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PARTITO OPERAIO COMUNISTA

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APPENDIX I, No. 66

(Passages marked with a line at the side are for information only)

"PARTITO OPERAIO COMUNISTA BOLSEVIK-LENINISTA": its attitude on labor syndicalism.

The following is the translation of a report circulated by the above party on the Naples Congress of the C.G.I.L., (Italian General Confederation of Labor) last January. The report was printed on paper bearing the following rubber-stamped letter-head:

"PARTITO OPERAIO COMUNISTA
BOLSCHEVICO - LENINISTA."

Sezione d'Italia della IV Internazionale
Sezione Romana - Largo Corrado Ricci 34I.

The title and text of the report follow in translation:

"The Trotskyists at the Naples Congress of the C.G.I.L."

The Congress of the C.G.I.L. of January 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st achieved no forward step in the problem of syndical unity, nor has it convinced the workmen of Italy or of the world of its stability or of its ability to develop along class lines the present Syndical movement in Italy.

A confederation of Labor such as that of the three parties not only cannot win the confidence of the great majority of workmen who belong to no political party, but its policy will never be able to reach the masses and guide them in meeting the problems of reconstruction.

The "syndical unity achieved" by the C.G.I.L. remains an experimental phase of the "Fact of Rome" of June 1944 entered into by the three parties, the Communists, the Socialists and the Christian Democrats; hence the working masses are not guaranteed, through syndicalism, the class unity which they need to defend themselves against the reactionary employers, and the "bourgeois" state, and to attain an adequate social and economic standard of living and thus emerge from the present state of low wages and unemployment, with a soaring cost of living in the midst of desolation, ruins, misery and hunger.

This syndical unity "achieved" in Italy by the three Parties without allowing the syndical currents existing within said parties to express themselves, while alienating the great masses, amounts to nothing more than a formalistic and bureaucratic structure, permeated and dominated from above by the three "Secretaries", themselves under the influence of the Italian bureaucracy, and neutralizing and paralyzing each and every movement of the masses, stifling every possibility of discussion, of liberty, or of democracy, raising the ghost of dissension, adding to the exasperation and suspicion of the working classes, which unless checked will in turn lead the reactionary employers and middleclasses to adjourn all economic-social problems to a time more favorable to them.

By means of this syndical unity, Stalinism has introduced into Italy police terrorism directed against all forms of liberty, all expression of thought, all democratic syndical tendencies, and against all opposition. When it fails to convince or dominate the masses with lies

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Sezione d'Italia della IV Internazionale
Sezione Romana - Largo Corrado Ricci 341.

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This syndical unity "achieved" in Italy by the three Parties without allowing the syndical currents existing within said parties to express themselves, while alienating the great masses, permeated with more than a formalistic and bureaucratic structure, permeated and dominated from above by the three "Secretaries", themselves under the influence of the Italian bureaucracy, and neutralizing and paralyzing each and every movement of the masses, stifling every possibility of discussion, of liberty, or of democracy, raising the ghost of dissension, adding to the exasperation and suspicion of the working classes, which unless checked will in turn lead the reactionary employers and middleclasses to adjourn all economic-social problems to a time more favorable to them.

By means of this syndical unity, Stalinism has introduced into Italy police terrorism directed against all forms of liberty, all expression of thought, all democratic syndical tendencies, and against all opposition. When it fails to convince or dominate the masses with lies or corruption, threats or promises, it turns to persecution by libel and false accusations against the militants and revolutionary elements who speak out in defense of the interests of the working masses and who are trying to point out to the workmen, the true situation and the danger of a "false" unity, and that of an absence of any clear-cut programme or syndical methods for uniting the workmen on the basis of class warfare.

Syndical unity in Italy therefore remains a mere promise, but from the practical point of view of the interests of the working classes, it amounts to a mere union resulting from non-class political agreement between the three parties, and from a policy of collaboration which is useful only to the employer-class, which even though it has made a few concessions with regard to wages which are still basically

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attuned to the interests and advantage of capitalism, in exchange has nevertheless succeeded in paralyzing the workmen's movement through the political-syndical organization of the present leaders of the C.G.I.L.

The laws determining the sliding-scale of wages are based on the margin of profits of the employer, and whatever improvements have been gained, were not wrested by the federation, but were conceded by the employers who felt they were necessary and who are tied to their "democratic" policy of industrial expansionism. Such is the policy of the C.G.I.L. with reference to the Italian economic situation.

It is logical that it should arouse criticism, opposition and discontent among all workmen.

Coming at this time, after the last Syndical Congress, the policy is a challenge to the patience and the misery of the working masses.

The opinion is general that this union is doomed to disintegrate as and when the proletariat of the Northern provinces join the workmen of Central and Southern Italy, because the "reformed" and bureaucratic policy of the Federation is alienating the great masses from the syndical organizations, which are paralyzing the work of the militants within the ranks of the three parties.

One cannot speak of syndical "unity" when the advanced elements of the parties are excluded, and when every expression of opinion coming from below is stifled by undemocratic methods.

The Congress of Naples was nothing more than a four day Convention called for the purpose of ratifying and finding headings for decisions previously reached by the "Three", with no consideration given to the suggestions or the wishes of the congress.

