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assez imprudemment Pie XI... Mais cela nous amène aux accords de Latran.

On sait maintenant que le réglement de l'irritante question romaine avait déjà été ébauché sous les ministères Orlando et Nitti. Mais que la liquidation du contentieux entre le Vatican et l'Etat italien ait été un des succès spectaculaires de Mussolini n'en reste pas moins évident. M. De Felice renseigne le lecteur très précisément sur le déroulement des négociations. Son jugement sur l'attitude prise alors par le pape est en substance positif: Pie XI aurait réussi à sauver, aux prix de concessions au régime et de la caution qu'il lui accordait sans enthousiasme, l'existence d'une classe dirigeante catholique, les cadres les plus jeunes de l'ancien «Partito popolare italiano» sans doute; ces gens allaient en 1945 se trouver en mesure de prendre l'initiative de la construction de l'Italie nouvelle sans qu'elle devînt un pays anticlérical. Certes les faits se sont bien déroulés ainsi: mais peut-on valablement en attribuer le mérite à la clairvoyance des «politiques» du Vatican? C'est pour le moins discutable. Et on peut en revanche se demander si la compromission de l'Eglise à l'égard du fascisme n'a pas dès 1945 rendu indispensable la participation massive de la même Eglise aux luttes politiques, car si le parti démocrate-chrétien ne s'installait et ne se maintenait pas au pouvoir dans les années «dures» de l'immédiat après-guerre, la situation de l'Eglise en Italie ne risquait-elle pas de redevenir plus difficile qu'à l'époque post-cavourienne? D'où une autre forme de compromission, dont les élections de 1948 témoignent éloquemment. Mais ceci est une autre histoire...

Ce jugement n'est certes pas le seul discutable du livre (cf. pp. 416–417). Nous nous avouons peu convaincu, par exemple, par l'argumentation concernant l'attentat Zamboni (p. 205–207). Mais un livre de cette dimension et de cette nature prête le flanc à la critique et à la discussion; c'est même une de ses raisons d'être. De toute manière, cette monumentale biographie, peu maniable, mais richement documentée (et munie en appendice de textes documentaires très précieux) est indispensable à toute étude sérieuse du fascisme; elle est d'ores et déjà un des ouvrages de référence fondamentaux sur le sujet et sur l'époque.

Lausanne *Rémy Pithon*

GEORGES FISCHER, *Le parti travailliste et la décolonisation de l'Inde*. Paris, François Maspero, 1966. In-8°, 342 p.

Ever since the independence of India was recognised by the third Labour government in Britain, one recurrent theme in the writings of many British Labour politicians and journalists have been that the new regime in India is the product of a well-established tradition of understanding and co-operation between the British Left and the Indian national movement. A critical analysis of the theory and practice of British Labour with regard to India was long overdue, to test the validity of this theme. Dr. Fischer has put us all in his debt by a very thorough study of the subject.

Three sources influenced the approach of the Labour party to the Indian problem: the Liberal tradition, the context of British parliamentary politics, and the tradition of ideas borrowed from utopian or Marxist socialists. From the Liberal tradition the Labour party got the notion that progress towards independence had to be by stages, and that before the attainment of independence India must prove her capacity for self-government. The context of British parliamentary politics and the exigencies of parliamentary compromises determined when the Labour party would press for concessions to Indian nationalism and also how much concession they would advocate. Finally, certain features of the socialist tradition also operated against a willing and speedy recognition of Indian independence. The concept of international working-class solidarity was accompanied by a corollary that the labour movements of both countries were interdependent and so the metropolitan labour movement should act as the trustee on behalf of the exploited masses in India. So efforts were made to get labour legislation enacted in India and to set up trade unions and labour parties on the British model, even when the British model was inappropriate to Indian conditions. The underlying assumption of superiority – often unconscious – led to misunderstanding between British labour leaders and Indian leaders. These misunderstandings were most pronounced in the inter-war years. Nevertheless, despite these limitations. there was a genuine underlying commitment all along to the belief that sooner or later India must become as free as any other dominion. When compared with continental socialist parties the Labour party is thus seen to be more liberal in its approach to decolonisation.

