

Elementary note on students and authentic left-wing Marxism

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Student movements cannot be presented as having a history or historical tradition.

In the era of bourgeois and liberal revolutions, both republican or merely constitutional, student uprisings or organisations did not have autonomous actions or tasks. Student groups of the time joined the bourgeois revolutionaries, patriots or Carbonari, and sometimes, as in Italy at Curtatone and Montanara, fought in independent formations. In France, it is certain that students of the time figured among the stormers of the Bastille and among the Sanculots, as well as among the soldiers of the revolutionary armies under the command of former military school student Napoleon Bonaparte. In these and similar cases, the only autonomous class, leading the revolutions and aspiring to new power, was the large financial and entrepreneurial bourgeoisie.

To advocate, in the putrescence of 1968, the autonomy of a student movement, is only further proof of how far the fallacious communism of Stalin's successors, who've now plunged into the depths of the worst social-democratic revisionism, sink into the quicksand of betrayal and blasphemy, lured by the prospect of an obscene electoral manoeuvre. They go so far as to enunciate the outlandish thesis that the students form a social class, and even consider Mao's China to be to the extremist left of these incoherent movements and assumes, as a theoretical formula relating to the state, that of 'workers' power'.

Since the false communists of today, the heirs of Stalin and their colleagues in Budapest, Warsaw or Prague, boast of representing the working class and of being the centre of a baleful and repugnant organisational and parliamentary unity. We, the only ones who have remained faithful to the original and invariant doctrine of Marxism, are well within our rights to regard as worthy of their horny faces and corresponding ostrich stomachs, the impassive swallowing and digestion of the superstitious thesis that gangs of students, more or less inflamed by the ideals of skipping classes, hanging professors and cheating in exam grades, form a social class to which this ignominious apostrophic is addressed:

"Come on boys! Today it's your turn, we offer you for sale at a vile price, quoted in pounds or ultra-valued dollars, the primogeniture always claimed by us of the red proletariat, the hegemonic class of the world revolution".

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The market or barter is fraudulent precisely because the university students and others are not a real class, nor are all the strata that crowd in behind them: intellectuals, such as writers, artists, histrionics of different types in whom the degeneration of this bourgeois society is crystallised: scribblers, noise-makers and arrogant howlers; whereas it is a real class the working class that a gang of soothsayers nowadays denigrates in order to prostitute it by offering it in the market.

According to Marx, the proletariat is a class not only because without its labour it is not possible to produce any of the commodities, the receipt of which forms the enormous wealth of capitalist society, be it consumer goods or capital goods, but because the proletariat not only produces everything, it also reproduces itself, i.e. it realises the production of the producers. It is in this sense that Marx wanted to introduce into his modern doctrine, after almost twenty centuries, the classical term by which the ancient Romans designated the members of the working plebs of their time: *proletarians*.

At this point, wanting to develop our comparison between the fertile proletariat that should resign itself from history today and today's students rioting to take its place, one would be tempted to make an easy irony by reading press reports about student collectives such as American *colleges* or French campuses, where the main revolutionary postulate seems to be sexual freedom.

Workers of both sexes can, by mating, beget new workers for the labour armies of future centuries, while so far it is not automatic for students to beget students, even among those peoples where the births of workers and peasants have been granted the magnanimous freedom to study.

There is nothing the neutered classes can ask of history; the most solid Bastille against which the young French seem to have had hurled themselves appeared to have been the wall the Ministry of Education erected to protect the female students' quarters (a true modern gynaecium) from the incursions of their male colleagues, who were certainly not driven by the duty to give birth to future generations of students, nor convinced that genetic power was a part of the conquest of political power. But, if we also want to consider the historical classes that preceded the exalted capitalist bourgeoisie, it is easy to see that, due to their historical dynamics, the genetic factor must always be brought into the account.

In feudal society, just as it is true that the masses of serfs provide the progenitors of the serfs of later times, so too the privilege of their exploiters, forming the feudal aristocracy, is transmitted from father to son.

At the apex of that society, even for the autocratic monarch, the hereditary principle applies in its highest expression. History reminds us that the feudal lord tries, with the legendary *Jus primae noctis*, right of the first night, to

dispose for his personal pleasures even of the virgin daughters of his unfortunate servants.

