
Force and Violence.

by Israel Amter

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“I take a solemn oath that either the government of the country must be given peacefully to the Fascisti or we will take it by force.” Thus spoke Mussolini, leader of the Fascisti, and ex-socialist. “It will be the duty of the Fascisti to restore its (the cabinet’s) legality by themselves seizing the government.” These were the words of Vianchi, Secretary of the Fascisti.

The occasion was the first convention of the Fascisti of Italy, just held at Naples, which was attended by 50,000 civilian delegates and 40,000 Fascisti on “a war footing.” Only a short time before, the Fascisti had invaded Trent, which is part of the territory ceded to Italy by the Treaty of Versailles.

The Fascisti are a super-governmental body, which although disavowed by the government, nevertheless “more than often not, merely does the work that the government dare not do,” as the New York Times puts it. The work of the Fascisti is to kill off “dangerous” labor leaders, storm and burn clubs and labor headquarters, and generally break up all labor organizations.

They have repeatedly challenged the government, and even threatened to occupy Rome under a military dictatorship. “General elections must take place in December. If the government will not do this, the Fascisti will do it.” In these elections the Fascisti demand a majority of the seats, regardless of the outcome. Should they not obtain the government “legally,” they openly state that they will seize it by violence.

In 1917, the Russian Bolsheviks, supported by the soldiers, workers, and peasants of Russia, overthrew, *practically without bloodshed*, the corrupt, degenerate Kerensky’s government, which succeeded power upon the removal of the Romanovs, and set up a government of the workers and peasants. For this they were

charged with being usurpers and exponents of force and violence. Immediately they were repudiated by the “constitutionally” organized capitalist governments of the world, and a military campaign launched against them on all fronts and within the frontiers with the aid of foreign gold, foreign munitions and supplies, and foreign troops — *including American*.

Slander, condemnation, distortion, and lies were hurled at the Soviet government; it became a pariah among the nations. All the capitalist governments — and even the socialist-bourgeois government of Germany — refused to deal with it, and instituted a starvation blockade against the country, to supplement the military invasion for bringing Soviet Russia to submission.

The Ku Klux Klan, sections of the American Legion, the American Defense Society, etc., are organized bodies similar to the Fascisti of Italy, exercising a censorship over the United States and making physical attacks on individuals and organizations without governmental organization. State and municipal authorities make raids and attacks without regard to law or constitution. Foster is run out of Colorado, 200 IWW are deported from Portland, Ore., Negroes are lynched in the South, conventions of trade unionists and militants are raided. A Daugherty injunction, which is practically a declaration of war on organized labor, and is followed by the threat of the use of federal troops in case of widespread strikes — all of this happens in America — at times at the instigation of the authorities, and *very often under their direct orders*.

Why does the government of the United States not demand a cessation of this unconstitutional, uncivilized activity on the part of the Fascisti and the abrogation of their program of force and violence? Why

does the government of the United States not refuse to deal with the Hungarian government, which is almost as black as that of the Romanovs' was? Why did the government of United States not protest against the shooting down of the miners in South Africa? Why does the government of the United States not break off diplomatic relations with Poland, Estonia, and Finland, which have used the most brutal, repressive measures against the workers?

Why do the Fascisti gain the admiration of the "better class" for their daring and strategy? Why is the Ku Klux Klan, *which was supposed to have been stamped out by Attorney General Daugherty* allowed to continue its work openly, and even to participate in elections?

Why this condemnation of the Russian Soviet government, and this hatred of it?

"Given an army of its own, such as the Italian middle and upper classes have developed the Fascisti, the bourgeoisie of any country need never fear the success of general strikes. By reason of superior leadership, superior freedom of action and resources, an armed bourgeoisie can always win." (*New York Times*.)

This is why the Fascisti are lauded and the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion are encouraged to follow their example. *These organizations are for the suppression of the working class, for smashing working class organizations, breaking their strikes and killing off their leaders. Force and Violence are their natural and necessary weapons.*

"MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THEY MERELY DO WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DARE NOT DO."

It is clear, therefore, that force and violence *as*

such are not condemned in the United States. *It depends entirely on who uses it, and in whose interests it is employed.*

In the hands of Mingo County miners demanding their constitutional rights; in the hands of Ludlow, Colo., miners, who try to protect themselves from the greedy coal barons and the Colorado state militia; of the members of the IWW at Centralia, Wash., who defend their hall against the ruffians of the American Legion; of the miners and their wives in Kansas, who robbed of their livelihood by an army of scabs and gunmen; of miners in Herrin, who are provoked to violent defense by attacks of the cowardly mine guards in the service of the coal operators; of the Russian workers and peasants, who put an end to a dissolute, rotten regime and establish a government of their own — *in the hands of the workers, for the promotion and protection of working class rights and interests, force and violence is a crime.*

The actions of the Fascisti have provoked the workers of Italy to form a Workers' Guard to protect themselves and their organizations. Milan, which has a workers' government, is forming a Red Guard to shield it from the lawless bands of the Fascisti. In Germany, where the "Orgesch," "Sipo," and "Technical Aid," as the various "Black Hundred" organizations of the reactionaries are called, carry on their depredations, the workers have their military groups for self-defense.

No doubt, in the course of time, the organized labor movement of America will be driven, in sheerest self-defense, to the adoption of some similar measures.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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