This, in brief, is the author's general thesis. In course of developing it has made a number of perceptive comments on related problems. He has pointed out that firm commitment to parliamentary procedures and to the notion of gradual evolution often led to a state of having perpetual negotiations without reaching any solution (p. 174f.). In that context there is a brilliant sketch of Ramsay Macdonald (p. 109). In course of discussing those labour leaders who saw India as a *tabula rasa* for experiments in socialist construction (pp. 71f., 136f.) he correctly points out that it is not just reformist socialists who have thought like this, but that Marxist socialists, including Kautsky, Lenin, and even Marx, have thought that the working-class of the metropolitan country had a special role to play in the colonies. The insistence of even the Labour left on developing democratic and socialistic institutions in India before independence was recognised often had an effect opposite to what they intended. Until these preconditions were fulfilled independence could not be given. Yet until the deadweight of the British bureaucracy and British imperial interests were removed, many of these reforms could not be realised. Thus developed a vicious circle of no change (p. 217). Only the pressure of events in the aftermath of the second world war made everyone in the Labour party realise that India would have to be given up soon, even before the radical reforms have been achieved (p. 316f.).

In his preface Dr. Fischer has written that he is not a historian and has no ambition to be one, in explaining why he has concentrated on published sources, and has not studied archival material. As a matter of fact he has used some unpublished sources which have enhanced the value of his work, like the records of the Commonwealth Department of the Labour party, the papers of George Lansbury, and the diaries of Beatrice Webb. The archival sources which the present reviewer has consulted modifies some of the author's conclusions. On pages 167f., and also at pages 111, 172 and 193, the author has described the approach of the second Labour government (in particular that of Wedgwood Benn) to the question of constitutional reforms in India. It seems to me not correct to say that the Labour government was determined to base its views on the report of the Simon Commission only. Wedgwood Benn tried hard to get the Indian nationalists to accept the idea of a round table conference which would have a free hand in discussing any constitutional proposal, and also asked them to work out a united programme.

From a historian's point of view a more serious criticism is Dr. Fischer's neglect of a chronological treatment of the subject and his preference for the analysis of ideas according to their thematic unity rather than their temporal context. By taking the twenty-five years from 1914 to 1939 as one unit, and in trying to prove the persistence of certain stereotyped ideas in the minds of labour leaders, he has sometimes not paid enough attention to changes in their attitudes. Throughout this section, the author has tried to gather as many published utterances as possible to document the theses that all the labour leaders were afraid of mass movements and of the linking-up of political and economic agitations, and consequently had little sympathy with the mass movements led by Gandhi, Nehru and others. This blurs the difference between the approaches of reformist gradualists like Macdonald, Graham Pole, Attlee and others, and the more leftwing leaders like A. A. Purcell, Fenner Brockway, George Hicks and Ellen Wilkinson. I have discussed the repercussions of these different approaches on the Indian leadership, elsewhere, and so will not dilate on it here.

In spite of these criticisms, it must be stressed that this is an indispensable work for those studying the process of decolonisation in different countries, and also for students of modern Indian and modern British history. It should be translated into English as early as possible. Before a new edition or an English edition comes out, the following misprints should be corrected. On page 36 Madame Kama is wrongly spelt as Karma. On page 38 note 26, the name of the author should be T. F. Tsiang. On page 75 the first name of Lajpat Rai is spelt wrongly as Lai; it should be Lala. On page 128 the sentence at line 24 has been wrongly printed earlier also at line 22, and should be deleted from that place. On pages 131, 185 and 241, the name of V. J. Patel has been wrongly printed as J. V. Patel. On page 305 there is no indication in the text as to which sentence the footnote number 84 belongs to.

Delhi *Partha Sarathi Gupta*