



When soul and heart cry

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One cannot remain silent in the face of what happened during the night between February 28th and March 1st. It is urgent to participate at the collective mourning, to express the heartbreak of a collective grief.

The first of March in this country is synonymous with rebirth, it heralds spring, many wear red and white threads that will protect their skin from the hot summer sun, others scan the sky in search of the first swallow, everybody begins to shake off the dust of winter... particularly this year, the first of March seemed to extend the celebration of Carnival, and instead... the unexpected happened. A tragedy, a crash, with fire, destruction... a train full of young people, wiped out, torn apart.... those who died instantly, those who were trapped in a longer agony, those who were rescued among the rubble and the other lifeless bodies, those who will remain disabled, forever scarred in body and soul. Yes ... a train. People choose the train because it is safer, faster, cheaper, ecological. The roads, we know, are dangerous, especially before, during and after holidays: too much traffic, too much speed, too many drivers who don't care about the rules. The train, on the other hand ... is a place where one relaxes while travelling, converses, meets new people, hangs out with friends, flirts, sleeps, celebrates something, has dinner or a drink, a place where nobody should die. It should not have happened, 'human error,' they say. But it's not just the responsibility of one person who didn't see, who didn't notice, who wasn't alert, who forgot, it can't be the responsibility of one... but how? In the digital age we entrust a train to a single person? Just one? Where were those who were supposed to watch over it, to supervise? Making sure that everything was properly functioning? Those who did not update the train safety system to prevent such tragedies? Who did not install the modern digital control system in use in most European countries? Who didn't train their staff and educated them to use a new, safer, system?

An entire train... how could it escape the fact that it was running the opposite way? Because of carelessness? Because of distraction? Based on the premise that nothing happens anyway? A criminal carelessness, a murderous distraction.



A train full of young people, can one imagine how much life and joy there was on that train! Students returning to their universities after the Carnival holidays, young people going home after parties with friends. Messages that come and go "No, mum, I'm not arrived yet, there's a delay, we just left Larissa, everything's fine, don't worry, I'll call you later" Calls that never arrived... the agony of mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, friends, boyfriends and girlfriends, grandparents, the first news, "it can't be, it's not possible".

Once again, this country counts the victims, as we write so many people are still missing. This country does not take care of its children... how can we not remember the other tragedy at Tempi, same location, the school trip bus that plunged into the void on a road that was too narrow, too dangerous for that heavy traffic, too often signaled for its danger... Tempi as a sacrificial altar, where the country immolates its children. It took that tragedy to rebuild the road, why another tragedy to make the trains safe? Could we learn without immolating? Children are our most precious, without them mankind disappears, yet we continue to don't protect them. I cannot but recall another tragedy (as always, I have one foot on the other side of the Ionian) no less serious, a few hours before this one, at sea instead of on land: the small, old fishing boat that left Izmir and crashed on the coast near Crotona, South Italy. It was carrying more than 150 migrants and refugees, mostly young people, families and children, missing and drowned in the stormy sea. Yet there had been time to intervene, it had been spotted, it could have been towed to safety... criminal irresponsibility, violation of the laws of the sea. And then, why that long journey across the Mediterranean, why not land much sooner on a safe European coast, the Greek coast? Maybe right in front from where they had left? Why to force desperate people to face such enormous dangers?

In the year 2023, having emerged from a pandemic that claimed victims all over the world, we expected a changed humanity, more sensitive to human suffering, more attentive to human life, more responsible, more generous, more aware of community values. We shall see, we wrote then, but we are still groping in the dark.