When the modern bourgeoisie appears, Marx, besides analysing its economic and social dynamics, stigmatises its customs, already scourged by the defeated feudal nobility. The new bourgeoisie, while hypocritically continuing to idealise the feudal and Catholic family, not only lust after their workers and their workers' daughters, but, as the *Manifesto* so aptly puts it, find the greatest relish in seducing their own wives in exchange.

Today, in this increasingly fading human society, and especially in the imbecile self-consciousness it has, we not only see theories that erect students as a social class, but we even hear of a struggle of generations, presenting society as divided into two camps: the adults and the youth. Applying our genetic criterion, we can laugh at the crazy image of a collectivity in which the old reproduce into old men, and the young into young men, with total subversion of every biological criterion, according to which, of course, he who is born first generates first, and he who is nearing the end of his life is no longer capable of generating.

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Since the end of the first world war, we Marxist proponents of the first classist doctrine occasionally have to revolt because we see someone fabricating an artificial *class* that tends to connect with the forms of power. The ultra-modern America, swollen by having been able, since the First World War, to exploit the now exasperated Europe, in which the power of the industrial capitalists had historically come to light, exhibited to us the myth of the technocracy, in which at the top were no longer the rich or the masters of the great workshops, but the scientists and technicians or capitecnicians of all ranks, who until then formed only a layer of functionaries if not lowly maintainers of the former.

Let us take a leap across the historical interval between the first world war and the first workers' revolution, and the geographical interval between the far west and the great Russia. In the latter, it was clear that a twofold class revolution had left at the feet of the triumphant proletariat as much feudal tsarist absolutism as capitalism, which even there had attempted to take its place. However, even in the camp of Marxist theorists - and we are alluding, of course, to the great Trotsky - doubts arose about the manifestation of power in the proletarian form, and a new power was described that could fall into the hands of a class that was neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat, but, to a Russian workers' and Marxist opposition, appeared to be the bureaucracy established in the shadow of the new state.

The Italian marxist left, even while standing at the side of the generous trotskyist opposition on the stance that the emergence of bureaucracy was a factual illness of the communist dictatorship that arrived shortly after Stalinism, vehemently rejected the notion of it being a social class and that it could come into power, and considered insincere such a prediction, which goes against the orthodox and classic historical chain predicted by Marx. In the clash between Stalin and the general left-opposition, led by Trotsky and so many other heroic comrades of ours, it was, unfortunately, the latter who succumbed to a preponderant force, and from this sinister ordeal came the failure of the grandiose revolution. It is therefore not a new fact that we have to discuss, in order to deny their class characteristics, purported new forms that boast to have languished in the mighty womb of history, and that are *pseudo-classes*; yesterday the technocracy or the bureaucracy, today the students or the intellectuals, and what we might call, perhaps recalling Molotov, the *derethanocracy*, all of which are indistinct and clouded forms and which do not constitute, like the real classes, the anticipated appearance of a new destiny of tormented human collectivities.

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Returning for a moment to the chronological method, in order to develop further, at least for Italy, the course of relations between the student youth and the socialist proletariat, we can go back to memories of the early socialism of the late 19th century, in which the Italian party gained the adhesion of the famous writer Edmondo De Amicis, whose very un-Marxist and revolutionary writings on 'civil struggles' were handed over to the youth. De Amicis was a pacifist, he abhorred violence no less than the still-warm, dead Luther King, and his whiny, dewy mentality was matched in England by the Fabians and in France by the followers of Malon, to whom Marx certainly did not spare his fierce scorns. De Amicis, in order to justify his watered-down socialism, even attempted in one chapter to explain Marxist economics to the young as he could, but he could only refer those of them who were fortunate enough to do so to certain courses at the universities of the time, claiming that they would find more ample teaching there than in his pages as a timid vulgarian.

