can help us to understand the electoral result: if Lugano was the same of the past, that is to say only the city centre, the mayor would be again Giudici. The new areas have made the difference, but they are also the most multi-ethnic.

Every day, about 50 thousand workers coming from Italy pass through the boundary. It is an important resource, which changed in time, for the Ticino. However, it is often unpopular. What do you think about this?

“I’m the first to say that the Ticino would stop if there weren’t cross-border workers, especially building and health. However, we have to start reflecting on the advanced service industry today. The people of the Ticino work especially in this sector and it is important to guarantee appropriate working conditions. Companies often hire cross-border workers with lower-pay contracts, which cannot be accepted by a Swiss worker. And, if this mechanism continues, all the job market will be damaged as time passes.”

A subject concerning both Lombardy and the Ticino, from an economic, but also a social point of view, is about the great works, such as Alp Transit and Arcisate Stabio...

“The Ticino is interested in the Alptransit, and our goal is to reach Chiasso, hoping that Italy goes on from its part, and then from the Lugano-Malpensa highway and Arcisate Stabio, which should be ready by 2014. Here, the goal is to arrive for Expo, an event which Switzerland is investing a lot in. This new connection would allow us to reach Malpensa in an hour, and to reach antipodes such as Losanna and Ginevra in about three hours, thanks to the connection with Gallarate. Moreover, we would have an alternative to car for cross-border workers, by creating a positive situation even as for pollution and traffic.”

Turning back to politics and to some social issues such as immigration, your party, the League of the Ticino’s people, often took a very hard position, sometimes above the line. What do you think about this?

“The League is not xenophobic. It is a container with different people and different political modus operandi. There were expressions, like those of Giuliano Bignasca, which were very hard, with words that don’t belong to me. But this was the ‘Nano’, this was his force, even though he was very open in reality. His message was always focused on the need to protect our roots.”

What was your relation with Bignasca like? And how did you approach the

party?

“The ‘Nano’ was a genuine person and all people loved him. It was he who asked me to enter politics, join his movement, thirty years ago. At first, I was reluctant, but then he managed to persuade me. To understand the value of Bignasca, let’s think of his funeral’s day, I had never seen so many people before, even very different people, for a farewell.”

Are there any differences between the League of the Ticino and the Italian League?

“Yes, I think so. In the Ticino, there isn’t a “school” as in Italy and perhaps even a strategy like the one of the Northern League doesn’t exist. Moreover, we have some more difficulties today. Bignasca had a powerful political nose, he could even improvise and follow his instinct. But these are unique qualities and, without him, we will have to work more on confrontation.”

In Italy, today, discussed issues are anti-politics and sobriety. Are they discussed also in the Ticino’s politics?

“There is a basic sobriety. People choose their representative among those of each party. The fact that politicians, who have different positions, are so close forces to develop a constant compromise ability. This is what is technically called “Agreement in Principle”. Politics is seen as an important responsibility, and forces us to use transparency about the results before the electors. As for anti-politics, I can say that this is important also in the Ticino; however, this responsibility isn’t so much felt. It partly exists in the League of the Ticino’s people, which, however, came to power immediately.”

What are your passions, beyond politics?

“Unfortunately, I haven’t much time, but I read when I can. I also like cinema and sport. Recently, I have spent some time on social networks, especially on Facebook. I think it’s extremely interesting, but very binding.”

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