



# The voice of Maria Dolens

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## The elections in the USA

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**O**n November 5, an electoral body of over 200 million people will be called to the polls to elect the 47th President in the history of the United States of America.

At the time of publication of this article, that very important appointment will still be eight months away, but it seems clear from this point on – save for the most unlikely of cinema scripts – that the current occupant of the White House and his immediate predecessor in office will compete for the prestigious, four-year mandate.

The absolute lack of suspense shared by the only two parties, the Demo-

cratic and the Republican, capable of producing “electable” candidates on a national scale, largely derives from the unequivocal outcome of the so-called “primaries”, that is to say local pre-consultations which, although in different ways, characterize all the states of the Union. Those that have taken place so far have in fact been transformed, within their respective parties, into indisputable affirmations for both Joe Biden and Donald Trump, prompting a good number of challengers to withdraw from campaigns that are as expensive as they are clearly destined for failure.

*To be continued on page 6...*

### IN THIS EDITION

## 02

**The Risk of Rearmament**  
by Carlo Trezza

## 04

**Stories of Trentino People in the World**  
João Pedro Stedile: from Terragnolo to Brazil

## 08

**For Whom the Bell Tolls**  
The Christening

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# The risk of rearmament

BY CARLO TREZZA\*

In his foreword to a 2002 United Nations study on disarmament education, then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed his satisfaction for the fact that a whole new generation of young people was coming of age «without the ever-present terror of a nuclear catastrophe». He added however, that the flip side of the coin was ignorance and that «the companion of ignorance is complacency: we care little about what we know little about». This was written over 20 years ago. The same could be said today with the weight of the risks of a nuclear clash that have now increased significantly. I won't dwell on the crises and wars taking place today, but I will add that each of them involves one or more countries that possess nuclear weapons.

Awareness and knowledge of the problems is therefore indispensable and must start from education.

All UN general secretaries from Kofi Annan onwards have worked actively to ensure that states implement the guidelines established by the aforementioned UN study on disarmament education.

Since then, every two years, the United Nations General Assembly votes on a resolution for which each State is called upon to report what it has achieved in the field of disarmament education.

The reason I decided to focus attention on this theme in the context of the Bell of the Fallen is because not many people know that one of the most interesting and significant events dedicated to disarmament education takes place in Trentino, a few kilometres from Rovereto. This is the winter course that ISODARCO (International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts) car-

ries out every year in Andalo. ISODARCO is an Italian non-governmental organization which, since its foundation in 1966, when the Cold War and nuclear arsenals were at their peak, has played a unique role in raising awareness of the risks of nuclear war and an arms race. The NGO maintained this commitment throughout the years of East-West détente and today is more active than ever as a new arms race is underway.

Last month, before the world's leading figures landed with their private jets at the Davos Conference, the ISODARCO participants had already reached the Trentino ski area by bus or train. The idea of organizing what, in a recent article, the newspaper «Avvenire» defines as a «mini-Davos of Disarmament», emerged in a conversation between President and Founder of ISODARCO, the physicist Carlo Shaerf, and Edoardo Amaldi, one of the «Via Panisperna Boys», disciple of Enrico Fermi. The meeting took place in the aftermath of the Cuban nuclear crisis, which in 1962, brought humanity to the brink of nuclear war.

To avert this danger in the future, the two scientists thought of organizing courses dedicated to the

scientific problems of international security and the arms race, in order to build a strategically stable world with a smaller quantity of armaments.

Its founder still directs the school today, while the academic part is currently coordinated by professors Steven Miller and Francesca Giovannini of the Belfer Center of Harvard University. The protagonists of ISODARCO, apart from its teachers, are above all the students who will be the leaders of tomorrow. This year the participants, around one hundred, came from all over the world: in addition to Europe and the United States, India, Pakistan, Iran, China and Korea were also represented. The course offered a unique opportunity to share a week of full immersion in the complex issues of nuclear disarmament and international security with the world's leading experts.

The affinities between ISODARCO and the Rovereto Peace Bell are not only territorial: both initiatives aim to keep the memory and knowledge alive of the suffering caused by war because there is a necessary complementarity between maintaining the collective memory and the search for a balance in reducing rather than increasing the instruments of war that fuel conflicts.

Then there is the symbolic fact that Maria Dolens was built in 1924 with the bronze of the cannons offered by the nations that had participated in the First World War. The physical elimination of armaments constitutes the main *raison d'être* of disarmament activities. I have personally witnessed and attested to the destruction of tanks, cannons, mines and chemical weapons which transpired as a result of specific international agreements.

