



The voice of Maria Dolens

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The Indian giant

Accompanied by sincere wishes for the new year, we wish to focus our readers' attention on some considerations regarding a "giant" of the current geo-political landscape, India. As is well known, the country achieved independence only in 1947 at the conclusion of a path, led by Mahatma Gandhi, which to this day has remained unequalled as an example of a political result that is both radical (separation from a colonizer) and the result of an almost entirely non-violent process.

Three quarters of a century after this historic event, the inclusion of India among the "heavyweights" of world membership takes on the features of an achievement earned, on the basis of the following characteristics: second place in terms of population, which becomes the

first if we limit the ranking to democratic systems; seventh for territorial extension; fifth in overall economic ranking; second among the fastest growing countries, with an extraordinary 7 percent compared to the previous year. On top of that the availability of nuclear weapons, acquired in the 1990s, following a protracted phase of experimentation.

After obtaining independence, India identified some fundamental strategic choices and carried them forward with perseverance and determination: the development of the internal economy, and with it the attempt to correct the major weaknesses intrinsic to its system, i.e., very strong social inequality and a female condition among the most disadvantaged;

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HAPPENING AT THE UN

The cost of ignorance

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION

Education is noticeable when it is not there, when someone is “poorly educated”, which essentially means that one does not know how to relate to others. And this is the problem, if you don’t know how to read the world you don’t understand what people are telling you, you miss what is happening, perhaps you withdraw into yourself, you begin to think you are always right, everything that goes wrong depends on a cynical and cheating destiny or, even easier to imagine, by people who hate and hinder you, probably because they are envious. This is not usually the case, but you only realize this if you read, solve some mathematical problems, stay informed, listen. In the West you simply have to choose to do it. It is also true

that in the most developed countries there are pockets of the population who have difficulty accessing education due to issues related to low income or a disadvantaged social context, but in most cases the possibility of studying is guaranteed, without distinction of gender, social class, religion or any other form of discrimination. In the rest of the world the situation is very different. On planet Earth right now, there are an estimated 258 million children and youths out of school and 617 million children and adolescents who cannot read or tackle basic maths. But there is no equality even among the disadvantaged and discrimination is almost always linked to gender: in sub-Saharan Africa less than 40 percent of girls complete lower secondary school.

In addition, around four million refugee children and young people are out of school.

Education is a human right, is for the common good and is a public responsibility, not only because everyone should be given the opportunity to improve their social and intellectual status, but also because without inclusive and fair quality education, less developed countries will fail to break the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions behind. The West, for its part, will continue to suffer the indirect consequences of the phenomenon in the form of massive migrations. And there are no walls that can stop desperate parents who have no food to give to their children.

To address the issue in an ongoing and structured way, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed January 24 as International Education Day in 2018. The idea behind it is simple and fundamental: without education there is no development and without development there is no peace. The West should invest in education worldwide for philanthropic purposes but also because it is convenient. It is not a question of being “good”, but of thinking in practical terms. To put two and two together. In fact, it is useful to know how to put two and two together.

HAPPENING AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Obligations that do not expire

THE SECRETARY GENERAL WRITES TO THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

There are times the bell rings while you are being questioned. You think you are safe, but at the door the teacher reminds you that you will continue to be questioned the next day. It has happened to everyone, even to those with the highest grades who say nothing however so as not to tarnish their image, and even to the most intelligent, who often admit it because they are the most intelligent. It also happens when school is over and it also happened to the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergej Lavrov, who was reminded in a letter by Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, that Moscow must implement the outstanding judgements issued by the European Court of Human Rights even if it has been expelled from the CoE. In short, not only did the bell ring, but you were sent out of class during lessons, and you still have to do your homework.

Despite the fact that the Russian Federation was excluded from the Council of Europe on 16 March 2022, the Kremlin is in fact still required to implement the judgements of the Strasbourg judges relating to the actions committed up to 16 September 2022.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe strongly regrets the fact that since 3 March Russia has ceased all communication regarding the execution of the judgements. In the face of this behaviour,

The Russian Federation must implement the outstanding judgments issued by the European Court of Human Rights even if it is no longer a member of the Council of Europe



a change of strategy was decided upon. Given the absence of information provided by the Moscow authorities, the contribution provided by civil society was utilised instead, intensifying exchanges with non-governmental organizations operating in the areas concerned. Interaction with UN human rights bodies, of which Russia is still a member, will also be strengthened.

