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Italy

Critical Left assembly charts left opposition to Prodi

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A thousand participants at the Critical Left [1] assembly in Rome on the 14th and 15 April decided on a "social opposition pact" to the Prodi 'social-liberal' government. The key points, were No to War, No to Bush in Rome, participation in Gay Pride and support for the struggle against environmental devastation. On the question of the reorganisation of the left it affirmed "it is time to work for a new political subject" between Montezemolo's Democratic Party and a projected new social liberal 'Left' Party in which the Communist Refoundation (PRC) leadership is willing to participate. The meeting also called upon Franco Turigliatto to withdraw his Senate resignation [2].

Birth of the left opposition to Prodi

"If the future of the left is a Democratic Party which Montezemolo supports and a Mitterrandist socialist refondation, we decidedly think that a new political subject is needed". This is what Salvatore CannavÃ² and Franco Turigliatto, respectively Communist Refoundation (PRC) MP and Senator, both supporters of Critical Left (Sinistra Critica) had to say, opening and closing the meeting organised by their association.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/turigliatto3.jpg>]

Franco Turigliatto speaks to Assembly

Speaking to a thousand activists, the two leftwing parliamentarians emphasised the incapacity of the current restructuration underway on the left to provide a voice to bodies that come out of the social movements. "Far from it, more and more the forces of the radical left act as an obstacle to the movements", added Turigliatto, "as all the actions of the last year show: Have you seen the radical left mobilise to support an 'exit strategy' from Afghanistan?"

The meeting was also an opportunity to propose a "pact" among movements to the many social, trade union and political forces invited, to unite and co-ordinate social struggles, territorial summit meetings and major mobilisations.

"For example, we could organise a worthy welcome to Bush," CannavÃ² proposed at the outset of the agenda, in reference to the US president's visit to Italy foreseen for early June - a proposal taken up by many speakers. Participants in the assembly included Giorgio Cremaschi, from the FIOM (Metalworkers' Federation) Luca Casarini and Piero Bernocchi, spokespersons for the No TAV and No Dal Molin committees, as well as university students, the feminists from "Facciamo Breccia", MEP Giulietto Chiesa, trade unionists from SDL <http://www.sincobas.org> and USI <http://www.ecn.org/usi-ait>, Tommaso Di Francesco a journalist with the left-wing daily Il Manifesto and many others.

Opining the meeting's work, on behalf of the Emergency association, the well-known political cartoonist Vauro, who demanded a governmental commitment to the liberation of Rahmatullah Hanefi and announced an initial mobilisation of Emergency next Friday in Rome, at Piazza Farnese. Emergency's presence was sought out by the organisers in order to provide an initial, tangible concrete solidarity to Gino Strada's association. Vauro took the opportunity to explain the horror of war, Emergency's humanitarian vocation, its resolve to save human lives, which spurred Gino Strada's association to take action to free Mastrogiacomo and his colleagues, just as it refuses war "with no ifs, ands or buts". "I fully recognise myself in this meeting's title 'Incompatible with War' because it is what Gino Strada and Emergency have represented up to now".

Closing the meeting, Turigliatto reiterated the need to oppose the Prodi government and its policies of continuity, with attacks on the workers' movement and continued support for war. "We want to affirm that our lives, the lives of

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millions of people, take precedence over profits and business needs - for this reason we can not help but be anticapitalist”.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/sala.jpg>]

In short, this Critical Left meeting was the first public initiative by a current/association that has decided not to repeat the leftist rite of proclaiming a split from PRC and proclaiming itself a small party.

“Our project is more ambitious, we want to rebuild a class and alternative left, we want to do it while putting self-organisation of the movements at the forefront, along with a reorganisation process that will necessarily take some time. It is clear that from today, constructing the Critical Left association is our priority task”.

Among the initiatives and dates set by the assembly were solidarity with Emergency, a welcome for Bush, a strong turnout for Gay Pride on 9 June, against the Vatican's unacceptable interference, support for all struggles in defence of the environment and the countryside, starting with Val de Susa, as well as the demonstration on 19 May in Campania called by Zero Rubbish.

Finally, the meeting issued a vocal and very determined appeal to Franco Turigliatto to withdraw his resignation from the Senate announced on 21 February, after the vote against the D'Alema motion, an action that did not prevent his expulsion from PRC. “These were resignations submitted to the party which refused them,” said Gigi Malabarba, closing the meeting, “and it is fitting to withdraw them so Turigliatto's contradictory voice continues to live in the halls of power.”

[1] Critical Left (In Italian, Sinistra Critica) is an association of those "who want to create an alternative" - ie an alternative to the politics of the Prodi so-called centre-left government. It was created on the initiative of Italian Fourth Internationalists to wage a fight against the right turn of the PRC leadership.

[2] Sinistra Critica leader Franco Turigliatto voted in the Senate against the renewal of the mandate for Italian troops in Afghanistan, one of the reasons why Prodi lost this confidence vote. For this Franco was effectively expelled from Communist Refoundation, and then announced his decision to resign as a Senator - for "personal reasons". While understanding this decision, Sinistra Critica think he should stay in the Senate