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Italy

The Dragons of national unity against the working class

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In the end, the highest institutional representative of the Italian bourgeoisie, the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella, has chosen to entrust the fate of the country to the man who is considered the best manager of Italian capitalism, Mario Draghi. His record in the international spheres of high finance, at the Bank of Italy and then in the European one, where he played a key role in the management of the Euro crisis, speaks for itself. He kept things under control with partially unorthodox financial measures compared to the traditional neo-liberal methods.

Mattarella's choice, justified by the pandemic and social crisis, has big implications on the political and institutional level. It is deeply questionable and opens up future scenarios that are not yet completely clear, but which are very worrying for the democratic stability of the country.

The consecration of Draghi has been openly called for, desired and envisaged for a long time by the most diverse political, social and media circles of the Italian ruling class. They called him in to deal with the difficulties of its political representation. Its political hegemony in parliament is mediocre, fragmented and completely unprepared to manage this very delicate phase coherently and in line with its interests,. The health, social and economic crises continue to interact dangerously and are not under control.

On the day of the opening of the government crisis, we had underlined the dissatisfaction of the bosses with the divisions and uncertainties of the executive led by Conte. In particular, we had recalled the concern of the Confindustria (Confederation of Italian Industry) about the use of the 200 billion euros of the Recovery Fund which, for Bonomi (leader of Confindustria) and partners, must guarantee the revival of profits.

What a vain and posturing spectacle it has all been - no worse than that of the parties' previous negotiations for the reconstruction of a third Conte government. In the television studios after Mattarella's speech we saw the pundits competing to see who could best denounce the failure of "politics" and toast the saviour, the arrival of the man of destiny.

In fact the negative characteristics of the various currents representing the bosses (in parliament there is no longer the presence of any force that refers to the working class) are an almost direct expression of the institutional political choices and electoral models imposed in recent decades by that same ruling class.

Bourgeois democracy appears increasingly worn out, authoritarian tendencies are accentuated and in the face of the current crisis they think there is nothing better than to resort to a person who is able to assume a bonapartist role (perhaps).

We will see if Draghi will be able to meet expectations. In order to form a government he must obtain a parliamentary majority and then be able to maintain and manage it in the face of the various competing political and economic interests. We will also see what the spread of the parties willing to support him will be. There are many difficulties and the pressure will be enormous.

There is no doubt that an eventual Draghi government disrupts the plans and prospects of the various political parties, starting with the PD (Democratic Party dubbed centre-left but social liberal), which hoped to be able to build a new stable coalition with at least part of the M5S (Five Star Movement centrist populists started by comic, Beppe

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Grillo). It could further undermine the M5S. It also complicates the plans of the right-wing forces that were almost certain of victory in the next election. They initially expressed their wish for the calling of a general election but then softened their tone and began to express a willingness to support Draghi.

One thing is certain, however, all the governments of 'national unity' that have taken place in our country have been of great harm to the working classes, to their living conditions and created political confusion and disorientation. We saw it with Andreotti in the 1970s, Ciampi in 1993 and Monti, much more recently, all operating under the banner of austerity.

Behind the governmental crisis there are not only the divisions and the power struggle between the parties, but there is the unresolved problem of economic policies. For this reason, there is no doubt that various protagonists have worked to steer the political crisis towards the Draghi solution. Not only an unpalatable character like Renzi, (ex PD leader who split to form Italia Viva) who has been calling for it for some time. He has always offered himself as the best representative of the interests of the Italian bosses and now also as a paid jester of the Saudi monarch (he recently paid a flying visit there).

In one of the many dire televised debates, Landini, the CGIL (main trade union confederation) secretary, was completely on the defensive amongst the pundits. He said Draghi was a useful and authoritative choice, when in fact he represents a very serious danger for the working class. Landini then shamefully confirmed this judgement the following day in the hope perhaps of being able to maintain a semblance of government/trade union consultation. It is evidently not in his plans to activate the social struggle of workers, precisely what it is essential in the face of the new Confindustria sponsored government. .

The mobilisation of workers is in fact indispensable in the face of the very difficult scenario that is opening up. We have the deepening social crisis, the increase in unemployment with the coming restructuring of industry and the persistence of the pandemic. There is no other way to stop governmental policy from being made to serve the interests of employers, profits, private health and increased exploitation (they call it increased productivity).

We should remember that it was Draghi who invented the distinction between good and bad debt, the first being debt that favours investment, or rather that favours financial stability, i.e. the interests of banks and employers,. The second, bad debt is unproductive expenditure, perhaps social expenditure aimed at the underprivileged classes, or income support and cassa integrazione (a type of furlough payment to workers where jobs are lost or being restructured).

The Italian bourgeoisie is calling Draghi to address a fundamental problem that all members of the European bourgeoisie have begun to discuss.

The catastrophe of the health crisis forced the bourgeois class to make certain choices in total contradiction with their ideological principles and economic choices. But it was primarily a question of saving the capitalist boat. It had to be accepted that the number of hours worked would fall, but not to the same extent as employment, which was partially contained with the CIG (cassa integrazione/furlough) and the freeze on redundancies. They have accepted that the public debt would soar, breaking all neo-liberal dogmas. But now they are discussing how, step by step, with more or less caution, they can restore the old order. In other words, what are the mechanisms to start repaying debts and, at the same time, to allow companies to restructure and lay off workers, i.e. to guarantee the revival of profits.

The whole of this, however, continues to be conditioned by the persistence of the pandemic and its effects on production, hence the constant search for an impossible 'balance' between health and the economy.

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The management of Draghi's Recovery Plan will be measured against this strategic dimension of what the bosses want to happen.

The workers' movement needs to respond to this aggressive project of the employers' class to further roll back the living standards and conditions of working people.

The battle for the reduction of the working week without loss of pay and the redistribution of existing work is not only a trade union objective, it is a fundamental social objective that determines the future of the working class.

The good debt, the one that is sustainable over time, is not the one that is sustainable by profits, but the one that is part of a project of economic growth:

- that is sustainable on an environmental and social level,
- through public investments for the reconversion of the economy,
- for the guarantee of an income for all,
- for a revival of education,
- for massive investment in public health that allows first of all a vast plan of vaccination for all and the activation of all measures that effectively fight the pandemic.

It is with this approach that we fight the very project of a Draghi government and we will fight its policies even more so if they succeed in setting it up.

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PS:

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