The articles by Gramsci published in English in International Press Correspondence

Derek Boothman

Antonio Gramsci

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Abstract
The articles included here represent most of what Gramsci published in the Comintern journal International Press Correspondence, under his own name or one of his pseudonyms of the period, G. (sometimes Giovanni) Masci. In much of this period Inprecorr was coming out more or less twice a week, with articles from all parts of the world, including from Russia, with articles written by the various Party and Union leaders. Even during the period of great polemics which basically started just before Lenin's death and carried on over the whole of this period, the Inprecorr in its various languages of publication, carried articles giving all points of view written by all the participants in the controversies. This was true both of the Russian communists, so the Trotsky controversy was given full airing from both sides, and of those involved in other debates outside Russia. In Italy, for example, it was not only the extreme left of Amadeo Bordiga that was present in the Party, and that found space in the pages of Inprecorr, but also the right of Angelo Tasca – one of the Turin Ordine Nuovo group and, up to near the end of Gramsci's stay in Moscow, one who had the ear of the Comintern leadership. And another on the right was Antonio Graziaidei, an economist judged to hold a “revisionist” stance, whose views were expressed fully both in Inprecorr and in book International Press Correspondence came out regularly in Russian, French, German and English (with the abbreviation Inprecorr), and sometimes, it seems, also in a Spanish edition. The period of the articles published here ranges from 1922, up through Gramsci's half-year stay in Vienna (December 1923 to May 1924), and on to the last period when, after his election as a parliamentary deputy, he was able to return to Italy on the basis of parliamentary immunity. With his new status as a deputy he could in theory evade the warrant that had been put out for his arrest in February 1923.

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The articles by Gramsci published in English in *International Press Correspondence*

Introduced by Derek Boothman

The articles included here represent most of what Gramsci published in the Comintern journal *International Press Correspondence*, under his own name or one of his pseudonyms of the period, G. (sometimes Giovanni) Masci.\(^1\) *International Press Correspondence* came out regularly in Russian, French, German and English (with the abbreviation *Inprecorr*), and sometimes, it seems, also in a Spanish edition. The period of the articles published here ranges from 1922, up through Gramsci’s half-year stay in Vienna (December 1923 to May 1924), and on to the last period when, after his election as a parliamentary deputy, he was able to return to Italy on the basis of parliamentary immunity. With his new status as a deputy he could in theory evade the warrant that had been put out for his arrest in February 1923.

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\(^1\) This pseudonym is seen here, for example, in the list of contributors on the title page of the 4 January 1924 issue, but not the article itself, where his name is wrongly given as “J. Masci”.

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form (referred to by Gramsci in the last of the pieces here) and rebutted by other, non-Italian Marxist economists, again in Inprecorr.

The pages of the journal with Gramsci’s articles have been scanned into a computer and adjusted to give an image which is a close approximation to but, for various reasons, not absolutely exact image of the original page; parts of other articles on the same pages as those of Gramsci, have here been deleted. Taking his articles in order, the first – published in Inprecorr, it seems, on 19 April 1922 – deals with the Genoa conference that tried to introduce some order into the capitalist economies and establish, through the Soviet foreign minister Chicherin, a relationship with the young Soviet Union. In this article, as in the later one on “Italy and Yugoslavia”, there is a mention of “Fiume”, the city known in most places outside Italy as “Rijeka” (both words meaning “river”) and situated along the Dalmatian coast in current day Croatia. Soon after writing this article on the Genoa Conference, at the end of May Gramsci left for Moscow, arriving there on 3 June 1922, and very shortly afterwards was admitted to a sanatorium at Serebryanyi Bor (Silver Wood), now a suburb of Moscow but then somewhat outside the city, with what turned out to be a total nervous breakdown. This meant he was out of circulation for most things except for very urgent party business, usually meaning letters drafted by another comrade and co-signed by him, until the autumn of that year, when he was well enough to attend the IV Congress of the Comintern (5 November–5 December 1922). In this period in the sanatorium one of the other patients was Evgeniya Schucht, a communist whose Party membership had been sponsored by Lenin, a long-standing family friend, and through Evgeniya, he met her sister Jul’ka who became Gramsci’s wife and mother of his two children; another sister, Tatiana, was to become his main physical and psychological support in prison.

