

Manifesto of the Second Maximalist Congress 2025

Manifesto of the Second Maximalist Congress 2025

We are experiencing a true crisis of civilization that puts economic and human development at odds.

At the heart of this agony is the devaluation of human labor.

When work is devalued, not only does the way of working become impoverished and hostile, it is the entire way of living that becomes increasingly dehumanizing.

Conquering work, organizing collectively to work and live with meaning is the necessary change in our hands to make better lives possible.

In the great crises of civilization, it is not the center that generates alternatives, but the peripheries. And today, the periphery is not only about work, but also about the European and Mediterranean countryside.

There are no written solutions or detailed plans to impose on reality, but rather a way of working and living to be developed and from which to learn.

We are experiencing a true crisis of civilization that puts economic and human development at odds.

It manifests itself as a series of material imbalances that, throughout the world, hinder social evolution and erode, if not negate, the positive effects of growth on the whole. Working poverty is returning, accompanied by an unprecedented concentration of resources in almost global monopolies; land and rural areas are emptying while cities reach a critical point due to saturation; an already undeniable demographic crisis accompanies a long-term ecological and climate crisis.

The inadequacy of all this in the way of social organization, production, and living that had served to drive growth and stabilize society, dismantles collective institutions, ruins lives, reduces the impact of the most promising discoveries, and derails the social utility of the most impressive technical advances.

Unable to understand the causes and generate a collective solution to this underlying crisis, social life is covered with a patina of atomization, passivity, weariness, and hopelessness.

The most impressive human achievements fueled by science in recent centuries—from medicine to physics—are rejected by a growing portion of society, which simply no longer "believes" in them and plunges into an extreme and dark irrationalism. The basic unity and equality of the entire human species is denied by an identity explosion that barely conceals a nihilistic and delusional subjectivism. Increasingly, war, or at least its preparation, is proposed as the only possible collective horizon.

Beneath the noise of a culture that expresses the normalization of inhumanity, there is a society that finds no purpose in the way of life that organizes it.

At the heart of this agony is the devaluation of human labor.

Labor is the collective action of society and the species, the ongoing act of producing what each society needs to sustain not only its structures but, above all, its members and the resources they use to develop.

Labor is the coordinated and meaningful human action that elevates us above immediate survival and generates knowledge, the measure of the progress and potential of our species. Therefore, the social organization of labor is the primary purpose of the various social structures that humanity has created. And for this reason, devaluing or denying labor undermines the foundations of any human society.

However, devaluing labor is the first reflex of the economic system when it encounters a stumbling block. And when the stumbling blocks continued to occur over the last half-century, it became the system's way of life. That's why economic growth and human development seem contradictory today: because it has become a given that growth can only be sustained by devaluing labor—and therefore the lives of those who work. And that growth, and only growth, however achieved, will drive development once again.

But neither can the growth of consumption be simply assimilated to human development, nor can a system doped by the devaluation of labor indefinitely sustain a consumption that satisfies the basic material and cultural needs of everyone, not even the vast majority.

This is not merely a question of industrial concentration. The massive relocations of the 1990s contributed significantly to the devaluation of labor, but they were not its cause. Even if the process were reversed in some way, if, as Trumpists and Eurocrats claim, offshored industries were "repatriated" and arms industries developed in a new militaristic direction, what would "return" to the US and Europe would be a new wave of hyper-concentrated investment, not the large, well-paid workforces and factory cities of the industrial age. The atomization and precarization of labor is not contradictory to the over-scaling of capital, but rather its result.

The revaluation of labor can no longer be the result of an increase in capital intensity as in the 19th century. As the theorists and architects of globalization were clear, in mid- and high-capitalization countries, the incorporation of new technologies may lower prices, but in the medium term it necessarily reduces the share of labor in total income and, in the long term, the value of labor alone... which is not even encouraging for trade prospects in the domestic market. Hence the fantasies of a universal income now revived by the debates on AI: the industry itself is concerned about seeing its consumer base decline and having to compete for an increasingly narrow and basic domestic market.

