

In Italy

How Does Italian Fascism Stand Today?

Many facts, of an international character as well as of one specific to the internal situation in the country, put the Italian crisis, the crisis of the fascist regime in Italy on the order of the day. Among the facts of an internal order, there is a whole series of movements characterizing the awakening of the masses and a new disposition on their part to fight. In the field of international facts, must be considered in the first place the Spanish events in connection with the fall of Primo de Rivera. The difference existing between the two dictatorships has already been remarked upon: between the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, born of a "pronunciamento" of military juntas in a country that is among the least economically developed and where the weight of old feudal elements is still very tangible; and the dictatorship of the Black Shirts, born of a long period of civil war between bourgeoisie and proletariat, and leaning upon a movement of petty bourgeois masses.

The Class Character of Fascism

Yet up to now there has never ceased to be a discussion on the character of the fascist dictatorship in Italy. For the parties of the bourgeois anti-fascist concentration, which has its seat in Paris, fascism is, in general, a phenomenon above the classes, to be studied in the cabinets of psycho-analysts (Labriola); a morbid phenomenon having its origins in the psychosis of war (Nitti); a deviation, a degeneration from the normal paths of capitalism (Treves and Co., the emigrated social democratic chiefs being still desirous of seasoning their analysis with a bit of sweetened Marxism). Others again have wanted to apply the term of Caesarism to fascism (it is even said that Bucharin, fascinated by such an analogy, once had the idea of writing a book on fascism from this point of view). But the only correct method for the understanding and analysis of fascism is always the method that Marx taught us: the method of having the class struggle at its basis and applying itself to the conditions in which the class struggle develops in modern times.

Viewed from this historical angle, fascism is only the dictatorship of Italian capitalism in its present phase. Like every definition of fascism, this one naturally also gives only the essential content: the class content. The fascist movement is not a simple, a homogeneous one. Its line of development from its origin till today, has been in the direction of the defense of

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lems there is primarily the problem of staying in power. The grosser its errors, the hastier it is to transpose its methods of internal Party struggle to the field of the trade union movement, consolidating for a certain time its positions in the apparatus as compensation for those it has lost in the masses.

The official press, and principally the Moscow Pravda, leads its readers into error concerning the real situation within the C. I. Nevertheless the facts are there. At the present moment, when the commercial and industrial crisis create anew a great instability of capitalist relations, socially and internationally, we see that the Communist Parties are weakened, internally disorganized, without confidence in the leadership and without the faith of the masses in the slogans of the C. I.

The gravest thing is that under the cover of "self-criticism", there has been instituted in the C. I. as much as in the C. P. S. U., a disastrous regime of servile adulation before all the zig-zags of the "general line" concocted by a group of irresponsible functionaries.

The Right wing of Communism, which directs the openly opportunist elements (Brandler, Louis Sellier, Lovestone, Jilek, Roy, etc.) who, only yesterday, were joined with Stalin in his blind fury against the Left, succeed in enrolling many revolutionary workers misled by the nefarious adventurism of the official policy. But the number of worker-Communists who fall finally into the most complete indifference is still greater.

(To Be Continued)

capitalist profit and the rabid struggle against the revolutionary movement of the working class; but the stages traversed by fascism in its development are different, and each of its stages corresponds to a different moment in the development of the class struggle and the social relations of hostile forces: bourgeoisie and proletariat. These stages can be fixed about as follows:

1. Up to the occupation of the factories (September 1920), the epoch when the revolutionary wave reached its culminating point. At its beginning, fascism is a melange of combative spirit, or "arditism". It still is, so to speak, an organization of cadres, limited to the cities and composed in its majority former "arditi", former war volunteers, mutilated soldiers and demobilized officers. Its first activities against the working class are "razzias", surprise actions organized with the aid and complicity of the liberal State. (The governmental measure assuring the cadres of the fascio is a decree that bears the signature of a social reformist minister: Donomi; it is the decree which provides for the support of demobilized officers in service activity at state expense.) In this period, the workers' movement is still too strong to be openly tackled even by the State forces. (Giolitti, instead of entering into conflict with the workers entrenched in the factories, prefers to let the social reformists operate so as to have a reason for occupying the factories). The force used by the bourgeoisie in this acute period of the class struggle to maneuver against the working class is principally the social democracy which, by the aid it brings the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the working class blazes the trail for fascism.