Although a commission was appointed to check the credentials of the delegates to the congress, no secret ballot on any question was based on a roll-call of the forces of the three and the respective groups present.

The Secretariat of the Three and the Directorate, previously designated by the high bureaucracy of the three parties, were proposed and voted for by the count of hands, not of the delegates, as a body, who demanded to vote. But of a group of some of them who had received previous instructions. When the delegates wished to discuss the question of the appointments, the "Three" adjourned the session amid protests and disorder.

However, the Congress did not take place without interventions from the militant Trotskyists, who were accused of being schismatic by the leaders of the three parties.

It was thus that our comrade Nicolo Di Bartolomeo, backed by the mass and in the name of a group of delegates, intervened and proposed a resolution, which is hereinafter reproduced, and which should be brought to the knowledge of all workmen throughout the world so that a clear picture may be had of the false policies of the leaders of the Italian confederation of labor who did not dare, because of their negotiations with their employer friends, to put to vote a resolution which portrayed the tragic conditions of the masses and pointed out the only conditions which could adequately further the interests of the working classes.

RESOLUTION.

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RESOLUTION.

"The Congress of the CGIL sitting in Naples from the 28th to the 31st January, 1945, after hearing the report of the Secretariat and having taken note of the work accomplished from the Pact of Rome to date, passes to the order of the day: Whereas syndical unity represents the greatest victory as yet achieved by the workers of Italy, which unity should be internationally formulated, as an international syndical federation by means of a world congress by which general directives should be given or syndical policy regarding the great problems of a just peace for all peoples, regarding equal distribution of raw materials, the organization of world markets for and of imports and exports between all nations, in order to guarantee to workers justice, security in peace, work and liberty.

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Decides to exploit and broaden this victory by amalgamating into a single organization all manual and intellectual workers, from those exercising a liberal profession down to the factory hand, for the purpose of safeguarding and defending their class interests.

Declares it to be of fundamental importance to proclaim that true syndical democracy and liberty of thought and speech for those of all political beliefs - from the most extreme right to the most extreme left - are conditioned on the maintenance of the principle of class struggle and of the independence of political parties.

Affirms that syndical unity cannot be an effective instrument for the emancipation of the workman from the exploitation of capitalism if it is not based on the relative force of the proletariat compared to that of the middle-classes, and if it is not determined to place the working class in a position, face to face with the employer class, where it can obtain decisions which will further the interests of the masses.

Repudiates all thought of class collaboration, demanding for all workmen freedom of action and the right to strike - which are the sole means of not being involved in negotiations directed and influenced by big business.

Proclaims the principle of free syndicalism, and rejects all forms of syndicates made obligatory by law or common practice.

Affirms that the conception of syndical unity must also include a determination to obliterate all vestiges of economic and social inequality between the workmen of the North and those of the South, who by means of a single organization must be guaranteed uniform and material conditions.

Approves the syndical programme based on a uniform national agreement for all categories of working-classes and in the principle of a sliding wage scale adjusted to the cost of living.

• DECISIONS •

That equal work shall be equally remunerated for men women and children; that professional schools shall be provided for the children during off-time, and paid for by the employers and the state.

That the food problem for the workmen will be solved by means of factory messes and cooperative shops.

That the economic reconstruction of heavy industry shall be controlled by the workmen through factory committees. That the same principle shall apply to banks, other industries, public utilities whether private or partly state-owned, through nationalization.

That the economical and social level of the industrially backward regions of the South shall be raised by introducing a system of fair division of labor and by more modern and scientific methods of work, and by assigning to women and children tasks commensurate with their physical and professional aptitudes.

That the land shall be distributed to the peasants who work the soil through the expropriation without compensation of the great land-owners, whether Fascists or not.

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That the unemployed while awaiting employment in future public works undertaken by collective government agencies, will be paid a dole equal to two-thirds of their normal wages.

DECISIONS:

That all Social Insurance and Social Welfare organizations shall be reorganized and grouped into a single agency under syndical control.

That all employment offices, which because of their technical character, must be politically neutral, shall function through syndical organizations.

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RESOLVES.

- 1) That the Directorate of the C.G.I.L. shall consist of 27 members, elected by secret ballot according to the principles of syndical democracy, with proportional representation for the minority.
 - 2) That said Directorate shall thereupon elect, by a majority vote and secret ballot, a secretariat or executive committee of five or three members.
 - 3) That the appointment of the present General Council is purely provisional pending the National Congress of all Italy, because the delegates to the present Congress were restricted in their voting ability due to the fact that the various congresses of Syndicates, Federations and Chamber of Labor were not previously informed of the agenda of the Congress by any means whatsoever. The wish is expressed that the foregoing, and the reasons therefore, be brought to the attention of and discussed by all syndicates, federations and chambers of labor which within three months will put the same to vote.
- The congress affirms that syndical unity presupposes class structure and disciplined obedience to all majority decisions, with the minority entitled, without prejudice of ideology or religious faith, to express and defend its own opinions.
- Takes note of the formation of Provisional Councils of the National Federations hitherto organized, and instructs them to proceed with their task of preparing respective national congresses for the election of permanent councils for said federations.
- Expresses the hope that invitations will be extended to all syndical unions in all countries to send representatives to a world labor Congress which will have for its agenda international reconstruction".

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