

Call for Papers 1/23 [www.dialetticaefilosofia.it](http://www.dialetticaefilosofia.it) July 2023

Deadline 20 December 2023

Languages accepted: Italian and English

## ITALIAN MARXISM IN THE CRISIS OF THE 1970s



Alberto Burri, Rosso Plastica, 1963 © Fondazione Burri (Fonte: [www.arte.it](http://www.arte.it))

### THEMATIC EXPOSITION

1974 is commonly considered the year of the official opening of critical reflection of and on Marxism in Italy. The obligatory reference is to the political-philosophical *Intervista politico-filosofica* by L. Colletti, as well as, the year immediately following, *Il marxismo e lo Stato*, the debate opened by N. Bobbio among the Italian left. But also, and just before *Intervista*, the release of P. Sylos Labini's important *Saggio sulle Classi Sociali*, in which the problem of the relationship and distinction between the working class and middle classes is addressed with particular attention, especially in the Italian context, going against «proletarizzazione dei ceti medi».

On the other hand, the «crisis of Marxism» was already being discussed at the end of the 1960s, with particular regard to the break-up of the international communist movement – the conflict between the PCUS and the CCP – and to the lack of reciprocal mediation between the *culture of communism* and the *culture of desire* from 1968 onwards; in Italy in particular, the expression was explicitly introduced by V. Gerratana in 1971, at a conference organised by the Istituto Gramsci. It was then taken up again in 1977 by Althusser in Venice for a conference organised by the «manifesto» on the same theme.

From 1978 to 1983, the centenary of Marx's death, the rich theoretical discussion between the various Italian Marxisms on the theme of their own crisis of hegemony,

on the failed transition from capitalism to socialism, and on that passive revolution, which Americanism and Craxism would later bring about in Italy in the 1980s, certainly shows how there was already then an inkling if not awareness of that theoretical deficit – ascribable to both historicist Marxism and scientist Marxism – which some today believe should be summarised by an effective formula of «Marxism without Capital». Others explain this crisis in terms of a failure to critically confront Marxism with the empirical sciences of politics, sociology and economics. Then there are those, the same protagonists of the said debate, who harshly decree those years as the farewell of Italian Marxism, paradoxically and tragically mistaking it for nothing less than the announcement of a great transformation already at the door. There are also those who place the crisis of Marxism only in Italy, not considering it a theoretical and intellectual crisis, but rather a practical-political one. Last but not least, it is necessary to highlight the downward parabola of studies on Gramsci, if not their abrupt interruption after the first half of the 1970s, which G. Liguori expounded in his *Gramsci conteso*, regarding the phase followed at the symposiums and conferences in 1977, 40 years after the death of the Sardinian marxist. The years 1976-1977 saw the greatest expansion and, immediately after the publication of *Quaderni del carcere* edited by V. Gerratana, the beginning of a long decline, both of the PCI's electoral fortunes and of the diffusion and incidence of Gramsci's work in Italy. Facts probably connected to each other and ascribed to the more general «crises of Marxism» mentioned above.

The most relevant, on the theoretical front of the critique of political economy, will result to be C. Napoleoni's intervention in *Valore* in 1976, – «l'intermezzo marcusiano» of the author, as it was defined – where, respect to the lengthy debate on transformation of values into prices, is put forward the issue of alienation proper to «una società che si costituisce al livello del lavoro morto [...] e non al livello del lavoro vivo», creating an extrinsic relationship between persons, though asocial while at work become social only when under the influence of a domineering object.

It will be necessary to wait for A. Graziani's intervention, *Riabilitiamo la teoria del valore* (1983), to respond to Napoleoni, and relaunch the said theory in terms of macroeconomic, i.e. «l'idea del processo economico come circuito monetario».

A broad and comprehensive assessment of the crisis that Italian Marxism went through in the 1970s, would take place precisely on the centenary of Marx's death, with the publication of special issues – not only in «l'Unità», «Critica marxista» or «Rinascita», but also in «Corriere della sera», «la Repubblica», «la Stampa» – with the organisation of conferences and various collective publications.

In summary, this Call intends to focus in a critical-reconstructive manner on the debate that took place in Italy within Marxism in the 1970s until 1983. During these years, which were marked by a serious economic, social and political crisis, but also by significant civil conquests, an important debate was articulated on the essential

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themes of theoretical Marxism: the dialectic and contradiction, the state-civil society relationship, the critique of religion and the Catholic question, historical materialism and the philosophy of praxis, the sustainability of the critique of political economy, the relationship between democracy and socialism, the realisability of Marx's ideas, the tension between Marx's Marxism and Lenin's Marxism, the Hegel-Marx relationship. The topicality or inactuality of Marxian thought, not exactly coinciding with Marxist thought.

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### **OPERATIVE INDICATIONS**

This Call therefore invites contributions to consider relevant authors, themes and issues of Italian Marxist thought in the above-mentioned period. Potential contributors are invited to stick to the suggested themes.

The special request is not to exceed the overall size of 50000 characters!

Potential authors are invited to send their proposals in the form of complete contributions with abstracts in English and keywords in English, in duplicate: in **Word** and in **anonymised PDF**, scupulously following the editorial rules available on our site at the following link: <https://www.dialetticaefilosofia.it/norme.html>

The editorial board reserves the right to select the contributions received and only after the examination to forward them anonymously to the reviewer.

Contributions should be addressed to the Editorial Office [dialetticaefilosofia@gmail.com](mailto:dialetticaefilosofia@gmail.com) indicating:

- as an object: Call 1/23

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[e.g. italian marxism in the crisis\_c\_f]