Gramsci came back into circulation just in time for the IV Congress, and was well enough to write the article published in Inprecorr as “The Mussolini Government”. This however does not get quite as far as the title suggests, stopping instead at the discussion of the previous, and last, non-fascist government for the next two decades, that of Luigi Facta. Giovanni Giolitti was, as usual in that period, the dominant figure behind the scenes attempting – but not very successfully – to control the course of events, and he is here the main target of Gramsci’s criticisms.
of the “liberal” forces. The article breaks off rather suddenly before arriving at the point of the formation of the Mussolini Government announced in the title. It may be that this is indeed the end of the article, but it may also be for example that a page went missing from the article consigned by Gramsci to the editors of *Inprecorr*. Certainly the French version of the article in *La Correspondance Internationale*, on which Quintin Hoare’s translation was based (*Selections from Political Writings (1921-1926)*, Lawrence and Wishart: London, 1978: 129-31) breaks off at the same point before getting to the formation of the Mussolini government after the March on Rome in October 1922 and the King’s nomination of Mussolini as prime minister on 31 October 1922. The text of the article printed in the English language edition of *Inprecorr*, and translated at the time from Gramsci’s Italian, naturally is different in its wording but not its meaning, from the Hoare translation. Here as elsewhere, the translation, or perhaps the type-setting, shows signs of being rather hurried and there are more mistakes than usual in typing, or in the transliteration of names, the correct forms being “Giolitti”, “Turati” and “Fasci di Combattimento”.

The “Letter from Italy” printed in the opening number (3 January 1924) of Volume 4 of *Inprecorr* which bears the by-line “G. Masci (Rome)”, maybe in order to confuse the fascist secret police, but modern readers should not be confused since, first, this is indeed Gramsci and, second, he was in Vienna. The article is of interest perhaps most of all for its attempt to sketch out a class analysis of the social power base of fascism, though marred by an temporary over-optimism about the supposed short-lived nature of fascist trade unionism. One can probably get as good a description of the challenge made to these unions by the communist forces on the left, since in its very first period fascism, or parts of it, did certainly find itself in a rather rocky position.

Almost immediately after this “Letter from Italy” we find another article, this time on the Yugoslav question, which he had been following, and on which there is a very interesting and important letter, to be published in the forthcoming edition of his pre-prison letters. Gramsci’s stay in Moscow had in fact been prolonged slightly, to the beginning of December 1923, i.e. beyond what had been foreseen, to allow him to attend the Comintern conference on the Balkans. And in the fourth number of *Inprecorr* (24 January) of 1924, there is an article of his headed
“Italy and Yugoslavia”. Then, while still in Vienna partially directing Italian Party operations from relatively close to Italy and hoping to be able to return there, Inprecorr published another article of his, this time about the elections held at the start of April 1924. Again the by-line “G. Masci (Rome)” should not deceive. This article was written and published only a few days after the elections and it is apparent from what he writes that not all the results had been confirmed, since the list formed by the Communist Party and allies actually obtained two more seats (nineteen) than he here seems to think (seventeen). The maximalists obtained 22 deputies, as said in the article, and the reformists 24. Amendola’s list in the South got seven deputies and the “constitutional opposition” as a whole 14 (see Paolo Spriano, Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano, Vol. 1: Da Bordiga a Gramsci, Einaudi, Turin, 1967: 340). In the case of this article more than in others, however, the binding of the journal is so tight that some words and figures in the margin are difficult and even impossible to decipher. Where possible we have filled in the incomplete words with additions in square brackets.

As we know Gramsci was elected as a parliamentary deputy at the April elections. And later that year, in August 1924, after a hard-fought battle in the Italian Party, the new Central Committee that emerged after the V Congress of the Comintern, nominated him General Secretary.² It is then not surprising that the chronologically last article published here is of a rather different nature from the 1922 to 1924 ones. It is in fact a report to the Italian Party Central Committee and in effect begins to sketch out the line that was to form at least one of the main planks of the platform approved by the III Congress of the Party, held illegally in the French city of Lyon the following January. Here the copy of the Inprecorr article is good, key names and terms are highlighted in bold type; any imperfection (e.g. “cation” for “caution” are due to the typing or typesetting of the original). Gramsci’s theses (political report) to the III Italian Party Congress and his assessment of the Congress itself are available in English in the Hoare volume referred to above, but preparation of an English version of the entire set of the fives theses of the majority, representing Gramsci’s full position at that time, is underway in a volume to be edited, annotated and introduced by Adam David Morton and the current author, A Grand and Terrible World:

