

# THE APPEAL BY J.P. SARTRE

The events of Bologna provided a golden opportunity for the authorities to launch a campaign of raids and arrests against the Left - in particular against its channels of communication and expression. Following on the arrest (in Paris) of Bifo, a member of Radio Alice's production collective, a group of French intellectuals have produced this appeal. Bifo, by the way, has been accused by the Bologna magistrate, Catalanotti, of being one of the "plotters" behind the demonstrations there.....that old "conspiracy" theory again!

## APPEAL BY J.P. SARTRE AND OTHER FRENCH INTELLECTUALS ON BEHALF OF THE COMRADES WHO HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED.

Now that the second East-West Conference is to be held in Belgrade, we wish to draw people's attention to the very serious events that are taking place in Italy at the present time. In particular we must stress the heavy repressive measures that are being used against working class militants and dissident intellectuals who take up positions against the Historic Compromise (the agreement by which the Communist Party, with 34% of the popular vote, undertakes to support the minority government of the Christian Democrats, who hold 38% of the popular vote).

These are the conditions - so what does the "Historic Compromise" mean in Italy today? The so-called "socialism with a human face" has revealed its true face. On the one hand it is developing a system of repressive control over the working class and the young proletarians who are refusing to carry the costs of the Crisis. On the other hand it plans to share out the State apparatus with the Christian Democrats (the Christian Democrats would get the banks and the Army; the Communist Party would get the police, and social and territorial control). All this within what is in reality a "one-party" system. It is this state of affairs that has provoked the rebellion of young proletarians and dissident intellectuals in Italy in recent months.

What has led to this situation? What has happened?

Since February, Italy has been shaken by a revolt - a revolt of young proletarians, the unemployed, students, and those who have been forgotten in the politicking of the Historic Compromise. Faced with a policy of austerity and sacrifices, they have replied by occupying the universities, by mass demonstrations, by fighting casual labour, by wildcat strikes, sabotage and absenteeism in the factories. They have used all the savage irony and creativity of those who, ignored by the powers that be, have nothing more to lose. "Sacrifices! Sacrifices!", they shout. "Lama, whip us!" (Lama is a top Union bureaucrat, and a CP member). "The Christian Democrat crooks are innocent...WE are the real delinquents!" (Ministers exposed for swindling public funds are protected by parliamentary immunity from prosecution). "Build more churches...And fewer houses!"

The response of the police, the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party to all this has been absolutely clear: the prohibition of all demonstrations, open-air meetings and mass meetings in Rome; a permanent state of siege in Bologna, with armoured cars in the streets; and police using guns against the crowds.

Faced with this ongoing provocation, the movement has had to defend

itself. When they are accused of plotting and conspiring, and of being financed by the CIA and the KGB, those whom the Historic Compromise has excluded reply: "Our plot is our intelligence; your plot is to use our rebellion to step up your terror campaign".

We must remember that:-

\*\*\*\* Three hundred militants, including many workers, are at present in jail in Italy;

\*\*\*\* The lawyers who defend them are systematically persecuted; the arrests of the lawyers Cappelli, Senese, Spazzali and nine other militants of Soccorso Rosso (Red Help, the legal defence group for arrested comrades) are forms of repression that are inspired by the methods used in Germany;

\*\*\*\*Criminalisation of professors and students at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Padua. 12 of them are accused of "subversive association": Guido Bianchini, Luciano Ferrari Bravo, Antonio Negri and others;

\*\*\*\*Police searches of the Area, Erba Voglio and Bertani publishing houses, and the arrest of Bertani. In an unprecedented development, evidence for arrests is gathered from a book on the Bologna leftist movement. The homes of the writers Nanni Balestrini and Elvio Fachinelli have also been searched. Angelo Pasquini, member of the editorial collective of the literary magazine ZUT has also been arrested.

\*\*\*\* The broadcasting station Radio Alice in Bologna has been closed down. Their material has been confiscated. 12 Radio Alice radio producers have been arrested.

\*\*\*\* The Press has launched a campaign tending to: show up the struggles of the movement, and its cultural expressions, as a plot; and incite the State to organise a full-scale witch hunt.

We, the undersigned, demand the immediate freeing of all the militants arrested; an end to the persecution and the smear campaign against the movement and its cultural activity. We proclaim our solidarity with all dissidents who are at present being "investigated".

Signed: J.P.Sartre, Michel Foucault,  
F.Guattari, G.Deleuze, Roland Barthes,  
F.Vahl, P.Sollers, D.Roche, P.Gavi,  
M.A.Macciocchi, C.Guillerme, and others.

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This Appeal created a big stir in the Italian Press. The Communist Party papers said the French intellectuals were ill-informed, and suggested that Sartre was not very well. F.Cossiga, Minister of the Interior, told the Italian Senate that Italian terrorists have "pseudo-political and pseudo-cultural backings, squalidly and indecorously manifested in bizarre cultural manifestations in countries near to Italy". P.Spriano, the PCI's official historian, said that Italy "...is the freest country in the capitalist West". Il Manifesto (the group that broke from the PCI in 1970) said Sartre and the others were "exaggerating". Il Corriere della Sera tried to link up the cultural background of the signatories with that of the anti-Marxist "new philosophers" in France. Renato Zangheri, Communist mayor of Bologna, said in an interview with Le Monde, that the French intellectuals should come to Bologna to see for themselves if there was any repression going on.

This is precisely what they have done. A European Conference on Political Dissent took place in Bologna on September 23-5th 1977.