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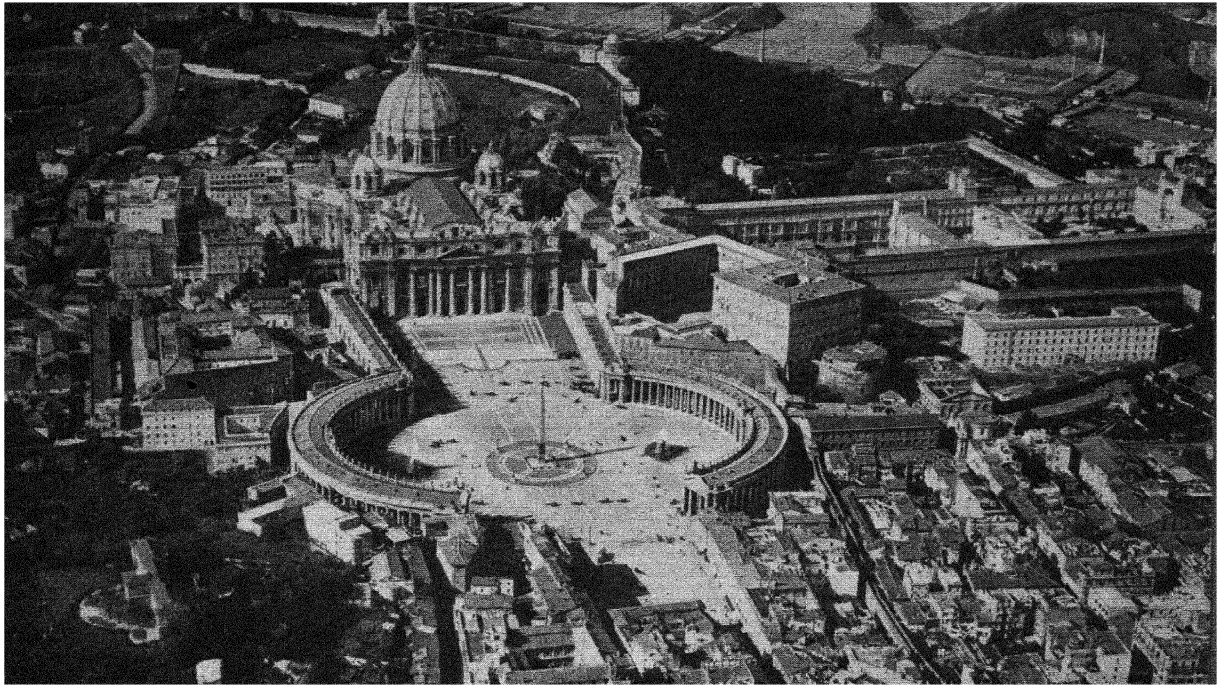
THE WORLD TO-DAY

ITALY

Frontispiece

1. ROME

ST. PETER'S AND THE VATICAN, WITH THE COLONNADE BY BERNINI
(*E N.A.*)



ITALY

By

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

THIS is no place to attempt to write a history of Italy. The Italians of to-day are afraid of being appreciated only for their past and reject Mussolini's histrionic efforts to revivify classical Rome. It would nevertheless be absurd to hope to reach any understanding of Italy to-day without insisting upon the tremendous scale and pace of Italian history, as also upon its particular characteristics, so strikingly different from those of either our own or that of France. For the history of Italy has been convulsive and tumultuous, the most gloriously creative periods having alternated with periods of devastation and despair; above all, the dimensions of Italian history have been universal or municipal, but never, until the nineteenth century, national. These are the keys to Italian character.

The City-State of the Roman Republic gave the world a remarkable republican precedent and its juridical conceptions became part of that fabric of civilization which brought us, in the twentieth century, into conflict with the barbarism of Hitlerite Germany. Brutus notwithstanding, the Roman Republic grew into the Roman Empire with its military and administrative achievements, and, above all, the idea of the *Pax Romana*: Italy was then the heart of the Mediterranean world.

Since then wave upon wave of foreign invaders has lashed across Italy, Arabs and Normans settling permanently among earlier Greek colonies in Sicily and the South, while numberless Germanic inroads left permanent traces in the North. Though barbarians destroyed the Roman Empire, they themselves were subdued by the Christian Church, whose leading prelate was the Bishop of the old imperial capital, eternal Rome; thus the Popes restored to Italy what the Emperors had lost, a certain leadership of Europe. When Charlemagne or Otto the Great aspired to be the successors of Augustus they felt that they needed the Pope's sanction in order to establish a new,

a Holy, Roman Empire. In future, wherever the Emperor resided he accepted, in one form or another, the theory of a world condominium with the Bishop of Rome.

The inevitable conflict between Empire and Papacy, so admirably analysed by Lord Bryce in his *Holy Roman Empire*, then furthered the development of an intense municipal or communal life in the myriad cities of Italy, Milan, Siena, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, and the rest. It was a landmark in the history of the Communes when the Lombard League defeated the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa at Legnano in 1176. Yet their achievements were less military than commercial, administrative, and aesthetic. Venice, founded in the sixth century by men fleeing to the lagoons to escape from the Huns, had developed large-scale trading activities, with voyages like that of Marco Polo to the Far East in the thirteenth century. The Sienese school of painting provides an exquisite expression of life there in the fourteenth century, all the more interesting on account of its isolation and therefore its independence. Already in the thirteenth century Florence had developed the most remarkable form of government, framing a civic life which was intensely creative. These were the days when the Florentine population carried Cimabue's still semi-Byzantine Madonna to Santa Maria Novella 'in a festive procession of the people and trumpeters': they were the days when every artisan—unless all the bad work has been magically destroyed—made beautiful objects; every ledge, every hinge received beauty and individuality of form. This was the time when Dante first used the Tuscan vernacular which came to be accepted as the written Italian language from one end of the peninsula to the other and has scarcely changed since.

In *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* Burckhardt writes of Florence in this period, 'Here the whole people are busied with what in the despotic cities is the affair of a single family. That wondrous Florentine spirit, at once keenly critical and artistically creative, was incessantly transforming the social and political condition of the State and as incessantly describing and judging the change.' A little later he adds, 'In no other city of Italy were the struggles of political parties so bitter, of such early origin, and so permanent.' This explains the exile of Dante, but also the rise to power of the Medici

II.
PAINTING

GIOTTO (1267–1327): THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. FRESCO IN THE SCROVEGNI CHAPEL, PADUA

(*Anderson, Rome*)

as rulers of Florence; in other cities *Signorie* had succeeded the Communes earlier. These ruling families, such for instance as the Este at Ferrara, the Gonzaga at Mantua, became patrons of art and learning in a fashion which many critics would consider the Communes could never have emulated. Certainly the central Renaissance period, covering the fifteenth century, when all Europe looked to an Italy radiating inspiration from scores of independent centres, is mainly based upon princely patronage. It was this Italy which, earlier through Petrarch and Boccaccio, but in the fifteenth century through men like Lorenzo the Magnificent and his friends Politian and Pico della Mirandola, made Europe humanist. Rejecting medieval convention and ostensibly returning to classical inspiration, the men of the Italian Renaissance gloried in the fullness of human achievement and its expression in new forms of art, and created in fact the criteria which counted as modern until long after the Industrial Revolution had struck at their foundations. In this sense the short-lived Florentine, Masaccio, was perhaps the first modern painter, to be followed by the Pollaiuolo brothers, Andrea Castagno, and then Botticelli, and by the sculptors Donatello and Verocchio. In the same period the Florentines could choose Brunelleschi's design for the crown of their city, the dome of S. Maria del Fiore, and the Rucellai palace was built by that great humanist, Leonbattista Alberti. All this and much more was created in Florence alone. Meanwhile Mantegna at Padua 'painted men as Caesars and made splendid with antique frieze and column the legends of the Church', and the work of Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione in Venice was approaching what Berenson regarded as 'the most complete expression in art of the Italian Renaissance'.

With the opening of the sixteenth century the humanistic ambitions of the Popes themselves drew the greatest artists to Rome, where Bramante and Raffaello did much of their work. This is why Michelangelo Buonarroti, painter, sculptor, poet, and architect, and perhaps the greatest of them all, is associated in our minds almost more with Rome than with his native Florence. 'Humanism', it has been said, 'is the effort of men to think, to feel, and to act for themselves, and to abide by the logic of results. This attitude of spirit is common to all the varied energies of Renaissance life. Brunelleschi, Machiavelli,

Michelangelo, Cesare Borgia, Galileo are here essentially at one.' Two other brilliant and versatile Florentines might be added to this list, the almost god-like Leonardo da Vinci, and Benvenuto Cellini, in whose *Autobiography* the Sack of Rome in 1527 is characteristically described. For a new era in Italian history had opened even before the fifteenth century was over, an era of further foreign invasion and conquest. The glories of Italian civilization had aroused envy from abroad while deflecting the Italians from the common-sense precautions which guarantee self-defence. The sensitivity of Florence to every form of criticism had brought Savonarola to the front as the enemy of humanist morality, and twenty years later, amidst a series of international conflicts on Italian soil, came Luther's protests against a Medicean Rome under Leo X. School text-books habitually speak as if the Renaissance had been blown out like a candle by the Sack of Rome. This is misleading and obscures the fact that Michelangelo, having shared in the defence of Florence in 1529–30, continued to work for many years in Rome, where he painted *The Last Judgement* between 1534 and 1541, and worked on the dome of St. Peter's much later; in Venice Titian and Tintoretto were at work until late in the century while Palladio's buildings sprang up in Vicenza and Venice; and Giordano Bruno, the heretic philosopher, was not born until 1548.

The truth is that from 1530 onwards Italy came under Spanish domination. This led to the three sessions of the Council of Trent, between 1545 and 1563, which transformed the nature of the Catholic Church. If Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the true Neapolitan spirit of philosophy, had been Italy's greatest scholastic teacher, Saint Francis of Assisi had been Italy's most typical expression of medieval piety; his ingenuous, impulsive sweetness was eminently Italian, and it is not unfitting that (with Catherine of Siena) he should be Italy's patron saint. Many Italians feel that the Christianity of the people in Italy, never seriously affected by either Reformation or Counter-Reformation, has remained Franciscan to this day. The counterpart in the Italian character to Francis of Assisi is Nicolò Machiavelli, the lucid realist who believed that intelligence must inevitably triumph over force or emotion, and with Latin directness states and illustrates this belief which has

inspired or corrupted politicians throughout history. Macaulay, whose analysis of the Machiavellian state of mind remains unsurpassed, wrote (in 1827): 'Among the polished Italians, enriched by commerce, governed by law, and passionately attached to literature, everything was done by superiority of intelligence. Their very wars, more pacific than the peace of their neighbours, required rather civil than military qualifications. Hence, while courage was the point of honour in other countries, ingenuity became the point of honour in Italy.'[1] At the time when the Papacy entered into aesthetic rivalry with the secular Princes of Italy, the Borgias, followed by Julius II, had also consolidated the Temporal Power, the Romagnol and other territories vaguely subject to the Papacy, into a papal principality on the Renaissance model, and in the year of Julius' death, 1513, Machiavelli dedicated to the Medici the book in which he approved their action; *The Prince* concluded with a plea to the Medici to use Borgia statecraft to save Italy from foreign barbarians before it be too late.

With the Council of Trent the Counter-Reformation made the Pope, not the mere Renaissance Prince, but rather the Spanish despot, of the Church, and the spirit of Loyola banished that of Saint Francis. And yet the Spanish Jesuits, struggling to yoke the Italian Renaissance to their chariot, were in a strange way captivated by it. Perhaps nothing is more profoundly and irrepressibly Italian than the fact that the new Spanish asceticism became the patron of the most magnificently sensual forms of Italian art in the period of baroque. 'This [baroque] architecture,' Geoffrey Scott wrote in *The Architecture of Humanism*, 'which might have satisfied the dream of Nero, is the work of Sixtus V, the Pope who so hated paganism that he could not look with patience on the sculptures of the Vatican . . .; who destroyed the ancient ruins which Pius II had protected, and valued what he spared only that he might plant upon it the victorious symbol of the cross.' And in the

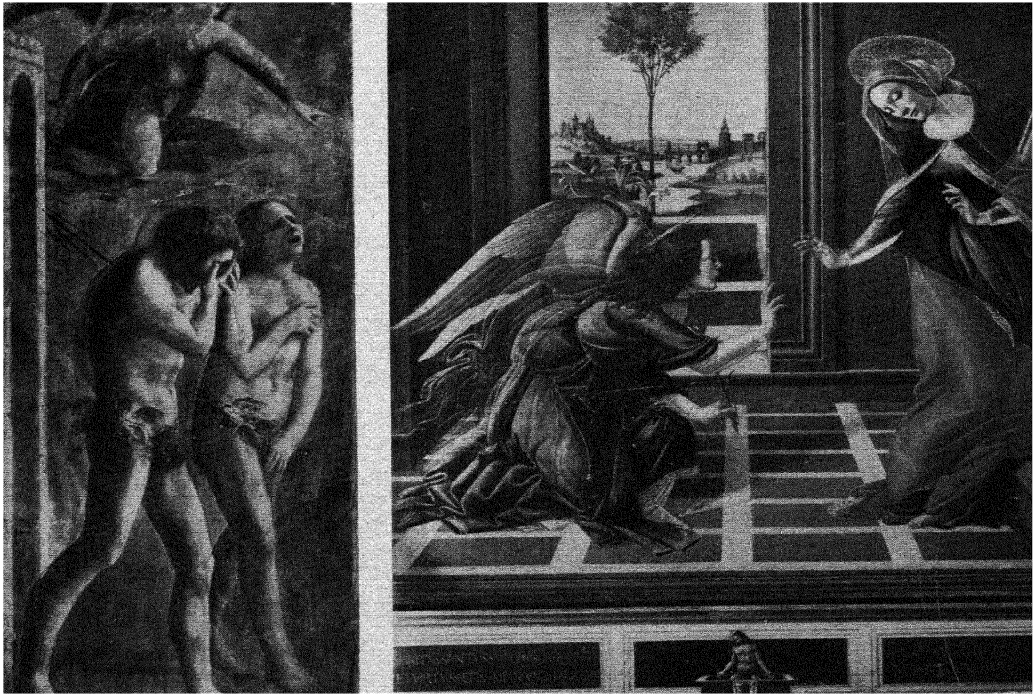
[1] Macaulay also pointed out that even Machiavelli had his quasi-Franciscan weakness: of *The Prince* he wrote aptly enough, 'One sentence is such as a veteran diplomatist would scarcely write in cipher for the direction of his most confidential spy; the next seems to be extracted from a theme composed by an ardent schoolboy on the death of Leonidas.' Cf. Count Sforza's account of Giolitti in *Les Italians tels qu'ils sont.*

III.
PAINTING

1. MASACCIO (*c.* 1401–1429): THE EXPULSION FROM EDEN. FRESCO IN THE CHURCH OF THE CARMINE, FLORENCE

2. BOTTICELLI (1447–1510): THE ANNUNCIATION UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

(*Anderson, Rome*)



seventeenth century, during two important periods, the chief papal architect was Gianlorenzo Bernini, the perfection of whose humanism was only invigorated by his application of a Botticellian rush of movement to sculpture and architecture.

