

**15th Annual U.S.-European Transatlantic Social Dialogue**  
***Going on the Offensive: Best Practices for Multi-Racial  
Organizing and Movement Building.***

# **Labor's Response to Right-Wing Attacks on Vulnerable Communities – What Can Unions and Worker Organizations Do to Support the Most Vulnerable? The Italian experience**

**Salvo Leonardi**

**September 14-16, 2017**

Worker Institute at Cornell's ILR School

16 East 34<sup>th</sup> St, New York City



*Fondazione Giuseppe Di Vittorio*



# A premise

- Public discourse is pervaded by "the obsession of the foreigner", with an undue and nefarious overlap between concepts like borders, immigration, crimes and terror. Media and political "entrepreneur of fear" shamefully excite the "low instincts" of the population.
- Today, immigrants are the new poor. Natives dislike them for that. Poverty is considered a fault, almost a crime. As poverty is criminalized, then immigrants, consequently, are criminalized.
- Western local working classes, losers of globalization, are scared, easily targeted and victims of the populist and right-wing messages, scapegoating immigrants for most of their worries.
- Problem: how to prevent/avoid a definitive divorce between culturally vulnerable lower classes and enlightened, reflexive globalist elites, within the political left and trade unions (see the Brexit and Trump examples)

# Are Italians becoming racists?

For some sources, immigrants' perception in Italy is not different (and worse) from the ones produced in better performing economies (German Marshall Fund, TT, 2016)

For others, Italy is one of the countries with the highest rate of ignorance on immigration (Jo Cox Report, EC, 2017).

- The majority think that resident immigrants are 30% of the population, rather than 8%; Muslims 20%, when they are 4%
- 86% view gypsies very unfavorably; 61% Muslims (Pew Research Center)
- **It's the second main cause of insecurity, after unemployment and before terrorism** (Eurobarometer, 2016).
- The number of Italians favorable to recognize the citizenship to born-children has turned from majority to minority in a couple of years
- The stable successful of a **xenophobic party like the "Northern League"**, nationally over 10%, but much stronger in the richer parts of the country. Now the **5Stars. The two most voted parties by the blue collars, even unionized**, using the immigrants' welfare dependency argument and cultural difference (Islamophobia)
- **The centre-left is quite undistinguishable from the right.** At the Ministry of Interiors (an ex communist) as at level of local administrators

# Under the right-wing attack



ristora **Libero** Mercoledì 6 settembre 2017  
CAPSULE GOURMET **ristora**  
OPINIONE **Libero** Roma Volume 1.1.1. - Spedite in abbondanza postale  
DIRETTORE VITTORIO FELTRI  
ANNO LII NUMERO 245 EURO 1,50\*

## La bimba trentina di 4 anni morta di malaria

# DOPO LA MISERIA PORTANO MALATTIE

*Immigrati affetti da morbi letali diffondono infezioni. Basta che una zanzara punga prima un malato e poi uno sano e quest'ultimo muore. Il governo se ne disinteressa e insiste con l'accoglienza*

I verbali dello stupro di Rimini: «Violenza oltre ogni immaginazione e doppia penetrazione»

di PIETRO SENALDI

Numero uno dello share pure con le repliche  
**Terence Hill, prete o forestale, fa ascolti**

Questo è un articolo che **Libero** non avrebbe mai voluto scrivere. Una bimba di quattro anni, ricoverata in ospedale a

Giulio Andreotti è morto da qualche anno ed è più facile parlarne bene che male. Ora sappiamo che sta per uscire un suo romanzo, trovato in un cassetto dalla figlia Serena, e siamo curiosi di leggerlo com'è che sarà interessante, malgrado. Verrà pubblicato dalla Nave di Tesco, diretta da Elisabetta Sigebà, con questo titolo: *Il buono cattivo*. Tema: il divorzio che nel 1974 fu al centro di un referendum perso dai cattolici, tanto è che da allora i matrimoni si sciogliono come neve

LINEA NOTTE

NATURAL **il Giornale** NATURAL  
Kangra **il Giornale** Kangra  
SABATO 24 LUGLIO 2015 Direttore ALESSANDRO SALLUSTI Anno XXXVIII Numero 174 - 1,20 euro www.ildigitale.it

L'ADDIO AL DELFINO DI DON VERZE  
Ecco perché era una follia negare i funerali a Cal, morto di vergogna  
Luca D'Amico a pagina 28

L'ULTIMA MODA DEI GIOVANNISSIMI  
Sul web il porno girato in classe  
Ma è un marchio per la vita  
Giordano Bruno Guerri a pagina 37

