

Italy: A project for our times

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This article “A project for our times” presents the project of *Solidarietà Internazionale*.

“Internationalist Solidarity” (*Solidarietà Internazionale*) is a tool, an arena to debate and to deepen political and cultural issues. Its members are directly engaged in social conflict and in projects of self-management, self-organization, and social re-appropriation.

We live in difficult times. The construction of anything materially and symbolically powerful enough to deal with the hardness of the current class conflicts has not yet followed the dissolution of what we called the “workers’ movement” in the twentieth century. We were part of that movement, in which we conducted an important political struggle about ideas, trying to connect different but converging experiences such as revolutionary Marxism, critical left, left-libertarianism – enriched by the acquisitions of radical social movements after World War II, primarily by feminism; to promote permanent revolution and social emancipation as “action of the workers themselves”; to oppose bureaucracy in the midnight of the century; to promote an international revolution during the struggles and uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s; to oppose capitalism and stalinism and to promote self-determination of peoples and movements fighting for their liberation; to promote feminism and free sexual orientation; to promote an ecological vision of social transformation.

We identify we that political struggle, and we know that many of those acquisitions are still essential. But we also know that a historical era has ended in the wake of the crisis of class culture and the dissolution of the network of relationships between trade unions, political parties, associative and cooperative structures. The synergy of those institutions of the workers’ movement has been worn down by a progressive loss of consciousness caused not only by the blows of capitalism in crisis, but also by the failure of so-called “communism” realized in several countries – whose ruins fell down on the same subjects who has to be liberated – and by the hegemony conquered by the social-democratic tendencies (then “social-liberal” ones) in that movement itself, tendencies that delivered many institutions created by the movement to the logic of profit and market that they claimed to fight.

That history is behind us, even if it still generates monsters in the present times. We are living today the slow time of reconstruction, reconstruction of ideas and material power of social subjects. In this period, in this challenge we stand and we commit ourselves – aware of the inadequacy of the existing left, daughter of her own faults and mistakes.

We are comrades who in recent years participated in the experience of *Sinistra Critica*, of which we were also founders, part of the leadership, activists. From within this experience we reached the belief that a break was needed, a decisive turning point in respect to the tradition of a small ideologically crystallized party unable to understand the transformations of class composition and the emerging pathways of politicization.

We built *Sinistra Critica*’s project as an alternative to *Rifondazione Comunista*’s choice of participation in the social-liberal Prodi government (in particular against the decision to support the

war in Afghanistan). We tried to keep alive an inspiring and militant heritage which, however, was not enough to face the venture. It was also because the venture itself changed and redefined its priorities.

Today it is no longer the time to build small parties, based on the strength of an ideology but often characterized by political and social irrelevance. We are living in a time of rebuilding in which the boundaries between the political and the social elements in class struggle become milder and discolored, and the redefinition of a general political project is much more contradictory.

We look back to Sinistra Critica experience with serenity, convinced that we had to live it till the end; we do not live its dissolution as a failure but as a conscious and needed choice in order to invest the cultural and militant resources that experience has left us in the new period that awaits us.

The central issue remains the question of how to rebuild an anti-capitalist project in a context of weakness and - in the same time - of growing social anger: the capitalist aggression is quite clear, the robbery of public resources, salaries and rights is carried out with less and less shame every day.

The class struggle is every day rougher, and its social subjects experience directly (without the defence of their political and social "institutions") the violence of capitalism (which, on the contrary, has different "intermediate bodies" and tools with which it is able to act) - and they are also supposed to give original and experimental answers.

We should understand in this way the experiences of global revolt going on in different countries in the world - from Occupy Movement to the Indignados, the Arab revolutions and the workers' struggles in key emerging countries, such as China.

The rebellion is everywhere with spurious and multiformed resistance characters - and it is redefining an alphabet of the revolution. We want to connect ourselves to this new alphabet, knowing that it is the time of the "slow impatience" (as Bensaïd said) where the ability to link up to the rhythms and languages of modern protests is crucial. The subjects (actors) of the transformation will build themselves from the attempts of self-organization.

To rebuild a new radical and anti-capitalist left we do not need generic appeals to the unity of the left, abstract hypotheses of recasting what remains of radical left leaderships who can be generous but detached from any real process of social and political overthrow that is needed.

For a revolutionary option - in the absence of revolutionary conditions - it is crucial to consider the social fabric in which to invest resources. That is why we think that our task today is not to affirm an already packaged identity, but to experiment the building of instruments and tools which could support social and political self-organization of workers, in the old and new forms, and all the subjects in revolt. Our perspective is still the goal of building a class oriented, anti-capitalist, eco-socialist and feminist political subject.

That goal, however, requires preconditions, time, innovations, experiments. Our priority is not the development of a sort of party, oriented to elections and the propaganda, but the construction of instruments of class solidarity and mutual aid, what Gramsci defined as *casematte*.

In this sense, we are committed to building an anti-capitalist, environmentalist, feminist, internationalist area.

In this new phase democracy is more crucial than ever. Democracy as a tool for self-determined social self-assertiveness, often in latent opposition to the dominant institutional system; as criticism to politics, in order to establish also anti-systemic institutions of the movements and to imagine the

alternative. We are not against electoral participation in all cases, but as the social dynamics move to build, albeit confusedly, an alternative sense to the existing institutional system, it would be a mistake in our opinion to focus primarily on institutional representation. This could be at the same time a shortcut to hide political difficulties, giving militants something to do.

In this new project we are starting out with an identity in progress. Identity can not be given once and forever, because its construction is a process itself. We reiterate historical elements of revolutionary identity - like the fundamental break with capitalism, the need to establish institutions of social movements that could be really alternative, the democratic self-determination of the class in the struggles, the internationalist commitment, the refusal of apparatus and bureaucracies, individual freedom of sexual orientation and the ecological dimension of the struggles. Last but not least, also feminism - as an integral and crucial part of the liberation process. But our reference to critical Marxism is nourished by a great cultural openness and aims to enhance the best of the revolutionary traditions. Above all, we are paying attention and searching for new and unprecedented programmatic solutions.

The class struggle is every day more globalized. This awareness became clearer already with the anti-globalization movement in the early 2000s. In this sense we are committed for the need for an International intended as plural alliance, democratic, linked by the free choice of its components, able to build itself not only on the level of the political project but also through the practices of social movements.

For this reason we remain connected to the project and debate of the Fourth International - knowing that also that definition has had its day and that, even at the international level, it is necessary to challenge the future with much more courage.

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P.S.

* Translation International Viewpoint. <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/>

* Italian version here:

<http://solidarietainternazionalista.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/un-progetto-per-il-nostro-tempo/>