Some progress has been made in recent decades: chemical weapons, anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, nuclear tests, and even the possession and use of nuclear weapons have been prohibited by specific international agreements. Unfortunately, in recent years the reverse process has occurred: many of these commitments have been dismissed or even violated with the risk that in the field of arms control we will return to the "law of the jungle". The risk we run is that the common ground pertaining to the inadmissibility of some of these weapons and the stigmatization of their use will be lost. It is therefore necessary to support and reinforce the objectives pursued through initiatives such as those of the Bell of the Fallen and ISODARCO to keep the memory alive and promote awareness of the risks we are running.

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## MEMORIAL AND REMEMBRANCE

All victims of persecution have the same dignity. Whichever side they fought or served on. The words "memorial" and "remembrance" are often used to commemorate the massacres. Perhaps they are the most suitable, perhaps the first that come to mind. You could play with synonyms, but you don't play when it comes to people who have been murdered. "Memorial" is used to commemorate the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis which is observed on January 27th, day of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945. "Remembrance" is used so as not to forget the massacres of the Foibe and is remem-

bered on February 10th, the date on which, in 1947, the Treaty of Paris was signed which assigned Istria, Kvarner and the city of Zadar to Yugoslavia. They are very different things. In the first case it is a World Day announced by the UN, in the second it is an Italian civil solemnity. Even the extent of the massacres cannot be compared: on the one hand a planned genocide which led to the death of 6 million people, on the other the massacre of Italian soldiers and civilians by Yugoslav partisans which caused 3,000 to 5,000 deaths, according to some historians more than 10,000. Let us not confuse the two but let us neither forget that the Bell rings for one and all.



## STORIES OF TRENINO PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

# From Terragnolo to Brazil

## JOÃO PEDRO STEDILE'S EXPERIENCE AMONG THE "LANDLESS"

*We asked various descendants of Trentino emigrants to tell their stories in first person, emphasizing how their origins have guided and influenced them in life. This would not have been possible without the active and cordial collaboration of the 'Trentini nel Mondo' Association, founded in 1957 working for social solidarity and as support for aggregation and assistance for Trentino migrants and their descendants. This month's figure is the Brazilian social activist João Pedro Stedile.*

The history of a people cannot be separated from the history of its society, of social and productive relationships, even if people are able to change history.

Brazil was the country that experienced the longest period of slavery in the whole of the West (1500-1888). When that system was no longer sustainable, since the purchase, transfer from

Africa and the upkeep of slaves had become expensive and also because slaves either died very young (around the age of 35) or ran away, the capitalists wanted to move to wage labour. The government of the time enacted two measures: a land law that mandated private ownership of land and another that encouraged the migration of peasants from Europe in exchange for ac-



cess to land. Thus, between 1875 and 1914 more than three million migrants arrived in Brazil from all over Europe.

In the 1890s, two young men from Terragnolo arrived in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil: Vittorio and Giuseppe Stedile. They married early. They received 25 hectares of land from the government, which they had to pay for. Vittorio was my great-grandfather. He married Santina Bortolotto. They had eighteen children. My grandfather Antonio Stedile was born in 1901 and my father Arcides in 1930.

The first generation of migrant farmers were committed solely to survival, working hard on land they did not know, in the middle of the forest. My father's generation experienced a transformation of Brazilian capitalism, which stopped being agrarian and began to develop industry, based on foreign capital. Between 1930 and 1980, farmers began producing raw materials and providing cheap labour to make agro-industries profitable. Almost all my uncles became labourers.

This was the social and economic situation when my mother Lourdes Agustini gave birth to me in 1953.

The 80s arrived as did the first crisis of this economic model. There were no jobs in the cities and there was no land available for cultivation.





The country was governed by a “military-corporate” dictatorship (1964-84), functional to the geo-political situation of that time, referred to as the «Cold War».

It was in this context that I grew up and lived my youth. I was greatly influenced by members of the Catholic Church who had embraced Liberation Theology and transformed religious faith into practices of awareness of the real world. All this made me a rebel against all the injustices that existed.

From the Trentino blood of my ancestors, I inherited the desire to work and study. From their culture I learned to appreciate wine and grappa. From my grandfather Antonio I learned to always respect others. From my grandmother, Rosa Dotti, who was a midwife, I learned to always help others.

Life has taught me that we can only be happy if we practice solidarity.

With this class consciousness, overcoming the fear of dictatorship, I began to take care of the poor peasants of our State, who began to fight to obtain land to cultivate, organizing the first occupations of unproductive large estates, to implement the right to work the land, following the teaching that the land should belong to those who work on it. The first mass occupations, with the mobilization of hundreds of peasant families, began in September 1979 and have never stopped. As a result of this struggle that took place throughout the country, in 1984 it was decided to found the ‘Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra’ (MST), a national movement of peasants fighting for agrarian reform.

I have spent my whole life in this militancy. Thanks to the determination and will to fight of the farmers, more than five thousand unproductive large estates have been occupied, giving rise to settlements with almost five hundred thousand families who have benefited and today work, study and organize a good life in the field.