ALLARME DA LONDRA  
Gli scienziati pronti a creare animali che parlano come uomini  
Gala Costantini a pagina 39

## SONO SEMPRE LORO CI ATTACCANO

*Oso come in guerra. Un'autobomba davanti ai palazzi del governo e un assalto armato al convegno del partito laburista. Almeno trenta vittime. La prima vendetta di Al Qaida dopo la morte di Bin Laden?*

di Flaminia Nirenstein

Non ho mai tentato di immaginare che un attentato del genere si verificasse in un paese come l'Italia. Ma ora che è successo, mi rendo conto che non ero così ingenuo. E che, in effetti, il mondo è un luogo molto più pericoloso di quanto io pensassi. E che, in effetti, il mondo è un luogo molto più pericoloso di quanto io pensassi. E che, in effetti, il mondo è un luogo molto più pericoloso di quanto io pensassi.

**PI SAPIA E GLI ALTRI I**  
**GLI EROI DELLA SINISTRA STANGANO I CITTADINI**  
di Alessandro Sallusti

A devo sopprimere quello è, un fatto e non voglio slogan. La riprova magica che ha incantato il mondo intero è stata quella di Obama e Napolitano, poi ha un certo il più sodo della storia, nessun taglio. A due anni dalla loro elezione a sindaco, i nuovi eroi della sinistra Pisapia e De Magistris, hanno messo le carte in tavola. Pisapia ha annunciato che il governo del biglietto del tram annunciato dal primo settembre del cinquanta per cento. Un fatto che ha fatto il sindaco di Milano, Berlusconi. Non per controllo tempo di attesa, ma per controllo tempo di attesa.

