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Italy

Berlusconi's government is falling... what next?

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We want to be clear from the outset. The downfall, or better still the driving out of the Berlusconi government and the end of the Prime minister's political career, are cherished goals. It's over.

This government represented the ferocious and immoral face of neoliberal politics, a government that does not recognize democratic rules and has built up the fortune of friendly firms and individuals through cuts to social spending and to the living standards of millions of women and men. For this reason his downfall is a liberation and an opportunity for working people and for democracy in our country.

But...

We are not the slightest bit interested in the debate about the institutional composition of a crisis government: whether a technical government, a "transitional" government, a government of national unity or with other labels...

On the other hand we are very interested in understanding what is being prepared for this country's working women and men, youth and those who are unemployed or in temporary or casual work

The government crisis does not come on the heels of mass mobilizations, although these have taken place in Italy, but is the result of both Berlusconi's personal incapacity and of his mendacious majority to fully satisfy the demands of ruling capital in Europe – i.e. the ECB and its French-German bosses, even if the Italian Draghi is at the helm – and the need for the Confindustria (Italian Industry Association) and the banks to obtain fresh capital so they can emerge from the crisis with more profits and power.

To be able to thoroughly carry out these policies the governing centre-right parties cannot act alone: they need to also get a part of the so-called "opposition" to support the programme. That is, the "responsible" opposition made up of the Democratic Party and the elusive "third pole" (the Casini, Fini, Rutelli trio...). An opposition so responsible that they utterly support the IMF/ ECB solution and when they do criticise Berlusconi on economic policy they do so...from the right. They criticise Berlusconi as a pariah, but do not argue against his basic political positions.

They are so responsible that they allowed the passing of the financial bill (so that they could discuss the vote of non-confidence in December 2010) the budget and the Stability act...

In order to provide an adequate, left response to the government crisis the key to the political choices facing us in the coming months must be clearly and honestly confronted: who pays for the crisis?

It is not enough to say we want more resources for labour, for youth, for social programmes, for culture etc... if it is not specified where these resources must come from.

The clear response we must give is a class response; those who provoked the crisis "who have never paid for it" must pay for it. We do not say "the rich must pay too". Only the "rich" must pay, the others (pensioners, workers, the unemployed, part-time and temporary workers, migrants) have already paid and are still paying.

The fall of the Berlusconi government is an opportunity for the left and social movements to gain the strength to

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organize and for workers, precarious students and migrants to take part in a mobilization that can put forward a clear platform from below:

- the illegitimate debt must not be paid, useless and harmful expenditure must be cut (military spending and big public works such as the TAV, Expo2015, the Messina Bridge...);
- remove the billions in gifts to businesses as a result of Prodi's still operative tax break along with similar provisions;
- the banks must be nationalized and public management of common goods defended – as 27 million voters demanded in the 12th of June referendums.

With these resources we could build a different economic policy, which could finally respond to the needs of the "99%" – as the Occupy Wall Street demonstrators say – and prioritise the ecological reconversion of production (and of civil protection, so as to prevent other deaths from the next storms or earthquake).

We ask "civil society", which is demonstrating against the Berlusconi government and speaking out particularly against the most scandalous and tabloid-worthy aspects, not for opinions on the next government but rather if they are ready to struggle on policy. We call on them to stop supporting "friendly" governments (or regional or town administrations). We want to convince them not to let anyone in government carry out a war on workers' rights and against the interests of working people.

In short, we want the union, associations and movements to do their job: do not give any more external support to so-called friendly governments, but work independently and autonomously to build the alternative.

We are doing everything to mobilise – starting in the coming weeks: from the 17 November student demonstrations to the 26 November National Demonstration for the defence of water and common goods, in the hope of a real general strike (which will probably be stopped by the Confederal unions taking a "responsible" position in support of a government of national unity).

<http://ilmegafonoquotidiano.it/news...> 9 November 2011