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Italy

Construct an internationalist anti-capitalist project

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Italians, initially favourable to the project of European unity, have gradually changed position in the face of austerity policies carried out by centre right and centre left governments (justified every time by European directives and endorsed by the big trade union organisations), which have greatly worsened the living and working conditions of working people.

European Union: anti-capitalist viewpoints

This has strengthened an ever-greater detachment from/rejection of the European Union and the very idea of unity of the European continent, which has nourished the development of nationalist positions (for some the return to a mythical age of national sovereignty), many of them profoundly reactionary, racist, xenophobic and even fascist.

Xenophobic critique of the EU

This is what explains both the severe defeat of the Democratic Party, which had become the most significant interpreter and manager of the interests of the big bourgeoisie, and the electoral victory of the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S – Five Star Movement) of Di Maio and the Lega led by Salvini. These parties present themselves as the defenders of national sovereignty while strengthening their links with the most reactionary governments in Europe, but above all by waging (in particular interior minister Salvini, with the agreement of the M5S) a reactionary campaign against migrants, the chosen scapegoats for the difficulties experienced by large sectors of the population to which the government has no response.

The critique of the European Union comes then from the right, associated with the migrant question which is, for the moment, the dominant theme, eclipsing even the question of the euro which was recently so central to the debate on Europe. It must unhappily be noted that this foul racist campaign has won support: it poisons the whole of society, dehumanising a part of the population and produces indifference in relation to the ongoing tragedy in the Mediterranean, opening the way to future regressions of democracy.

A government at the service of the national bourgeoisie

Although having different bases, the M5S and the Lega are the expression of sectors of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, but with close relations to leading employers' groups (above all the Lega, which for some years has administered the most developed region of the country, Lombardy). If this government has been able to exist, it is because in certain important ministries, there are people who enjoy the trust of the neoliberal establishment; the finance law being prepared is closely in line with the European treaties. If the former government was distinguished by the gifts it presented to the big enterprises and the banks, the national sovereignty claimed by the current government has the goal of distributing wealth differently inside the bourgeois class to salvage enterprise groupings who are struggling to cope with international competition.

Against this government, there have not yet been responses at the level required, even if there have been social

struggles for the defence of jobs and partial mobilisations of solidarity with migrants.

Constructing a social and political alternative

To construct a social and political alternative, the task incumbent on the forces of the left, involves knowing how to simultaneously fight EU austerity policies, the pseudo-liberal Europeanism of the Democratic Party (now in opposition), linked to significant sectors of the bourgeoisie, and the actions of this right wing racist government, without forgetting the nationalist and reactionary regressions at work within society.

Numerous social and political forces to the left of the Democratic Party have in the past supported the process of European unity, starting from a position which accepted the institutional framework of the EU, while demanding a reform of the treaties in social and democratic sense.

This had no result since the rejection of austerity policies has only been defended at the electoral level, with the ability or the will to construct the necessary social resistance. This approach to the EU still remains in some sectors, even if a force like Rifondazione has radicalised its position, saying that it is necessary to disobey the European treaties by rejecting their directives.

Reject the trap of neo-sovereignism

Other forces, however, starting from the denunciation of the capitalist and anti-popular character of the European treaties and the need to exit the euro and the EU, now have a neo-sovereignist position: they deem it necessary to recover a full national and monetary sovereignty; they do not see the need for a process of construction of an alternative for working people on the continental scale, and they envisage on the contrary the formation of an undefined Mediterranean zone whose class contours are to say the least uncertain.

As for us, we think that the EU is a tool of the European bourgeois classes to impose their domination and the exploitation of the labouring classes, to destroy the social conquests established after the Second World War, and thus must be fought against. But we also believe that it is necessary to build an alternative project at the European scale, an internationalist and anti-capitalist project which can be credible and realisable by involving the hundreds of millions of workers present on the European continent. A project founded on the rejection of austerity policies, the construction of mobilisations, solidarity of struggles at the European scale, solidarity with migrants and the fight against the borders which divide workers and peoples. A project advocating the democratic self-organisation of the exploited as indispensable tool for building a genuine social and political alternative.

PS:

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