# DIFENDILA

DAI NUOVI INVASORI

# difendila!

POTREBBE ESSERE TUA MADRE, TUA MOGLIE, TUA SORELLA, TUA FIGLIA

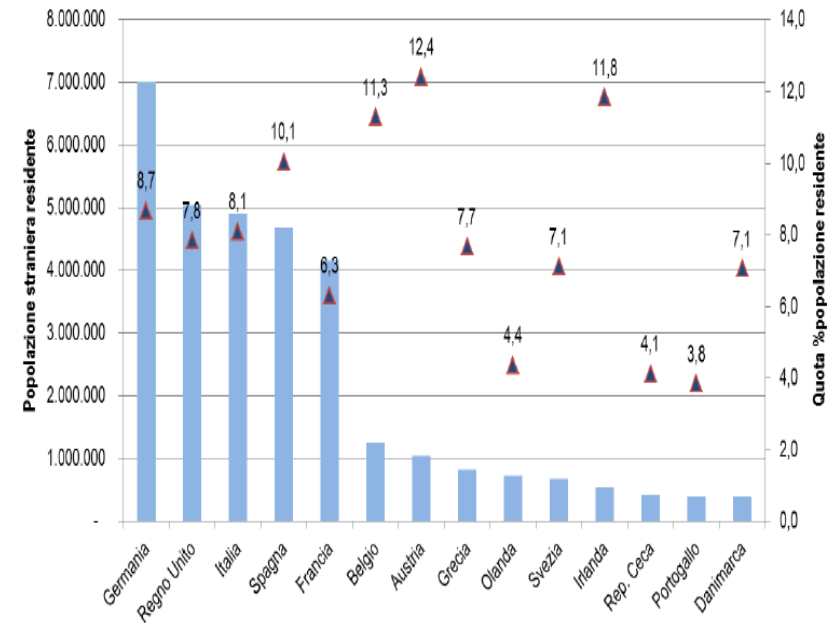
**FORZA FN NUOVA**

POTREBBE ESSERE TUA MADRE, TUA MOGLIE, TUA SORELLA, TUA FIGLIA

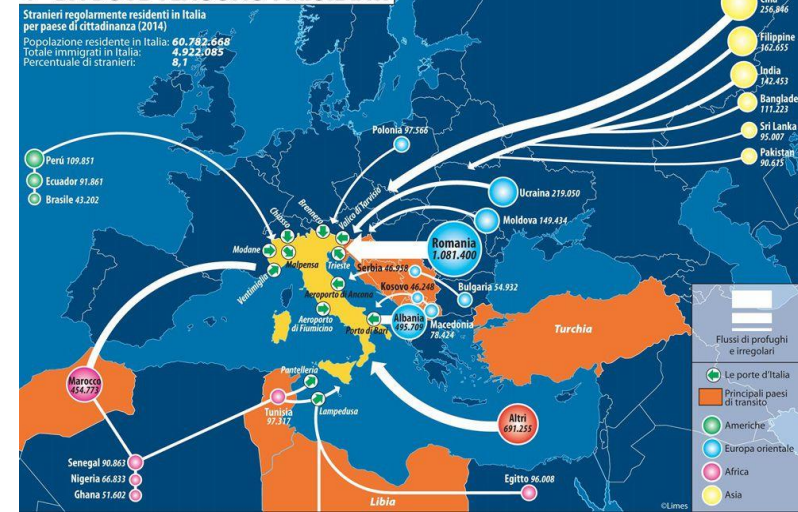


# Profile of non-national population in Italy

- **Foreign-born residents:** 5.026.153; 8,3% (+37,8% in 6 years) of the entire population (60,5mln); + approx. 450.000 undocumented
- **Distribution:** North 58,6%, Centre 25,4%, South 15,9%
- **Migration inflows:** 386.000 (2011) vs. 280.000 (2015); below LM needs
- **First 5 communities:** Romania (22,9%), Albania (9,3%), Morocco (8,7%), China (5,4%), Ukraine (4,6%)
- **Cost/benefit balance for state budget:** 9% GDP; 8 bln in social contributions, with receiving just 3bln in pensions and other provisions
- **Immigrant workers employed:** 2,294,000 (2015) = 10,3% of the total number of employed persons. **Unemployment rate:** 16,2%, Italians 11,4%

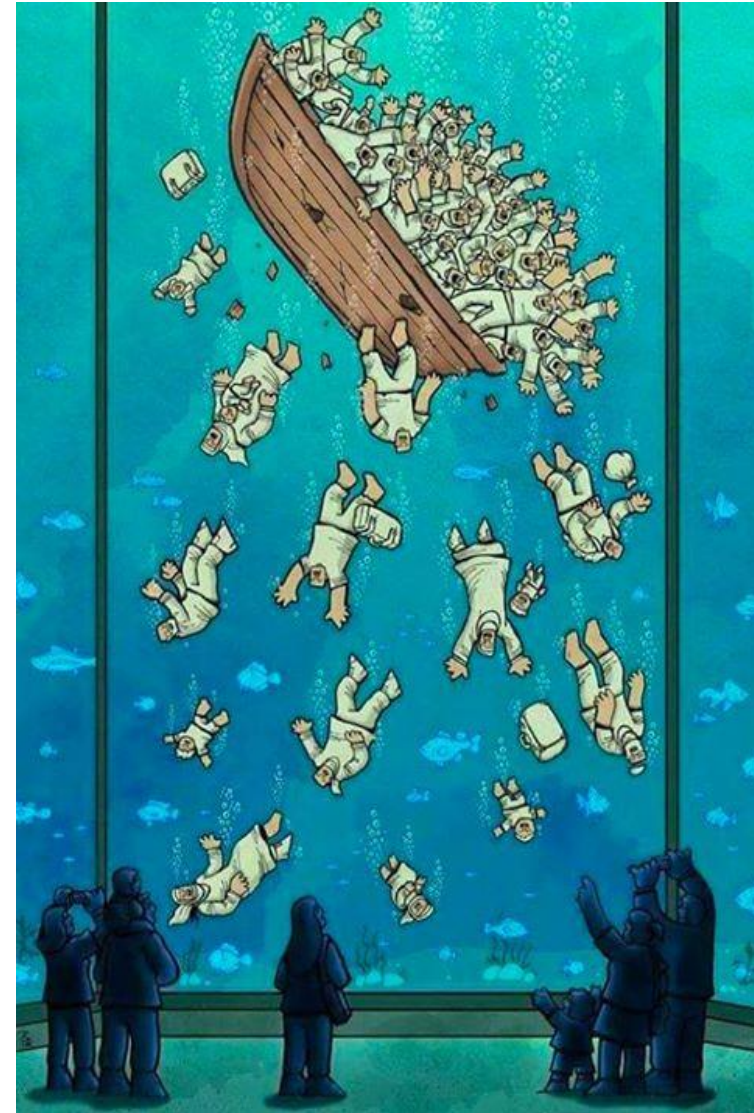
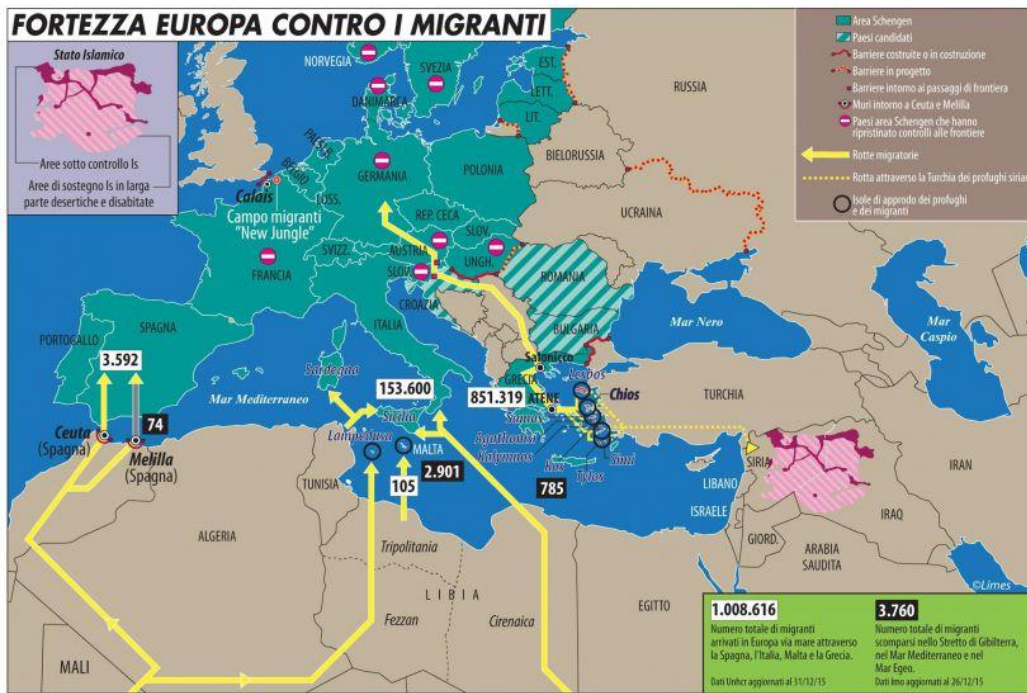