The eighteenth century saw the substitution of Austrian for Spanish domination; every European war brought some territorial redistribution in Italy, but that was the net result, together with the growing prominence of the half French rulers of Savoy and Piedmont. Maria Theresa and her sons ruled Lombardy and Tuscany well. Naples prophetically brought forth Vico while Milan contributed Beccaria to the Age of Reason, which spelt the decline, with Spain, of the Papacy, and the suppression of the Jesuits. Outwardly this was the period of Venetian rococo, of Goldoni, Guardi, Piazzetta, and Casanova, and of the last grand baroque outbursts of Tiepolo. Only the poetry and drama of Alfieri began to sound a warning note.

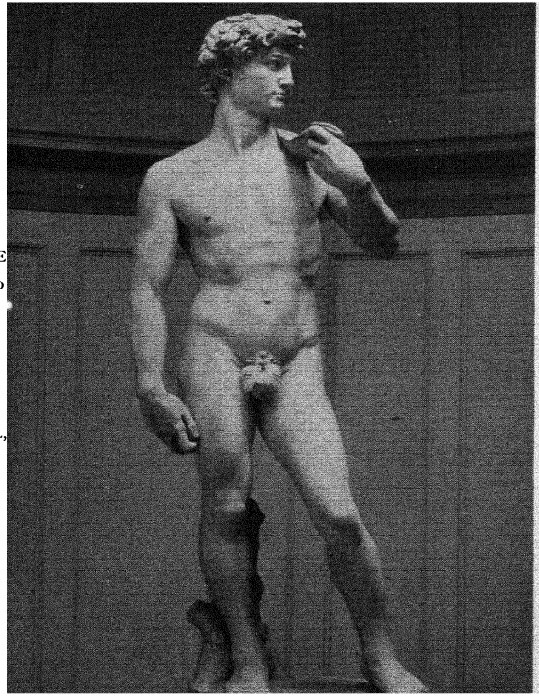
Neither Spain nor Austria left much behind. The difference between them lay mainly in the fact that the Habsburg Empire provided a vehicle for Italian influence which thus retained some of its importance in European life; Goldoni's comedy celebrated the marriage of the Dauphin with Marie Antoinette, and some regard Würzburg as the scene of Tiepolo's greatest achievement: this Bavarian city certainly provided some of the most beautiful examples of Italian architectural influence upon German baroque.

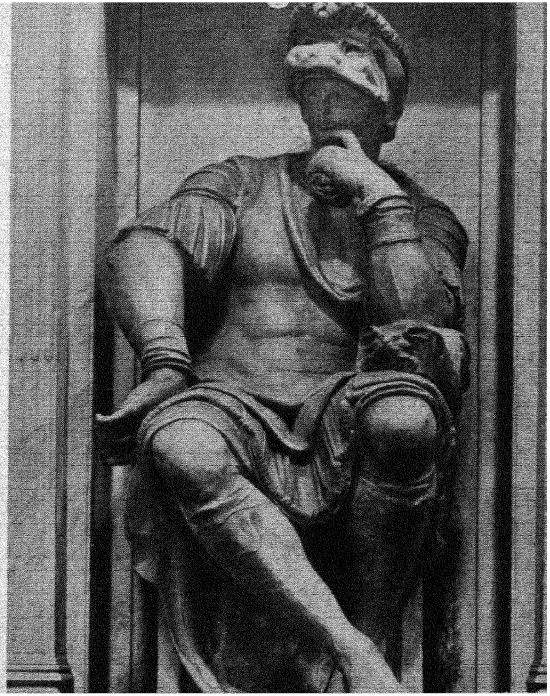
I have hitherto allowed myself to attempt to define Italy primarily in terms of the plastic arts. These had expressed the essence of Italy because intense and rapid visual reactions and a sense of form were before 1800 more characteristic of the Italians than they were of the French. Whereas the French contribution to civilization has been even more literary than a matter of painting and architecture, this is by no means true of the Italians. French, not Italian, succeeded Latin as the language of Europe, and Italian literature—the Divine Poet notwithstanding—has not on the whole overflowed into the non-Italian world. Though the Italian language is more musical than the French and is poetically important, it is a language which is not merely spoken but, as it were, acted, and perhaps the written prose suffers from this. And while it

IV.
SCULPTURE

MICHELANGELO
(1475–1564)
1. DAVID.
FLORENCE
ACADEMY

2. LORENZO
DE MEDICI.
MEDICI CHAPEL,
FLORENCE





would be absurd to neglect the contribution of Palestrina and Monteverde to music, they do not approach the stature of Michelangelo. It is significant that Leonardo, the supreme example of the Italian humanist, the man who sought to excel in every direction of constructive human activity, is popularly remembered as a painter, though his scientific and other achievements were almost certainly more remarkable than his painting. This painting of his made the most brilliant intellectual statements, but it seems to have been the accident of the place and the age which caused him to use paint as his medium at all. (A century later, as it happened, another Tuscan genius, Galileo, rejected the seductions of painting and music to become one of the greatest scientists in history.) The plastic arts, unlike literature, need no translation, and through these and through her traditions in jurisprudence and philosophy, pre-nationalist Italy had perhaps contributed more to the civilization of pre-industrial Europe than any other single nationality.

'You will find that, as Spain is still seventeenth century, so Italy is still eighteenth century to-day' a wise friend said to me in Italy in 1946. Yet since the period of the first French revolution Italy has been striving to think and live in national, instead of in universal or communal, terms, and it is not yet clear, at the end of the Hitlerite War, whether the attempt has succeeded or failed.

No one, I believe, has given a more accurate account of Northern Italy in the early nineteenth century than Stendhal in his *Chartreuse de Parme*. As a Corsican, the 'liberator' Napoleon was regarded as Italian, and there is no doubt that he was not merely a disturbing factor but that his division of Italy into no more than three states gave substance to earlier dreams of national unity. It is worth noting, *en passant*, that, like Hitler a hundred and thirty years later, he caused an unfortunate Italian corps (under Eugène Beauharnais) to join in the invasion of Russia. After all this the unsatisfying 1815 settlement was imposed; not only were the Venetian and Genoese republics suppressed, but also the Jesuits returned, and under Austrian direction obscurantism now superseded enlightenment. Among the small educated class conspiracy, always congenial to Italians, became the order of the day, inter-

spersed with romantically courageous insurrectional attempts which were cruelly punished. The Austrians, the *tedeschi*, became the national bugbear, and in the political literature, clandestine and open, which was poured out both at home and by exiles abroad, the need for the end of the Austrian régime became axiomatic even for pious Piedmontese noblemen like D'Azeglio and Cesare Balbo. The latter wished for an Italian federation, but the most famous advocate of this conception, from the time of the publication of his *Del primato morale e civile degli Italiani* in 1843 was another Piedmontese, the exile, Vincenzo Gioberti, who envisaged an Italian federation presided over by the Pope. It is part of Italian nature to oscillate between an exalted optimism and the baldest self-denigration. The poets, Leopardi and Foscolo, had indulged in the latter state of mind, and Gioberti was important as part of a confident reaction against it. More important still was the Genoese, Giuseppe Mazzini, whose programme for Italy was the union of all Italian-speaking territory in one genuinely democratic unitary Republic. Professor Alessandro Levi defines Mazzini's whole conception as '*d'una missione provvidenziale, affidata da Dio stesso alle nazioni, le quali per cooperare all' unitario progresso umano dovevano comporsi ciascuna in unità*'. The story of Mazzini has been told so often that it is almost embarrassing to pronounce his name. But his permanent importance has not on the whole been appreciated because his projects were shelved. Mazzini did in fact found a tradition of uncompromising Republican idealism based upon an austere personal integrity, a tradition which has recently gathered force with the discrediting of other institutions, and it is interesting to find the short-lived Partisan Republic of Domodossola in the autumn of 1944 imitating as closely as it could the conduct of Mazzini's own Republican régime at Rome in 1849. The half-childish ingenuous Franciscan element in the Italian character was expressed and satisfied even more, in the days of the first *Risorgimento*, by another Genoese (born at Nice) who was nearly as true to his Republican inheritance; this was Giuseppe Garibaldi. Another interesting figure who wished for a federal, not a unitary, Republic was the Lombard, Cattaneo, who fought against the Austrians at Milan during the heroic *Cinque Giornate* of 1848.

Events in 1848–9 discredited first the Giobertian idea in the unworthy person of Pius IX and then the hopes of the Republicans, and Italy sank back into the gloom of Austrian reconquest; it is not uninteresting to read that the years from 1849 to 1859 became known as the 'decennio della resistenza' when the *tedeschi* 'were made to feel that they were in a conquered country where they could have no social intercourse with the people; for no self-respecting Lombard or Venetian would even speak to an Austrian'. There seemed to be no other innovations except for the French garrison which Louis Napoleon had managed to rush into Rome. The only other visible change in Italy was the *Statuto* which the miserable Charles Albert had unwillingly granted to his Piedmontese subjects on 4 March 1848, a year before his abdication. This constitution has a certain importance because it has more or less remained in force ever since; in 1944 the Allies insisted upon its retention until the election of a Constituent Assembly, thereby refusing recognition to more spontaneous and democratic political manifestations. This caused a certain disappointment because the *Statuto*, in spite of various modernizations, was associated with the clerical conservatism and hesitancy of Charles Albert, as well as with later perversions; at the time it was granted, the elected chamber was to rest upon a very narrow franchise, while the Crown nominated the Senate and retained a veto on legislation together with great influence upon the machinery of administration. This did, however, represent an important advance at the time, and it meant a great deal that Charles Albert's son, young King Victor Emmanuel, resisted the Austrian demand that the *Statuto* should be revoked. Still more important was the appointment a few years later of a new Prime Minister in Turin; for if Garibaldi and even Mazzini represented Italian ingenuousness, a worthy heir to Machiavelli's ingenuity was found in Cavour. He, for his part, was a great admirer of the English political and economic principles of the time. Above all he knew how to play his trump card, the fact that the contemporary ruler of France regarded himself as the champion *par excellence* of the nationalistic conception in Europe, and that, once an unsuccessful Italian insurgent, he retained a sentimental interest in the unification of Italy, in defiance, as the French Right main-

tained, of the interests of France. Unfortunately for Cavour, Napoleon III, with his predilection for paradox, had also constituted himself protector of the Pope, who, after his early liberalism, had subsided into the natural hostility of the Vatican towards the unification of Italy; the nationalist aspiration was bound to menace the Temporal Power and in general expressed an anti-clerical—often a masonic—state of mind, while the Papacy could not join in anti-Austrian escapades. But the Roman Question could wait while Cavour, at the cost of a Crimean campaign and later of Nice and Savoy, induced the French Emperor to drive the Austrians from at least Lombardy in 1859. The excitement among the educated classes was tremendous, but it must be remembered that about three-quarters of the population of Italy was illiterate at this time, though the percentage of illiterates was relatively low in the North. Early in 1860, after the departure of their former rulers and the arrival of Piedmontese Commissioners, it was decided to hold plebiscites in Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and the Romagna as to whether the population desired to be annexed to Piedmont which had now, with Liguria and Lombardy, formed the nucleus of the future *Regno d'Italia*. Of the small number of persons entitled to vote, the big majority, interpreting 'Yes' as the only way of voting for Italian unity, legitimized the recently instated authority of Victor Emmanuel.

Naples and Sicily were still ruled by the Bourbon regime, whose punishment of patriots like Carlo Poerio and Silvio Spaventa had caused Gladstone to censure it as 'the negation of God erected into a system of Government'. In May 1860 came Garibaldi's fairy-tale descent upon Sicily with his thousand Redshirts. His success seemed to justify all the optimism of *Italia farà da se*, romantic young volunteers from the north flocked to his standards and he was able to conquer not only Sicily but the kingdom of Naples. In October, however, he was met and superseded by Victor Emmanuel with his regular Army which had meanwhile occupied Umbria and the Marches; 'during their ride together Victor Emmanuel had told him in soft words the hard decree that the Royal Army would take over all the operations of war and that the Garibaldini were no longer required': '*ci hanno messi alla coda*'

('they have sent us to the rear') Garibaldi remarked sadly to a friend.[1]

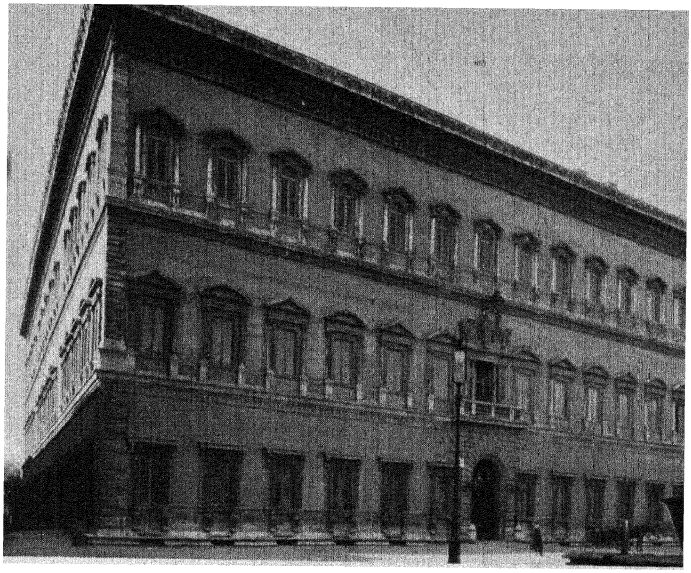
There was a case for Piedmontese policy; the European courts viewed the changes in Italy with suspicion, and there was danger of preventive intervention if Italy were thought to have gone red—nineteenth-century Garibaldian red, of course, nothing more terrible then. Mazzini and Garibaldi, the Party of Action as they called themselves, always brushed such diplomatic considerations aside as ignoble, and Garibaldi continued sporadic attacks upon Rome. In fact the military successes of Prussia, not of the Party of Action, completed the unification of Italy, causing the Austrians to give up Venetia in 1866 and the French garrison to leave Rome in 1870. Under protest from the Catholic world the Italian troops entered on 20 September, and much coveted, much idolized Rome became Victor Emmanuel's capital, the Temporal Power disappeared and the Pope was the Prisoner of the Vatican.

