

La Resistenza come secondo Risorgimento?

di Francesco Lamendola - 23/11/2015

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Was the Resistance a second Risorgimento? This is the hypothesis that progressive intellectuals have wanted to accredit, from 1945 to today; and they have largely succeeded, because their sweetened and idealized version of the Italian civil war was just what a people anxious to forget quickly, to turn the page and to rebuild, at bargain prices, a democratic virginity, was asking, blaming every misdeed on the fallen regime and its tyrant, and claiming for itself every merit, true or presumed, in the "reconstruction" of a free and just society.

The most interested in this operation of real rewriting of the past in an ideological key, were, of course, the Communists, who had a double strategic need: to make people forget their sad Leninist and Stalinist DNA, the purges, the gulags, the sinkholes. , the merciless massacres of the spring of 1945, which they had rehearsed in Spain during that country's civil war, including the physical purge of non-aligned "comrades"; and, on the other hand, to present themselves, and the work they carried out during the Italian civil war, as a moment of fusion and perfect harmony with the Italian people, or, in any case, with all the best forces of progress, starting with anti-fascist Catholics; and therefore as a "natural" continuation and as a further development of needs,

It was, among other things, an ideological operation equal and opposite, and therefore very little original, to that advocated by illustrious intellectuals of fascism, in particular by Giovanni Gentile, that is, of fascism as a complete and crowning of the unfinished work of the Risorgimento that is, the formation of the Italian people. Both theses may contain elements of truth, or at least of verisimilitude, depending on whether the emphasis is placed on certain facts and certain aspects of the Risorgimento, to deduce its "logical" continuation, respectively, in the Resistance or in Fascism. Before even going into such a reconstruction, however, it would be necessary to define what Fascism was - even just Fascism as a movement, leaving Fascism as a regime aside - something on which historians still do not agree and, they probably never will be. They agree on one thing only, in the fact that it was a political movement created by Benito Mussolini at the end of the First World War, and which, having detached itself from the original socialist matrix, attempted to trace a sort of "third way" to the overall

problems of modernity, aggravated by the disastrous effects of the First World War, between liberal democracy, dominated by unregulated capitalism and financial excessive power, and communism, as it was being realized and defined in the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin. But the Risorgimento, what was it? And the Resistance,?

The Risorgimento is generally interpreted as that historical phenomenon for which the Italian people created their own national state, fighting against the forces that opposed it. Even it has been given a selective and interested reading by the dominant culture (of Masonic matrix): it has been silent, or overlooked, on the fact that the adverse forces were to a good extent Italian strength: on a social level, the peasant masses, to say 90% of the population (and sorry if it is little); at the political level, all the pre-unification states, with the exception of Piedmont: Modena, Parma, Tuscany, the Church and Naples. They wanted to believe that the real and only obstacle was Austria; he modestly kept silent about another, much more real and insidious: the lack of interest, or opposition, of the great majority of Italians themselves. Furthermore, on closer inspection, a Risorgimento, as such, has never existed: that is, as a unitary and intentional phenomenon. The word, dripping with rhetoric, was adopted as a container to include a large amount of facts, situations, characters, theories, even extremely different from each other. And we are not just talking about minor phenomena or figures; we are also talking about the major ones: until the last, that is, up to the two-year resolution of 1859-60, it was not at all clear whether Cavour and Vittorio Emanuele II aimed to enlarge Piedmont, or to make Italy; nor if Mazzini and Garibaldi aimed to make Italy or to make a revolution and a republic. Nor are we talking about the sidereal distance that separated an anarchist like Pisacane, or a terrorist like Felice Orsini, from a moderate liberal like Cesare Balbo, or from a Catholic like Gioberti. The truth is that each served its particular purposes, pursued its particular objectives: this was the strength and weakness of what, in retrospect, was seen as a unitary phenomenon, and called the Risorgimento. Its strength: because, if an attempt, a line, a leader failed, there were always two or three or four alternative "solutions", ready to take action; for example, where the landing of Sapri in 1857 failed, the landing of Marsala in 1860 succeeded. The same goal - perhaps -, but the direction is different; the outcome is different. Its weakness: because, lacking a unitary structure, and even if in principle, once the most immediate and "easy" purpose has been achieved, the territorial unity, all the other problems - institutional, political, social, economic, cultural - remained unanswered: and such they dragged on for several

decades. Some, such as the bridging of the gap between North and South, have not even been achieved today, a century and a half later.

Therefore, when it is stated that the Resistance was a second Risorgimento, it should be clear what it was, or at least what it *did not* was, the Risorgimento: it was not a revolution, nor a movement of the people (except for some isolated cases, such as the **Five Days of Milan or the resistance of Brescia**); it was not a moment of national unity, but, if anything, the search for that unity, when there was still everything to do, starting with the essential thing: to convince the Italian people that it was right and necessary to create their own national state. As for the Resistance, it was, like the Risorgimento, - and starting with the name, somewhat ideological and not at all neutral -, a container in which to insert, and deliberately confuse, at least three different things: a) the patriotic struggle against the occupier German (who was, moreover, the ally of the day before); b) the class struggle, promoted by the communist partisans not only against the Germans and the fascists, but also against current and potential opponents of a future communist regime (and this explains the indiscriminate atrocities committed after the war is over); c) the actual civil war, against the fascists of the Social Republic. And that they were different things, a whole series of facts (not theories) demonstrate: for example, **the massacre of Porzûs, in which the Friulian communist partisans eliminated the partisans of Catholic origin, precisely because of an irremediable contrast regarding the point a): or the question of the annexation of vast areas located near the eastern border to Tito's Yugoslavia.**

By way of pure example, we have selected, among a thousand others that are suitable for this, a passage by the historian **Giuseppe Mammarella** - a free lecturer in Contemporary History at the University of Florence and a former teacher at Stanford University in California - so that the reader can get an idea of the systematic ideological forcing to which that page of our very recent history has been subjected, in order to adapt it to the needs of the political and cultural Vulgate of the forces that emerged victorious from the civil war and committed to building their own "official" mythology, assuming for herself the role of saviors of the homeland and entrusting to the vanquished the ungrateful function of interpreting absolute evil (as even the former leader of the political party who claimed to be the direct heir of the ideal experience of the Italian Social Republic said, Gianfranco Fini).