## 4 - DA DOVE VENGONO I MIGRANTI



# The Italian frontline of the «Fortress» Europe

The key geographic position of Italy in the new in-flows migrations towards Europe





# Refugees, economic immigrants, “illegal persons”

- More asylum seekers and family reunification than job-seekers; regular extra-EU accesses for work are practically closed
- The undocumented immigrant, considered “illegal person”, just for a subjective status and not for a true crime committed.
- The ambiguous divide between asylum seekers (good) and economic immigrants (bad)
- Arrivals: 10.000 (2000),... 66.000 (2014), 103.792 (2015); 181.000 (2016), 100.000 (Sept. 2017)
- The drastic drop of this summer; from 22.000 (Aug/2016) to 2.000 (Aug/2017), - 82%, after the controversial agreement with Libya

CAMPAGNE FLAI CGIL



# The Italian legal framework on migration and work

*The 1948 Republican Constitution:* the fundamental principles of formal and substantial equality (no matter race, color or religion (art. 3); the right to asylum (art. 10); to fair, sufficient and dignified pay (art. 36)

*The Turco-Napolitano Law (Leg. Decree no. 286/98)*

- Employers are bound by law to respect «wages and insurance set down by the applicable law and national sectorial collective agreements»
- Employment conditions «cannot be worse than those established by applicable national industry-wide agreements»

*The Immigration Law (Law no. 189/02)*

- Residence permit and social rights tied to a work contract

*Anti-gangmaster and slavery Law (Law no. 199/17)*

- Supporting regularization of undeclared immigrant workers in agriculture
- Sanctions for employers committing illicit labour intermediation, with workers smugglers and slavery conditions



# The racial lines of contractual stratification, over-exploitation and discrimination at work

- Non-nationals work is mostly complementary and not replacing locals workers
- Labour intensive sectorial segregation (harvesting, domestic work, construction, logistics, etc.), over-qualification for lower-skill jobs, under-classification, rare in better paid jobs
- Over-represented in precarious contracts, “dirty and dangerous” jobs, informal and undeclared, subcontracting in SMEs, bogus self-employment
- Hardest working conditions: tasks, longer working hours, overtime, less desirable shifts, false part-time. Higher exposure to accidents and risk for H&S
- Wage gap (-25%), unpaid bonuses and seniority, non-compliance of collectively agreed wages; contract infringements
- Poorer training and career advancement
- First out in case of crisis and dismissals
- Uncertain social and pension rights
- Intimidation, aggression, slavery in extreme cases