²These events will be reconstructed in the English pre-prison letters volume, where newly found documentary evidence will also be provided about his assumption of the general secretarship.
Gramsci’s Pre-prison Letters. In the summer of 1925, however, we see Gramsci at work on the so-called “Bolshevization” of the Party, but a Bolshevization that for him meant collaboration of everyone, irrespective of their particular political position, in the leadership of the Party, with all contributing to the formation of policy and then being bound by a collectively arrived at decision. Indeed he expresses the hope in this article that “we”, meaning the Party majority “shall arrive at an understanding with Bordiga”, who had, together with Bukharin, been offered joint vice-presidency of the International, but turned it down. This view of Gramsci’s of what constituted Bolshevization and the relation between majorities and minorities was, in the international communist movement, more observed in the breach than in the observance and leads on to the disagreement he expressed with the Russian Party the year afterwards, but that issue will be dealt with afresh in the forthcoming volume.

The English-language articles presented in this number of the IGJ are based on microfiche and paper copies of Inprecorr consulted mainly at the Marx Memorial Library and at the European University Institute in Fiesole, just outside Florence in central Italy, and the author wishes to thank the librarians and staff of both places. Pretty well all collections of Inprecorr seem incomplete, with numbers missing, so there is certainly at least one other article on “The Vatican and Italy” printed at the time in an English translation which up to now has “escaped”. This is one that is available in other languages, including a retranslation into Italian, a process which is also the case with other articles here that one can see in an Italian version. The translation process leads of course to inaccuracies, whether translation was done at the time or decades later. A note of caution should therefore be introduced when one reads the articles here. And a further note of caution should be added since, in the absence of the originals in Italian, and knowing the editorial practices of many journals – including Inprecorr – some changes from Gramsci’s originals might have been introduced. It is known that yet another article by Gramsci appeared in another Comintern journal in the first half of the 1920s, dealing with the situation in the “red two years” in Turin. Republication of this, the longest article that he wrote before the famous essay on the Southern question, is being delayed in the hope of being able to compare it with the original handwritten manuscript, which has
only just come to light as a result of archival research by the present author, by Adam David Morton and by Emilia Kosterina.

The translation service at the Comintern was exceptionally advanced for its time, and indeed in the Archives one sees notes asking, for example, for documents to be translated at great speed so that the Comintern leadership had a reliable version in their hands within a couple of days. The translators were obviously working under great pressure and with great efficiency. What one does notice however is often a somewhat stilted nature to the translation itself, with literal reproductions of the style, wording and at times grammatical structures of the original language, understandable given the situation in which the translators were working. We have not changed these aspects of the translated articles, nor the typing or type-setting mistakes as regards spelling and punctuation.

We should here like to thank Daniele Negretti for invaluable help in producing as good a copy as could be hoped for with present computer technology; without his help this contribution to the IGJ would indeed have been far more laborious.

The articles are presented below in chronological order. Approximate dates are given where possible:

- Fascism: Letter from Italy, Inprecorr Vol. 4, No. 1. (3 January 1924).
- Election Results in Italy, Inprecorr Vol. 4, No. 25, p. 231.
- The situation in the Communist party of Italy, Inprecorr Vol. 5, No. 60, pp. 835-6.
The Genoa Conference and Italy.

by Antonio Gramsci (Turin).

One problem dominates Italian foreign policy: the establishment of German supremacy in the Adriatic and the annexation of Fiume and Dalmatia to Italy. The question now arises: What is the attitude of Germany and Russia to this foreign policy?

Before the war Yugoslavia was predominantly influenced by powerful Russia. Even to-day its existence is very closely connected with the fate of Russia, of course not so very much in connection with the form of government of the latter, i.e., not whether Russia has a feudal, bourgeoisie or proletarian government, but rather because it is the natural ally of the Slav population in the Balkans. When Russia is weak, Yugoslavia is weak; this weakness permits Italy to extend its imperialism to the Balkans. This is furthermore the form of nationalistic propaganda in Italy, which at the same time is the immediate expression of the policy of the agrarian large landowners and the military caste.

Russia is a most serious competitor of Italian agriculture. Before the war Italy imported 1,600,000 tons of grain from Russia, and the great land owners were protected by the state by the imposition of an import duty to the extent of 5.75 lire per hundredweight. It is thus very natural that an impoverished, ruined Russia is in their eyes much more desirable than an economically efficient Russia which would be able to export its grain surplus.

