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Italy

For a way out of the crisis of the PRC towards the left

- IV Online magazine - 2007 - IV391 - July-August 2007 -

Publication date: Wednesday 25 July 2007

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1. The obvious political crisis of the Prodi government and the conflicts between its components mark the bankruptcy of the political project of the Union, which was victorious in the elections in 2006, but which is incapable of representing a real political and social alternative in opposition to the Right.

[https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Sinistra_critica.jpg]

Conceived of to guarantee a solution of continuity of Italian governmental policy, the Prodi government proved - which was foreseeable, and had been foreseen - to be a government that is hostile to the workers, representative of the interests of Italian capitalism (which is the real beneficiary of its basically anti-social policies), practising a "compassionate liberalism" and integrated into the mechanisms of multilateral war. [1]

This total bankruptcy is fundamentally the result of the exhaustion of the room for manoeuvre of reformism. It is not an accident that it goes hand in hand with the progressive involution of the Italian Left, which is being demonstrated by the formation of the Democratic Party (PD) under the leadership of Veltroni. [2]

The governmental Left, for its part, is scarcely being successful in limiting the damage, without managing to reverse the basic tendency. On the contrary, while contributing to putting a brake on struggles and conflicts, it is becoming an accessory and an active participant in these liberal policies. The Critical Left reaffirms its will to build opposition to the policies of the Prodi government and its refusal to support or endorse its anti-social and warmongering measures. We will oppose the umpteenth pension reform, we are against the base in Vicenza, we are opposed to the choice of causing an environmental disaster, such as with the high-speed train (TAV). No to the TAV, Notto Dal Molin, we will not help in any way or allow ourselves to be used! [3]

2. The bankruptcy of the Union makes it obvious that the political line approved by the PRC at its Congress in Venice is also bankrupt, from its assumptions to its forecasts. The "Great Reform" has failed, faced with the diktats of Brussels and the employers; the alliance with the "good bourgeoisie" has broken down in the face of the usual aggressiveness of the Confindustria [4]; the Right has never been as strong in Italy; the imperviousness of the government towards the movements is leading both to desertion in the face of the real movement and to ineffectiveness within the government. It is a case of a bankruptcy for which the whole of the leading group of the party bears responsibility.

3. This bankruptcy is producing the irreversible crisis of the PRC. We are witnessing the fundamental exhaustion of its role. Its political function as mediator between the active forces of the Italian and European bourgeoisie and the social movements is clearly being emptied of its content and is impossible to continue, because the PRC is unable to remain within the movements. June 9th made it possible to photograph this situation. The future lies with a coherent anti-capitalist project, difficult though it may be, with class independence and with building an alternative to both the centre-right and the centre-left.

4. The exhaustion of the PRC is also shown by the attempt, more or less lucid, of the leading group that aims at finding a way out of its crisis towards the right, in the direction of a "socialist refounding" which is once again proposing the traditional moderation of the Italian Left. "To go beyond", indeed, means today going in the direction of social and governmental compatibility with what exists, in the framework of an abstract left unity based primarily on political class collaboration, whatever form it might take: confederation, "network", model, single party, "work in progress", etc.

5. Confronted with this bankruptcy, faced with a history which is ending with the other "beyond" proposed by the leading group of the PRC, we propose a radical alternative: a way out of the crisis towards the left, a different "beyond", directed towards the social movements and towards struggle, rediscovering political autonomy and the revolutionary perspective, outside of the government and the mediations that are imposed by the PD, at the heart of the social opposition.

6. The Critical Left is committing itself as of now to this project by proposing, to all the forces who are ready and willing, to start a constituent process of an alternative Left - anti-capitalist, ecologist, feminist, internationalist. A process of political recomposition that is open and has a medium-term perspective, and which is capable of being enriched by the best experiences of communist refounding, of the mobilization of Genoa, of the movements and of independence from the centre-left.

It is in no way necessary to respond to the creation of the PD by seeking to form a united Left, without adjectives, which is impossible from an organic point of view. Because, as always in Italian history, there are two Lefts: one oriented towards social compromise and the other, combative, anti-capitalist, class-based and internationalist. Today, even to the left of the Democratic Party, there are two lefts.

7. So we want to build this other Left, which will guarantee the presence of revolutionary themes, which will take over the best traditions of communist refounding and which puts the emphasis, as always, on the project of the movement. With the bankruptcy of the institutional and governmental Left and the difficulties caused by the social defeat, we must answer by social opposition, by building mobilizations, unitary networks and structures of social struggle.

We reaffirm this unitary approach, which is capable of building the broadest possible mobilization on the basis of given objectives. But on the basis of recent experience, of June 9th and 16th [\[5\]](#), and including the multiple local struggles in defence of health and the environment, we believe that the construction of pacts for action at the national and local level, around specific objectives and within the framework of a social opposition to the Prodi government, constitutes a priority today.

The "no" to the war, the dismantling of the base in Vicenza, the rejection of the TAV, the defence of essential needs, the continuation of Pride, are the terrains of our work. But it is on the social terrain, in particular, that the decisive battle is being fought out today. For that we undertake, in liaison with the forces that organised June 9th, to plan out social actions which will lay the basis for a massive mobilization in the autumn against the policies of the Prodi government.

8. The comrades of the PRC who are members of the Critical Left therefore ask the party's leading structures to convene an extraordinary congress before the autumn. Within such a framework, making possible a broad and transparent confrontation of ideas, we will put forward our proposal for an way out of the crisis towards the left, as an alternative project to that of "socialist refounding". Because these are the only two possible alternatives, in the space between which there can only be confusion.

We will propose this working hypothesis to the congress and will put we it into practice immediately afterwards.

9. We launch a call for the broadest participation in the National Seminar of the Critical Left that will take place in Bellaria (Rimini) from the September 20th to 23rd, which will be a decisive moment for discussing the future of the Association.

Finally, we convene for November 9th-10th the National Assembly of the Association, which will discuss on the basis of a document to be prepared after the Bellaria seminar by the National Coordinating Committee.

[1] We reproduce here the motion adopted unanimously by the National Coordinating Committee of the Critical Left Association (Associazione Sinistra Critica) on July 8th, 2007. The original can be consulted on the web site www.sinistracritica.org

[2] Walter Veltroni (born in 1955) began his political activity in the Italian Communist Youth in 1976, was member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and supported its transformation into the Party of Left Democrats (PDS) of which he was general secretary, then into the Left Democrats (DS). He is currently candidate for the post of general secretary of the Democratic Party which is due to be founded next October in order to unify, under the aegis of Romano Prodi, the current Prime Minister, his governmental centre-left coalition in a single party.

[3] The movements against the high-speed train connecting Lyon to Milan through alpine valleys which are still largely unspoilt - No TAV - and against the extension of the US military base in Vicenza - No Dal Molin - are among the most important movements which are conducting the struggle against the centre-left government of Romano Prodi.

[4] Confindustria is the name of the Italian employers' federation, whose present leaders supported Romano Prodi's Union against Berlusconi, his right-wing predecessor.

[5] On June 16th there took place in Rome the march for homosexual dignity - Gay Pride - which was a great success, with hundreds of thousands of participant(e)s, in spite of the inclination of the Prodi government, under the pressure of the Pope, not to grant equal rights to gays and lesbians.