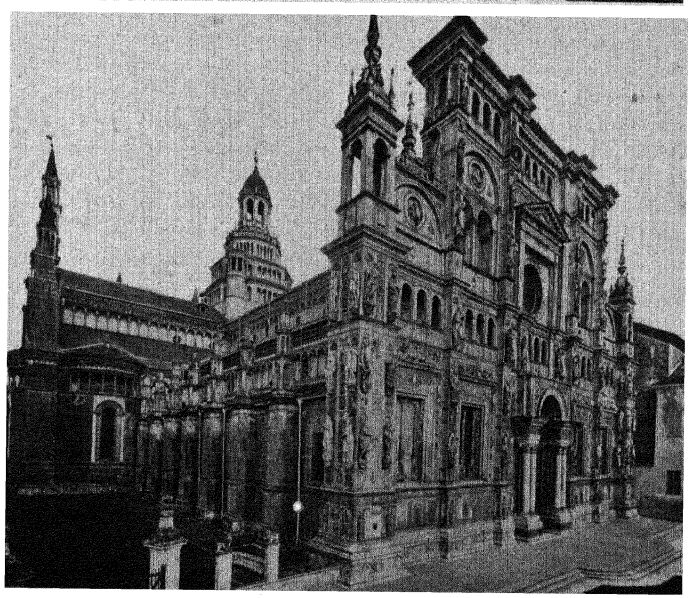
The story of the nineteenth-century *Risorgimento* as we learn it in our schools, and even in our universities, is misleading, for we gain the impression that the majority of the Italians achieved what they set out for, and magically established British constitutionalism where it had never reigned before. It is necessary to make clear that the commotion which made possible a political transformation was due to a small number of educated people,. many of them very young, who were genuinely inspired with various gospels preaching the regeneration of Italy and the world. They were immensely Italian in the exaltation of their hopes and in the heroism and sacrifice to which this incited them. They were immensely Italian, too, in the fertile multiplicity of their political conceptions and the conflicts consequently created. For such reasons as these, other forces reaped the harvest they had sown, and the inspirers of the first *Risorgimento* were mostly thrown aside as rapidly as possible, the Piedmontese Army regarding Garibaldi and his Redshirts as revolutionary ruffians to be disarmed as soon as they could no longer be used.

As Cecil Sprigge writes,[2] Italy 'when it aspired through the

[1] See G. M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi and the Making of Italy*, Longmans, Green, 1911.

[2] C. J. S. Sprigge, *The Development of Modern Italy*, Duckworth, 1943.





V. ARCHITECTURE

1. FARNESE PALACE, ROME 2. CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY, PAVIA

(*E.N.A.*)

voices of poets and philosophers for national unity, had never dreamed that Providence would send its answer in the shape of a dynasty, an army and a bureaucracy from Piedmont'. Many Italians to-day are still shy of plebiscites because their grandfathers voted in 1860 for Victor Emmanuel in order that Italy should be unified; yet, as the plebiscite question was put, they involuntarily voted for the country to be Piedmontized. Not only was Turin the least Italian of Italy's cities, but the Lombard patriot, Count Stefano Jacini, complained of the Statuto applied to a country with Italy's wealth of regional variety as a 'monstrous connubium' of British parliamentarianism with French administrative centralization. Indeed, there was an altogether un-Italian rigidity about the prefects and generals of Piedmont to whom all practical decisions were now to be left, regardless of the tenor of Parliamentary debates. On the other hand the continuation of Cavour's Cobdenite economics for some years exposed the poor south to crippling competition.

The soaring idealism of the Italian nature is bound to be constantly disappointed, and exaltation alternates with an excessive and at the same time lucidly self-analysing bitterness of disillusionment. Not only was the Kingdom of Italy launched in 1870 to the murmur from the Left of Mazzini's words in 1858 to Cavour, 'We represent Italy, you represent the old, greedy, timorous ambition of the House of Savoy', but from the Right came the resentments of the Church, of many dispossessed officials and of a large part of the peasantry at any rate in the south. This whole pattern of emotional ebb and flow in nineteenth-century Italy has been so exactly repeated in our own time that it becomes imperative that it should be traced as clearly as possible if we wish to comprehend either Fascist Italy or the anti-Fascist Italy which has taken its place.

Thus the fifty years between 1870 and the establishment of the Fascist regime may be summed up as a period of *delusione* between the *Risorgimento* and the spurious elation of Fascism. But within these fifty years there was a great economic development, and between the disappointment with the Piedmontized Kingdom in the 'seventies and 'eighties and the feeling of revolt against Giolittianism in the years before the First World War, there was another period of generous hopes, and throughout there was tremendous activity of every kind.

The Kingdom was at first governed by conservatives until their Parliamentary defeat in 1876 brought the Left (more or less the old Party of Action) to power; but it was, as it may always be, 'powerful in number, rich in men, but lacking in a principle of coherence', and after a time *trasformismo* under the former Mazzinian, Depretis, became the order of the day. *Trasformismo* meant an empirical opportunism in place of a political programme, and 'the constant theme of Italian politics up to the first Great War . . . may be described as a struggle between *Trasformismo* and groups which endeavoured to gain power in the name of definite principles, or at least of highly coloured myths'. After the 'dominion of Dry-as-dust', as Sprigge calls Depretis' rule, came the period of the old Mazzinian, Crispi, who had broken with Mazzini in the 'sixties because he decided that 'The Monarchy unites us, the Republic would divide us'. Crispi was all else than dull and his anti-clericalism revivified the Roman Question. But he was responsible for the unforgettable rout of the Italians at Adua in 1896, which politically killed him.

The last period before the war was the age of Giolitti (1903–15). Giovanni Giolitti was an efficient Piedmontese bureaucrat, a man who kept to early and precisely regular hours of work all through the years in demoralizing Rome, more like some Swiss Federal Councillor than any Italian, still less any Roman. He perfected Depretis' manipulation of the parliamentary machine, gaining support for whatever legislation he chose by practical concessions to many conflicting groups. When the forms of British parliamentarianism are inorganically imposed upon an over-centralized prefectorial administrative system, the Prime Minister may become in a different way as dictatorial as Bismarck. Every deputy who wanted something for his constituents required an order from Rome to the Prefect of his province, and this he could only obtain from Giolitti, who traditionally combined the office of Premier with that of Minister of the Interior. After a period of tremendous labour unrest, Giolitti, aided of course by external circumstances, sponsored the period of modern Italy's greatest prosperity; it appeared to be a period of successful Machiavellian realism when many separate interests were unscrupulously exploited in the genuine interest of the people as a whole.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

YET if the French were merely bored by the Louis Philippe régime, the Italians gnashed their teeth over Giolitti and his so-called *askaris* (coloured troops). They were too quick not to grasp exactly what his methods were and too Latin to shirk the full implication, so Latin, indeed, as to exaggerate it. Further, they were too passionately interested in politics to accept Giolitti's dictatorship, which required submission without inspiration or even the illusion of it. A curious misinterpretation of the Italian character is prevalent among us, the *dolce far niente* idea which Croce has flatly—and rightly—denied. Just as their emotions flare up and, deprived of inspiration, die away, so their action, like their history, is convulsive and tumultuous rather than continuous. As for their interest in politics, it is ten times more intense than ours: they are Mediterraneans, *agora*-minded like the classical Athenians. It is entertaining to find an English engineer who visited North Italy in the summer of 1860 writing to *The Times* of the 'rapacity' for news 'astonishing to an Englishman', and of Garibaldi's photograph seen in every size and shape, from the shirt-stud to the 'big poster on the town's walls' (Trevelyan). That was in a time of elation, yet even in the depression of the winter 1945–6 there were signs of an avidity which is foreign to most of us. This begins extraordinarily early, and not only because Italians mature more quickly than Northerners. I have watched tired, hungry children of 8 or 9 at political meetings in the starving Italy of 1945 and 1946, and their interest never seemed to flag. Children of 12 like Pollacie fought with Garibaldi, children very little older fought and died with the Partisans in 1944, or drove the Germans out of Naples in the *Quattro Giornate* in September 1943, just as half-criminal children fought among the *neo-Fascisti* at the same time. Our children expend equivalent emotions on not letting their cricket team or captain down. It would be absurd to suggest that Italian history has been made by children; it is only important

to understand this element, the Franciscan one again in a way, which is often reflected in the older people, however penetratingly it is challenged by their profoundly sceptical side.

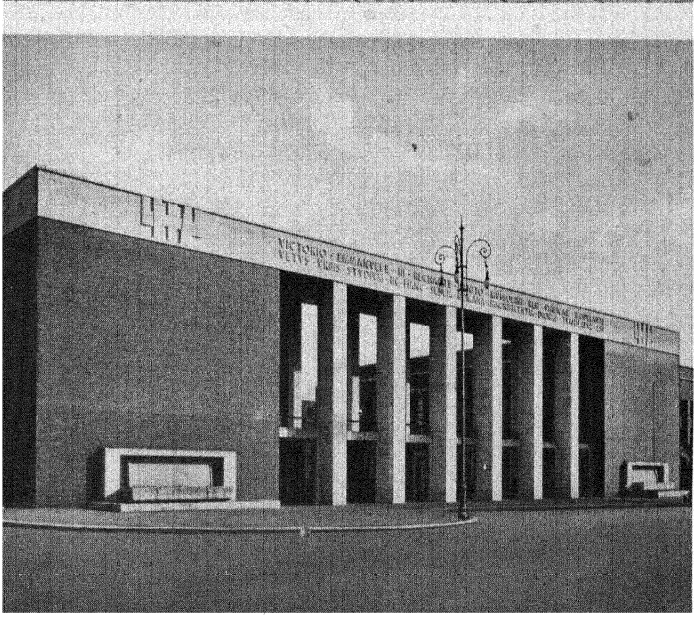
Perhaps this is the moment to try to analyse the character of the Italian people in greater detail. It has certainly not appreciably changed, though twenty years of Fascism have played upon its weaknesses and obscured its virtues. In the British army to-day a conception prevails of 'dirty Wops', servile and lying and thieving, not only lazy but helpless. One of Italy's tragedies is indeed the fact that in 1943 the Allies, for the only time in history except for Belisarius, invaded Italy from the south and took their impressions from the poorest, most neglected and demoralized, in a way least Italian, areas. Later on they did not find the Tuscan peasants dirty or servile; and at the very same time there were innumerable households in the north where British prisoners were sheltered and fed at a far more terrible risk than most of them ever knew. As for the lying and the stealing and corruption and bribery, it has never been discovered how many human beings in any other country in circumstances of great want are likely to remain honest. Probably the Italian does lie and steal and take bribes more readily than Northerners do. This is partly a corruption of his realism and partly due to his pride in intellectual ingenuity—Machiavelli again. But of stealing he is often proud for moral as well as intellectual reasons; it seems to him just and charitable to take from the rich to give to the poor, and this too, perhaps, brings us back to St. Francis. And again, the Italian, in practice and despite the academic prevalence of philosophic idealism, is always opposed to the powers that be. This is no doubt the result of his history: Italians have mostly been governed badly and oppressed, and since 1494 they have often been ruled by foreigners. It was one of the most difficult problems after 1870, and it has become acutely difficult to-day, to induce a positive attitude to the State, for people in Italy much more naturally resist every form of authority—it seems to them more virtuous or more entertaining, or both. This makes them difficult to organize, prone to the celebrated 'confusione' from which they will nevertheless emerge quite suddenly, and, with a little flash of genius, catch up with a rush with Nordic competition. It is illuminating to observe this

sort of thing in Switzerland where the Italian-Swiss have retained these characteristics intact, despite their Confederates, and where one has constant occasion to contrast them with the German-Swiss.

The Italian is particularly difficult to govern from the fiscal or the rationing point of view, possibly even more so than the Spaniard or the Frenchman. The State has so often been his enemy that a man of scrupulous personal integrity, over-meticulous in refusing any sort of favour for which he might be beholden, will consider it absurd not to cheat the authorities over taxation. As for any rationing system, he will regard that as quite certainly a trick concocted by officials to deprive him of the free exercise of his wits in an open market. Clandestine commerce he therefore finds hard to condemn, while, though he is in general humane, he frequently remains indifferent to the gross social injustice involved in not guaranteeing an equitable minimum ration all round.

These and other things the Italians undoubtedly have in common, in spite of the diversity of their history and dialects and geographical background. People who cannot think well of Paolo Monelli's political record, and do not perhaps agree with every word I shall quote, yet consider that his recent analysis is particularly illuminating.

> If we go abroad [he writes in *Roma 1943*] into great popular masses in London or New York, the Italian in the crowd will strike us at once, whether he be the son of a Calabrian or a Lombard... For by comparison with other nations the Italians have certain qualities in common—among others, for instance, *gentilezza*—a word which can be translated into no other language—sobriety, compassion, realism, a sense of property and of personal rights, of equity, of logic, and we have above all an equilibrium of the emotions which causes us to emerge quickly from anger or despair, from folly or joy. These are qualities which degenerate into excess in individuals or classes of people suddenly divorced from their natural environment, or in a large part of our people in certain periods of suffering and distress. The *gentilezza* degenerates into softness and servility, patience into cowardice, realism into dishonesty, the sense of property into avarice and jealousy, the balanced emotions into scepticism or inertia; our imaginativeness makes us into liars, our



VI. ARCHITECTURE

1. RAILWAY STATION, FLORENCE 2. THE UNIVERSITY, ROME

(E.N.A.)

artistic proclivities into buffoons and windbags, our vitality makes us tragically obsessed by sensuality.

Typically Italian also is that consciousness of the supernatural which has been called pagan, but which is a simple religiousness without mysticism or introspection, almost a sense of human solidarity in the face of superhuman things.

It may be worth recalling at this point, in relation to the sense of personal rights of which Monelli speaks, a description of the extraordinary endurance of Socialist working-class families confined by the Fascists on Lipari which was once given me by some one who had witnessed it for many years. She was the wife of a quite other prisoner on the island, herself a member of an aristocratic and clerical family in a neighbouring country. She described to me small children of Socialist workmen—here are the politically-minded children again—who could not be beaten by the Fascist guards into giving the requisite Fascist salutes. When I pressed her as to what gave these people their strength, she said it was certainly nothing to do with organized religion but some fundamental historically inherited faith in the rights of man.