**In unionized factories no reports on serious discriminations**



# Labor's Response: migrants and unions in Italy

- Today foreign workers are quite everywhere a key factor for trade unions, both as a growing constituency in the labour market and as a target group for potential new members in a revitalization strategy
- Unlike some other national unions, historically or even today, Italian unions have never opposed, to the new large-scale immigrations.
- On the front line, with other social movements and actors, in order to push political establishment to adopt measures which can facilitate and improve the non-nationals and ethnic minorities integration and social citizenship
- A mix of universally inclusive strategy for workers and low income earners (universal social rights, full employment, inclusive collective bargaining, higher minimum wages) and specific positive actions for immigrants (servicing, organizing, tailored-campaigns)

***First and foremost workers !***

# Foreign workers and union membership

	(A) Employees (self- employed excluded) (mln)	(B) No National Employee s (mln)	(B/A) No National Employees on Total Employees (%)	(C) Trade Union Members Total (mln)	(D) Trade Union Members Active Workers (mln)	(D/A) Trade Union Density (exc. retirees) (%)	(E) No National Members (x1000)	(E/B) No National Union Density (exc. retirees) (%)
<b>Total</b>	17.3	2.1	10.0	<b>12.0</b>	6.6	38.1	<b>939</b>	<b>45.2</b>
<b>CGIL</b>				5.5	2.6	15.0	409	19.7
<b>CISL</b>				4.3	2.4	13.9	335	16.1
<b>UIL</b>				2.2	1.6	9.2	195	9.4
<b>Others</b>				?	?	?	?	?



# What do Italian unions do for racial, ethnic and religious minorities?

1. Migrants national/sectoral co-ordinations and specialized offices for servicing, organizing, recruiting
2. Equal treatment and positive actions in industrial relations
3. Campaigns, in alliances and movements, for better life and working conditions
4. Tripartite territorial social bargaining on local welfare
5. Political lobbying for better laws on migrant and refugees issues
6. Trans-national union cooperation for a different globalization
7. A cultural and pedagogical engagement about nature and opportunities of migration today



# 1) Migrant offices and servicing

Since the 1980s, **specialized offices and staff** in each local and/or sectorial venue, providing free services, like information, guidance and assistance for administrative practices related to:

- work-related documents, labor legislations and rights
- residence permits and family reunification
- application for asylum request
- housing, transports, local benefits
- work accidents, maternity, pension rights
- tax revenue declarations
- free of charge legal advocacy
- courses of Italian language
- a space available for holding social events and entertainment

**Servicing as one of the key ways to recruit new members**



## 2) Positive actions in all-levels industrial relations

### Information and consultation

- Joint committees to monitor the labour market dynamics and migrant workers
- Multi-lingual guide for migrants

### Right to training classes

- Italian language
- workers rights
- health and safety at work



### Holiday:

- individually-tailored holidays planning, with longer leaves to reach their home country

### Positive actions in working conditions

- Recognition of the observation of some religious demands (meal; prayers' corner, holidays)
- Adoption of company codes for zero tolerance against racism

### Shop stewards, workers' delegates, trade union officials

- Supporting immigrant candidates in works councils elections and unions officials



### 3) Unions campaigns: in agriculture

The plague of massive abuses, over-exploitation, forced labour, new slavery in agriculture, often under the control of criminal organizations.

“Invisibles”, “Still in the field” campaigns for **undocumented migrants** in condition of semi-slavery.

**Street unionism**, using caravans as mobile offices to reach migrant workers in the fields and ghettos, to provide them with information, assistance and protection.

**Trade Union “Work Brigades”** to inform about the new law against illicit labour intermediation and infamous working conditions “caporalato” (gangmasters)



GLI INVISIBILI  
DELLE CAMPAGNE  
DI RACCOLTA



## 4) Territorial bargaining and other activities

Tripartite territorial and social bargaining on access to welfare benefits and local facilities: tax exemptions and support for health care, nursery, housing, transport

Reducing taxes for getting the new stay permit

For transparency and socially responsible labels in the “Made in Italy” supply chain: minimum wage and sub-contractor solid responsibility

*Decent work for domestic workers.* Collective Agreement; bilateral bodies. International campaign for ratification of the ILO convention no. 189 (“*Begins at home*”, <http://idwfed.org/myfairhome>)

Against forced prostitution, project “*Ways out*”, for the setting up of work-related support for victims