At that time, the law faculty alone included a course in political economy which, of course, was conducted according to directives that Marx would have called vulgar economics and boasted the names of Pantaleoni, Loria and then Einaudi, with some of whom Engels himself had polemics. Evidently, for the good De Amicis, a rose-water socialist, in comparison to whom Bissolati and Turati themselves were dangerous subversives, the pale university economics courses already contained too much doctrine, and he would not have known how to turn to more authoritative sources.

In 1911, Italy celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of national unity under the banner of the Savoy monarchy. The socialist party, although led at the time

by right-wing elements, nevertheless had the merit of inviting the proletariat not to consider those demonstrations that praised the bourgeois homeland as their own, and generally did not send their representatives there.

The Italian students, on the other hand, more or less framed by their own teachers and professors, were in the front row in those tricolour demonstrations. After all, in the previous years and up until the tragic 1898, they had applauded the deformed colonial enterprises, against which the socialist proletariat was able to rise up with courageous uprisings, even in the streets. There was nothing in common but only terms of antithesis between Italian students and Italian workers at the turn of the century.

The reader who, lucky him, belongs to the younger generation, must not believe that, at the beginning of this already decrepit century, there were no university strikes. There were questions about the direction of the school even then, and indeed they were more heated due to the recent tradition of the new secular state's struggle against the ancient ruler of all school organisation, namely the Church. While the workers were openly against the Church, even though they did not idealise the cultural function of the modern class state, the students were increasingly turning their backs on clerical circles and institutes and moving towards the blockade and masonic attitudes of what was then called the popular left. Throughout Europe, for every good radical bourgeois leftist, a rhetorical phrase by the poet Victor Hugo was sacred: 'In every village there is a lighted face: the teacher, and an extinguisher, the priest! ". We must send teachers and priests back to the arms of the bourgeoisie.

In every student-led agitation, one could often see a young, more or less eloquent orator ranting, "Down with the priests!" and thus apostrophising his listeners: "If you are monarchists, you must hate the priests who still dream of taking Rome away from you; if you are republicans, the same; if you are radicals, you must also be anticlerical. But are you socialists? And you too must pass into the great family of the enemies of priests'. Later, towards the beginning of the present century, a great struggle took place in France (Combes ministry) to expel priests, friars and nuns from their last positions in schools.

At the level - as we would say today - of adult politics, this secularising and masonic orientation and blockade of the popular left soon prevailed, which the Marxist and revolutionary wing of the proletarian parties took to fight as a very serious danger. This correspondence between the students' restlessness and the well-known Masonic methodology seems clear to us. Freemasonry achieved its aim of debilitating the workers' movement by the classic means of promising its affiliates, especially the very young, an easy, bright and remunerative future career. Young people were always the first to respond to such an appeal, and the phenomenon was and remains of considerable magnitude.

Half a century ago, the mouths of those who exulted at hearing: "what a career you will have when you grow up!" still stank of milk. Today, even babies are familiar with the neologism "break through".

Against the culpable and regrettable hesitations of the socialist right, which tended to accept invitations to the blockade in the national parliament and local bodies, the Communist left soon rose up, declaring incompatible with the policy of transactions between parties that referred to positional classes. This contrast was sharper in Italy than in other countries, and allowed better than elsewhere the defence of the proletariat against the ideological influences of bourgeois democratic radicalism, which as everyone knows, was the primary cause of the international disaster of August 1914. In Italy, in the historic dispute between interventionists and neutralists, the students provided a favourable environment for the manoeuvres of the proponents of war, who, often led by their own professors, echoed the words of the famous oracle who had thundered at the Scoglio di Quarto in "maggio radioso". In these winds we can find the earliest roots of the, much later vilified, twenty-year fascist period of the new blockade-ism, which no longer takes as its Turk's Head, the black cassock of the priest but the black shirt of the squadrist. The deception does not change in the course of history and the danger is always the same: to break the boundaries between the effectively antagonistic classes, which are always and everywhere the master bourgeoisie and the working proletariat.

In this conflict, now almost centuries old, we have always found the bearers of the most sinister insidious trap to be the phantom classes, the false classes that offer themselves, like intellectuals today, to act as pimps and bunglers in order to evade the inexorable line of history that will be resolved with the world victory of the proletariat, which has reached its revolutionary dictatorship everywhere.