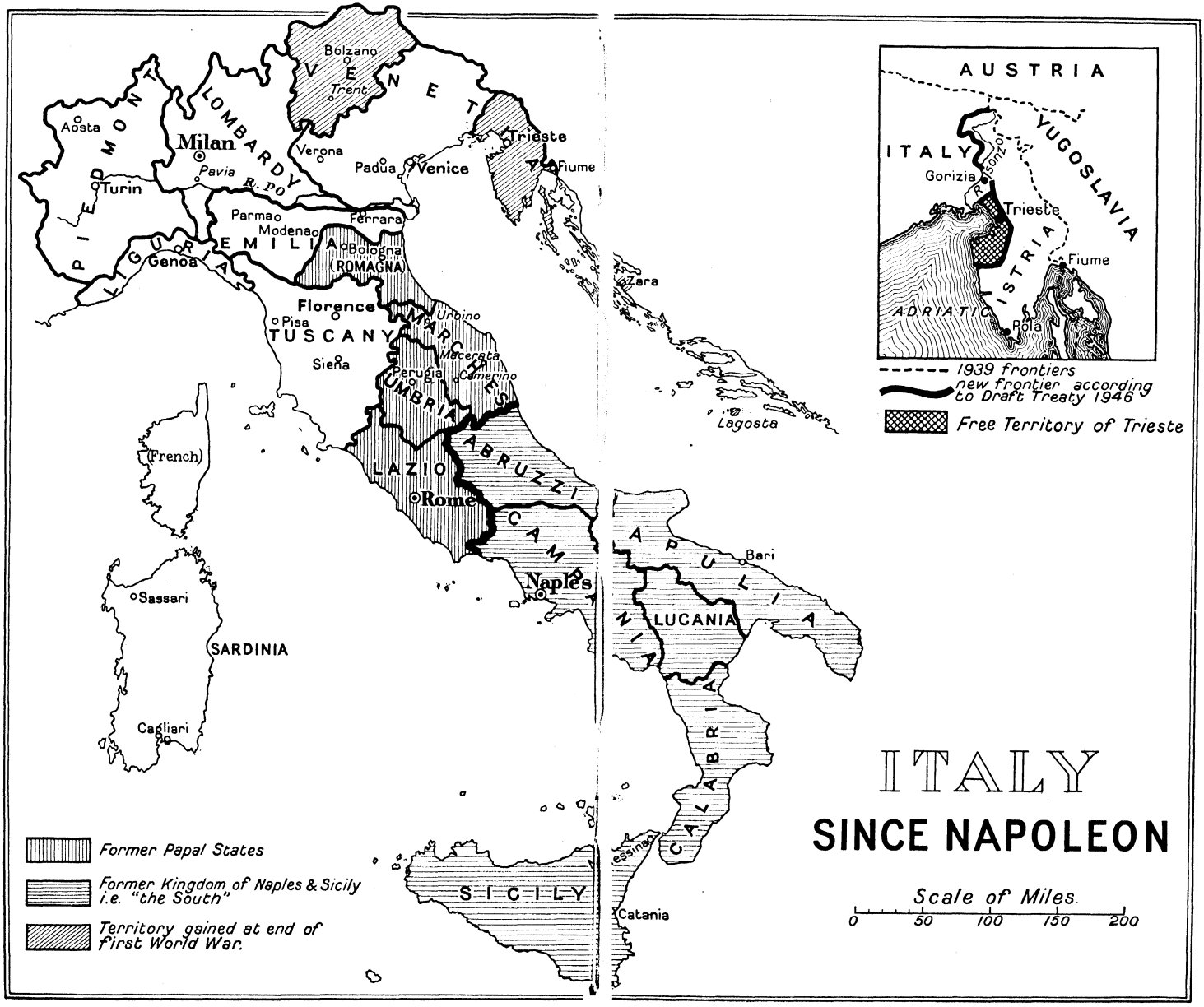
One other witness must be called into the box, that splendid old Englishwoman, Flora Stark, who was imprisoned with common criminals in the Veneto in the summer of 1940, in a petulant attempt by Rome to go in for reprisals. She described a prison-governor and her wardress as impressively humane, and of the criminal women in whose company she found herself she writes: 'In spite of many dreadful rows and violent language, no rancour was really felt—presently laughter and good humour would return, and chaffing as before. Also the old civilization always shows, however bad and wicked they are! An innate sense of decorum returns to the surface and pulls up even the worst with a recognition of the value of graciousness that saves one many a hard knock. Undisciplined they are and undisciplined they ever will be, in spite of their Duce's and his friends' efforts.'[1] Perhaps 'graciousness' is, after all, the best makeshift translation of *gentilezza*, a word which combines kindness with courtesy and, I think, also conveys the condition of a very ragged beggar whom I encountered squatting in a Roman street in the autumn of 1945. He was obviously starving and the day's

[1] Flora Stark, *An Italian Diary*, John Murray, 1945.

news was black for Italians, but he expressed his vexation with unsurpassable grace, singing the very words '*la vita è noiosa*' ('life is trying') to a charming melody in the sun.

There are other things more earthy than *gentilezza* which are essential to the fabric of Italian life from one end of the peninsula to the other; after all, character is not quite independent of food, drink, and climate. Monelli speaks of Italian sobriety and it is certain that drunkenness is rare, because it is regarded as disgraceful and stupid—an Italian is more ashamed of getting drunk than of stealing. But wine in just quantity and good quality is all the more important to him, and local patriotism is often expressed in terms of pride in the wine of his *paese*. In a different way (because coffee comes from abroad) the *espressi* have an absolute importance; a little very good and very strong, but it matters. The Fascists never took a greater risk than when they reduced the importation of coffee, and the shortage to-day means real suffering. Last but not least comes *pasta*, the essential first course to every midday meal and the only course for the poor—in the North it may be replaced by *risotto*. It is said that Marco Polo brought back from Asia the taste for noodles, flour made into all these strings and pipes and little leaves, spaghetti, macaroni, fettuccine. Naples is the greatest centre of production, but every province has its own favourite form and sauce. It is something of a daily rite both for rich and poor, the eating but also the making, of *pasta*, for to buy it ready-made is regarded as slapdash, not quite a serious action. I shall never forget how a shy, timid woman who worked for me in Rome was transformed into a person of pride upon discovering with surprise that I did not know how to cut up the flour-paste into *fettuccine*. It has sometimes seemed to me that the solemnity which attaches to every part and the whole of a French meal is concentrated in Italy in the eating of *pasta*. In both countries the quality of the food is aesthetically important, while the manner of eating it unaesthetically expressive. An Italian enjoys his spaghetti perhaps as an Englishman sinks into an exquisitely comfortable armchair, the lack of which in Italy he often bitterly deplores.

It is a Nordic illusion to suppose that Italians are lazy and dirty. In Southern Italy, as in any area of poverty, the dirti-


Bolzano
Trent
VENETIA
Aosta
Milan
Verona
Padua
Venice
Trieste
Fiume
PIEDMONT
LOMBARDY
Pavia
R. PO
Turin
Parmao
Modenao
Ferrara
EMILIA
Bologna
(ROMAGNA)
Genoa
LIGURIA
Florence
Urbino
Pisa
TUSCANY
MARCHES
Macerata
Siena
Perugia
Camerino
UMBRIA
Zara
Lagosta
(French)
ABRUZZI
LAZIO
Rome
CAMPANIA
Naples
APULIA
Bari
Sassari
SARDINIA
LUCANIA
Cagliari
CALABRIA
Messina
SICILY
Catania
Former Papal States
Former Kingdom of Naples & Sicily i.e. "the South"
Territory gained at end of First World War.
AUSTRIA
YUGOSLAVIA
ITALY
Gorizia
R. Isonzo
Trieste
ISTRIA
Fiume
ADRIATIC
Pola
1939 frontiers
new frontier according to Draft Treaty 1946
Free Territory of Trieste
ITALY
SINCE NAPOLEON
Scale of Miles.
0
50
100
150
200

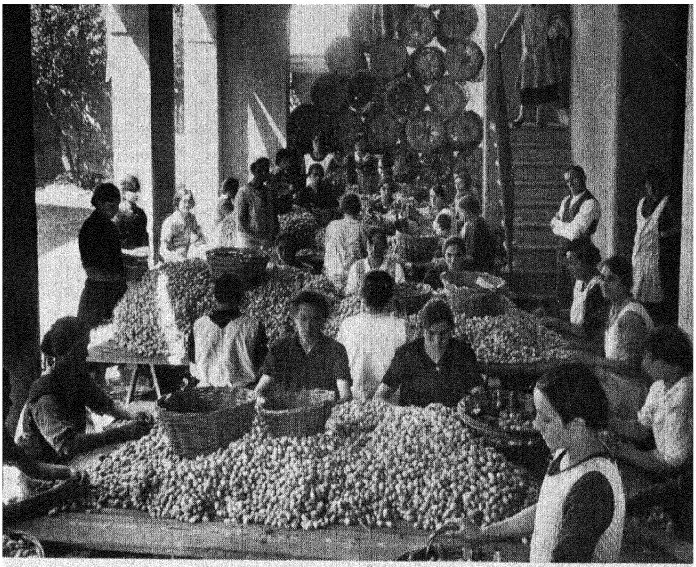
ness may be true, but elsewhere foreigners are often misled into thinking them dirty only because they are lazy about shaving. In the matter of washing the Italians are more thorough than some nations with a reputation for being clean. In reply to the charge of laziness it may be said that the intellectuals often work by fits and starts rather than uniformly, but they work at least as hard as their opposite numbers in England, and the peasants are noted for their industry. Of course the further south one goes the less possible it becomes in the summer to do any kind of work during the middle of the day. As for the hygienic discomforts, the Italian's insensitiveness to some smells and to noise, and his silly amorousness of which foreigners rightly complain—what do these mean?—mainly a mixture of poverty and exuberance, perhaps. To Madame de Staël the apparently childish vanity of many Italians was less radically vain than the vanity of the French, who behave in less spontaneous fashion because they are more afraid of the censure of others.

It is time to throw a glance, not only at the people, but also at the geography of this captivating country.

Very roughly Italy divides into three climatic regions, of which the first is the North with the Alps skirting the great flat plain of the River Po, and with a treacherous mountain climate bringing to Milan fog and rain of a violence which can astonish British visitors, and then again breaking into generous sunshine. The plain of the Po seems, however, to surround one with intensely cultivated flatness, fertile fields of rice and wheat and maize; only further north do the lakes of Garda and Como amidst their own luxuriance mirror the mountains of the North.

Travelling south, through the dullness of Emilia, one then comes to Tuscany and Umbria, the very heart of Italy, and to the full beauty of the mingling colours of olive and vine, thrown up by the dark green of the cypresses and rounded pines. Here are Florence and Assisi, and Orvieto where pure Piero della Francesca landscape surrounds you; here in Central Italy you may fall in love for ever with the gentle and imaginative Apennine contours, and the Alps will ever after seem to you theatrical and harsh.

Then you will come to the South which might be Greek or



VII. OCCUPATIONS

1. SORTING SILK COCOONS 2. THRESHING CORN

(E.N.A.)

Spanish, where there is much less vegetation, yet on the fringes southern fruits grow until you arrive at the orange-groves of Sicily. The South, one should remember, is the country of malaria, though science has reduced the menace the word once contained.

And all the way through Italy you will pass ancient towns and cities bridging the rivers or crowning the hill-tops, vaunting the classical features of their beauty, pointing to the ruins of Pompeii and Rome.

Psychologically Italy is divided, perhaps for the sake of simplifying the problem, into two, not three, regions; all discussions of the question are phrased in terms of North and South. The frontier between the two is most indistinctly drawn. The Milanese are inclined to abuse everything south of the Po as Southern, while the Neapolitans damn as Northern all that lies north of the old Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, even Rome. To the Northerner, the South is dirty and corrupt and inefficient, to the Southerner the North is hard and stupid and unsubtle. It has been seen that at the time of the unification of Italy the North was far richer and far less illiterate. It has been seen that the northern administrative and economic systems of Piedmont were then, as far as was practicable, imposed upon the South, which for some time resisted, through brigandage and in other ways.

When at the opening of the twentieth century industry began to develop on a grand scale, it was natural that it should do so almost exclusively in the North where there were big masses of urban population, good communications and water power possibilities, and also a certain industrial tradition. But the Neapolitans, on whose territory the first piece of Italian railway construction had taken place in 1840, complained, not without some justification, that the Northern entrepreneurs were determined to prevent industrial development in the South where they wished to preserve and exploit quasi-colonial conditions. Gradually the South took an unexpected revenge. Since enterprising young Northerners went into industry, Southerners who had no possibility of doing so went into the public service, and owing to that very over-centralization which the South had most loudly deplored, Southerners were able more and more to become small State officials even in the

North; the higher birth-rate of the South stimulated this process. Why are the only really grubby buildings in Milan the offices of the Prefect and the other representatives of the central Government? Any Milanese will tell you the reason with alacrity—because the officials are predominantly Southern. And why are these officials often obstructive and corrupt?—because they are Southern and of course want to take it out of the North. Though the Giolittian atmosphere may have been to blame, this development only reached a climax later, thanks to the Fascists.

Any reasonable line drawn between North and South will undoubtedly leave Florence in the North and Rome in the South. Florence is still more cultivated, less commercial than Milan or Turin or Genoa, but the psychological atmosphere is just as invigorating. As for Rome, it is physically and morally enervating. It is characteristic that in Milan lunch is at 12.30 as if one were in Switzerland, and in Florence it is not so very much later, but in Rome you will be invited for 1.30 and with luck have begun by 2.30, and all through the day things will get postponed in geometrical progression—in fact it is rather like Budapest in its flashy, snobbish days. It is no idle speculation to wonder whether Mazzini and Garibaldi were not lamentably wrong in insisting—in this case with success—upon Rome as capital town; they dreamed of republican Rome which was mortal and not eternal; by no manner of invocation could Mussolini bring it back to life.

Although Naples has a worse reputation in the world, its middle class has a continuity of tradition which is lacking in Rome; there are Neapolitans who maintain that Bourbon like Habsburg administration was, if reactionary in principle, yet in practice competently paternal. In addition to its great intellectual inheritance Naples can also boast of benevolent oddities like the *Banco di Napoli*; this institution was founded in 1539 to provide loans without interest to the needy, and still to-day it assigns part of its profits to charity. Within the Bourbon kingdom, the Sicilians always hated the mainland and strained after independence, so that modern separatist tendencies are historically normal.

I have tried to sketch the character of this people and the character of the country in which they live. But one thing I

will not attempt, and that is to examine their racial descent. Too much excruciating nonsense has been written under this heading without making anybody wiser about human behaviour at the present time. It is platitudinous to repeat that their climate and their history have affected the Italians profoundly; it has been seen that the latter has brought innumerable foreign invasions, some of which have led to important absorptions of foreign blood by the people descended from the Italian population of Roman Empire days. What that population then was in terms of race, beyond that it was 'Latin', seems to me of virtually no importance, in spite of the problem of the Etruscans and the mythology of Virgil.

Italy's demographic problem, however, has gradually revealed itself as serious, and some attention must be devoted to it here and now. When the first census was taken in United Italy in 1871, the country was found to have 26,801,154 inhabitants, the same area being computed to have had a population of 23,617,153 in 1848 and 14,689,317 in 1770. Between 1871 and 1915 the number of inhabitants increased by about two million in every ten years, by rather less that is to say between 1871 and 1881, and by rather more between 1901 and 1911 when it totalled 34,671,377. Before 1919 the area of the Kingdom was 110,623 square miles,[1] not much more than half that of France and a little larger than that of Great Britain. The problem of Italy is the opposite of that of France—its average soil is not very fertile and the country is poor in basic raw materials, while it is only too rich in labour; in spite of Fascist efforts the birthrate has declined slightly since the First World War, but the population has continued to increase at an impressive rate and is likely to do so until it reaches 50 millions in 1970. There are obviously three ways of attempting to solve a problem of this kind—emigration abroad, territorial expansion, or to increase productivity per head of the population at home.