**CGIL CGIL**  
CATANIA **FILCAMS**

**Camera del Lavoro**  
via Crociferi 40 - Catania

# SOScolf

☎ 335 1942079

**SERVIZI OFFERTI:**

- stipula contratto a norma del CCNL del lavoro domestico
- elaborazione prospetti paga mensili
- calcolo tredicesima
- calcolo contributi previdenziali
- compilazione modelli MAV per il versamento all'INPS
- conteggio ferie, malattia, maternità, infortunio
- calcolo TFR e liquidazione
- assistenza per agevolazioni fiscali previste per il datore di lavoro
- regolarizzazione rapporto di lavoro per i lavoratori extracomunitari

**SPORTELLO SINDACALE**  
per colf, badanti e collaboratori domestici

**ORARI DI RICEVIMENTO:** martedì e giovedì ore 9-13  
mercoledì e venerdì ore 15-19

E' possibile essere ricevuti anche al di fuori di questi orari telefonando al numero 335 1942079



# The first strike of the Sikh community in South Lazio and North Campania



**Organising and capacity building** with a community of 30.000 Sikh workers employed in agriculture and cattle breeding Exchanges in the **Sikh temple**, after the weekly religious celebration

**Strike on 18 April 2016**  
against forced labour,  
indecent living and  
working conditions and  
gangmasters





# The immigrants and the unions: a FDV survey

- *What do they expect from the unions at the workplace or local level:* a better dialogue with the immigrants, language learning, trade union training
- *What do they expect from the unions for their better integration in society:* more campaigns on their problems, cooperation with their associations and NGOs, territorial social bargaining
- *Which are the most sensitive issues to focus the next unions mobilizations:* abrogation of the restrictive norms on the link job/permit to stay; changing the law on citizenship; right to vote in local elections



## 6) Political lobbying and social coalitions for a better legislation on the migrant issues

- Migration policies considering foreigners a resource for the national economy and society (ageing population; labour market; welfare sustainability; re-population of abandoned territories, etc.)
- Abolition of the crime of illegal immigration and the right to arrive and live legally (there's nothing like "illegal human being"!)
- Closure of the infamous detention centers and right to a dignified reception/location
- Abrogation of the restrictive *Immigration Law*: if you lose your job, you can't lose the stay permit too
- Changing requirements to access nationality for Italy-born children: from *Ius sanguinis* to *Ius soli* or *culturae*
- Voting rights in local and European elections



# 7) Trans-national union cooperation for a different globalization

- International networks and campaigns, with the European and global unions federations: like ETUC UnionMigrantNet, or “*Europe needs a Pay Rise*”, to reduce/converge the cross-country wage gap; effective respect of the freedom of movement. A new common legislation for asylum seekers
- Union Network for the Migrants Rights (Rsmms, Casablanca, 2014) with the 27 independent unions from 16 Mediterranean and Sub-Sahara Countries, in order to push Governments to ratify the ILO Conventions on migrant workers
- Cross-country bilateral and sectoral agreements and joint projects (i.e.: agriculture; construction), on cooperation and development (South America)
- The INCA-CGIL «Patronage». 94 front offices in 26 countries. Legal expertise and advocacy – directly in the origin countries – for the portability of social protection rights in trans-national workers mobility (pension rights; family reunification; cultural and administrative mediation with consulates and embassies)

# «Going on the Offensive» a cultural and political effort



- To be the **story-tellers** of a different discourse; to say the truth, against oversimplification, lies, prejudices, stigmatization. To make a big cultural and pedagogical campaign for reversing the vulnerable workers fears towards the root causes of their discomfort. To learn solidarity and “dis-learn racism” (Williams)
- To frame the public discourse over migrations within the global and unstoppable changes of our times (asymmetrical demography; economic inequalities, climate change, access to natural resources, wars and terror), **challenging the xenophobic rhetoric** (“invasion”, “security”, “clash of civilization”)
- To **fight the neo-liberal globalization**, since growing inequalities and injustice – infra and trans-nationals – are some of the main causes of ongoing troubles and instability
- To **merge the forces with other similar sensibilities**, a) nationally (Catholic Church, associations, NGOs, radical movements, what remains of a political left) b) internationally (UN, ILO, EU, Global union federations; social and labour networks and forum, etc.)
- To make compatible the traditional **distributive struggle** for social justice, with a **fight for the recognition** and respect of the different cultures and subjectivities (Honneth). Social justice is not a matter of horizontal and zero-sum conflicts (war between the poor), but still vertical and distributive, a matter of class power relations