In the future, the Committee of Ministers will consider adopting more general decisions addressing cases involving Russia. In addition, the Council of Europe will regularly publish updated information on all the judgments which are still pending, as well as a register of «“just satisfaction” awarded» which is still unresolved and the interest accrued in penalties in the meantime. An initial budget has already been provided. Experts are currently examining 2,227 cases pending full implementation by the Russian authorities. Information is currently awaited on the compensation of “just satisfaction” in 1,874 cases. As of November 8, 2022, the amount that Moscow ought to pay amounted to more than 2 billion euros.



DATA FROM UNICEF AND *FONDAZIONE MIGRANTES*

Between inclusion and exclusion

RECORD FIGURES OF MIGRANTS IN 2022

Statistics is not that science according to which if one person swallows a whole chicken and another dies of hunger, it turns out that both have eaten half of it. If we are careful with data, read the numbers properly, really understand what the tables mean we may see how things are going. In particular on very sensitive topics such as that of migrants. One of the sources considered most reliable on the subject is that of the *Fondazione Migrantes*, which has just published the 2022 Report on the

Right to Asylum. Another is Unicef and it is worth comparing the data provided in recent months.

According to *Migrantes*, there are 103 million refugees in the world, a figure never reached before, equal to one inhabitant out of 77. More than double compared to 10 years ago. Last year, Europe welcomed over 4.4 million Ukrainian refugees who were granted temporary protection. In the same year however, the EU «did everything to keep tens of thousands of people outside its borders, people from other routes

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and countries in need of protection», reads the text. According to the Italian Episcopal Conference «at the end of October 2022 the minimum estimate of refugees and migrants dead and missing in the Mediterranean was just under 1,800. Once again, the heaviest toll was paid by those attempting to cross the central Mediterranean, on the route that leads to Italy and Malta, where 1,295 dead and missing were counted, compared to 172 in the western sector and 295 in the eastern sector» the report states.

The UNICEF study goes back even further in time. According to the United Nations Children's Fund,



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more than 2.4 million people have crossed the Mediterranean from 2014 to today, fleeing war, violence and poverty, hoping to reach Europe for a better life. At least 23,845 have lost their lives at sea. Many of them were children. Many were young people and adolescents who, more often than not, travelled without family members and were unaccompanied by adults. Over 165,500 people arrived in Europe in 2021, including 23,000 children or un-

der-18s, often in very difficult conditions. In the first 10 months of 2022, arrivals amounted to more than 116,000. Of these, almost 23,000 were children fleeing conflict, insecurity and poverty, particularly from the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and South Asia. In 2021, the easing of the measures to contain the Covid-19 pandemic allowed the recovery of migratory flows. As of December 2021, just under 100,000 refu-

Since 2014 just under 24,000 people have lost their lives in the Mediterranean in the hope of reaching Europe



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gee and migrant children were present in Italy, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia, the countries most affected by the emergency, including almost 17,000 children separated from their parents and unaccompanied by adults.

The picture of the situation is clear and not new: people who can, leave countries where there is no security and no work. It has always happened, only the nationalities of the desperate change. The question to ask yourself is: should we or shouldn't we share our chicken?

India is the second fastest growing country and has availability of nuclear weapons

To be continued from page 1...

active defence of the national territory from threats from neighbouring states (potential or otherwise) and, finally, the affirmation of its own, recognized leadership in the region, also obtained by making military troops available to numerous peace-keeping missions of the United Nations. The constant concern associated with the presence of particularly fierce rival powers in the area, such as the British Empire until the Second World War and, from then to today, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has certainly contributed to the pursuit of these objectives.

In carrying out this approach, Delhi has pursued a policy of equidistance from the opposing blocks for many decades, distinguishing itself in the international arena for the "visionary" work of the then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, one of the founders in 1961 of the movement of «non-aligned» countries, a heterogeneous group of like-minded people who in the meantime have reached the considerable number of 120 members.

More recently, and without renouncing the traditional status of neutrality, India seems to have started a slow but constant conversion towards positions that could be defined as "pro-Western", starting with the most politically sensitive case of the moment, that of Ukraine.