In Italy the industrial workers are only-third of the entire working class. The other two-thirds are agricultural workers or peasants. Even the Italian Socialist Party was at the beginning more a peasants' than a workers' party. This also in part explains its development from a proletarian standpoint and its vacillating policy. The new attitude of the People's Party; the party of the Catholic peasants, has thus also obtained very great importance for Parliamentary politics as well as for Italian foreign policy.

As the civil war, which the large landowners deliberately commenced in order to carry on a large-scale offensive against the Catholic Party, spread and grew in intensity, the Peasants' Party turned more and more to the left and the reactions of this change in its attitude were very soon evident in Italian foreign policy. Premier Benoni, who was in very large degree influenced by the People's Party, changed his attitude towards Russia and showed a certain inclination toward the reestablishment of relations with Russia. This led him to take the initiative in Geneva for the convocation of the Genoa Conference.

The foreign policy of Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Fascist is in complete agreement with that of Nitti, the representative of Big Business and high finance. These circles are interested in the coal district of the Black Sea. This explains why they display a very sympathetic attitude towards an international financial consortium for the capitalist exploitation of Soviet Russia's resources. They thus hope at the same time to do good business and to obtain their own sphere of influence on the Black Sea.

All the vacillations of Italian foreign policy are caused by the intensification of the class war and the consequent disintegration of the social forces. It is thus necessary to give an exposition of the Italian situation, in order to illuminate the reactions in foreign policy which are therewith connected.

The trend to the left of the People's Party and the fact that several of its most prominent leaders, such as D'Annunzio, have expressed themselves in favor of this new political tendency, have led to a split within the military clique, a large number of whose members are Catholic.

However, for the great majority of these groups the Conference has only this significance: the reestablishment of Germany into European economy. That also explains why circles are now supporting the Genoa Conference, who at first bitterly fought it and even employed it as a pretext for the overthrow of the Bonomi Cabinet. Among these latter the most prominent are the supporters of Gioia, the Fascists and the Nationalists.
The Mussolini Government

By Gramsci

The failure of the Italian state, which was lately settled in a modified Fascist manner by the Fascist Party assuming power, may now be briefly examined.

The Italian bourgeoisie has succeeded in organizing its state not so much by its own intrinsic strength as by the fact that its victory over the feudal and semi-feudal classes was largely due to the policy of Repubblica, which artificially inflated the price of industrial products, thereby enabling the state to finance itself. This process was partly achieved through the intervention of the state itself in the economy, which, in order to maintain its own power, encouraged speculation in the stock market.

However, the state's attempts to maintain its power were not without limitations. The state's control over the economy was limited by the need to maintain a balance between the interests of the state and those of the industrialists. This led to the emergence of a new class of industrialists who were in a position to influence the state's policies.

The state's attempts to maintain its power were also limited by the opposition of the Italian workers. The workers' movement, which had been suppressed during the Fascist regime, began to organize and demand better working conditions and higher wages.

In conclusion, the state's attempts to maintain its power were limited by the opposition of the working class and the need to balance the interests of the state and those of the industrialists. The state's attempts to maintain its power were ultimately unsuccessful, and the Italian state was forced to submit to the pressure of the workers' movement.
FASCISM

Letter from Italy.

At the conference held on the 19th December under the direct auspices and in the presence of the Prime Minister Mussolini, between the leaders of the Fascist Trade Unions, the complete failure of the proposed strike was announced. The Fascist Unit that was to attack the factory forces in the spontaneous struggle against the railway and the city workers, and to be organized in the factories, was to be suppressed immediately. At the same time, the announcement was made that the Fascist Trade Unions were taking the initiative in organizing a new strike, to be called the “General Strike,” to be held on the 25th December.

The Fascist Movement, however, was not able to carry out the strike as planned. The reasons for this failure were the following:

1. The factory forces were not willing to participate in the strike.
2. The public were not willing to support the strike.
3. The Fascist leaders were not able to organize the strike effectively.

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POLITICS

Italy and Yugoslavia.

By G. Masu (Rome).

The conclusion of the agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia, which liquidates the question of Fiume and opens up a new period in the history of the relations between both countries, has its origin particularly in the following three series of facts:

1. The approaching commencement of the election campaigns in Italy. The Fascist government wants to deprive the constitutional opposition of one of the most important causes of its success and of its development among the bourgeoisie: the complete failure of the Fascist foreign policy, which had isolated Italy in Europe.