[1] After 1919, 119,733 square miles, while France was 212,737 square miles.

CHAPTER III

ITALIANS OVERSEAS

(1) *Emigration*

After the unification and up to the First World War, emigration became an important factor in Italian life. There were temporary and permanent emigrants; the former went to Europe and North Africa, mostly to thinly populated France and to her Empire, especially Tunis, the latter to the United States, Argentine and Brazil. They were generally poor people—we know them well in Soho—but all the same they saved money to send home to Italy, and poor savings in America made handsome incomes for relatives in Sicily. It should be noted that the emigrants to North and South America were generally country people from Sicily or Southern Italy, where it is possible to find—on account of temporary emigration—whole villages speaking English with a strong American accent.

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, prosperity was increasing the population rather than providing for it, and it will be seen that colonial ventures offered no solution. Annual emigration from Italy, which had been about half a million, went up to three-quarters. In 1911 the Italians abroad numbered five and a half millions, and it was calculated that between 1872 and 1913 emigration had reduced the natural increase of the population by nearly four millions; the increase registered within the country having been nearly eight millions, emigration had thus reduced what it otherwise might have been by about 33 per cent.

It will be convenient to complete this brief account of Italian emigration here. The situation was transformed by the restrictions placed by the United States upon immigration, first by the law of 1921 and finally by the Johnson Act of July 1924. Consequently the number of Italian emigrants to the United States fell from 142,154 in 1921 to 52,182 in 1922, and to 34,524 in 1926. Argentina and the British dominions also

stiffened their laws, and in every case, since the doors were to be shut in the face of great poverty, the Southern Italians were severely affected. Incidentally, a census of all Italians living abroad in 1924 discovered nearly ten millions of them scattered about the world.

From 1926 onwards Fascist policy also put a brake upon emigration, just as it virtually put an end to foreign travel. Italians abroad were above all to remain Italian, and the Fascist discipline imposed upon Italians living in France and French North Africa caused considerable indignation among both Italians and French. The exploitation of the demographic problem by the Fascists especially in their propaganda against France caused particular irritation, since, while complaining of the density of population in Italy, they did everything in their power to stimulate its increase—fortunately without the success which they seemed to expect. On the other hand the population of Italy, reaching 42 millions, had overtaken that of France by 1935, and in 1936, whereas the density of the French population was 76 to the square kilometre, that of the Italians was 136·8.

In spite of the changed circumstances after the Johnson Act the whole phenomenon of Italian emigration has led to the establishment of a large Italian community in the United States, which is an important factor in the life of Italy to-day. By far the largest concentration of Italians in America is in the Middle Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (925,222 in 1920, 950,419 in 1940). United States statistics give the following figures:

ITALIAN POPULATION IN THE U.S.

	Total	*Born outside U.S.*	*With one or both parents Italian*
1900	738,513	483,963	254,550
1910	2,114,715	1,343,070	771,645
1920	3,361,200	1,610,109	1,751,091
1930	4,546,877	1,790,424	2,756,453
1940	4,594,780	1,623,580	2,971,200

These four and a half millions bring sympathy and help from the United States to Italy and partly explain the less rigid

attitude of the American Government (as compared with the British) towards Armistice Italy after September 1943. The famous mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia, afterwards Director-General of U.N.R.R.A., represents the many solid democrats among them.

The Italians have been too glibly held responsible for American gangsterism, but Mussolini's hunting down of the Mafia —along with resistance to Fascism—did actually link up with fresh arrivals in the Chicago underworld. At the same time political refugees of the most admirable kind were arriving in the United States, men like Count Sforza who would return to Italy as soon as they could, or others like Professor Salvemini or G. A. Borgese who have become American citizens and important contributors to American intellectual life. In any case all the Americas feel a certain filial regard for the Genoese father of their history, Columbus; it was a Florentine explorer, Amerigo Vespucci, after whom they were named.

(2) *Colonial Expansion*

In 1871, when both Italy and Germany had achieved political unification, they found themselves in fairly good time to join in 'the grab for Africa'. At first little interest was manifested in Italy for anything of the kind, and what interest there was was primarily commercial. But when in 1881 the French imposed their protectorate upon Tunis, where there was a certain Italian (mainly Sicilian) population, the attitude of the Italian public began to change. The French action, partly instigated by Bismarck to this end, stimulated Italian sensitivities about prestige; after all, no country was more intimately concerned with North Africa than Italy from a geographical point of view and the French were regarded as intruders in Tunis. In the course of the decade, moreover, Italy's serious population problem had emerged and with it the hope of finding some solution in Africa. The African possibilities for the accommodation of Europeans were already narrowly limited, but from that day to this all kinds of fallacies came to be formulated, leading up to the conclusion that colonial expansion in Africa was a demographic necessity for Italy; the advocates of this view were often all too sincere, but when they were not,

they welcomed the justification for imperialistic claims, and there was always something in the argument that Italy, unlike France, was in demographic need.

In 1869, the year of the opening of the Suez Canal, a Genoese shipping company, Rubattino, had with Government backing bought the Bay of Assab in the south-west corner of the Red Sea; in 1882 this small piece of territory became an Italian Crown Colony. At this moment the Franco-British quarrel over Egypt, which was only ended by the Anglo-French Entente over twenty years later, reached a culminating point, and Great Britain began to smile upon Italian activity in Africa. This probably encouraged the Italians to occupy Massawa in 1885. There followed the remarkable Treaty of Uccialli in 1889 between the Italians and Menelik, the Emperor of Abyssinia, who had required their support against a rival claimant to his throne. According to the treaty, Menelik agreed to act through Italy in his dealings with other Powers and this seemed to make Abyssinia into an Italian protectorate. At the same time Menelik welcomed the Italians to the plateau of Asmara as a further addition to their first colony, which in 1890 received the name of Eritrea. In 1885 a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar led to the occupation in 1891–2 of the unhealthy eastern tip of Africa on the Indian Ocean, which became Italian Somaliland.

Eritrea provided valuable coaling stations, but these first colonial acquisitions were useless from a population point of view, since only the plateau of Asmara was habitable for Europeans, while 'Somalia could never have been . . . anything except a grave financial liability under European administration' (*The Times*, 21 August 1945). It should be noted that the Italians did achieve something here on behalf of the natives, in that they struggled hard to abolish slavery. But these colonies cost a high military price all along, including the loss of the garrison at Dogali in 1887. Two turbulent figures like Crispi and Menelik were certain to come to blows, and within a short time French influences helped to cause Menelik to repudiate Uccialli in 1893. After several years of fighting a small Italian army was smashed by the Abyssinian hordes at Adua on 1 March 1896. This was the end of Crispi and the first African programme, but it was the beginning of hypersensitive resentments and chauvinist aggressiveness, and of

many disagreeable things which only revealed themselves later, when the Nationalists and then the Fascists emerged.

The year 1896, thanks to Crispi's elimination, brought one substantial gain. The Government succeeding his made haste to reverse his francophobe policy and arrived at the important Conventions of 28 September; according to these, in return for Italy's recognition of the French protectorate in Tunis, France in 1896 renewed the treaty Italy had made earlier with the Bey. The substantial Italian population in Tunis acquired the right to have its own schools and other institutions, and to keep its Italian nationality. This had its importance from the demographic point of view, although endless disputes arose in practice: the French were accused of making it impossible to open the new schools which became necessary, and of discriminating against Italian legal and medical qualifications. In 1911 France allowed private schools to be opened, and the Dante Alighieri Society, which had been founded in 1890 for the propagation of the Italian language, established a number in Tunis. Difficulties with the French authorities, however, invariably cropped up.

A second more successful attempt at Italian expansion took place in the Libyan war of 1911. By this time there was a tacit understanding, in spite of the Triple Alliance, between London, Paris, and Rome allowing them a free hand in Egypt, Morocco, and Tripoli respectively. It suited Giolitti, whose system was showing signs of severe strain, to satisfy Clericals and Nationalists by declaring war on Turkey, and a good deal of propaganda was done suggesting to the peasants that the conquest of Libya would obviate the need for emigration—there would be land there to colonize without crossing the Atlantic or learning the English language. The result of the war, which caused Italian methods of conquest to be acidly criticized, was the Treaty of Lausanne of October 1912, by which Italy not only received Libya, but was also allowed to occupy the Dodecanese islands, including Rhodes, as a pledge for Turkey's fulfilment of the terms.

In this fashion, though the islands had only strategic value, Italy did at last gain some land she could colonize. But its possibilities were narrowly restricted. The western part of Libya, Tripolitania, was agriculturally interesting—without


ITALIAN EMPIRE
=pre-Fascist Colonies
=Fascist acquisitions
ITALY
ALBANIA
Sardinia
Sicily
Malta
Pantelleria
Dodecanese
Rhodes
CRETE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
TUNISIA (French)
Tripoli
Tripolitania
Cyrenaica
LIBYA
EGYPT
Suez
RED SEA
SUDAN
ERITREA
Massawa
Adua
Assab
FRENCH SOMALILAND
Jibuti
Gulf of Aden
BRITISH SOMALILAND
ABYSSINIA
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
Mogadishu
INDIAN OCEAN
Scale of Miles
0
500
1000

too great an outlay of capital—up to a certain depth inland, and later on a considerable number of Italian colonists were planted there, while the town of Tripoli expanded and absorbed Italians from Italy. In Eastern Libya or Cyrenaica, however, only the coastal area of Jebel Akhdar was suitable for European settlement. Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were divided by a desert, and, in travelling south in either, one would find conditions increasingly Saharan. Here was no real solution of the over-population problem, nor was one to be found by making Rhodes a tourist centre with new Italian hotels and passenger shipping services.

CHAPTER IV

INCREASE OF PRODUCTION AND THE RISE OF SOCIALISM

We have seen that the natural resources of Italy are not very great. To what extent was she able during the period 1870 to 1915 to develop them in order to provide for her growing population? In the early days an enormous majority of the people were peasants in the sense of working and depending on the land. One great difficulty in providing for them was the fact that the corn-growing area could not be essentially increased owing to natural circumstances such as inadequate rainfall, insect plagues, or poverty of soil—the latter is sometimes attributed to intense cultivation for so many centuries that fertility may have been impaired for some time. Count Jacini, however, in a report which he drew up at about this time, blamed the Government for too little encouragement to agriculture. Serious efforts were made, especially in the North, where communications were good, and Croce notes a great increase after 1886 in the importation of agricultural implements and manures, and also in agricultural production. The tariff war with France initiated in 1887 reduced Italy's entire foreign trade by a quarter in its first year, but after Crispi's fall in 1896 it was possible to end it and relieve in particular the producers of Italian wine.

Whereas one tends always to associate the rise of Socialist activity or other agitation for social reform with the industrial working class, it is characteristic of Italy that the peasants in certain regions have been quite as rebellious as their brothers in the towns; they did not, of course, produce the Socialist political leaders, for these nearly all came from the middle class. It should also be noted that the distinction between town and country was not so clear as in many other lands, because there were so many small towns supplying little state or municipal or commercial jobs for people who would otherwise have been peasants. The question of increasing agricultural production depended partly upon agricultural working conditions, and they in their turn largely justified the agitation demanding

their reform, an agitation which merged with the development of Socialism, with all its momentous consequences for Italy.

There were large estates scattered all over the country, but peasant proprietorship, mostly with very small holdings, was common in Piedmont, Lombardy, and Venetia: in these provinces one heard of relatively little unrest; the same was true of Liguria, where there were more but well-administered big estates. Really shocking conditions very often prevailed in Apulia and the islands, Sicily and Sardinia, where the *latifondi*, huge estates belonging to absentee landlords, were the order of the day. Here speculators, who had rented this land, hired day-labour, and exploited it as thoroughly as they could. In 1894, when agrarian disorders occurred in Sicily, there was also a great deal of bitterness on account of the usurpation of common lands by big owners, while a fiscal system still prevailed which was feudal in the worst sense—the *signori* (lords) could impose taxes but need never pay them. In the early 'nineties, after some years of relative prosperity, the prices of Sicilian wine and sulphur had fallen, distress inflamed indignation, and peasants, with a few other groups of labourers such as the sulphur miners, began to form workmen's *fasci*.[1] The landowners were forced to make certain concessions, but various demonstrations involved clashes with military and police. This led Crispi, then Prime Minister, to initiate in 1894 a campaign of ferocious persecution of all forms of Socialism, which had now become his bugbear; the result in the long run, as will be seen, was to make the Socialist Party a major factor in Italian politics.

The most characteristic system of farming in Italy was perhaps neither peasant proprietorship nor the *latifondi*, but the *mezzadria*. This prevailed in the heart of Italy, in Tuscany, Umbria, Emilia, and the Marches, a very important area for the production of grain, wine, olive oil, fruit and tomatoes, and industrially valuable plants like hemp, grown especially around Bologna. The *mezzadria* system—we have mostly learnt about it as *métayage* in France before 1789—was based upon contracts many centuries old. The owner of the land divides with the peasants who work it the produce on a 50–50 basis; the owner mostly owns the livestock and the implements

[1] *Fasci* means groups.

and pays the taxes and other costs. The system worked fairly well on the whole, but it is obviously a system which impedes technical improvements and is liable to provoke disputes. At all events the peasants as well as the country-town people of the Romagna had been notorious for their turbulence since the days of Papal rule, Republicans and Anarchists abounding among them before the emergence of better-organized Socialism. There were other centres of unrest in the area and the Lunigiana (around Carrara) in north-western Tuscany was also a scene of conflicts with the authorities in 1894. At the beginning of the new century agrarian strikes organized by the so-called leagues became quite a regular thing: in 1908 Parma, for instance, was headquarters for strikes of this kind. It is perhaps significant that there was much less unrest in the areas where peasant proprietorship was important: it might be replied that the religious piety of Venetia provides the explanation, but the reply would be less acceptable with regard to Lombardy and Piedmont.

If the increase of agricultural production was, certainly by comparison with other parts of the world, slight, industrial expansion was not really important in Italy until the new century. In the contemplation of Italy to-day it is essential to remember that her big industry is very much younger than that not only of Great Britain, but also of Germany, Belgium, and even of France. The increasing population could by no means find room in industry at the time, and this, of course, stimulated emigration quite early. But the most interesting phenomenon to be observed is that the Italian Socialist Party was born in the earlier 'nineties before industrial labour problems could exist on a big scale.