In fact, if Dheli has never adhered to the resolutions condemning Russian aggression at the United Nations (choosing the line of abstention), it has not opposed the positions taken in other multilateral forums, which are very critical of President Putin. Such was the case of the G-20 summit in Bali, preceded - a few weeks earlier - by the summit in Samarkand of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional multilateral body to which Delhi attaches marked strategic importance. On that occasion an interview with Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also received great prominence in the media. The central passage is as follows: «In the presence of profound emergencies in relation to food, climate and energy needs as well as complex industrial transitions, this is certainly not the time for war. More than having to deal with the consequences of the devastation, we need to focus on concluding a peace pact».

Political analysts deemed this a decidedly innovative language, considering India's dependence on the Russian Federation not only for the supply of equipment and weapon systems, but also for the vital political-military support, a

legacy of the Soviet era, which was granted by Moscow on several occasions in moments of acute crisis (which resulted in armed conflicts with both the PRC and Pakistan). In this context, it also appears significant that Delhi did not intend to follow Moscow and Beijing in the vote against the expulsion of Iran adopted by the special UN Commission on the Status of Women at the beginning of December.

Continuing with the list, India has, for some years, been participating in the Quad, the informal quadrilateral body also made up of the USA, Japan and Australia which aims to maintain a free, open and peaceful Indo-Pacific geographical area. If it seems understandable that Delhi has, on several occasions, refused to recognize the new entity as "Asian NATO" for reasons of expediency and good neighbourliness towards Beijing in particular, it does not however appear less convinced in relation to its participation in the innovative security structure.

At this point we cannot fail to make a comment, albeit succinct, on Prime Minister Modi, leader of the People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party / BJP), with a long ex-





Prime Minister Modi is a figure in which traits of the nationalist coexist with those of the statesman who appreciates the advantages of international cooperation

perience as governor of the state of Gujarat and, nationally, in office since 2014 with re-election in 2019. He is, undoubtedly, a charismatic figure, in which traits of the convinced nationalist (summarized by the keyword *Hindutna*) coexist with those of the statesman who is able to appreciate the advantages of international cooperation and

has a clear idea of the geo-strategic interests of the subcontinent. Particularly significant were the openings he promoted towards the United States, both on a political level («India and the US are natural allies») and with regard to commerce and direct investment, reciprocated by Washington with the recognition of India's coveted status of global player. With a significant percentage of consensus currently unmatched among democratic nations (77 percent of voters) he seems to be heading, without any particular fears, towards a new appointment in 2024 which would bring him a third term as prime minister.

In conclusion, it is necessary to acknowledge the ruling class and the diplomacy of Delhi for having prudently and gradually initiated that "change of pace" in this first part of the century which was necessary both to profitably accompany the rapid changes that have taken place in the geopolitical context of reference, the In-

do-Pacific area, and to ensure the Indian nation and its one and a half billion inhabitants a leading role in the years to come.

A mixture of assertiveness and moderation will also have to be used for the consolidation, in the sense of "peaceful coexistence", of relations with the People's Republic of China, a neighbour which from its numbers (GDP six times higher, defence expenditure three times greater) has a tendency to impose the attitude of arrogant superiority also towards Delhi as is held towards all the other countries in the area. In the presence of territorial claims (Himalayan region) that remain open, the repercussions of a conflict involving the two most populous nations on the planet would in fact open a vulnerability that is probably unbridgeable in the current, and already precarious, system of international relations.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President

OVER 50 WORKS BY LIBERIO FURLINI ON DISPLAY AT THE COLLE

Recovering our origins

An exhibition of works by Liberio Furlini entitled «Recovery of our origins» was inaugurated on 15 January at Colle di Miravalle and will remain open until 15 February. The aim, explains the curator, Claudio Matté, is to investigate our origins «to understand how important it is to take time, not to rush and leave out the important things, to be aware that there is no future without a rethinking of the past». In the exhibition Furlini offers reproductions of cave paintings. He allows us to reflect, to turn the clock back ten thousand years, to rediscover a more human pace and to mark our rhythms which vary according to the region of the world in which we live. The works, which total more than fifty and represent all continents, «have the characteristic of remaining faithful to the original whilst still interpreting it» explains the curator. The exhibition, continues Matté, essentially seeks «to create a reflection on our origins. Art came even before words, as an act of the will to express ourselves in order to be understood and limit conflicts. These thoughts, expressed by our ancestors inside the caves where they sought shelter, were the first type of communication».



Bear and panther - France - Chauvet cave



Bison - Spain - Cave of Altamira



Reindeer - France - Lascaux cave