

Cathedrals in the desert

Considerations on the mass protest to be held in Turin on 11th July 2014

M.

July 10, 2014

‘Rebel, for today society is oppressing me and wants to prevent the free expansion of my being, I use all weapons to struggle. Rebel against the mass, for they are my enemies too, with their superstitions, morals, degradation, etc. Against the mass too, I am struggling. Alone in the struggle for MY redemption, MY freedom, MY present. Of all the rest I do not care.’ – Bruno Filippi

The G7 summit will be held on 11th July in Turin, and inevitably the city will be the theatre – never was a word more appropriate – of a protest organized by various national realities.

Some anarchists have also decided to champion the event, which puzzles me quite a lot. 11th July will be yet another performance of social anger, which is part of an everyday context almost totally lacking conflict (with some exceptions) and which is often driven by very low level demands. 11th July will be yet another day when some will get political gains and audience on the media of the regime, and all the better if clashes and arrests occur too. Then, once the wave of ‘indignation’ is over, real social peace will come back in the beautiful country, at least until next show in the piazza.

This autonomy/indignatos’ performances shouldn’t concern rebels and revolutionaries. And what about the middle-class rallying cry calling for the protest, words that are absolutely unacceptable? Too heavy taxes, exploitation of precarious workers? But we who are for the destruction of work and the abolition of waged labour, what have we to do with these topics if not to criticize those who turn to the current system of exploitation instead of struggling in order to destroy it, and demand it be ‘reformed’? Obviously anyone whose goal is the conquer of power and not its destruction can only denounce the mismanagement of political institutions, and leave their meanings and structures intact, without even considering their breakup, but what do anarchists have to ask the state and the institutions for? Or is it that someone has bowed to the (very dangerous) logic of ‘intermediate struggles’? Have we become trade-unionists of revolt? What do we have to do with protestations about cuts to public services, given that the latter are given out by the state? Have we come to embrace the logic of charity, ops welfare, also in Anarchist milieus? I don’t think so.

Some might say that it is necessary to participate in order not to leave the way open to ‘them’, but don’t we realize that we’re playing a game with rigged cards? The event has been prepared for

months by the galaxy of autonomy, which through its slogans (like the very annoying ‘see you on the 11th’ stuck around everywhere ...) is creating a popular imagination made up of industrial action across-the-board, and therefore is not really questioning the set of symbols called state, authority, etc., but it’s substantially calling for a ‘popular’ reform without touching the basic structures of the system. It doesn’t seem to me that anarchists are attempting to re-launch the event in a proper context, therefore it would be a question of participating by turning a blind eye, perhaps only for fear of being cut off from ‘social struggles’, as if the stupid and reactionary crowd were waiting for the liberating words of those who don’t have flags.

Moreover, the demo of the 11th is being addressed to those who willingly accept to bear their chains, defend them – work is a right! – and in a low voice ask for the chains to be loosened a bit and maybe painted in red. It’s addressing civil society, which applaud the work of ‘good’ judges and become indignant at the wickedness of the ‘bad’ ones; a society which chant ‘everybody out’ – a reactionary slogan, if you think about it, which doesn’t criticize the structure but those who administer it – and demand ‘honest’ public servants; a society which want to reform prison not to destroy them; which repudiate violence but are ready to endure it. What do we have to share with a stupid herd? Do we have religious ambitions about redeeming the masses through the word? And if this was the case, wouldn’t it be better – for you! – to organize a mass under the symbol of the encircled A (we definitely hope not!) rather than take part in red flag liturgies and hope to conquer a little space? Sometimes I’ve got the feeling that those who preach social anarchism in a context of daily struggles of the masses behave like trade-unionists pushing for intermediate struggles not as strategies on the short run, which I wouldn’t agree with in any case, but as if they feared that their interlocutors didn’t understand what they were being told ...and I agree with this, they can’t understand the meaning of total liberation because they are afraid of it, perhaps they don’t want it, and certainly it won’t be 1,000 words or 1,000 demos that will make them change their mind. Those who can’t liberate themselves cannot be liberated by anyone else, and to break up the chains that constraint one from inside is a purely individual process that goes along obscure roads, how can we think we can interpret it? I say it again: big piazza liturgies shouldn’t concern us, not even as ‘critical participation’ because we’d be once again walk-ons in the game of various authoritarians.

‘Other people are quite dreadful. The only possible society is oneself.’ – Oscar Wilde

Do you really think that big mass protests have any sense? Then organize them. On my part I think that all forms of direct attack, not the ones mediated with the authority, is the road that I want to follow. A matter of usefulness? The pleasure of action that is deafening scream against the tempest of reaction, standing erect on the bow I don’t surrender but go on the counter-attack... A matter of usefulness... but are you really sure that the piazza is ‘useful’? That it can ‘open people’s eyes’? Or is it that the dynamics leading from moaning to anger are unknown to us, as to anyone else? If this is true, isn’t it wiser to act according to one’s sensibility and not according to the lies of social pedagogy? And then, aren’t piazzas merely self-referred ‘collective individuality’, which among other things is a ridiculous oxymoron?

If all this wasn’t enough, I also find it annoying that one should act according to the deadlines established by the enemy, in a reasoning of interiorized resistance which should however leave space for constant attack on exploitation and the authority. To act ‘in response to...’, especially with certain presuppositions, means to legitimize and acknowledge the authority of the enemy

to a certain extent, but competitors are such in a game whose rules are shared, for example in so called democratic dialectics, but we rebels/revolutionaries, what need do we have of competitors? We've got enemies, with whom we don't negotiate.

I'm not against mass protests a priori, but they should be included in a context of real and constant attack on the authority, attack that today is decisively limited but it should have real revolutionary foundations in an anarchist sense. Here and now because we're living here and now. I'm not condemning myself to inaction, it's only that I see the struggle in a different perspective. It's not a question of not doing anything, it's a question of striking the authority systematically with all kinds of actions according to the logic of small groups and affinity.

11th July will be the representation of a reformist, bourgeois and conservative dissent. That each one relate to the day as they best think, but later, please, don't start with the usual moaning of those who have fallen in the trap...

'Beyond the political conclusions of each one, the only sure thing is that any comrade's desire to actively get involved in the anarchist struggle, should study the mistakes made and they should be a step ahead of the enemy, planning their next moves very carefully and precisely. Avoiding as much as possible hasty moves without however going into inactivity.' – Nikos Romanos

'The stupidity of the movement when it doesn't consider the urgency for attack is due to the fact that imprisonment will always be the logic consequence for those who want to destroy the system. The state and capital have powerful antiriot weapons and armed soldiers, but let's consider a protest made by a thousand people asking higher wages and let's see if this is more dangerous than the actions of some individuals who only 'burn' small properties and claim they will be no longer subjected, and show they no longer respond to power's language of control.' – Eat

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