Many things have happened in these 40 years of activity of the MST. We have lost many lives, many leaders. I saw many arrested. We have had defeats especially when the government was right-wing. But our movement has grown both in size and wisdom, and we have won many victories and learned many things.

We have learned that the fight for land does not just mean dividing it to allow everyone to work but that it is necessary for the land to carry out its main social function, that is, producing healthy food for all people.

We have learned that to be a good farmer you must also be a guardian of nature, preserve biodiversity, not use pesticides, take care of water and plant trees, always. Only trees can save us from climate change and the destruction of the planet.

This is why we organize dozens of agroecology schools in Brazil and Latin America.

We have learned to be tolerant towards those who think differently but combative against all forms of exploitation and oppression.

We have learned that only knowledge truly liberates people. And this is why it is necessary to encourage study throughout one's entire life.

We have learned that it is necessary to participate in the political life of our country, so that society is more democratic, and governments are more committed to protecting people's interests.

And in this journey, I feel privileged. Because thanks to the organization of farmers within the MST we contributed to the birth of “Via Campesina”, a movement that brings together farmers from more than one hundred countries, as well as the organization of the first World Social Forums (the annual meetings of social movements, NGOs, networks and exponents of civil society, to reflect on the nature and consequences of globalization).

In 2014 we were called by Pope Francis to organize a global meeting of popular movements with his participation, in a dialogue on humanity's dilemmas and the problems of workers in the world.

We have received many awards, including the 1991 «Right Livelihood Award», referred to as the “alternative Nobel Prize”, with the following motivation: «...for their courageous commitment to obtaining land for the landless and helping these people to cultivate it sustainably».

After a long time, I now feel like a Brazilian-Trentino, citizen of the world. Because there are no foreigners on our planet. We are all equal and brothers of the same common home: the earth.





*To be continued from page 1...*

Custom has it that, being able to count on the “security of position” in the White House and the obvious support of the leaders of his own party, the President-in-Office is decidedly less exposed to the danger of internal competition.

Where this type of competition usually manifests itself most prominently is in the opposition, since - at least in theory - the various challengers start (or should start) from positions of substantial equality. In fact, the initial presence among the “likely to be elected” of two qualified alternatives to Donald Trump, namely the Governor of Florida Ron DeSantis and the former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, suggested, as with the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in mid-July, the possibility of a less obvious final designation. But, as mentioned above, the results of the primaries, although partial, ended up leaving their mark, prompting the former to discreetly withdraw and the latter to throw in the towel after the disappointing results of the “Super Tuesday” at the beginning of March.

Returning to the question of lack of suspense that appears to characterize the November elections, it seems legitimate to ask why, in the richest, most powerful, economically dynamic and technologically advanced country on the planet, such a fundamental choice, also from the point of view of future international stability, sees two protagonists who are decidedly far from the prestige and credibility that should mark the profile of George Washington’s

46th successor. In addition to various charges for cases of corruption, withholding and concealing documents as well as sexual harassment, Trump is in fact weighed down by the indisputable connivances he abetted in January 2021 with the attackers of Capitol Hill, historically the most serious internal threat ever brought to American democracy. Connivances so serious as to prompt the Courts of a number of States of the Federation to declare



ineligibility (these sentences were, however, very recently “overturned” by the Supreme Court).

On the other hand, if Biden’s personal ethics appear objectively immune from substantial criticism (this positive opinion does not extend to members of his immediate family), it is above all his evident senility that causes widespread concern. Exemplified in the blunt definition by the Special Counsel Robert Hur («an elderly man with good intentions and a poor memory») as well as in the more popular label of ‘sleepy Joe’, it justifies the emergence of well-founded doubts regarding the full possession of those qualities of coherence, lucidity and intellectual responsiveness which are indispensable in fulfilling the most important and delicate government task in the world.

In an attempt to respond to any queries, in Trump’s case, aside from all other considerations, the belief prevails that for the Grand Old Party (as well as for the powerful lobbies that support and finance it) he still represents the Republican exponent most suited to attracting the votes of the US electorate to the party. In fact, it is important to remember that on November 5, apart from the indirect election of the new President, the entire Congress (currently with a Republican majority) will have to be reaffirmed as will the Senate (controlled instead by the Democrats) for a third of its composition.

In Biden’s case, the matter is more complex. His victorious election in 2020 was in fact seen by many of his supporters as the necessary “bridge” on the path to a forthcoming, clear generational change by passing the baton to Kamala Harris, to favour entry into the White House, 4 years later, of a brilliant, competent and “young” sixty-year-old. With the project left on paper - for reasons related to the lack of charisma and consequent reduction in the popularity of the current



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Vice President - the Democrats were left with no other solution, to use an irreverent but effective formula, thus resorting to “tried and trusted”.