2. The coming to power in Greece of the government of Venizelos. The government of Mussolini had to convince itself that it could not do two jobs at the same time. Venizelos is the politician who, since the discussion of Versailles up to the present time, has contributed most of all to thwart and to destroy the expansionist plans of Italian imperialism in the conflict with Yugoslavia, Italy was hampered by the treaties; in the conflict with Greece, however, the treaties are in favour of Italy, and in the agreement recently concluded, it is directly affirmed, that Italy and Yugoslavia pledge themselves to maintain the "Status quo" established by the treaties. Closely connected with this is the policy of France towards the Little Entente, which would have become an immediate danger for Italy, if the conflict for Fiume had been intensified, as seemed probable until very recent time.

3. The new plan of foreign policy, which until 1922 had been a personal one of Mussolini's, now becomes the official government policy. With this plan are connected the agreement between Italy and Spain; the policy of approachment to the Second League; the conflict between Italy, fully aided by Spain, on the one hand and England and France on the other, regarding the Tangier question. A prelude to all this had been the Italo-Greek conflict and the landing of Italian troops at Corfu, a measure which was in no way warranted by the murder of General Tellini, but was probably only part of a larger concerted plan.

It has always been the personal conviction of Mussolini (and in this Mussolini approached more to the policy of the "Corriere della Sera", of the "Simpio" and the adherents of Nitti, than to great majority of the Fascists, and in particular of the nationalists who had subsequently entered the Fascist party), that Italy must not remain by-passed regarding the question of Fiume and of Dalmatia, which rendered the creation of military security in the Adriatic impossible, but that she must obtain this security by means of concessions to Yugoslavia and must acquire the liberty of movement necessary for a large-scale action in the Mediterranean, especially in its eastern part.

The question of Dalmatia was already practically liquidated from the moment, when the triumph of the reactionary parties in Yugoslavia and the suppression of the peasants' movement assured the Italian proprietors of the Dalmatian great landed estates, that their rights were not to be curtailed in favour of the Croat peasants. In Dalmatia there prevails a state of affairs similar to that in the Baltic countries and in Galicia, i.e. a difference of nationality between the landowners who inhabit the towns, and the mass of peasants who cultivate the soil. In the first King's speech delivered at Belgrade after the return of the dynasty, it was announced that the Italian owners of the great landed estates of Dalmatia were to be compensated, that the Croat peasants were to be fed from all feudal bonds and were to be granted portions of land. The situation has since entirely changed. Already in the last year the Italian troops evacuated the occupied zones of Dalmatia, and nothing of a disastrous nature for the owners has taken place. The newspaper campaign, fostered by the aggraves, has completely ceased, and the recent treaty has settled the question once for all.

The further development of the new Italian foreign policy will furnish an answer to the questions being raised at present by a portion of the press: is the Italian-Yugoslavian agreement directed more against France than against England? An objective examination of the situation and an acquaintance with the opinions expressed by Mussolini during his career as a
fascist journalist, justifies us in predicting that, substantially, Italian foreign policy will become more anti-English through preserving the appearance of the character of impartiality between France and England. The fact must not be overlooked, that the Fascist Party, as a petty bourgeois nationalistic mass, asserts a continual pressure on the government. The Fascists would like to initiate a direct policy of complete independence from the hegemonic Powers which are at present contending against one another for world dominion. But it is clear that the economic weakness of Italy compels a compromise between the making of mere affirmations for the purpose of internal propaganda on the one hand and the real policy on the other. And therefore the adventurous and blustering character of Fascist foreign policy still continues.
The Results of the Elections in Italy.

By G. Masei (Rome).

All parties declare themselves satisfied with the results of the elections, because all parties up to the eve of the poll had [had] no criterion, not even an apprehensive one, whereby to make forecasts, and all of them felt themselves to be crushed by the Fascist terror. This statement identifies the essential feature of the Italian situation which is characterized by the desanctionization of the masses, by the impossibility of holding meetings and by the feeble circulation of the papers openly in opposition to Fascism. The first results known up to now show definite results, owing to the complication of the election law, which will only be known by the 14th or 15th April permit us to draw some very important conclusions which are indispensable for understanding the general orientation of the future political struggle in Italy.