Therefore, Giuseppe Mammarella wrote in his book «The Italian Communist Party, 1945/1975. From Liberation to historical compromise "(Florence, Vallecchi, 1976, pp. 9-10):

*«The definition of the **Resistance as the second Risorgimento**, valid on the ideal as well as on the political level, suggests significant similarities between the two great moments of national life also on the operational level. With the Resistance the working class becomes, for the first time, an authentic protagonist in the history of the country, but also the Resistance like the Risorgimento is configured as a fact in which the effort of organization and political construction by an elite is particularly relevant. relatively small, while both lack the great popular uprising which is the characteristic feature of great revolutions. The political elite, the active force that organizes the participation of the **working class in the Resistance is the Communist Party**. The successful element of the PCI, in the mobilization of the working class lies in the new organization and propaganda techniques prepared and refined in the course of the anti-fascist struggle conducted by the PCI on the domestic and international level. **Unlike any other force participating in the Resistance, the PCI can count on an organization of activists**, the future leaders of the party, quite numerous, experienced and politically homogeneous.*

*Since the split in January 1921, the PCI had been a party of cadres; this characteristic was consolidated during the anti-fascist struggle in the clandestine action in Italy and in the international one in the ranks of the Comintern. **The war in Spain was to give** the militants and communist leaders who participated in it a military and political experience that will prove invaluable in the partisan guerrilla warfare. The fall of fascism will free a large number of communist activists - more than three thousand - who, denounced by the OVRA for **their clandestine activities and condemned by the Special Court, had** spent several years in fascist prisons or in confinement, waiting to resume the action. The availability of these elements will give the PCI a clear advantage over the PSI (upon returning from exile Nenni will note the organizational inconsistency of the PSI: "The party does not exist, there are only the Communists") and to the working class of the North a type of political leadership that the old pre-Fascist socialism had never been able to achieve. The doctrinal elaboration that took place during the period of exile, during which, despite errors and ups and downs of intensity, the political debate contributed to expressing this guide, which was supported as on a coherent strategy. all levels had never*

stopped. [...] the doctrinal elaboration that took place during the period of exile contributed decisively, during which, despite errors and ups and downs of intensity, the political debate at all levels had never stopped. [...] the doctrinal elaboration that took place during the period of exile contributed decisively, during which, despite errors and ups and downs of intensity, the political debate at all levels had never stopped. [...] The PCI could count not only on its organizational skills, but on the great prestige it derived from the tradition of fighting against fascism in Italy and abroad in the popular fronts, and above all from close relations with the USSR. The political and ideal link with the USSR is a basic fact to understand not only the success of the PCI, but even more the will to fight of the Italian working class and its expectations of revolutionary palingenesis. For the majority of the Italian working class, the great victories of the Red Army over Nazi-Fascism represent the definitive proof of the success of the first socialist revolution. the revolution, which in Italy had always been seen by the masses in a messianic perspective, thanks to the USSR and the victory of the Soviet people, emerged from the anti-fascist war as a consolidated experience, the starting point and model of other revolutions.

In the triumph of the Soviet one, the Italian working class saw the surest guarantee for the success of its revolution and, in the anti-fascist and anti-Nazi struggle, the natural term of passage towards it: "today in the mountains against the Nazi-fascists, tomorrow in the streets and in the squares all over Italy against the bourgeois and the remnants of fascism ". In this slogan, which reflects the revolutionary expectations of a large part of the resistance movement, the class struggle is joined to the guerrilla war, almost two successive moments of the same revolutionary process. "

Everything in this piece of prose literally drips silly rhetoric, ideological complacency and systematic alteration of the facts, with the aim of providing a pre-established, politically correct reading of the Italian civil war: starting from the fact that the latter is never called with his name, and therefore, absurdly, one speaks of a thing that is not recognized as such; not to mention the *incipit*, in which the problem of demonstrating is neither discussed nor posed in the slightest, but simply asserts that "the definition of the Resistance as the second Risorgimento [is] valid on the ideal as well as on the political level". As if to say that the profession of historian ends where it should begin. Someone imagines an art historian, or a philosopher, or a scientist, or any other scholar of any

serious research discipline, who proceeds in this way: affirming, without any proof, that the thesis in question is correct and true, and that it should be accepted as an article of faith? Not even theology proceeds in this way; even theologians, although they start from a presupposition of faith, seriously pose the problem of proving their assertions. But this, obviously, it is not necessary for "politically correct" historians, especially if they have presided over the Stanford Study Center in Florence for over thirty years. How many university chairs and how many presidencies of cultural institutes have been made available to these "historians" who do not even bother to save appearances and justify their reading of recent Italian history in a partisan key, but limit themselves to incensing the winning part ?