

The Genocidal Pogrom in Gujarat: Anatomy of Indian Fascism

Does the Petty Bourgeoisie Fear Revolution?

Parliamentary cretins who consider themselves connoisseurs of the people like to repeat: “One must not frighten the middle classes with revolution. They do not like extremes”. In this general form this affirmation is absolutely false. Naturally, the petty proprietor prefers order so long as business is going well and so long as he hopes that tomorrow it will go better.

But when this hope is lost, he is easily enraged and is ready to give himself over to the most extreme measures. Otherwise, how could he have overthrown the democratic state and brought Fascism to power in Italy and Germany? The despairing petty bourgeois sees in Fascism, above all, a fighting force against big capital, and believes that, unlike the working-class parties which deal only in words, Fascism will use force to establish more “justice”. They understand that one cannot forgo the use of force.

It is false, thrice false, to affirm that the present petty bourgeoisie is not going to the working-class parties because it fears “extreme measures”. Quite the contrary. The lower petty bourgeoisie, its great masses, only see in the working-class parties parliamentary machines. They do not believe in their strength, nor in their capacity to struggle, nor in their readiness this time to conduct the struggle to the end.

And if this is so, is it worth the trouble to replace Radicalism by its parliamentary confrères on the left? That is how the semi-expropriated, ruined and discontented proprietor reasons or feels. Without an understanding of this psychology of the peasants, the artisans, the employees, the petty functionaries, etc., – a psychology which flows from the social crisis – it is impossible to elaborate a correct policy. The petty bourgeoisie is economically dependent and politically atomized. That is why it cannot conduct an independent policy. It needs a “leader” who inspires it with confidence. This individual or collective leadership, i.e., a personage or party, can be given to it by one or the other of the fundamental classes – either the big bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Fascism unites and arms the scattered masses. Out of human dust it organizes combat detachments. It thus gives the petty bourgeoisie the illusion of being an independent force. It begins to imagine that it will really command the state. It is not surprising that these illusions and hopes turn the head of the petty bourgeoisie!

But the petty bourgeoisie can also find a leader in the proletariat. This was demonstrated in Russia and partially in Spain. In Italy, in Germany and in Austria the petty bourgeoisie gravitated in this direction. But the parties of the proletariat did not rise to their historic task.

To bring the petty bourgeoisie to its side, the proletariat must win its confidence. And for that it must have confidence in its own strength.

It must have a clear program of action and must be ready to struggle for power by all possible means. Tempered by its revolutionary party for a decisive and pitiless struggle, the proletariat says to the peasants and petty bourgeoisie of the cities: “We are struggling for power. Here is our program. We are ready to discuss with you changes in this program. We

will employ violence only against big capital and its lackeys, but with you toilers, we desire to conclude an alliance on the basis of a given program.” The peasants will understand such language. Only, they must have faith in the capacity of the proletariat to seize power.

But for that it is necessary to purge the united front of all equivocation, of all indecision, of all hollow phrases. It is necessary to understand the situation and to place oneself seriously on the revolutionary road.