1. The constitutional opposition (Amendola, Bonomi) has known that it has belied it a rapidly disappearing minority of the public opinion. In Italy, even among large states of the working class, the legend had arisen that the bourgeoisie itself, through its progressive and radical wing, would carry out an "anti-fascist revolution"; the elections have destroyed this legend. [has] nothing before the Milan Reformists in a decisive and emphatic manner the question of abandoning the old political theme of the block, with the bourgeoisie left in favor of the workers' and peasants' block.

2. The working class has revealed reserve forces exceeding expectations. At Milan, the combined votes of the three parties Communist, Minimalist, and Reformist, have, in 1924, passed those which the Socialist Party polled in 1919, i.e. in the period of the highest revolutionary development the **1,000 votes in 1919 have grown to 66,000 in 1924. The working class has proved again in a magnificent manner its historical function as a champion in the sphere of opposition to Fascism; the results of the elections declare that against Fascism no other opposition is possible than revolutionary opposition. The Communist Party is the sole workers' party which has scored an electoral success: [had] thirteen deputies in the last legislature, and it now has seventeen. The Reformists have won six, the Minimalists from 9 to 22. In the industrial towns (except Milan) the Communist Party has polled more votes than the minimalists, in some towns, especially in the South of Italy, it has polled more votes than the Minimalists and Reformists together. The indication is a clear one: the revolutionary proletariat is reorganizing itself around the Communist Party and abandoning the Minimalist Party which has the majority of its sympathizers among the rural wage-earner.

3. The peasant mass has been disintegrated by Fascism. [It] has in a large part forsaken the banner of the Party of the Populists and has formed a whole series of local political groupings which purport to themselves at the elections as opposition parties: the Populists' Party from 196 seats had sunk to 39.

The electoral law, supported by the state apparatus and by the Fascist organization, has manufactured a large majority for the government of Mussolini: 4,204,454 votes for the "National list" and 39,080 votes for the Fascist minority list II, with the total of 374 seats out of 535 of which, however, only 260 are officially numbered members of the Fascist Party. To what extents these figures reflect the real state of mind of the population can be judged by the following fact: at all towns with over 77,000 inhabitants (except Bologna), the Nationalist is in an unquestioned minority, as compared with the combined votes of the opposition. The smaller the centers and the more the Fascist pressure is able to control the votes of the individual citizens, the more the voting became plebiscitary right up to 100% for the National list and for the list II.

In any case, Fascism has obtained a victory, and the Mussolini government has been strengthened by the elections both as regards at home and abroad; a fact which will have very notable consequences. The new Chamber will assume a true and proper character of a Fascist Constituent Assembly; this means, that it will legalize Fascism by reforming the National Constitution and by formally abolishing the democratic liberties which have ceased to exist in fact. It is therefore not improbable (already is allusion in this regard was contained in the program speech of Amendola) that the democratic opposition will raise the demand for new elections, in order to convince a true and proper Constituent Assembly with the definite task of revising the Statutes, and by means of this slogan it will again seek to create a good basis for a Left Bloc. The Communist Party which emerges politically strengthened from the elections will therefore have a well defined task to fulfill: it must continue and intensify the campaign for the proletarian united front and for the workers' and peasants' government, in this end taking advantage of the parliamentary tribune. The peasants who have been shattered by the elections and who, in their great majority, have been compelled by means of terror to vote for Fascism, will realize more continually that from the present situation, the only way out is by revolutionary means. In the South of Italy, the Fascists have only the excuse of unheard of acts of violence succeeded in subduing the peasants masses on the election day; throughout this whole area (which comprises one third of the territory of Italy) the Communist Party formerly had not even one deputy, and now it has three: one in Sicily, one in Apulia and one in Campania. The economic situation of these populations is a terrible one: emigration has been rendered impossible by the American immigration laws, and the area of land under cultivation has for this harvest been decreased by the great land-owners. The Fascist terror can only for a short time prevent a wave of revolts, as took place in the decades from 1866-1870 and from 1890-1900. The tree Communists elected in the South therefore have historic significance which can surpass all expectations.
The Situation in the Communist Party

By Gramsci (Rome).

Comrade Gramsci recently gave a detailed report before the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy, on the inner situation in the Italian Party. We give below the most essential parts of this report. Ed.