2. The second stage of fascism, the stage of "squadriame" and "camionnisme" (assaults by armed squads mounted on military carriages), the stage that prepares the March on Rome, opens with the beginning of the defeat of the working class (defeat of the factory occupations).

Of all fascism's stages, this one is the bloodiest. On the countryside a veritable civil war develops. The liberal state, the old liberal state, throws off its stifling legality; it organizes, supports and protects the illegal violence of the fascist bands.

In this second stage, fascism is no longer only an organization of armed bands: the defeat of the workers' and revolutionary movement in Italy—due to the internal defects of the proletarian movement and principally to the lack of an organized party of the revolution—has as its result the driving into the arms of fascism of important layers of peasantry (farmers, small proprietors) whose sympathy had been progressively alienated from the socialist party as much because of the wrong policy of "land socialization" as because of its tactic which set against it the various categories of agricultural laborers, instead of endeavoring above all to realize a political alliance between the latter and the small peasants. Coming to increase still more the ranks of the fascio, are the demobilized and jobless petty bourgeoisie, the tradesmen hampered in their business by the socialist cooperatives, and also, to a weak extent, workers frustrated in their attempt at revolution.

The Period of Civil War

Crisis of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie; the defeat of the revolutionary labor movement (September 1920): these are the conditions fascism profited by to develop.

It is precisely in this second stage that there took place what is called, the "ruralization" of fascism. Steel and fire assure the submission of the country to agrarian slavery. The cities—where the industrialists in their turn now pass over to lockouts; "purge" the factories of revolutionary workers, applying "their" fascism to them in the shops—remain isolated from the peasants. In 1921 and 1922—up till the march on Rome—the civil war is in full swing in the cities and villages of Italy.

And it is in the furnace of the civil war that the Communist Party is born and

organized. Since the working class is forced to beat a retreat, the Communist Party of Italy has as its first task to organize the workers' line of resistance, in order to lead it later to the victory that escaped it in 1920. Bitter and difficult battle, ending in a new defeat of the working class that still remained too attached to maximalist Centrism and to social reformism whose policy at this epoch consists of preaching passivity and hoping for the liquidation of the fascist bands by the very ones that armed them: by the decomposing liberal state, by the monarchy, the industrialists, the large land owners.

If in the first stage of fascism what best characterizes the treason of the social reformists is their pact signed with Giolitti for the evacuation of the factories; in the second fascist stage, the treason of the socialist chieftains is called "the pacification pact" concluded with Mussolini.

A propos of this coup d'Etat, I will recall in passing the discussions that were held at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, meeting in Moscow at the period of the march on Rome. Bordiga then denied the possibility of speaking of a coup d'Etat, expecting that it was always the same class remaining in power. "The bourgeoisie cannot make a coup d'Etat against itself," he said. And he was right. But the coup d'Etat of October, 1922 was not against the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it was a coup d'Etat for the bourgeoisie, for the big banks, of big industry and big landowning, for the strengthening of the dictatorship of imperialist capital against the interests of the broad masses of the people. The march on Rome consequently marks the violent break with the old liberal and democratic forms, henceforth incompatible with the defense of capitalist profit; it means the establishment of the open dictatorship of capitalism, the creation of the industrial-agrarian-fascist governmental bloc under the direction of monopolistic capital.