The shift from understanding the centrality of work to the quality and way of life to a consumerist perspective is an illusionist's trap. It has confined entire generations to passivity and isolation, unable to even dream of collective solutions. It is no surprise that mental health is growing as a problem of the age. But above all, consumerism has served to justify the dismantling of the basic common welfare that had been the fruit of universalist systems. It has covered state welfare as a last resort with the shameless cloak of a "Social Justice" as empty as the "Territorial Justice" and "Climate Justice" that serve as its echo.

Painting leaks is not the same as plugging leaks.

When work is devalued, not only does the way of working become impoverished and hostile, it is the entire way of living that becomes increasingly dehumanizing.

The forms and severity vary in each place and context. While in Southern Europe, the devaluation of work keeps most young people in their parents' homes until well into their thirties, infantilizing them, atomizing them, and depriving them of healthy personal development, in Russia and Ukraine it

uproots them from their homes to be sacrificed as war consumables, and in Bangladesh or Vietnam it chains them to a sewing machine in a mousetrap.

Everywhere, work is at the center of all social and communal life, but through systematic devaluation, it has become a hostile, often unattainable periphery of a life that is increasingly difficult and alien to its protagonists.

For all of them and for society as a whole, the first challenge to taking control of their own destiny and recovering a truly human way of life is to conquer work.

Conquering work, organizing collectively to work and live with meaning is the necessary change in our hands to make better lives possible.

Without taking ownership of the conditions of our own work, we will not recover the perspective of the social or the spirit of community.

The current leads to a waterfall; there is no future in letting ourselves be carried away. We must row together to escape the main channel and reach the shore.

In the great crises of civilization, it is not the center that generates alternatives, but the peripheries. And today, the periphery is not only about work, but also about the European and Mediterranean countryside.

In periods of civilizational crisis, the center is stormy and agitated, regurgitating ideology and discourses that inevitably become divisive. By concentrating the contradictions of an era, it constantly creates new ideas, but is incapable of forming alternatives because internal tensions occupy every new space that arises.

If we look at the history of the Mediterranean and Europe, it is in the peripheries, in rural areas, and in the new social groups seeking them out, that the relationships, ways, and forms of the coming world were incubated before each civilizing leap.

The settlers who put the countryside back into production in Late Antiquity, or the "dusty feet" who inaugurated European land trade routes and fostered the first medieval cities, were seen by their contemporaries as exotic and relatively marginal phenomena, small social groups on the run who would return when

things returned to the way they always had been.

However, while the society from which they had emerged was consumed by endless ideological battles and wars, they experimented with new ways of working and living that, over time, outlined a new network of social relations.

Today, at the center, large global cities and their thought-provoking institutions (universities, consulting firms, think tanks, media outlets, etc.) have made work peripheral within the social narrative. Faced with the hardships of the once "middle class" and the precarious, they speak of "price problems" instead of pointing out the decline in labor incomes; they dream of AI rendering entire sectors of workers unnecessary; and they insist on fueling the ultimate form of individualistic consumerism: identitarianism.

Today, moreover, Europe and the Western Mediterranean are once again peripheral. And within it, rural territories represent a supposedly empty and agonizing "beyond," a portrait of Dorian Gray confined to a storage room from which, it is feared, a monstrous image will return.

But, seen through our eyes, an aging and poorly digitalized rural world, disconnected from the income growth of large, networked cities, the front line of the demographic and environmental crisis, is the most favorable scenario today for the conquest of jobs and the development of new digital and knowledge-based commons.

Of course, working to conquer labor and build new digital and material commons in rural peripheries is not the immediate alternative to the crisis of civilization, but rather a constructive way to achieve it. It is not the only way to achieve it, and it undoubtedly requires its own counterpart in the cities.

And of course, it is not the golden path that leads to the rainbow and the wonders of the world of Oz. It is an opportunity that demands risk, hard work, and the ability to resist frustration, just as much as any collective project in an age like ours.

There is neither certainty nor a sure reward.

There are no written solutions or detailed plans to impose on reality, but rather a way of working and living to be developed and from which to learn.

Along the way, we already see and use tools and new forms of cooperation, community organization and shared ownership, collective entrepreneurship, and learning. But above all, we are already experiencing, here and now, a better way of life, more socially useful and more personally and collectively enriching, than what was offered to us by devalued work in overcrowded cities, an expression of a civilization in crisis.

It is to this way of life, with work at the center and the spirit of community in every action, that we invite nonconformists and restless people willing to conquer work for themselves and the community.