Before the unification there were many small textile and other concerns which some people still consider more natural to Italy than huge modern complexes. The silk industry developed early but proceeded to decline, while cotton production increased considerably before 1900. Mining production expanded to some extent, but after 1900 the expansion was greatly accelerated. For it was essentially in the Giolitti period that Italian large-scale industry took its first big step forward. Prior to this, in spite of a Government policy (which foreshadowed Fascism) of favours to industry at the expense of

commerce, the fuel and power problem had not been faced. Italy was poor in basic raw materials in general, but the crux of the matter was—and long may be—her lack of coal. With the opening of the twentieth century, the financial and tariff situations were improved, and the importation of coal on a grand scale could be organized. Whereas 4,838,000 tons were imported in 1901, in 1912 the figure had reached 10,057,000 and in 1913 10,834,000. During the same period the production of electric energy by water-power rose from 48,000,000 to 3,000,000,000 kilowatts. The development of water-power, in fact, made it possible to supply the energy for the second great period of industrial expansion from 1915 to 1929 without any striking increase in the importation of coal, the volume of which henceforth remained almost stable; it was almost all imported from Great Britain before 1914. It is the destruction of power plants in the Second World War which created the desperate need for coal in 1945–6.

The Giolitti period witnessed a really great expansion of the iron and steel industry (headquarters in Milan) and the virtual rise of both the chemical and mechanical industries—this was, for instance, the period of the foundation and early expansion of Giovanni Agnelli's motor industry, the F.I.A.T., which transformed the character of the city of Turin. Among textiles, cotton developed tremendously, employing 200,000 hands in 1911—more than any other single industry—and wool became important; only the silk industry made next to no progress. In connexion rather with industry and commerce than with the intellectual developments of the period, for he is generally considered only to have followed up the scientific discoveries of others, Marconi's development of wireless telegraphy should be mentioned.

The first ten or fifteen years of the twentieth century were the period of Italy's greatest genuine prosperity in modern times. On the other hand, although the new factories provided fresh employment and although about half a million Italians were emigrating every year, the factories inevitably stimulated the concentration of the population in large urban centres, in particular in Turin and Milan, and this may have caused the population to grow even faster, though the rise in the general standard of living probably acted as a brake on the rate of increase.

The new Italian industrialists were, on the whole, hard busi-

ness men, liberals, as they often styled themselves, in the sense of believing that the weak members of society should be left free to go under; their sons generally hold very much the same view to-day. Further, Italians were accustomed to a gulf-like difference between the rich and the poor—this, too, has persisted up to our own time, aggravated, not diminished, by Fascism and war. But whereas the founders of modern industry in England a century earlier could enrol as their hands helpless people who suspected no dangers, in Italy, even if the majority was—as it always has been everywhere—unalert, there was yet a recent tradition of rebelling against tyrants of any kind, and there was a whole series of Socialist and other doctrines; and, above all, knowledge of the strike-weapon, to forearm the new workman before he went to be 'exploited'. Already in May 1898, when there was something of a bread crisis, popular indignation in Milan led to 'spontaneous outbreaks on the part of certain of the populace, including many women and children, unarmed and without organized means of attack or defence'.[1] Crispi's panic about Socialism had continued to spread among those who had much to lose, and the authorities completely lost their heads, behaving a little like the Nazis when they 'saved' Germany from Communism in 1933. Martial law was proclaimed in Naples and Florence, as well as in Milan, where in the course of three days' rioting only two members of the public forces were killed, while official statistics admitted that of the population eighty were killed and 450 wounded, opponents of the Government claiming heavier casualties still. At the same time hundreds of political offenders, including deputies, were arrested, newspapers were suppressed, and harmless associations broken up.

In Croce's view, 'what happened as the outcome of Crispi's home policy and the reaction of 1898 was not the realization of the Socialist ideal or the establishment of a campaign of revolutionary Marxist tactics, but the restoration to Italy of the conditions of liberty, to the general advantage of all persons and parties'.[2] In other words Government action in 1898 was

[1] Croce, *A History of Italy 1871–1915* (published 1927).

[2] Ibid. Professor De Ruggiero took the opposite and more often expressed view that 'the political life of the country . . . was undergoing a process of reduction to the colourless uniformity of dust' (*History of European Liberalism*, 1925).

so extreme as to induce strong middle-class sympathy for the working people and the Socialist leaders, and this led to the 'Lib.-Lab.' co-operation which was personified by Giolitti, and inaugurated a period of necessary and satisfactory reforms (corresponding to some extent with the reforms carried through by Asquith and Lloyd George at much the same time). Already in 1898, in order that some kind of appeasing gesture should be made, a law had provided for employers' liability for accidents and first steps taken towards old-age and sickness insurance. But these things had remained chiefly on paper. Giolitti, claiming the class struggle to be out of date, adopted an attitude of extreme tolerance towards strikes—of which there were an impressive number, both industrial and agrarian —and used State money to help finance various Socialist co-operative plans; thus co-operation developed in all directions, bringing real social betterment at the cost of accepting favours from Giolitti. Besides further social insurance laws, he then in 1911 greatly extended the franchise, raising the electorate from three millions, according to the law of 1882, to eight. This was indeed a political revolution which substituted electoral reference to masses for reference to a minority; it is worth remarking that in Italy, unlike Britain, the Socialist Party had 'arrived' in Parliament before this extension of the franchise, which far preceded the end of illiteracy. Here it may be noted that the Pope a few years earlier (1904) had reversed the ban upon participation in Italian political life by the devout; this in itself had substantially increased the number of voters who were then encouraged to vote for Giolitti in return for minor concessions to the Vatican. Since Giolitti also sometimes made deals with the worst Southern landlords, it is easy to sympathize with the indignation he aroused. The Right, which up to 1876 had ruled the country with absolutely clean hands, blamed the Left for Giolitti's *trasformismo*, while on the Left many dissentients appeared to condemn those moderate Socialist leaders who had allowed themselves to be caught in his toils. Even to-day the older Italian politicians of integrity have an exaggerated fear of accepting the most trivial favour as if obsessed by Giolittian perils, while on the other hand there are shrewd foreign critics who ask whether *au fond* post-war Italy is not searching for a new Giolitti.

CHAPTER V

INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN PRE-FASCIST DAYS

THE intellectual life of Italy during the first forty-five years of unity illustrates the mind and character of this fascinating nation faced with the new problems of the age. This intellectual life was more intimately bound up with contemporary political and economic developments than in other countries and directly prepared the way for developments to come: involuntarily it paved the road for Fascism, and it forms an inseparable part of Italian life to-day.

Before turning towards those intellectual activities with which this book must be primarily concerned, it will be fitting to give one general glance at literature and the arts since the middle of the nineteenth century when the ferment of the *Risorgimento* was apt to usurp all attention. Nineteenth-century Italy certainly broke with her past record in painting; she produced a number of simply pleasant painters, strongly influenced by Paris and entirely innocent of genius. On the other hand it was the century of Italian opera: Donizetti had died in 1848 and Rossini died twenty years later, but Verdi, the greatest composer of the day, whose name was used by the Milanese as a *Risorgimento* code—they chalked up VERDI to mean *Vittorio Emmanuele Re D'Italia* in defiance of the Austrians before 1860—lived on until 1901. His *Rigoletto* period came in the early 'fifties, but *Otello* and *Falstaff* were composed towards the end of the century. The music of Verdi has remained an integral part of Italian life to this day.

In literature Alessandro Manzoni, the grandson of Beccaria, had early achieved the masterpiece of *I Promessi Sposi* and was valued as a poet as well. It was to his memory that Verdi's *Requiem* was written in 1874. The period after 1870 was dominated by the poetry of Giosuè Carducci, classed by Croce with Dante and Tasso, Alfieri and Foscolo; it is relevant to add that Carducci followed Crispi, whom he hero-worshipped, from Republicanism to staunch support of the Monarchy, to which

conception he gave greater emotional substance at a time when opportunist acceptance of the *Regno* by many Republicans had blunted the fervour of Mazzinian days. Of D'Annunzio, considerably influenced by Carducci, it will be better to speak later on.

The most influential currents of thought after 1870, and indeed for many years, were those associated with the politicians on the Left, who, for this and other reasons, were strikingly successful in 1913 in the first elections held after universal male suffrage had been virtually introduced. With modern industrial conditions the old enthusiasms for a Utopian Republic or for the Anarchist ideal were mostly transformed into the search for the safeguarding of social justice rather than that of either national or personal liberty. Be it noted, however, that the old type of Italian Republican has never disappeared, and that the Anarchist movement, inspired by the very presence of Bakunin for a time, continued a fitful existence; among its less distinguished representatives were the Romagnol blacksmith, Alessandro Mussolini, and Bresci, the assassin of King Humbert in 1900.

In the 'seventies and 'eighties the strongest influence in progressive thought in Italy was that of positivism, deriving mainly from the teaching of Auguste Comte, but also from the English evolutionary school represented by Spencer and Darwin. The most prominent exponent of Italian positivism was the criminologist, Cesare Lombroso, who, carrying on the noble tradition of Beccaria, was, together with the politician Zanardelli, responsible for the relatively humane penal code of Italy at this time. It is interesting that the death penalty was abolished by Zanardelli in 1889 until such time as the Fascists reintroduced it. Lombroso was an exponent of the physiological explanation of human behaviour, and as such a new leader of masonic and in general anti-clerical opinion. He and Zanardelli, the most courageous and high-minded reformer of the day, who had led Brescia's revolt against the Austrians both in 1848 and again in 1859, and who, when in authority, still lived up to his libertarian creed, began to work for the introduction of divorce laws. Here they came into most violent impact with the opinion of the Church, which defeated them even in those pre-Concordat days. To this day divorce is a

possibility which is rejected not only by the Church but also by the State in Italy.

Italian positivism gave fresh influence to its forerunner, Cattaneo, whose federalist ideas began to prevail in the Republican Party. It was long represented by the historian Ferrero, who married Lombroso's daughter, and, like Cattaneo, lived many years in exile in Switzerland. The greatest importance of positivism in Italy, however, lay in the fact that it led straight to the widespread acceptance of Marxism, yet another 'religion of science'. Young positivists, believing in a religion of rationalism and humanity such as the ex-priest Ardigo and Cattaneo had preached, easily took the further step and embraced the materialistic interpretation of history. Perhaps the most influential representative of this evolution was the brilliant, if intellectually unstable, Antonio Labriola, who discovered Marx in about 1890 and proceeded to expound him to his students in his lectures on the philosophy of history at the University of Rome. At much the same time a positivist young writer in Milan, Filippo Turati, who had occupied himself with pamphlets on crime and the social question, influenced in those Russian-novel days by a young Russian Marxist, Anna Kulishoff, in 1891 founded a review called *Critica Sociale*; this provided an important expression of Marxist theory in the main centre of nascent industrial expansion on a large scale. German Socialist influences were now also felt, and, after the formal foundation of the Socialist Party in 1896, the first Socialist daily paper, *Avanti*, appeared, edited by Bissolati. From France the influence of Georges Sorel began to make itself felt, and Zola's social-problem novels, like those of the Sicilian writer, Verga, were eagerly read. Now, according to Croce, 'Not only political opinion but the whole of Italian thought and culture was permeated and invigorated by Marxist Socialism', thus firmly established before the crisis of 1898 when Turati and Bissolati and A. Kulishoff were among the host of political offenders arrested.

In 1898 the Italian public had been well prepared to sympathize with the sufferings of the poor, for whose troubles it was armed with remedies before the full descent of the main flood of industrialization. This to some extent explains the collapse of the Die-hard Right two years later, for it had no

programme other than that of 'striking with the strong hand against every movement for radical reformation of institutions, and against every association for asserting the peasants' and workmen's claims to economic betterment'.[1] Alas, many big landlords and industrialists seem to hold the same negative opinions to-day as they did in 1900, though the necessity for large-scale reform has continued to grow.

The fall of the Right brought back the old Radical and Social-reformer, Zanardelli, until 1903 when his Liberal colleague, Giolitti, succeeded him. *Trasformismo*, which had been applied by Depretis to corrode the principles and facilitate the practice of the parties on the Left after 1876, now became the slogan of the Socialist leaders to justify their collaboration with Giolitti. This led to Socialist splits and created something of a moral wilderness, in which, however, the voice of Benedetto Croce was raised; he proceeded to re-create Liberalism and fill it with new philosophical content. Croce was a Southern landowner by birth (he was born in 1866) and was originally considerably influenced by his uncle, the then eminently conservative patriot, Silvio Spaventa. Thereafter he hoped to find satisfaction in Marx, and was then instrumental in making the views of Georges Sorel and the theory of the general strike known in Italy. Finally he fell back upon Hegel, whose philosophy had not been without influence upon the *Risorgimento*, and further still to a profound study of Vico. This brought him into friendship with another philosopher from the South, a slightly younger man named Giovanni Gentile with whom he founded in Naples a review called *La Critica* in 1902; until its formal disappearance in 1944 it continued to make Croce's philosophy known to the world. The volume he published on aesthetics at this time, in his own view (1927) 'gave rise to innumerable studies, discussions and monographs; it may be said to have inspired everything of importance that was produced in Italy in the field of philosophical and historical study, criticism of poetry, music and the fine arts, linguistic studies, legal and economic science, the history of thought and civilization, and religious and educational controversies; thus, after an interval of two centuries, it recovered for Italian thought an

[1] Sprigge, op. cit.

active part in the thought of Europe, and even a kind of primacy in certain branches of study'.

Croce's philosophy is sometimes called the philosophy of the *fait accompli*; it rejects positivism and empiricism without reaching back to mysticism, insisting that the interpretation of reality should abide by the principles of logic, not empirical and formal but speculative and dialectical logic. His slogan '*tutt 'il reale razionale, tutt 'il razionale reale*' expresses his conception of the almost indistinguishable character of philosophy and history, for history to him is philosophy in the making. It is certain that no other Italian in this century has had greater influence than Benedetto Croce. Whereas in France the reaction against positivism and socialism and freemasonry was mainly expressed by Catholic writers on a transcendental basis, Croce and his followers reacted back to idealism. This is of fundamental importance. Though in practice the Italian behaves in as negative—even hostile—a fashion towards the representatives of the State as the Frenchman, Cartesianism (in spite of Campanella) never had much influence in Italy, whereas the philosophic inheritance of Naples made Italians highly susceptible to German idealism, culminating in Hegel.

'A truly intelligent Liberal', Croce wrote much later, in 1925, 'can never be converted to the authoritarian or reactionary, nor to the communistic, ideal, because he already contains these ideals within himself, within those limits where alone they are acceptable.' This is a magnificent definition of Liberalism which kept hope high in Fascist days. It must, however, be admitted that the political effects of Croce's influence have been negative rather than positive. In the first place, his assumption that, as history made itself, the truths of Liberalism would prevail, justified an entirely passive behaviour. Secondly, his idealism made his advocacy of an approach to rational truth through argument rather than experiment into something like a new mysticism. This in itself could never appeal to more than a small group of leisured people with much time for discussions of the kind. The people as a whole—and they counted in politics after 1911—rejected the new liberalism as a snobbish recreation and remained either pious or positivistic and Marxist or an odd and charming mixture

of the two extremes which Monelli's analysis partly explains. Thus rich and poor became philosophically, as well as economically, opposed.

