

# ***School and Immigration***

by **Ida Magli**

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Problems coming from immigration in the Italian schools are far more serious than what it would seem at a first glance. Notwithstanding the goodwill of the Minister and of the Teachers, all attempts to prevent these problems clash against a situation that is very complex. And the enthusiastic supporters of the so called "multiethnic society" do not see them. The word "integration" is always on the lips of politicians, but it is completely devoid of any real meaning. *Cultures do not integrate*: at a certain moment there will be the victory of one over the other, and this does not depend on numbers. All depends on the force, vitality and enthusiasm of the members of a culture. The Italian culture now is a loser, because immigrants are taking possession of our territory and this is enough to make them feel like conquerors.

School is supposed to help everyone learn how to live in the "Italian way", both Italians and foreigners. But this mission is doomed to fail because each pupil has different needs. For a foreign child, first of all there is language. He perceived the sound of his mother language before being born (in the womb he can hear the voice of his mother), and this is not the same sound that he hears at school. The disorientation of a child who does not understand what is being said is not only a cognitive and instrumental one, it is psychological. Language is the main character of our Species, which Nature entrusted to a social and cultural trigger: the presence of other human beings who talk. A total deaf does not talk because he never *heard* talking. Today we know that even surgery cannot help, if it is not done before the third year of age. A child who was born deaf hears some sounds, but does not learn to talk. So the deficit caused by a different language is far more complex and affects the ability of thought process, and also affects self confidence and personality.

As far as Italian pupils are concerned, if there are too many foreigners in a classroom - and 30% is far too much - teaching becomes more difficult and slow. In this environment all differences in sensibility - concerning food, religious beliefs, sexual behavior and even gestures and mimics - become signals that are difficult to understand, and one does not know how to react. There are no "good" solutions for this. Today in Spain public school is just for immigrants, while Spanish children go to private schools (and have to pay for them). It is not a question of refusing to be in school with immigrants; the problem is that the level of teaching had to adapt to the situation, and went down to a minimum level. Italy is following this same path.

Immigration today is the most serious problem, at school and outside; percentages, preaches and good words coming from politicians or priests will not change the situation. This is not the immigrants' fault, nor of the Italians, too. Italians are going towards the end of any hope for the future of their nation, and this is why they are having so few children. Another proof of this is the incredible revival of names referring to Italy, Future or Nation: all of a sudden politicians are using them again. They know all too well that these are the only things that Italians believe in, and that they would vote for them enthusiastically. But this is just a cynical fraud. Politicians are the same ones who condemned Italy to death: immigration is just the main tool for achieving this goal.

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(traduzione a cura di Marina Mascetti)