

mained passive during the great movement of the metal workers, evidently waiting for the revolution which would "come of itself" without needing the party "to provoke a decisive act of force" and "to lead the masses into the streets" as the "romanticists" of Ancona dreamed in their theoretical ignorance, many of whom are now repenting in prison to the extent that they have not paid with their lives.

*"The revolution, the decisive act of force, ought to come of itself, fatalistically, as a necessary consequence of the whole situation!"*

Before we expose the inner meaning of this sentence, with its scientific coverlet of the materialistic conception of history, we will establish the fact that it bears no relation to historic truth. When Trotsky wrote, "That which characterized the first revolutionary period of our party was the conviction that it had to succeed to power because of the inner logic of events," this did not mean that the Bolsheviki on this account folded their arms and waited until the power would fall to them, "fatalistically—of itself." On the contrary, when Trotsky deals with the description of the deciding events, he writes, "It was the time when we openly proceeded to get ready for the uprising and actively prepared for its organization."

In Italy's present situation Serrati admits that events are leading to armed insurrection with compelling natural necessity, yet he considers it superfluous to consciously prepare for it through organization.

The Bolsheviki, however, go still further than merely preparing for the organization of the uprising. In defiance of all the pseudo-Marxian teachings of international opportunism, they SET A DEFINITE DATE. "The logic of things demands that we appoint October 25, as the date of uprising." (The day on which the All-Russian Congress of Soviets was to meet.)

We will review the generally known facts of the systematic organization of the October Insurrection. The Military Revolutionary Council became more and more the real executive organ of the revolution and from it issued the decisive orders as the drama of events reached its climax. From the occupation of the telephone station at Petrograd to the attack on the Winter Palace, the events, which in their complex we call the October Revolution, came, not of themselves, but occurred through the conscious pre-arrangement of the Military Revolutionary Council, which accordingly had taken upon itself the role of destiny.

What can be established by the revolution in Russia, is also partly true of the

November insurrection in Germany. This also was consciously prepared. Its organizer was the revolutionary committee in Berlin, chiefly composed of the revolutionary leaders of the trades. That, however, the preparation was altogether insufficient; that the leaders of the insurrection—the leaders of the Independent Socialist Party—wavered very much about its execution, was fatal to the German Revolution. Ledebour himself says, "We would have done much better if we had prepared the revolution, if we had rigidly examined everything at the beginning. Because we have committed this sin of omission we have given Ebert and Scheidemann the opportunity of smuggling themselves into the revolutionary fold. Since then it was proved to have been a serious mistake that we did not attack correctly on November 5th."

The uprising of the Paris Commune, on the contrary, came as a matter of fact without such organization or preparation by its leaders, who were rather surprised by events; still we cannot consider this to be especially praiseworthy or led back to theoretical reflections on the "timid and fearful feeling of historical justification" which as Lavrov writes, "was to be read in its proclamation." In its aversion to civil war, which Paris was driven into, the Central Commune persisted in a defensive position," writes Marx in his *Civil War in France*. These two elements of fear of historic vindication and the aversion to civil war, which determined the decisive mistakes at the beginning of the Paris Insurrection and which led to its frightful defeat, are those which characterize the Italian Socialist Party. The first error prevails more among the centrists under the leadership of Serrati; the second, through tradition and the memory of De Amicis, and represents the humanitarian sentimentalism, the sacred right of reservation of the reformists.

Accordingly, what is in Serrati's eyes the spontaneous, unconscious, and unprepared insurrection, can lead to nothing else than a repetition of the results of the Paris Commune; to a repetition of the terrible blood-letting of the West European working class, resulting as in 1871 in the blighting of all hopes of a successful revolution for a long time to come.

Serrati admits this, himself, in his letter, where he says, "The Italian Revolution will be accomplished under infinitely more difficult circumstances than the Russian." This does not lead him to the conclusion, as it should, that the Italian proletariat must be infinitely better prepared for the moment of decisive attack; no, he concludes quite the contrary, that the reformists in the party and the trade union bureaucracy must remain intact.

We know that fearful obstacles will face the revolution in Italy, especially in consequence of the lack of coal and grain; the backwardness of the workers in the Southern Provinces; the powerful coalition of the international bourgeoisie, which in all probability will counter with a blockade. However, does then Serrati believe that those who today sabotage the revolution will work for it tomorrow? Has he then forgotten the executioner's work of Noske and the regrettable betrayal of Soviet Hungary by the Hungarian centrists? However, Serrati is like the phillistines of whom Lenin speaks, who do not believe in the creative force of revolution and are in deadly fear of it. Serrati believes that he cannot dispense with the help of the reformists, and that all organizational and technical conditions must be prepared in advance so that the revolution will be painless.

"They could not understand that the Commune was a barricade and not an administration," writes Lissagary about the leaders of the Paris Commune. The same can be truthfully said of Serrati. He, too, cannot understand that the revolution is decided on the barricades and not in the dim light of the trade union administrations. In that Serrati lays the main emphasis upon the question of armed insurrection. He shows us the goal and wants us to forget the path. He points out Communism to us, and juggles away the revolution.

At the session of the Executive Committee of the Italian Socialist Party, held October, 20th, in Florence, Serrati declared when the first signs of the reaction in Italy became noticeable, "The Italian bourgeoisie becomes less powerless, and they are compelled to provoke a clash of forces if this clash can give them the opportunity, due to a weakening of the proletarian power, to catch its breath. The Italian Socialist Party must, however, lead the proletariat according to Marxist principles, and not with impulsive actions evoked by any Tom, Dick or Harry." What this continual inactivity of the Italian bourgeoisie really amounts to can be seen by the recent events in Italy, the creation of a White Guard in the form of the Guardia Regia (and more recently the Fascisti—Ed.) hardly indicates that the bourgeoisie is becoming powerless. The Italian bourgeoisie seeks ever more to make up for this by a steady strengthening of their material power precisely because of their daily growing economic impotency which is incapable of solving the most vital problems of the country. We will not stress this point. What Serrati says of not artificially provoking an attack as long as this has in view immediate consequences is without doubt correct. What conclusion does Serrati draw from it? The phillistine and altogether self-evident truth