

Antonio Gramsci 1924

Neither Fascism nor Liberalism: Sovietism!

In the political crisis of the liquidation of fascism the opposition bloc increasingly appears to be a factor of a secondary order. Its heterogeneous social composition, its hesitations, and its aversion for a struggle of the popular masses against the Fascist regime reduce its actions to a journalistic campaign and parliamentary intrigues, which impotently run up against the armed militia of the Fascist party.

In the opposition movement to fascism the most important part has passed to the Liberal Party because the bloc has no other program to oppose to fascism than the old Liberal program of parliamentary bourgeois democracy, the return to the constitution, to legality, to democracy. In the discussion concerning the succession to fascism, according to the congress of the Liberal Party the Italian people is placed by the opposition before a choice: either fascism or liberalism; either a Mussolini government of bloody dictatorship or a Slandri, Giolitti, Amendola, Turati, don Sturzo, or Vella government tending towards the reestablishment of the good old liberal Italian democracy, under whose mask the bourgeoisie will continue to exercise its exploitative rule.

The worker, the peasant, who for years has hated the fascism that oppresses him believes it necessary, in order to bring it down, to ally himself with the liberal

bourgeoisie, to support those who in the past, when they were in power, supported and armed fascism against the workers and peasants, and who just a few months ago formed a sole bloc with fascism and shared in the responsibility for its crimes. And this is how the question of the liquidation of fascism is posed? No! The liquidation of fascism must be the liquidation of the bourgeoisie that created it.

When the Communist Party, in the days after the assassination of Matteoti, issued the slogan: “Down with the government of assassins! Dissolution of the Fascist militia!” it didn’t think that the government of assassins should be replaced by a government of those who in all their policies had opened the way to and armed the assassins; it never thought that Giolitti, Nitti, and Amendola, who were in power when the Fascist militia was formed, would be capable of disarming this militia which they had favored and armed against the working class.

In putting forth its slogan our party didn’t intend to replace failing fascism with the old liberalism, whose opprobrious failure and definitive liquidation the March on Rome had signaled. The Communist Party, from the beginning of the crisis of fascism, affirmed that the working class and the peasants must be the gravediggers and the successors of those in power.

The action of the mass of industrial proletarians and peasants is necessary for the defeat of fascism, for the class struggle with all of its consequences. Without a doubt the proletariat should and must use, in its struggle against fascism, the contradictions and the struggles that have developed within the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. But without direct action

fascism can never be brought down. Posing the problem in this way would mean, at the same time, clearly posing the question of the succession to fascism. With the defeat of fascism by the action of the worker and peasant masses liberalism will have no part in the succession: this right belongs to the government of the workers and peasants which alone will be capable of and will have the sincere determination to disarm the Fascist militia, arming the working class and the peasants.

At the current time it is a question of something other than the return of the constitution, to democracy and liberalism. These latter are mellifluous words that the bourgeoisie uses to mislead the workers of the city and the countryside in order to prevent the crisis from taking on its true character, that is the vengeance of the workers and peasants against the fascism that has suppressed them and against the liberalism that has misled them, and which just a few months ago collaborated or sought to collaborate (D'Aragona, Baldesi, etc) with Mussolini.

The Italian crisis can only be resolved through the action of the laboring masses. There is no possibility for the liquidation of fascism on the plain of parliamentary intrigues, only a compromise that leaves the bourgeoisie at the lead along with armed fascism at its service. Liberalism, even if inoculated with the glands of the reformist monkey, is powerless. It belongs to the past. And all the Don Struzos of Italy, united with the Turatis and the Vellas, will not succeed in returning to it the youth necessary for the liquidation of fascism.

A government of the classes of workers and peasants, which will not preoccupy itself either with the constitution or the sacred principles of liberalism, but which is determined to definitively defeat fascism, to disarm it and to defend the interests of the workers of the cities and the fields against all exploiters, this alone is the sole youthful force capable of liquidating a past of oppression, of exploitation and crime and of giving a future of true liberty to all who labor.

Today the Communist Party is the only one that repeats this truth to the proletariat. Its influence increases, its organization is developing, but the majority of the workers and peasants, dragged along by the Confederation of Labor and the Maximalist Party, in their turn advancing in the wake of the constitutional opposition, has not yet re-acquired its class consciousness, hasn't understood that the working and peasant class is the principal factor in the crisis because it has the irresistible numbers and the great force of youth. If it doesn't want to delude itself it must act on the plain of the class struggle as an independent force, which will soon be determinant, and not on the plain of class collaboration in order to do nothing but change the mask of the Italian bourgeoisie.

The essential task of our party consists in having penetrate among the workers and peasants this fundamental idea: only the class struggle of the mass of workers and peasants will defeat fascism. Only a government of workers and peasants can disarm the fascist militia. When these essential truths will have penetrated the spirit of the working and peasant masses by means of our tireless propaganda the workers of the factories and the fields, of whatever

party, will understand the need to construct Worker and Peasant Committees for the defense of their class interests and for the struggle against fascism.

They will understand that these are the necessary instruments of the revolutionary struggle and of their will to replace the government of assassins with a government of workers and peasants. At the moment of the closing of the of the Liberal Congress, which seeks yet again to win over the working people, from one end to the other of Italy the workers and peasants answer their sonorous and empty chatter with: Neither Fascism nor Liberalism: Sovietism!