In view of the finish line of 5 November, the battle promises to be close and, at least at this stage, impossible to predict, given that the discernible advantage which, according to the majority of surveys, Trump currently boasts (48% compared to 43 % according to the «New York Times») hardly seems insurmountable.

As has consistently happened in US elections, it will not be so much international issues (however wide the media “exposure” of them may be) that will orient the voters’ response in one way or another, but rather internal matters. We will return to the former in subsequent comments, limiting ourselves here to highlighting how, in the event of Trump’s affirmation, American support for the government of Ukraine, practically unlimited from February 24, 2022 to today, would undergo forms of attenuation. His recent, provocative statements on the role of NATO and the prolonged silence following the “state murder” of Aleksei Navalny bear witness to this.

Regarding the latter, the areas of civil rights, social security, greater distribution of welfare and climate change will

constitute the priorities of the current President’s campaign. The challenger will oppose these with reduction of taxes, the lesser presence of the State in the economy, the continuing freedom in the sale of weapons and greater severity in the repression of abortion and “unconventional” social behaviour.

That said, in the unanimous assessment of political circles and the media, the “mother of all electoral battles” will essentially boil down to the phenomenon of immigration and its regulation. According to official data, over 5 million people have crossed the country’s southern border, mostly clandestinely, during the Biden presidency. This is a flow that Democrats and Republicans, for once in agreement, consider unsustainable in the future, although they radically diverge on the most suitable solutions to effectively deal with it. These are extraordinarily relevant decisions, as they are destined to affirm Joe Biden’s reconfirmation in the White House or Donald Trump’s return to the Oval Office in full sail, thus reinforcing the doubts and uncertainties even across the Atlantic that, in the same sphere, characterize the basic choices of almost all governments of the Old Continent.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS - P6

# The Christening

«Well done, Father Rossaro. Today is his celebration and it is well deserved». Bishop Endrici was right, Father Rossaro deserved the celebration, but he hadn't dressed elegantly. In his opinion, the cassock he wore was too modest and for this reason he decided not to participate in the official lunch.

Already in the morning, at the train station, when it came to welcoming the queen and the other authorities, he had stood aside and left the front row to the representatives of the local institutions. The day, however, was important: 24 May 1925, exactly ten years after Italy entered the war, Great at the time, as it did not yet need the number one. It was the day of the christening.

Throughout the previous night, thousands of people from Rovereto had queued at the Convent of San Rocco to see the wonder that

had arrived from the Colbacchini Foundry. In the morning, once the six pairs of horses had been tied to the carriage that was to transport the load, everything was ready. And it is in this way that the Bell entered the centre of Rovereto.

The authorities were waiting in Piazza Rosmini. At the entrance to the square, Queen Margherita was ready to cut the ribbon, but the crowd, so huge and involved, was the main attraction. The great Carlo Delcroix, himself mutilated in war, gave the official speech and shortly after midday everyone headed towards the Church of San Marco, where Father Rossaro celebrated the solemn mass. Lunch followed without the priest and the moment everyone had been waiting for finally arrived. At Rovereto Castle, the Queen inaugurated the 'Bell of the Fallen' room dedicated to the memory of Carla Della Beffa. Immediately afterwards in Piazza Rosmini the bishop poured

water from the Leno, Piave and Tiber over the Bell, according to the sacramental rite of baptism. The name «Maria Dolens» was chosen, in honour of the Madonna who represents all mothers saddened by the death of their children.

The bishop read the bull with which Pope Pius granted an indulgence of 500 days to those who recited a prayer of suffrage for the fallen at the ringing of the bell.

After the official hymn of the Bell was played, it was those who had led the work in the foundry who took up the heavy clapper to swing against the bronze. Seven tolls and the Bell was already a universal symbol, designed to renew the memory of the fallen, all the fallen, every day and to prompt feelings of brotherhood. But finding a position between nationalist rhetoric and the aspiration for peace was not easy in a political climate that had transformed with the rise of fascism to power.

## THE HUMAN CROSSING EXHIBITION OPENS

Returning to the Foundation is the «Human Crossing | Footprints of Culture and Peace», exhibition that until 9 May will present works by three internationally renowned artists, three different styles, whose common bond is their attention to humankind. Alex Cattoi, explains curator Roberto Ronca, uses ceramics to represent imaginary beings who inhabit interior worlds. His beings appear to be deformed, but their deformations represent sensations for which words would not be enough. In the works of Roberto Lorenzini, composed of various materials, ceramics and everyday objects, Ronca continues, we find the little things in life. The video art of Isabel Pérez del Pulgar, concludes the curator, is pure poetry. Her images, which can be incredibly beautiful or incredibly absurd, are always poetry.