The Bourgeoisie Behind Fascism

It is a fact that the social composition of the fascist movement has undergone important changes in the different epochs of its development. But it is an error to believe, as is done by *Lo Stato Operaio*, review of the Italian Communist Party, that fascism, at a given moment of its development—notably at the period preceding the march on Rome when the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie had a very clear predominance within the fascio—had for a certain period been an autonomous political movement of the petty bourgeois masses and that, as such, it could have conceived and realized a plan of its own for state conquest against the old directing groups. In reality such an error leads to attributing to the middle classes an initiative it hasn't got and which it can have even less of in the present period of the class struggle (domination of monopolistic capital, period of the proletarian revolution). This conception also violates the Marxist conception of the modern state, the organization of capitalist domination. They forget, in pursuing this error, the class which organizes and rules the apparatus of domination (the state); and they finish by seeing only the ruling political personnel of the organization of the state, a personnel which, on the contrary, can very well be recruited and hired by various processes and in various circles (fascism or social democracy, for instance), according to the degree of the class struggle and the relation of opposing forces. Besides, there must still be noted the confusion that exists between the class content (dictatorship of capitalism) and the forms that the organization of the dictatorship can assume in the different historical periods of the class struggle (liberal, parliamentary forms or fascist form).

To sum up: It is strictly correct to say that fascism has not been, at any moment of its development, an autonomous political movement, even if the petty bourgeoisie who formerly adhered to it and still do, were able to think and still think so today. (Many are the fascists convinced that Mussolini is conducting an

independent policy at Rome). But the illusions of the petty bourgeoisie are not the reality. The reality is given in the relation of forces which hide behind these illusions. Since the birth of fascism, it is a fact that it has been raised and constantly guided by the ruling classes of the Italian state, by the bourgeoisie, by capitalism. The proof of it is that those who subsidized the first fascio (bankers, landowners, industrialists), are the same ones who later subsidized the march on Rome (Confederation of Industry, Commercial Bank, Agrarian Consortium, etc.).

In October 1922, the Italian bourgeoisie had thus realized all the political conditions for the march on Rome: defeat and dispersal of the labor movement; rupture of the contact between workers and peasants (isolation of the cities, of the country); anticipation and even resignation to the coup d'Etat by the democratic sections, Amedola, head of the liberal democracy, fascist victim who died abroad, had an attitude of support and encouragement for "the experiment of Mussolini" before the march on Rome. That is how Mussolini could reach Rome and take power without a blow being exchanged.

3. It is from this moment that the third and new stage of fascism must be considered. It is the stage of the realizations of imperialist capital; the stage of the ferocious policy of squeezing and despoiling the working masses for the accumulation of capitalist profits. It is the stage of industrial and banking concentration; of the development of big capital, of big industry and of the agrarian bourgeoisie.

These few remarks on the subject of fascism are, in our opinion, necessary as to allow a reply to the question we posed at the outset. By all that has preceded this, one sees that to reply to the question "How does the fascist dictatorship stand in Italy today?" signifies to analyze the elements of the situation permitting to define; first—how does the crisis of Italian capitalism and its fascist regime stand? and secondly—how do we stand with the formation of the revolutionary bloc of the workers and peasants?

That is what we will endeavor to determine in other articles.

—AKROS

A Stalinist Canard

The Daily Worker of May 13, 1930, publishes a story entitled "Trotskyite Tries It Out on 3 Dogs, But First on Labor", in which it declares that comrade James P. Cannon is a staff writer on the New York Telegram. The story was reprinted in the Freiheit. The "proof" for this contemptible canard is a story in the Telegram signed by one "James Cannon, New York Telegram Staff Writer". Needless to say, there is absolutely no relation between comrade Cannon and the Telegram reporter, a fact quite well known to the author of the lie, Earl Browder. The James Cannon of the Telegram is a fairly well known New York reporter whose stories have appeared for years, first in the "tabloid" New York Daily News and lately in the Telegram. The writers on the Worker and the Freiheit seem to think that anyone working for the capitalist press is a scoundrel. So far as they are concerned, they can affirm this from personal experience. Most of the Freiheit staff, for example, from Olgin up, received its training as Abe Cahan's office boys on the yellow socialist Forward. They are the proper people to practise filthy Brass Check journalism in the Stalinist press today.

We should suggest that the Daily Worker now print a story identifying comrade Cannon with Bishop James Cannon, Jr., of the Methodist church, and thereby prove that the Trotskyists are all Methodists, and agents of Herbert Hoover. Anyone who thinks the Daily Worker incapable even of this, does not know the infantile mind of Earl Browder, or has not yet plumbed the depths of Stalinist depravity.

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