

MANIFESTO FOR CONSTITUTIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

1. PREAMBLE

The longest and gravest cycle of crises in the history of capitalism after that of 1929 has brought the popular classes and large swathes of the middle classes of mature economies to their knees. A cycle generated by the class warfare from above unleashed by the political and financial elites of the United States and Europe, waged in the European Union through the single market and the euro. The process of globalization and financialization of the economy, together with the policies of public and private indebtedness regulated by the supranational organizations (IMF, World Bank, EU), have fed and multiplied inequalities and injustices out of all proportion, factors in a further exacerbation of discord and an additional round of stagnation. In this context, Italy has undergone a radical process of deindustrialization and impoverishment due also to the propensity of the historical families of Italian capitalism to live off unearned income. To tackle this situation, it must be acknowledged that, contrary to what reform-

ists or radical leftists believed, in particular after 1989, the path of democratic sovereignty at the European level is impracticable for profound cultural, linguistic and historical reasons. The "United States of Europe" or the so-called "democratization of the European Union" are a conservative mirage of a neo-liberal order founded on the devaluation of work and on the hollowing out of constitutional democracy. The only way to restore social and political value to work is the revitalization of popular and national sovereignty: this means focusing on implementation of the principles of the Constitution of 1948, whose spirit of solidarity and socialist orientation is essential for rebuilding both the economic and social functions of the democratic state and a renovated form of mixed economy. This is the road to relaunching industry, generating full employment, governing the market and restoring to the citizens, through the parties, the power to impact the general direction of the country. What we need, therefore, is an authentic **constitutional patriotism**.

2. FOR A PATRIOTISM WITHOUT NATIONALISM

The love of country which the Constitution requests of citizens is not a historical anachronism, a residue of the need to redeem the nation from two decades of Fascist rule. It was and remains a fundamental civic value, a founding sentiment of the democratic community, the very opposite of the ideological degeneration of nationalism. The left bears the responsibility of having given the right a monopoly over patriotic language. What is needed, instead, is to reclaim that tradition which, from Machiavelli to the French Revolution to the Resistance, identified love of country with love for the Republic, as life in liberty, as brotherhood and solidarity among citizens who love their

country and its institutions in so far as they guarantee to all the right to live in freedom, equality, peace and security. This feeling is shared by all citizens of a certain territorial community, irrespective of their ethnic origins, religious, ideological, and gender-related identities, etc. It is a feeling of protection given and received, and therefore **non-aggressive**, and recognizes equal rights and dignity to other patrie. It is not an abstract sentiment, however: it is incarnated in a place, in a language, in a culture; in a word, in a people and its institutions. The patria is simultaneously people, state and nation: **a unity that is the fruit of political construction** and not an ancestral heritage of blood. This patriotism is, as stated, **constitutional patriotism, indispensable for generating bonds of solidarity, which are in turn a necessary condition for redistributive policies and social justice.**

3. FOR AN INTRANSIGENT DEFENCE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF 1948

To the degree that it reflects the historic convergence between the cultures of socialism and social Christianity, our Constitution aims at promoting a rebalancing of the relations of strength among the social classes in favour of the weakest, first and foremost workers; establishes the principle according to which people's dignity is affirmed through work; and requires full employment policies, generalized access to work, and its distribution without discrimination with regard to gender, race, or religious or sexual orientation. It therefore implies, in the historical phase which

stands before us, work-time reduction at equal pay, on the basis of the principle of working less so that everybody can work, and the setting up of "guaranteed work" programmes realized directly by the public administrations. Finally, it recognizes **the conflict between capital and labour** as an irreplaceable tool of personal and collective emancipation. Just as it recognizes conflict as an engine of political and economic democracy and, to this end, requires the public authorities to promote the conditions of a balanced confrontation between the social forces and to work to impede the depoliticization of the market. It is for these reasons that our Constitution is disliked by big international finance. It is for these reasons that it has been manipulated by neo-liberal "reforms" implemented by our rightist, centrist and leftist parties (such as Article 81, which prohibits Keynesian economic policies, or Article 117, which yokes the European Treaties to the Constitution itself). And it is for these reasons that it collides with the European Treaties centred on the principle of competition and price stability. This is why it must be reaffirmed that the **fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution prevail over the European and international Treaties** and that limitations of sovereignty are admitted only in conditions of parity with the other states and only to promote those fundamental principles. A Europe consistent with our Constitution is not the European Union, but a confederation of sovereign national democracies that together tackle (but not in antagonism with the rest of the world) the challenges of peace, environmental protection and social justice.