The conditions under which the CP of Italy has to act, are extremely difficult. It has to fight on two fronts against the Fascist terror and against the reformist current concealed by the trade unions of the "D’Ambrosio" type. The regime of terror has considerably weakened the powers of the Italian trade unions. The reformist leaders exploit this state of affairs for their own ends, and proclaim the actions of the revolutionary vanguard in the trade unions. The masses are anxious for unity, and to carry on the fight within the "Confederazione Generale del Lavoro" (Federation of Free Trade Unions). The reformist leaders thus find themselves obliged to oppose the organization of the masses. At the last congress of the Trade Union Federation "D’Ambrosio" proclaimed the support of members of the Trade Union Federation must not be permitted to exceed one million. This means that the leaders of the free trade unions only want 5.5% out of 15 million Italian workers to be organised. An adherent of the social democratic policy of joint action with the bourgeoisie and of the "anti-fascist" policy, since this would weaken the basis of the bourgeois democratic parties.

How is it possible to combat the reformist spirit in the trade union movement to be avoided? We see one possibility only the organization of factory cells. Since the reformists oppose the concentration of revolutionary forces, it is the task of the factory cells to exert all the factory workers around the Party, and to strengthen the "inner Factory Committees" or, where they do not exist, to form "Propaganda Committees". These last should be mass organisations adapted to develop the trade union movement, and to participating in the general struggle against capital and against the ruling classes.

In this context the Italian communists are in a much more difficult position than the Russian Bolsheviks before the war. For they have to build their own autonomously against Fascist reaction and against reformist reaction. But the most difficult situation, the latter must be the transformation of the communist factory cells, both with regard to ideology and to organization.

In these questions there is no disagreement in the standpoint held by the Communist Party of Italy and the Communist International. The Italian Commission of the Enlarged Executive was occupied solely and exclusively with the inner Bolshevikisation of the Italian Communist Party. Commendable Bordiga, the secretary of our Communist Party, has called upon to take part in the work of the Enlarged Executive, and has declined to do so, although he was present at the 5th World Congress, and also at one of the plenary sessions of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International. His attitude is the most regrettable that the Bordigist attitude is quite the opposite. It is not only a scurrilous and scurrilous attitude antagonistic to that of the Executive, but even antagonistic to the Bordigist attitude. It is to be regretted that comrade Bordiga would not take part in the discussion on the Trotsky question, if he had gone to Moscow for this purpose, he would have had his opportunity of hearing the views and proposals of the Executive and those of the Moscow Congress, which would have counteracted the false impression the Russian Left has caused at the Italian Communist Party.

The Commission which should have discussed this question was composed of the members of the Party, but the Party must punis the Bordigist idea in the honour of the organisations in the Communist Party of Italy with reference to the five fundamental characteristics demanded by Lenin of every properly revolutionary Communist Party. These five points are as follows.

1. Every communist must be a Marxist. (Today we say: "Marxist-Leninist").
2. Every communist must take place in the forefront of the revolutionary action.
3. Every communist must speak more revolution than the bourgeoisie.
4. Every communist must be a Marxist. (Today we say: "Marxist-Leninist").
5. Every communist must be an internationalist.

We may say that the CP of Italy fulfils the second condition, but none of the other four.

The CP of Italy lacks a thorough Marxist-Leninist teaching.

In this lack we observe the remains of the traditions of the Socialist movement in Italy, which induces those theoretical discussions which might have aroused the interest of the masses, and contributed to their ideological education. This state of affairs is extremely regrettable, and comrade Bordiga contributed to its continuance by conflicting the tendency, peculiar to reformists, of substituting certain "collective work" for revolutionary political action, with the advantages of the Communist Party to so seize the intellectual level of its members that they are able to grasp the immediate and distant ends of the revolutionary movement.

The Party has succeeded in developing a feeling for discipline in its ranks. But a lack of international spirit is still observable in its relations to the Communist International. The Bordiga group, which tends to enslave itself with the designation of "Italian Left" has created a sort of local patriotism consonant with the demands of a world organisation. The situation created by comrade Bordiga is similar to that created by comrade Scarrà after the II Congress in Moscow, and that situation led to the expulsion of the Maximalists from the Communist International.

The greatest weakness of the Party lies however in its low for the revolutionary phase so often experienced by Lenin in this does not characterise Bordiga himself, it characterises the elements preying themselves around him. The expulsion of Bordiga is the result of the special conditions of life obtaining among the Italian working class. But the Italian working class forms only a minority of the working population. It is concentrated for the most part in one part of the country. Under these circumstances their Party falls easily under the influence of those middle strata who are capable of a certain extent of shortening the workers into a course actually opposed to their interests. On the other hand the situation in the Socialist Party up to the time of the Leghorn Congress was calculated to develop Bordiga’s ideology.