The people as a whole were, however, indirectly affected by bastard and mystical offshoots of Croce's philosophy. Gentile soon began to differ from Croce and, postulating the inclusion of thought within his conception of Pure Act, launched a form of 'actual' idealism; in doing so he showed himself sympathetic to experiment which Croce condemned. Thus Gentile was drawn into the paths the Futurists were treading, and in time became the very prophet of Mussolini himself. It is not without interest that in 1918 he too was appointed to lecture on the philosophy of history in the University of Rome.

After the social hopes of the 'nineties, growing—indeed striking—prosperity combined with the irritation felt against Giolitti to make the period before the war another period of *delusione* and cynicism, expressed in part by the sociologist, Pareto. 'The grasping and pleasure-loving spirit of the new industrialism' induced young artists to try everything out only in order to reject every result of their explorations except the last. The leading Futurists, men like Papini and Palazzeschi, specialized in *stroncatura* or 'debunking'; Marinetti was one of their more fantastic brothers. But by far the most important influence of this kind was exerted by Gabriele D'Annunzio, a poet of exuberant brilliance, rather Gargantuan in all that he did. At one time he worshipped at the shrine of Carducci; elected a Deputy of the Right, he ostentatiously joined the 'Extreme Left', the 'Party of Youth', when persecution made Socialism interesting. In the Giolitti period the affinity between him and the Futurists was made clear; for all of them began to play up, as their last hope in life, a new flamboyant and aggressive Nationalism. This seemed to be the one unexploded enthusiasm which Giolitti's Machiavellianism still made possible, and D'Annunzio in his decadence became its poet. It was supported additionally by a new Nationalist Party also founded by literary men such as the poet Pascoli, professor of literature at Bologna University, and a lesser light, Corradini; they clamoured for the shame of Adua to be made good, and soon gained support from Army people and certain captains of

heavy industry. The Libyan War in 1911 was Giolitti's first concession to the new imperialistic patriotism.

All through the period between 1870 and the First World War a characteristic of Italian life was a profusion of journalistic literary output. Each of the greater cities carried on a tradition of its own, profiting in Rome and the South from the freedom of the press which the Piedmontese constitution had brought; it was not until 1906 that a new Press Law completed this freedom, in what many people then regarded as a revolutionary way, by putting an end to all administrative interference and leaving the judges to deal with press offences like any others, except in cases of extreme obscenity. The Socialist press of Milan has already been referred to; its level was creditably high, while the liberal *Corriere della Sera* (closely associated with the Albertinis) soon distinguished itself for its excellent journalism. Two other first-rate papers were Frassati's *Stampa* at Turin and the *Resto del Carlino* at Bologna, but there were hundreds besides. The daily press was the scene of intelligent discussion, but a wealth of reviews achieved serious literary distinction. Apart from *La Critica*, Florence was still the centre *par excellence* for this sort of thing. The Futurists published a series of periodicals there, from *Learondo* to *Lacerba*. In 1908 Prezzolini, a former Nationalist, founded *La Voce* in Florence as a review of 'militant idealism' which followed Croce's work attentively, and published contributions from able writers like Montano and Bacchelli. *La Voce* led to the foundation by Salvemini of *L'Unità* in 1912, which, thanks to the interest of its editor, devoted much attention to international affairs. It is time for me to do the same.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORIGINS OF FASCISM

At the Congress of Berlin in 1878 Italy had been forced to acquiesce in the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Hercegovina, the hinterland to Dalmatia, without being able to obtain the Trentino in compensation—'Why on earth should Italy demand an increase of territory?—Has she lost another battle?' a Russian diplomat said to Bismarck, referring to Italy's defeats at Custozza and Lissa in 1866. In these circumstances her wisest course was nevertheless to join Bismarck's Triple Alliance in 1882, stipulating as she did that she would never fight England. This involved, however, an alliance with the Habsburgs, favourites of the Pope and popularly regarded as symbols of reaction. It suited the Italian Right well enough, and especially among the generals there was positive enthusiasm for Germany and its army, while certain academic circles greatly admired German learning: to the Right France appeared subversive, or at best masonic. But more popular sentiment in Italy and the intellectuals of the Left—Republicans, humanitarians, positivists—were still deeply hostile to *tedeschi* in general and in particular to the Austrian oppressor who prevented the Italians of the Trentino, of Trieste and Istria from completing Italian unity. Garibaldi, so long as he lived, strained furiously at the official leash which prevented irredentist expeditions to the north-east, and in 1882, the year of his death (as also of the first treaty of the Triple Alliance), the Italians were enraged by the execution of the romantic young Oberdan in Trieste on account of a merely attempted gesture against Austrian rule. There were of course Leftists who could not forgive France for Nice and Savoy, and there was Crispi himself—but by the time he was fulminating against France he was fulminating also against the peril from the Left in Italy.

Pro-French sentiment certainly had a good deal to do with the defeat of the Right in 1900. Though *Avanti* named itself after *Vorwaerts*, there was a strong humanitarian-masonic link between France and Italy, and many Italians had been keen

Dreyfusards. In 1897 Delcassé had sent a brilliant French ambassador, Barrère, to Rome, in whose dispatches one may read delightful accounts later on of the irritation caused in Italy by visits from William II with Buelow as Chancellor glorying in uniforms with all the zest of a Goering. The French now dropped their earlier demand for too open a breach with Vienna and Berlin, and by an exchange of notes in 1900 and 1902 Italy came to a secret understanding with France on a basis of 'You do what you like in Morocco and leave us to do the same in Tripoli'. This was the cause of the familiar German outcry against Italian treachery, to which the Italians after the Algeciras Conference could reply that by adopting the Anglo-French attitude against Germany and Austria they had made their position sufficiently clear. To some extent the Italians deliberately sat upon the fence, but the Wilhelmstrasse, where Bismarck had so long carried on his double game with Austria-Hungary and Russia, was ill qualified to make reproaches; only Lansdowne and Grey, among the foreign ministers of the time, would have shrunk from ambiguous commitments, and after 1907 Grey himself was involved with both Russia and Japan and has since been reproached for failing to make clear to Germany how far he was committed to France. The Bosnian crisis of 1908 made the alinements of the Great Powers ever more distinct, for Italy's interests in the Adriatic now clashed sharply with Austria's, and the Albanian question began to loom on the horizon. All this led to the Czar's visit to Victor Emmanuel at Racconigi in 1909, when Italy and Russia found themselves in sympathy, as against Austria, in Balkan questions, and made the usual free-hand exchanges, the Straits for Russia and Libya for Italy.

The Libyan war was possibly more important on account of its internal repercussions than on account of the acquisition of mainly desert land; in short it was important because it brought Benito Mussolini into prominence. This son of the anarchist blacksmith to whom I have referred was in some ways a typical product of the small people of the Romagna, brave and fiery rebels against the powers that be in the days of the Papal authorities backed by the Austrian garrisons of the early nineteenth century. Towards the end of that century, their state of mind was something of a positivist exaltation—if so con-

tradictory a condition can be contemplated—which led the active ones among them to join the Anarchists, the Socialists, or the Syndicalists, remaining always eagerly Republican. Young Benito Mussolini became a Socialist and in 1908, at the age of 25, went to Trento as a journalist, and worked for a little with the Socialist irredentist leader, Cesare Battisti; he was soon expelled by the Austrian authorities and it is not uninteresting that the Florentine *Voce* published an article he then wrote on the Trentino. It is sometimes said that Mussolini's visit to Trento brought Nietzsche into his life, though he had certainly been influenced by him earlier; his journalistic efforts showed the influence, above all, of Georges Sorel, and his behaviour that of Sorel's friend, Pareto.

Years before, the official Socialist Party had expelled its anarchists and syndicalists. Its co-operation with Giolitti, with the practical benefits involved, had, however, discredited the official gradualist attitude of the Party, and by 1911 many inscribed Socialist members were incensed against it, among them the Milanese trade unionist, Lazzari, and Benito Mussolini. The Libyan War gave the dissentients their chance. It was known that the *Banco di Roma*, dominated by various friends of the Vatican, had interests in Tripoli which strengthened the anti-Turkish zeal of the Clericals in general. It was known, also, that some of the new steel kings welcomed the prospect of increasing the manufacture of armaments. The Socialist party was faced with a grave dilemma. Its right-wing leaders, Bissolati and Ivanoe Bonomi, wished the Party to support the war, but all the more revolutionary elements, and especially Mussolini, declared that an imperialist war gave the Party its opportunity to free itself from Giolitti and to start a clean page. Turati, then editor of *Avanti*, and Treves were perplexed and the party in confusion, until the Socialist Congress at Reggio Emilia in the summer of 1912. On this occasion Mussolini, just released from prison after heading a Romagnol workmen's anti-war demonstration, led a proletarian revolt within the Party against its bourgeois elements, the so-called intellectuals; Bissolati and Bonomi were expelled, and Mussolini took over *Avanti* from Treves, thereby becoming a person in the national, not merely the provincial, eye. *Avanti* became pseudo-syndicalist in tone, full of heroism and will-power, while Socialists

in central Italy began to interfere with success between peasants and landowners, and here and there gradually to supersede the regular administration so that by 1913 much of Emilia, especially Romagna, was in a condition of rebellion. The 1913 elections brought back a big Socialist and Radical group, and Giolitti resigned and was succeeded by Salandra.

Thus in August 1914 there were cries and gestures of revolt against the system from all sides, from the farms and inns of Emilia, from the literary salons of Florence and the sumptuous dwellings of D'Annunzio. In spite of recent prosperity there was a case for declaring that the Piedmontese unification of Italy had failed and that therefore new methods must be tried. When the European War broke out Italian opinion, including the official Socialist Party, was at first almost unanimously opposed to intervention; in any case the Central Powers had no claims upon Italy, since the Triple Alliance could only involve her in the case of a defensive war. On the contrary it was decided to exploit the situation and make Austria pay in territory for Italy's neutrality, and the Government initiated negotiations to this end, Salandra coining the phrase *sacro egoismo* at the time.

From the very beginning the Republicans had wished to fight for France and the Allied defence of civilization, and a younger Garibaldi led off a party of volunteers to emulate his great namesake's expedition to France in 1870. Many of the Radicals were masons and strongly pro-French. The Nationalists were in favour of nationalistic action and after the battle of the Marne this meant fighting for the Allies. *A propos* the nationalists it is worth recording two trifles: some of them expressed anxiety lest Italy should wait too long to share in the fruits of victory, while a young nationalist sympathizer, Dino Grandi, anticipated a more 'natural' war later on when 'prolific and unsated' Germans, Italians, and Russians would fight against England and France. Undeterred by finding himself in agreement with men like Bissolati and Bonomi, whom he himself had forced out of the Socialist Party, Mussolini, 'in all the sincerity of a heartfelt vocation . . . to rise on the crest of incessant agitation', suddenly declared in favour of intervention against Germany. The Socialist leaders rejected his policy scornfully, and he resigned from party and party press. A

few weeks later he founded the *Popolo d'Italia* in Milan to agitate for war; Barrère, who was still in Rome, showed his interest, and there is little doubt that the French helped to finance the new paper. 'It is not against the proletariat that I shall fight,' wrote Mussolini in his *Popolo*, '. . . but you, sirs, you who are the leaders of the Party, . . . you shall pass through the toils, . . . I am there to spoil your game. . . . The case of Mussolini is not finished, as you think. It is beginning now: it is growing larger all the time.'

Mussolini was able to recruit the dissident Socialists and Syndicalists, and in alliance with one of them called Corridoni he founded a workers' interventionist organization called the Groups (*Fasci*) of Revolutionary Action or Fighting Groups. These were the nucleus of the Fascist Party founded at Piazza San Sepolcro in Milan in March 1919.

In the course of the winter and spring the situation was transformed in an extraordinary way. It was known that Giolitti was still determined to keep Italy out of the war, and it was believed that he was negotiating on his own with the Germans. Gradually not only the Mussolinian *Fasci*, the Republicans and Radicals and the Nationalists, but the whole D'Annunzio-Futurist movement of revolt took up the cry of intervention as a weapon with which to liberate Italy from the system of Giolitti. He himself was planning to return to office in May 1915, and it is not too much to say that Italy went to war against Austria-Hungary in that month in a great wave of emotional revolt against Giolitti. In the interests of accuracy it must be recalled that King Victor Emmanuel helped to push things in this direction: he was certainly anti-German, but he was also opposed to the return of Giolitti who had seemed well on the way to becoming an irremovable dictator with his double control of deputies and administrative machine.

It seems monotonous to retell the history of the First World War and yet some of its events must be recalled, so much have they become a part of Italy to-day. Italy went into the war militarily unprepared, but this was partly justified in the eyes of the military command because, together with the conservative Salandra-Sonnino Cabinet which had declared war, it had limited aims, the conquest of specified territories from Austria. In fact the old situation had returned: many generous-hearted

idealists had flung themselves into a war for world-liberty only to find their enthusiasm put at the disposal of small-minded Piedmontese officers like General Cadorna and a Cabinet of more or less pro-German authoritarians. While the enthusiasts dreamt of the overthrow of a retrograde Germany, the Government postponed declaring war on Berlin and thought only of the secret Treaty signed in London towards the end of April. According to this, France, Britain, and Russia had promised, in return for Italy's entry into the war, that she should thereafter acquire the Trentino, Trieste with all Istria up to Quarnero, Dalmatia (excluding Fiume, Spalato, and Ragusa) and the Adriatic islands, and, finally, sovereignty over the district of Valona and the representation of a small, neutral Albania (possessing only Durazzo on the coast) in its foreign relations. Though the treaty had been secret, its terms came to be known, never to be forgotten.

Just as the King's generals had regarded the Republicans with suspicion and contempt during the nineteenth-century *Risorgimento*, and just as they would despise anti-Fascists and Partisans in 1943–5, so in 1915 democratic enthusiasts for the war felt themselves treated as dangerous elements when they volunteered. A much broader government had to be appointed in 1916, but still no military progress was made; Giolittian and Clerical opposition to the war raised its head in alliance with the official Socialist Party with its formula '*Nè aderire nè sabotare*'. At this point Italian policy was reformulated by some of the most interesting and admirable Italian Radical publicists of the time, the historians, Salvemini and Ferrero, and two writers close to the *Corriere della Sera*, Giovanni Amendola and G. A. Borgese. These were men of unquestionable integrity and enlightenment. They said, 'If we are fighting this war for freedom, then we are fighting to defeat Germany and to break up Austria-Hungary and liberate not only her Italians but also her Slavs. That means that the Treaty of London state of mind must be abandoned and we must return to Mazzini's idea of co-operation with the Slavs.' The enunciators of these views, who were mocked as *Rinunciatari* by the Nationalists, were to be among the first enemies and victims of Fascism.