4. THE DUTIES OF THE NATIONAL STATE

The unsustainability of globalization, attested to by the re-presentation of protectionism and of inter-imperialistic competition, is the proof that the presumed end of the nation-state exists only in neo-liberal propaganda and in the scuttlebutt of a left that has replaced socialist internationalism – which is solidarity among national popular classes – with capitalist cosmopolitanism. In this context, the popular interests, to defend themselves from neo-liberal policies, ask for protection and security from their respective national states, conscious that only they can offer them the possibility of recovering a minimum of influence over their own destinies. The national state returns to being indispensable for promoting full employment, limiting and governing the market, and guaranteeing the social function of private ownership. Constitutional sovereignty is, therefore, a condition for abolishing the tyranny of the

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principle of free competition, subordinating it to social utility and the dignity of the individual. For this purpose, currency is a decisive political variable, to be put at the service of the general welfare and of constitutional democracy.

A **radical requalification of the state** is fundamental for overcoming the noted historical limits and assuming the form and substance of the state of the Constitution of 1948: for public education, public health, basic services, the fight against corruption and waste, and the winning of democratic control over the territory, subtracting it from a mafia-like criminality which is ever more widespread throughout the country.

The revitalization of the social functions of the state is also a condition for **defending national unity**. Behind the rhetoric on a “Europe of the Regions”, used also to justify the disastrous constitutional reform of 2001, is hidden the desire to weaken the national state, concentrating power in supranational institutions and delegating to bodies like the regions, devoid of any real capacity for macroeconomic planning, the pure administrative management of policies decided in technocratic centres, according to the principle of governance. In this context, the principle of subsidiarity towards territorial autonomies must be recognized as promoter of social cohesion of the whole nation and not, as occurs with the unbalanced allocation of resources and functions to the wealthy regions, of additional inequalities between Italy’s North and South, leading to a substantial rupture of the Republic’s economic and social unity.

5. AGAINST UNCONTROLLED MOBILITY OF CAPITAL, WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

The international mobility of capital, goods, services and people must be regulated and limited in regard to the protection of work, social justice and the environment. The European single market, a source of devaluation of work and of the hollowing out of national democracy, must be redefined to give priority to social cohesion over competition.

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6. REGULATE MIGRATIONS TO COMBAT XENOPHOBIA AND AVOID WARS AMONG THE POOR

Both xenophobia and the unrealistic principle of unlimited admission (“no borders”) are impractical responses for facing the epochal challenge of migrations. Indeed, they ignore the real causes of a phenomenon that requires political solutions. With reference to immigration in the West, if millions of human beings are forced

to leave their countries, it is above all because the neo-colonialism of the rich countries continues to plunder their resources and trigger local wars in order to divide up raw materials and markets, while the “reforms” imposed by the IMF and the World Bank worsen the misery. Reaffirming that neither the right of asylum in relation to those who have been deprived of democratic freedoms nor the duty of human solidarity in regard to the victims of wars and natural disasters can be called into question, it must be recognized that **the regulation of entries, in relation to the actual capabilities of integration, is an essential condition for offering a suitable reception** (up to jus soli), that is, able to guarantee living and working conditions to the admitted migrants analogous to those of the native citizenry and, at the same time, avoid social dumping on residents. Together, the **right not to emigrate** must be affirmed, as emigration is not at all a positive phenomenon for the country of origin, and everyone should have the right to live and work in dignified conditions in their own country: a right to defend with internationalist solidarity between the popular classes of rich countries and poor countries alike, called to fight together to promote and strengthen the right to full development of all nations.

