Il Soviet - Reformism and Maximalism

Reformism, as much as that sort of constitutional syphilis which, despite the most vigorous treatment and gory operations, continues to poison the body of the Socialist Party, has been showing too much intensity for some time now for it to be completely overlooked.

Fortunately, it has not yet conquered the sum of political power in our country, and it cannot give itself over to the mad joy of suffocating the popular uprisings in blood under the pretence of completely destroying the maximalist movement as it is currently doing so in Germany, where the violent repression of these uprisings outweighs, in ferocity, that so infamous of Tsarism, against which hypocritical and false German reformism claimed to have waged war by allying itself with the bourgeoisie, together with the latter, continuing to fight even when Tsarism was dead and buried.

In Italy, the reformist fraction firmly nested in various organs of the party and in the Confederazione del Lavoro, despite the revolutionary cloak of the party itself and of the leadership, largely uses slander against the maximalist fraction, painting them as a gathering of a few fanatics, of deluded, of reckless people eager to provoke violent popular uprisings. To the proletariat which clearly has a tendency to assume a battle position according to the maximalist method, the reformists do not tire of giving suspicious advice, and because they are convinced that this path will surely lead to disasters, they have shaped a maximalism for the use and consumption of these laudable intentions.

The maximalists, according to them, want to push the proletariat, still immature and unprepared, to an immediate revolutionary action, deluding it with the mirage of a revolution that, like a miraculous balm, would soothe all the proletarian pains as if by magic.

At the meeting they argue that a revolutionary movement is technically unfeasible and fatally doomed to failure because (oh generous souls of rabbits!) the offensive means of the bourgeoisie are so powerful that it is not possible to resist them. And here comes out, as a demonstration of this assertion, the living representation of hand grenades, machine guns and the like, under whose action the insurgent proletariat would be irreparably massacred without obtaining anything but painful and useless losses.

Therefore, to train the proletariat in the class struggle, which they do not deny, to strengthen its spirit and at the same time train it for the exercise of that power which it once had to conquer, they indicate to the proletariat the means for achieving this: the ballot box. The electoral ballot marks the extreme limit of human perfectibility for the reformists.

It only surprises us that so much is being done to obtain a change in the electoral mechanism, when with the conquest of universal suffrage (risum teneatis), according to those wise men who direct the Confederazione del Lavoro, the political revolution would have occurred so much that there is no longer any reason for there to be political parties!

It would not be necessary to demonstrate how inaccurate or even slanderous this presentation of reformist version of maximalism is, but it should not be forgotten that there is no lack of means to spread this slander to the reformist party, who in this campaign collaborates, true to its method, with the bourgeoisie, competing with it in intensity and only diversifying itself in its objective, because, while the bourgeoisie is more focused on foreign maximalism, especially Russian, it deals also with national one.

Maximalism supports the indispensable and prejudicial necessity of the conquest of political power by part of the proletariat organised in the class party, in order to be able to begin the implementation of
an infinite series of political and economic measures, whereby bourgeois society will cease to exist and the new international society of workers will be established.

No miracles, then, and no magic wands!

To confuse the revolution with the more or less violent, but fatally necessary insurrection, in order to dispossess the executive committee of the bourgeoisie of its power, is a deplorable effect of ignorance, even more deplorable if it is low polemical artifice to strike the imagination of the ignorant and speculate on that natural instinct of preservation, so that everyone shuns that which could endanger their own skin.

The maximalists, who are not at all fetishists of violence nor thirst for blood, much less proletarian blood, cannot, however, allow the absurd possibility that the political instrument of the bourgeoisie could be dispossessed peacefully without defending itself as best they can. The recent events in Milan (which will not be the last of their kind as conflicts between bourgeois and working class) are instructive enough to know what the bourgeoisie's state of mind is and on which side the provocateurs of violence are. It will not be the apostolic or evangelical preaching of the various Prampolines that will be able to extinguish it. It will diminish the more the fighting spirit of the proletariat is high and strong; while, instead, by depressing its spirit and sowing distrust in its own strength, it will only give oxygen to the resistance of the bourgeoisie, which will feel stronger to fight and render the conflict more severe.

The contrast with the reformists, even when they are disguised as revolutionaries on the basis of electoral intransigence in word (because true intransigence does not exist in the present conditions of the bourgeois regime and participation in it, even if negative, is always collaboration), is not a consequence of the conviction regarding the possibility or not of a favourable success of a more or less imminent proletarian insurrectional movement, from which it would seem that there should arise the desire to get on the directive to provoke it or not. The maximalists are happy to leave this claim to be prophets to the reformists.

The contrast consists in the recognition of the need for the revolutionary conquest of political power, a revolutionary conquest which is not an explicit or overt collaboration with the bourgeois regime but the antithesis and denial of it. The revolutionary conquest of power, that is, the one we want, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is not born complete and perfect, just as no organism is born complete and perfect; it is a beginning, it is a start towards the deepest and most radical transformations of social relations that will grow to radically eliminate the domination of one class over another. This magnificent movement, which marks the beginning of a new era in human history, cannot but have its victims. Humanity has made no progress without martyrs.

The proletariat has sacrificed many of its children, it will have to sacrifice many more fatally. It would be sacrilege if these were to be wasted in order to obtain, for example, an Ebertian-type republic, which in the reality of reformism is no way different from bourgeois reality, only the labels are different.

In considering possible future proletarian sacrifices, let us not forget that the offensive machines of the bourgeoisie, nightmare of reformist courage, do not act except as animated by human machines!