

All Power to  the Workers!

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## THE CRISIS IN THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

Comrade Zinoviev's Masterful Analysis of Serratianism or Italian Centrism

"What the Communist International demands of its followers, is the recognition—not in words, but in deeds—that civilized mankind has entered the revolutionary epoch, that all capitalist countries are facing the greatest convulsions and open class war, and that the task of the revolutionary representatives of the proletariat therefore consists in preparing for this inevitable, approaching civil war the necessary spiritual weapons and organized points of support.

"Those Internationalists who consider it possible to work together with Kautsky, Longuet and Turrati, to appear on their side before the toiling masses, renounce in deeds the spiritual and organizational preparation for the revolutionary uprising of the proletariat, altogether apart from the consideration as to whether this may happen in a month or a year, sooner or later."

L. TROTSKY,  
in *Terrorism and Communism*.

For some time the comrades of one of the larger cities of Southern Italy approached Serrati asking him to explain his views of the present situation and the tasks of the Italian Socialist Party arising therefrom. Serrati answered them in detail and later published his reply in the periodical, *Communismo*, of which he is the editor. In this article Serrati maintained that the present situation in Italy was undoubtedly revolutionary, and that the revolution could not be averted, and that there were only two paths open to the Italian Socialist Party, i. e. either to enter the government, using lawful means, which would mean co-operation with the bourgeoisie and the betrayal of the proletariat, or to make the revolution.

What, however, does this mean—"to MAKE the revolution?"

"Making the revolution," says Serrati, "means not so much to provoke a decisive act of force (which I believe to a necessary consequence of the whole situation and comes of itself, almost fatalistically) as to prepare those factors which can give us as a party the possibility of utilizing this unavoidable act of force and to attract those Socialist elements who will follow us according to the time, the circumstances, and the surroundings. We are not the ones who make the revolution, or, in other words, accomplish the decisive act of revolution which violently cuts the connection between the past and the future. We are those who are conscious of this new power which has arisen under the desired circumstances, and we must so act as to lead to the successful outcome of the revolution.

"The task of the Socialist Party, according to my view, is not so much to lead the masses into the streets—as the romanticists of the barricade think—but above all to prepare all the forces of the Socialist order which are indispensable to establish the new regime and thus assure its eventual triumph."

From this hypothesis Serrati draws the conclusion that it is necessary, in order to solve the great tasks that await the proletariat after the seizure of power, not to lose connection with the trade unions and comrades; that the majority of Socialist co-operative organizations of the

party must remain intact; and that since these bodies, which cover the country with the network of their organizations, are now in the hands of the reformists, the relations with these reformists should not be disturbed and the unity of the party must therefore be upheld at any price.

According to this view the unity of the party becomes a revolutionary necessity.

In his letter Serrati has expressed his views with delightful and unexpected clearness. There is, however, much more to be noted. Serrati has attempted to give the principal bases of the tactics of limping behind the advancing masses (a practice followed by the Italian Socialist Party), of the tactics of half-measures, which were mostly half-defeats.

It therefore becomes necessary, if we wish to understand the phenomenon of Serratianism — of Italian centrism — to thoroughly consider Serrati's letter.

The most important point, which illuminates the entire letter, is that in which Serrati claims that the final and decisive act of force comes "fatalistically—of itself." With this the position of Serrati is made absolutely clear. This also establishes the position of the Italian Socialist Party, which in April, 1920, looked on while the revolutionary general strike of the working class was crushed. The Italian Socialist Party again wavered when in June the soldiers mutinied in many cities; when in Ancona the workers fought on the barricades the Italian Socialist Party again hesitated to bring the movement against the Albanian war adventurers to a head by proclaiming the general strike. The Italian Socialist Party re-