7. TECHNOLOGY AND MARKET: INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ARE NOT ALWAYS RIGHTS

Technology (and to a certain extent science as well) is not “neutral”, in the sense that technological progress is profoundly integrated with other social systems and processes and reflects their conflicts, requirements and interests. This emerges from the way in which the recent technological advances have contributed to strengthen the domination of capital over work, intensifying rates and rhythms of exploitation, favouring displacements and increasing unemployment. It emerges from the contribution that technology offers to the colonization of vital worlds by the market (surrogate motherhood, commoditization of organs and genetic material, monopoly of genetically modified seeds, etc.). And finally, it emerges from the dwindling hopes for economic, political and social democracy and individual emancipation that the first steps of the digital revolution had kindled. Monopolistic concen-

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tration has throttled these expectations, allowing the large corporations of the sector to acquire total control over data, algorithms and intellectual property, generating previously unseen inequalities and threatening to fuel real forms of digital totalitarianism. This is why it is necessary to **adopt forms of democratic control over the use of technological and scientific knowledge**, on the basis of the principle that **not everything that is technically possible is also ethically acceptable**. And here is why it is necessary to fight proprietary individualism, which, by connecting technical feasibility, the conversion of innovation into commercial products and the inducement of new needs, converts every subjective desire into a "right". On the contrary, the rights and freedoms opened up by them are common goods that must always be understood together with the profoundly human sense of limits, the dignity of the individual and respect for nature.

8. SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY

The fall of the Wall and the neo-libertarian revolution seemed to have erased the word "socialism" from the political lexicon. Today, this term is returning powerfully to the limelight, starting from countries where it had never enjoyed a right of citizenship, like the United States and the United Kingdom, where leaders like Sanders and Corbyn are unafraid of embracing it. And it is reacquiring legitimacy thanks to leftist populist movements, from the Bolivarian revolutions to Podemos,

France Insoumise, and Aufstehen. Certainly, the socialism of the 21st century is not the socialism of the 20th, of which moreover a critical balance sheet free from prejudices has yet to be made. It is a socialism that in our country can and must draw inspiration from the constitutional principles referred to above, without nostalgia for past and recent experiences that did not succeed in seriously applying them. Principles of equality, fairness, solidarity and social justice which in the past would have been called "reformist" but today, in the context of the disasters generated by the neo-liberal system, take on an objectively "revolutionary" value. The **socialism of the 21st century cannot be disjoined from an ecologist vocation**. Given the environmental catastrophes generated by growth oriented exclusively

towards private profit and by the chase of 20th century socialism after the production levels of capitalism, today the slogan "socialism or barbarism" should be modified to **"socialism or ecological collapse of the planet"**. Human responsibility in relation to the environment as an irreplaceable intergenerational heritage, as an inheritance to preserve and pass on to future generations, is also a terrain on which the secular humanism of the socialist tradition and Christian humanism can find fertile ties, as demonstrated by the words of Pope Francis in his *Laudato si'* encyclical.

9. PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY

In order for all citizens to be able to contribute to determining national policy, **parties must be built as democratic, collective intellectual forms**, platforms of training and selection of leaders for the institutions of political representation. Democracy is representative and anchored to the irreplaceable function of the intermediate bodies, otherwise it becomes plebiscitary, in traditional or social media versions. Popular sovereignty is expressed through the centrality of Parliament and the freedom of mandate of every member of Parliament in representation of the nation.

10. BUILDING THE POLITICAL SUBJECT

None of the current Italian political forces are able to take up the indications summarized here. Not the reformist parties on both right and left, mutually responsible for the perversion of the nature of the Constitution in a neo-liberal sense and of the subaltern integration of Italy in the European Union. Not the radical or antagonistic leftist parties, deaf to the themes of the nation and the state. Not the current governing forces, which, although criticizing European Union policy and despite manifesting some (moderate and contradictory) redistributive intentions, appear incapable of operating – due to class conditions and/or ideological ambiguity – a necessary turn toward an economy oriented and governed by the public sector. The discussion and in-depth treatment of the themes presented above must therefore be made functional to the **formation of a political force, inspired by the principles of socialism, social Christianity, and environmentalism**, that is able to restore confidence and hope in the popular classes, respond to their demand for protection and social security, and commit itself to build with them a project for the country consistent with the programme of the Republican Constitution.

Patria e Costituzione, Senso Comune, Rinascita!

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