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Italy

Romano Prodi Challenged on the Left

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The balance sheet of the participation of the Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) in the government of the Union, the centre-left coalition led by Romano Prodi, is catastrophic. The militants of Sinistra Critica (Critical Left), a current within the PRC, drew this balance sheet during their January 27-28 conference.

After two days of discussion, on January 27-28, with more than 400 people present, the Critical Left current of the PRC decided to found its own association, without however splitting from the PRC.

The meeting opened with the intervention of a comrade from the permanent assembly of Vicenza, who is involved in a struggle against the enlargement of the NATO base there. He recalled how the government has betrayed the demands for peace of the majority of the population and called for support to the national demonstration on February 17th. Next, Giorgio Cremaschi of the FIOM (the metal workers' union), criticized the government's social policies, in particular the new threats to pensions. Elisa Coccia, of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer movement (LGBTQ) denounced the lack of courage of the Union over the rights of homosexuals, who are refused measures that exist in other European countries, such as civil partnerships. Daniel Bensaid of the LCR recalled the need to coordinate the anti-capitalist left on the European level.

[<https://npa31.org/IMG/jpg/giordanosuit.jpg>]

PRC leader Franco Giordano (tie, centre)

A balance sheet was drawn of the neo-liberal and warmongering policies that have been conducted over the last 15 years in Italy, by governments of both the right and the centre-left. With the adoption of a budget for 2007, the most austere budget in the entire history of the Republic, the sending of troops to Lebanon, the maintenance of those in Afghanistan, the confirmation of submission to the dictates of the Vatican on questions of civil rights and secularism, the comrades of the Critical Left reaffirmed the necessity of building a left opposition to this government, in order to respond to the growing malaise in Italian society.

Today it is no longer enough to limit ourselves to an internal political battle within the structures of the party, as was the case before this government came into existence. It is now necessary to build a real opposition to the majority line of the PRC, which is now jointly responsible for neo-liberal policies and which increasingly plays the role of a brake on social mobilizations which could challenge these policies. The organizational conference of the PRC, which has just begun, will be a test case for verifying the echo that this opposition has among party militants, who are increasingly passive and at a loss as to what to do.

The Critical Left association wants to be an instrument for autonomous political initiatives. In the coming period it must demonstrate that it is possible to build another "communist refoundation", one that does not abandon its anti-capitalist vocation. As was said in the debate, "the present line of the PRC is only justified to the militants by the lack of an alternative and the spectre of the return of Berlusconi. It is up to us to demonstrate, with our forces which are not enormous, that such an alternative can exist!" Various interventions dealt with the axes of this opposition to the government, which must start from being deeply involved in the social movements which continue to organize mobilizations.

The assembly ended with interventions by Salvatore Cannavo and Franco Turigliatto, respectively deputy and senator of the PRC and the Critical Left, who confirmed that they would refuse to vote in March for re-financing the military mission in Afghanistan. They will refuse this time, even if the government - which only has a majority of one

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vote against the right in the Senate - makes it a vote of confidence. In reality, "on the question of war, governments can fall and the left is no longer a left if it agrees to support war".