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Italy

New Beginnings

- Debate - Building new parties of the left -

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Sinistra Critica in Italy has been dissolved to give birth to two new political projects. This article “New Beginnings” is a translation of the final statement of Sinistra Critica national coordination (the Italian original is on the [Sinistra Critica site](#)). Articles presenting the two projects are [“A project for our times”](#) and [“Why a new organisation”](#).

At the last National Conference of Sinistra Critica two alternative political and strategic positions stood counterposed and at the end resulted virtually equal. Our work in the last months has produced no meaningful progress towards a coming together of the two approaches that address important analytical and theoretical issues in a different way and, most important, give themselves different political projects and instruments.

We live this difficulty as our own weakness yet as inserted in the wider social and political Italian and European crisis. Almost everywhere, the anticapitalist left forces experience a difficulty both material and of political strategy.

The objective conditions dictated by the crisis and by that “class struggle” in reverse the ruling powers have been leading for several decades, should offer a favourable ground to forces aiming at social transformation. But the material reality tells that it is not so: in France, in Germany, in the UK and in Italy it is difficulty, breaking down of forces and even crisis that prevail.

Sinistra Critica has represented a political project which, in the framework of the Rifondazione comunista experience, aimed to blend the necessary refounding of marxist thought and practice with energies made available by the new social and political movements. In this sense, it has found inspiration and political project in social disputes, in the life and vicissitudes of the labour movement, in the antiglobalization and for peace movements, in the new feminism and in the LGBT movement.

Always keeping a firm orientation aimed at the reconstruction of a political anticapitalistic, internationalist, feminist, ecologist subjectivity and organization.

This project was developed along the 1990s and 2000s, in the political battle inside the PRC against that party’s pro-government drift made evident particularly with the second Prodi government. We tried to show a way out of the deadlock of the left, alternative to the one proposed by Fausto Bertinotti and the Rifondazione leadership. That battle, concerning consensus, did not achieve the hoped for result.

But the winners of that dispute have achieved a Pyrrhic victory, that soon was transformed in the party’s defeat, and they are among the main responsible for the disappearance of the left from the Italian political landscape.

We remain convinced that the experience we realized in the past years, or decades, has been right. It has been right to contest at its roots the political culture prevailing in the Italian left, stemming from the Togliatti’s reformism and the inclination towards social compromise. It has been right to denounce the nefarious role that Stalinism has had in the history of the international labour movement, and to fight to retrieve “the memory of the defeated”, the just historical battles of the opposers to the Third International. It has been right to work for the cultural renovation of marxism, retrieving the best theories and the freshness of Marx’s critical apparatus against any attempt to ossify it. It has been right to fight against the bureaucratic apparatuses of the labour movement, in the political and trade-union field, upholding workers’ self-organization and leading role as the only way to a real emancipation. It has been right to retrieve the ecologist thought as a vital point of an identity for a new left.

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We defend, in particular, our constant effort to combine feminism with Marxism, and to have women power as an inescapable passage for any transformational project, in our conception of the anticapitalist left. It has been right to stay the course on a project of revolutionary and socialist transformation of the existing reality.

All this has not kept our project from coming to a standstill. We have not been able to produce a strong and credible alternative to the drift of the Italian left and when huge international upheavals (the crisis) and profound modifications in the living body of the Italian left occurred – one can just recall the PD's crisis after Rifondazione's – in our interior we began to develop different analyses and projects to answer the crisis.

Our last conference has traded us an organization virtually divided in half on two projects, whose alternative character has appeared evident along the time. After all, politics cannot be limited to analysis alone and to sharing basic horizons.

If it were so, there would not be, and there would not have been, splits, divisions, irreconcilable divergences.

At this point, we could have given birth to a classical dispute, extracting consents from each other, in an exhausting effort of simultaneous prohibition. We could also have hidden our divergences and “pretend” that nothing had happened, giving birth to two practically separate currents.

We have preferred to explain our situation, to make it explicit and transparent with the presumption of offering a different way to deal with the crisis of the left.

With this letter we declare closed the experience of Sinistra Critica which thus from now on no longer exists in name and symbols. But the militant collective this organization has represented does not retreat from political and social battles: from its “ashes” other stories are born, well structured and complex initiatives and activities are even already under way. In fact, its militants will give birth to different projects, one which proposes a political organization more than ever aimed at a strong class rooting, the other intent upon undertaking, in a class perspective, the way of promiscuity between “political” and “social”, that they will start to live publicly in the next weeks and in September.

We have thought that, instead of giving birth to clashes and recriminations it was more right and useful, also in respect of our common history, to share the separation moment, respecting the commitment of many militants. We hope that the two political projects arising from our experience will remain complementary albeit distinct. We don't know whether we will succeed but this is our purpose.

For this reason too we have decided to grant ourselves for the future a brotherly spirit, dividing with a common agreement, expressed in a specific written text, the existing scanty resources and granting each one the organizational political activity.

In this new political framework, together we reaffirm our common adherence to the debate, the heritage, and the political project of the Fourth International current, as it has evolved over time and as it present itself today in its international components from the French New Anticapitalist Party, to the Latin American debate up to the new Asian experiences. A non dogmatic, but political, cultural and “in progress” reference.

The National Coordinating Committee