Lenin, in his "Infinite Distance of "Radiational in Communism", defines this situation in the following sentences: "In a Party where there is a Taurian and a Scarrà, who does not consider Tauri, there must inevitably be a Bordiga as well."

But it is less naturally inevitable that comrade Bordiga should have preserved his ideology in our Communist Party, as we are already accustomed to do, although he was present at the 5th World Congress, and he is one of the members of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International. His broad attitude is most regrettable. He is not only an insurmountable obstacle to the Bordigist attitude, but even to the Bordigist attitude. It is to be regretted that comrade Bordiga would not take part in the discussion on the Trotsky question, if he had gone to Moscow for this purpose, he would have had his opportunity of hearing the views and proposals of the Executive and those of the Moscow Congress, which would have counteracted the false impression the Russian Left has caused at the Italian Communist Party. The need of the revolutionary leadership in the Communist Party of Italy?

What is the nature of the present situation? An milestone, which distinguishes between the past and the present, is the fact that the Congress of 1917 has had much more revolutionary dynamism in the Communist Party of Italy than any other Congress, which has led to the expulsion of Bordiga. This has been followed up by the famous "Leninism" and the "Leninist" group.

1. Bordiga's anti-partyism from the beginning.
3. The Commune-Marxist group.

Bordiga's faction was formed as national organisation before the Leghorn Congress, but it occupied itself solely with the inner life of the Socialist party, without possessing the political experience imperative for mass action.
The "Ordine Nuovo" group formed an actual fraction in the province of Pordenone. It developed its action among the masses, and showed itself capable of establishing a close connection between the inner problems of the Party and the demands of the Friulian proletariat.

The overwhelming majority of the members of the CP of Italy are elements which have left the Stalinist party; it deals with the fundamental questions of policy and organisation as being of secondary importance.

For instance there is a Gramsci question. We have to combat the deviations spread abroad in his last book. It would be strong to assert that Comrade Gramsci is a political danger, and that his revisionist conception of Marxism could generate an ideological current. But his return might contribute to strengthen the Right tendencies still concealed in the Party.

The affiliation of the "Fraction of the III International" which has retained its Marxist character to a great degree, might even afford the Right tendencies a certain organisatory basis.

It must be granted in general that a Right danger is probable in our Party. The masses, disappointed by the failures of the "constitutional opposition" (of the Socialists and Bourgeois), have streamed into our Party and strengthened it, but not to the extent to which they have streamed to Fascism, which has succeeded in establishing itself. In this situation a Right wing might easily come into existence — if it does not exist already — which, desirous of being able to overthrow the Fascist regime, might easily adopt a policy of passivity which would make it possible for the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat for anti-Fascist election maneuvering. In any case, the Party must recognize that the Right danger is a probability, and must first meet this danger by ideological influence; later, if necessary, with the aid of disciplinary measures.

The danger from the Right is merely probable, while the danger from the Left is obvious. This Left danger forms an obstacle to the development of the Party. It must therefore be combated by propaganda and by political action. The action taken by the "Extremo Sinistra" threatens the unity of our organisation, for it strives to form a party within the Party, and to replace Party discipline by faction discipline. We have the slightest wish to break with Comrade Bordiga and those who call themselves his friends. Nor do we seek to alter the fundamentals of the Party as created at the Leghorn Congress and confirmed at the Rome Congress. What we must demand is that our Party does content itself with a mechanical affiliation to the Communist International, but actually appreciates the principles and disciplines of the Comintern. But in actual fact 90% of our Party members, if not more, have today no knowledge whatever of the methods of organisation upon which our relations to the International are based. We believe that we shall arrive at an understanding with Comrade Bordiga, and we trust that he believes this as well, and as sincerely of it as we are.

The CP of Italy will hold its Conference shortly. In the discussion preceding the Party Conference we shall have to deal with the present political situation and the tasks of the Party in Italy. Since the last parliamentary elections the CP of Italy has been carrying on energetic political work, participated in by most of its members. Thanks to this work, the Party has tripled its membership. Our Party has shown much energy and realisation of actualities in proving the problem of revolution in Italy as the problem of the alliance between the workers and the peasantry. In short, the CP of Italy has become an important factor in the political life of the country. In the course of the above mentioned work, a certain unification of character, a homogeneity has been developed within the Party. This homogeneity, one of the most important results of our Bolshevism, must be firmly and finally established by