Il Soviet - The Constituent Assembly?

The end of the war brought with it a powerful breath of innovation, from which no one can escape. We also witnessed Salandra become a revolutionary!

In order to make this troubled Italy a little aware of the terrible convulsions that take place and are announced elsewhere, in many parts a... half measure has been put forward: a constituent assembly.

Who wants it? The "revolutionary" interventionists who feel the need to make themselves a little more accepted with the crowds, the republicans and the reformist socialists want it.

But the Confederazione Generale del Lavoro has also included it in one of its programmes, and in the name of this, Mr. Dugoni of the socialist parliamentary group has supported it in the chamber, saying that he also speaks on behalf of our party. However, the leadership of the SP which recently met in Rome did not make the proposal its own, and instead, in a resolution that we approve in full, ratified the programme of the political dictatorship of the proletariat. However, we do not approve of the fact that the parliamentary group continues to take political action on its own behalf which, if it corresponds to the views of the workers' organisations, does not derive from that desired by the party of which the group is an emanation.

What is the constituent assembly?

Pas grande chose, the French would say. It is a national assembly, elected if we wish with very wide suffrage, which, instead of having the legislative function, is called upon to discuss and establish a new political constitution of the state. This is the maximum application of the bourgeois concept of popular sovereignty.

It is precisely this concept that does not gain the confidence of the socialists at all, it is precisely this concept whose demolition is one of the main objects of Marxist criticism and socialist political action.

Popular sovereignty in the form of the ballot, freedom and political equality, are mere fictions when there is the division of society into classes and economic inequality. The elected chambers, the state, constantly remain in the hands of a dominant minority and serve exclusively its interests. No matter what the posthumous postscripts of Mazzini or Washington say about it, class domination, economic oppression, survive, indeed are harsher, in the countries famous for their declarations of human and citizen's rights; in the democratic (in politics) and plutocratic (in economics) republics of France or America.

Socialist criticism shows by sundial light that all the baggage of liberal philosophy is an ideology peculiar to the capitalist bourgeoisie, which uses it to justify its struggle against the strains of the medieval regime, but also the establishment of its social dominance over the working and exploited masses.

Not from the development and intensification of democratic forms, socialism awaits its realisation, but from the social struggle between the classes and the revolutionary victory of the proletariat.

The nefarious affinity that caused so much damage and confusion through the collaboration between socialists and bourgeois democrats has made one lose sight of this fundamental, programmatic antithesis between socialism and democracy.

But today a whole great movement brings socialism back to its highest conceptions, to its integral objective, which is the organisation of the proletariat into the dominant class.
The socialist revolution will come about when political power is in the hands of the workers, not only because the workers are the majority, but because the bourgeois minority will be deprived of any interference in the formation of the organs of power.

Democracy wants to save, in the name of the so-called right of minorities, the representation of the bourgeois classes. As long as the bourgeois classes have the right of representation, they will also retain the majority of the elective bodies and maintain their domination.

Instead, the socialist proletariat wants to seize political power in order to abolish in a second time the economic power of the bourgeoisie, and in a third time the division of society into classes, achieving the social equality of men.

In Russia, we have seen the constituent assembly preparing to play the game of the bourgeois classes dissolved by force by the soviets, organs of the proletarian dictatorship.

In Germany we see two programmes in front of us today: that of the bourgeoisie and the majority socialists, for the constituent assembly and the democratic republic; and that of the Spartacus group for the transfer of power to the councils of workers and soldiers.

In Italy, the movements for a defence of bourgeois power are already being studied, and the interventionist socialists, lost allies of the bourgeoisie, make propaganda for the constituent assembly.

The Confederazione del Lavoro naively takes the bait, while it should, also for exhaustive commitments undertaken, leave the solution of this problem to the Socialist Party, the political body of the working class, an instrument directly designated to the assumption of power.

They want a constituent assembly without any shift in the foundations on which the current legal systems are based. This constituent assembly, elected by the administrative bodies of the state controlled by the present government, would be as similar as two drops of water to the current parliament that has emerged from universal suffrage, loving midwife Giolitti.

The majority would be not only bourgeois, but certainly monarchical.

The constituent assembly therefore does not seduce us. The socialists won't lift a finger for it.

[Censorship]

Source: "Il Soviet", December 22, 1918.