Meanwhile Giolittian local officials sabotaged the war effort

and there was a good deal of desertion from the front. This, with Cadorna's attitude and the natural tendency of the Italians to create *confusione*, helped to explain the disastrous defeat inflicted upon them by the Germans at Caporetto in October 1917. From this time everything changed. The nation became solid in its determination to make good the catastrophe. The policy of the *Rinunciatari* was adopted, the more because America had come into the war and the Treaty of London could never be accepted by President Wilson. A new government was formed by Giolitti's friends, Orlando (as Premier) and Nitti; under the new and enlightened command of General Diaz, the Italian Army rallied on the Piave, and, by the time Austria-Hungary was visibly disintegrating, won a victory at Vittorio Veneto. Meanwhile Lenin had become the master of Russia.

All these were the factors creating the Italian post-war situation which, within four years, made Mussolini dictator of Italy, and which has been in several ways so strangely repeated after the Second World War that it cannot but repay study to-day. During the war the heavy and chemical industries had developed considerably—it was in this period that Montecatini (often called the *I. G. Farbenindustrie* of Italy), founded in 1888, became of first-rate importance—and this had also increased the strength of the industrial masses. During the war, and especially after Caporetto, the peasants, as in other countries, had been 'promised the land'. It had been generally accepted that the war for freedom was at last to bring the realization of all the political and social hopes which had hitherto gone astray. In 1917 the Socialist Party had proclaimed as its programme a Republican constitution, government by a single Chamber elected by universal suffrage, full civil liberties, social insurance, etc. Even the people on the Right had felt that these things must now be, and when free elections were held by Nitti in November 1919 without electoral bargains and by proportional representation, the Socialists were returned as by far the biggest party (though they had less than half the total number of seats), while the Catholic *Popolari*, with whom they might easily have agreed over much of their programme, came second.

Around 1900 there had been among certain priests and their friends a Modernist movement which, had it then found wider

support, would have deserved mention among the intellectual influences in the pre-war period. This movement, which had wished to give only symbolic value to Catholic dogma, and was furiously condemned by Vatican spokesmen, had also shown enthusiastic sympathy for social reform. Associated with it was a brilliant and upright young Sicilian priest, Don Sturzo, who, as mayor of Caltagirone, knew all too much about Giolittian electoral bargains with the retrograde landowners of Sicily. At the end of the war the land-hunger of the small peasant proprietors in the North, where the land was painfully overcrowded, became irrepressible, and the peasants constantly settled themselves on underworked land. This tendency was strong among the very Catholic peasants of Venetia, and Sturzo had rapidly built up a party—frowned upon by the Vatican—which championed these egalitarian cravings, so characteristic of the simple people of Italy.

Here then in embryo was a majority block of progressive deputies who might have realized a serious programme of up-to-date reform. Both the Catholic and the Marxist groups insisted, however, upon spurning even Radical sympathies by declaring that the war, which had made them (the Extreme Left) powerful, should never have been fought. The majority of the Socialists were blinded by the news from Russia into squandering their energies in crying for the punishment of those who were responsible for the 'bourgeois crime' of intervention. Further, they insisted that the Russian example must be followed and this crime of the bourgeois exploited in order to effect a real revolution and set up the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; this led them to boycott the newly elected Chamber. Thus were the Socialists willing to throw recklessly away the fruits of their Parliamentary victory.

It seemed to be the familiar story of the romantic enthusiasm of 1915 followed by grim disillusionment. The Peace Conference had accentuated this. It was not to be expected that the Treaty of London could stand, but it is generally held that the greater Allies wasted a golden opportunity of giving Italy some of the economic help of which she was so much in need;[1] it is certain that after the realization of all their hopes had been

[1] See Macartney and Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy 1914–37*, Oxford University Press, 1938.

dangled before Italy's worst chauvinists, they now became bitterly anti-Anglo-French, and, above all, hostile to France. But D'Annunzio, who more than any other had helped to sweep the nation against Giolitti into war, was not content to see the waves of intoxicated, bellicose enthusiasm die away. He had indulged in any number of romantic-warrior performances and was still immensely popular in Nationalist circles, and especially with the adolescent population, which, as we have seen, is not without its political importance in Italy. In 1919 the Fiume question gave D'Annunzio a fresh chance. Fiume had been Hungary's port; it was a mainly Italian town (with a Croat suburb, Susak), lying within a few miles of Istria; by the Treaty of London it had nevertheless been left to Croatia. At the end of the war it declared itself Italian and was thereupon occupied by mixed Allied forces. In September 1919, D'Annunzio marched into Fiume at the head of some thousands of demobilized and discontented officers and exalted young *Arditi*[1] in black shirts, and established there his *Reggenza del Carnaro* for some fifteen months. Here grandiose experiments in political stage-production were carried out, to be invaluable, later, to Mussolini, and, later still, to Goebbels. Roman salutes, all kinds of badges and uniforms (besides the black shirts), and the intoning of political ritual, began here. Most remarkable of all was the Statute of the Regency which threw together the conception of the Roman dictator with ideas borrowed from the medieval commune of Florence or from modern Syndicalism. One of its provisions (XVIII) ran as follows: 'The State represents the aspiration and the effort of the people, as a community, towards material and spiritual advancement. Those only are full citizens who give their best endeavour. . . . Whatever be the kind of work a man does, whether of hand or brain, art or industry . . . he must be a member of one of the ten corporations [of which a list then follows—1, industrial and agricultural labourers; 2, technicians and managers; and so on]. The tenth has no special trade or register or title. It is reserved for the mysterious forces of progress and adventure.'

[1] Meaning, roughly, daredevils. They had been recruited rather like 'suicide squads'. The black shirt was meant to commemorate both the Carbonari conspirators of the early nineteenth century and the toll of the war of 1915–18.

It now needed very little to bring these mysterious forces from Fiume to Rome. The post-war boom was waning fast, and many industrialists of Northern Italy were keen to halve their wages-bill as soon as they dared, although bread was scarce and prices very high. Labour still seemed strong, and plans for a juster distribution of wealth and division of control between employers and employed still seemed widely popular, but there had been ominous clashes in the streets between Nationalist ex-service men, *Arditi* and followers of D'Annunzio on the one hand, and red-badged admirers of the Soviets on the other. In August 1920, when the engineering employers of Milan declared a lock-out, the employees, the important *Federazione italiana operai metallurgici* or F.I.O.M., among whom Bruno Buozzi was prominent, occupied the factories for some weeks. The occupation petered out a little sadly, but it had momentous results. On the one hand it led to an agreement in September which provided for a form of workers' control of industry after which Italian labour has ever since been straining; on the other it made an impression of weakness upon the employers and their friends who now began to play up the 'Red Peril'—when they no longer feared it—for all they were worth. No one nowadays denies that a number of industrialists and agrarians deliberately financed young Nationalist and Fascist toughs who formed *Squadre d'Azione* to use Socialist and Communist workmen and *Popolari* peasants as roughly as they could.

It is interesting that up to the F.I.O.M.'s occupation of the factories Mussolini, who had lost much ground, was still a Leftist revolutionary leader of industrial labour; when the occupation began, while carrying on his feud against the Socialist leaders, he supported the action of the men. But after this he perceived a different road to power, and he, too, proceeded to exploit the panic which the factory occupations had created. His own Fascists became more and more difficult to distinguish from the Nationalist-*Arditi* formations of unemployed and discontented young men, and in the spring of 1921 they entered into Giolitti's service admittedly as his 'Black-and-Tans' before the holding of fresh elections. For among the disasters which had now befallen Italy was the return of Giolitti to power. Some people had felt that he alone could

save the country, but his last appearance proved to be his final condemnation. This Piedmontese politician had long tolerated a little convenient terrorism, during elections, in the 'barbarous South', but in 1921 he accepted Mussolini as an ally in order that the Fascists should intimidate the workmen of his own Turin and the peasants of Venetia.

Despite 'an unparalleled example of organized violence' by the Fascists, only 36 of them (including Mussolini) were elected, while the working population of the North stood firm. The Socialists, though the Communists had now split off and they themselves lost a few seats besides, were still the strongest Party in the Chamber, while the *Popolari* made gains. Soon after this a clear-sighted young Socialist called Matteotti began to reorganize a Unitary Socialist Party on a constitutional, parliamentary basis, in accordance with the common-sense view of the rank-and-file Socialist trades-unionists, and other signs of a 'settling down' of the country appeared. But Mussolini was determined that this critical *dopo-guerra* period should be turned to his account before the opportunity passed away. If he could not win over the workmen and peasants, they could be stampeded later on. If D'Annunzio melodrama and nationalist reaction were the cards to play, the Monarchy —and with it the Army—might prove to be the trump card, and Mussolini publicly abjured his life-long Romagnol republicanism in September 1922. Fascist violence had become more and more insolently shameless, led by Farinacci, the railwayman, at Cremona, Grandi in Bologna, Italo Balbo in Ferrara, and Scorza in Lucca—for it was in Emilia and Tuscany, of course, that particularly violent conflicts took place. In August organized labour, whose offices were constantly being attacked, attempted a general strike, which gave Mussolini the excuse for a *coup d'état*—Fascism would assume freedom to supplant the State: it is significant that the Fascists and Nationalists now appealed to the workers 'to shake off the yoke of the *politicians* by whom they are led'. Meanwhile Mussolini intrigued with Giolitti and Salandra, and it appears to be certain that the King secretly agreed to a Fascist 'March on Rome'. At the Fascist Congress at Naples in October Mussolini declared, 'What we have in view is the introduction into the Liberal State, which has fulfilled its functions, . . . of all

the forces of the new generation which has emerged from the war and the victory'. Thereupon four Fascist leaders, the famous Quadrumvirate, Michele Bianchi, Balbo, De Bono, and De Vecchi, organized the concentration of the now powerful *squadre* on Rome on 28 October. The Prime Minister, Facta, who had succeeded Giolitti and Bonomi, rightly decided to declare martial law, but this was vetoed by Victor Emmanuel for the reason always given on these occasions, that it would spell civil war. It was clear that the King and the Army, disconcerted by a good deal of Republican talk on the Left, preferred a Fascist experiment to any alternative, and Mussolini was entrusted with the formation of a government.

Would modern Italy find herself at last, or would this be the aggravation of all her woes?

CHAPTER VII

'THE WILL OF A FEW, EVEN OF ONE . . .'

CONTROL of the State machine was now in Mussolini's hands: for the next four years he consolidated the power he had so passionately desired, and only after that did he clearly discover the purposes for which this power would be used. At first nothing so very much seemed to have changed. There was still a Coalition Government in which most parties, including the *Popolari*, were represented, and there was a distinguished still Liberal philosopher as Minister of Education with plans for less rather than more discipline in the schools. That among the Fascists the Nationalists should swallow a little Syndicalism and the Syndicalists a little Nationalism suited the natural ingenuity of the Italians, and that Youth should be the catchword of the day was only too welcome. It was easy to discredit democracy, for the war had been fought for that, only, as it seemd to the Italians, to lead to an unjust Peace.

It was true that Mazzini's dream of an Italian Trieste and Trentino was realized and a million Italians 'redeemed' from the Habsburgs, but Italy had been left out when mandates were distributed, and the offers made to her at various times of Dalmatia, Valona, and Smyrna with rights in Southern Anatolia revoked. By the Treaty of Rapallo, drawn up in 1920 and ratified in February 1921 just after the Giolitti Government had forced D'Annunzio out of Fiume, Italy gave up to Yugoslavia Dalmatia, except Fiume, the district round Zara and some islands. Fiume became independent, but by the Pact of Rome in 1924 Mussolini forced Belgrade to accept its annexation to Italy; King Victor Emmanuel thereupon rewarded Mussolini with the Order of the Annunziata (all the members of which became 'cousins' of the King) and created D'Annunzio Prince of Monte Nevoso (in Eastern Istria, north of Fiume). As for Italy's urgent needs, facilities for emigration and for the importation of wheat and of raw materials for industry, nothing whatever had been done, while her only extra-European gain was the British cession of Jubaland to

Somalia some years later. What pretexts had not been provided for the preaching of the gospel of force!

All kinds of amiable vaguely progressive people were in 1923 quite glad to witness a more practical approach, as they thought, to politics when Mussolini proposed and carried through an electoral reform by which the strongest party in the Chamber was to have two-thirds of the seats, the remaining third being proportionately distributed; in this way there was to be a government strong enough to rule. By this time the Fascist bands had been reconstituted, together with a number of ex-Army officers, into a more powerful *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*. When elections were held in the following year, the intimidation was tremendous; the present writer, by chance in Florence though wholly innocent of interest in Italian politics at the time, has never forgotten that impression of Terror racing through the streets in those Blackshirt lorries. . . .

Mussolini naturally obtained his majority, but there were still nearly three million voters out of slightly more than seven and a half—i.e. more than a third—who had enough courage to vote against him, and when the Chamber met, Matteotti protested against Fascist outrages, and was thereupon murdered with unblushing brutality on 10 June 1924. This crime, in which at least De Bono and Finzi at the Ministry of the Interior were involved, brought about a serious crisis for Fascism, though one which was so little appreciated abroad that when the Council of the League of Nations met in Rome towards the end of the year, Mussolini was able to exploit Austen Chamberlain's cordiality to the advantage of his régime. Many Italians still feel bitter about the encouragement given to the Duce by democratic statesmen abroad, encouragement which, by impressing the King, may have saved the Fascist Government, and preserved Mussolini to work for the destruction of his foreign friends. It is certain that there was a tremendous and courageous Italian agitation against Fascism in 1924, which continued so vigorously as to cause Professor De Ruggiero, writing in 1925, to foresee the imminent downfall of tyranny. Unfortunately the anti-Fascist deputies could think of nothing better than to withdraw from the Chamber (except for the Communist deputies who remained there) in their

'Aventine' demonstration, which suited Mussolini well. In his counter-offensive which began the next year he deprived them of their mandates, then vastly increased his own powers, and by 1926 had suppressed all non-Fascist parties (Communists included) and oppositional newspapers. State control was extended to all associations and all masonic lodges dissolved.

It is not generally known that anti-Fascism between 1922 and 1926 put up a very brave struggle; only a few sporadic attempts at Mussolini's life have been remembered. The Milanese paper *Il Caffè*, descended from Beccaria's paper of that name, under the direction of Bauer and Ernesto Rossi, tirelessly attacked the Fascists, and in Florence opposition gathered around Salvemini and Carlo Rosselli whose *Quarto Stato* had influence. In Rome one of the most determined fighters at the time was Giovanni Amendola, a progressive Liberal who was Minister for the Colonies in the Facta Ministry. In his excellent paper, *Il Mondo*, he proceeded to expose the Fascists quite fearlessly until, assaulted and clubbed by Fascist thugs more than once, he escaped to Nice only to die in 1926; his collaborator, Cianca, survived and was able to return to Italy after the Armistice of 1943. Another remarkable anti-Fascist was a very young Piedmontese, Pietro Gobetti, who was only twenty when the Fascists marched on Rome. This tireless and fervent young Radical was a mystery to his very humdrum parents and the idol of his friends. He belonged to a remarkable group of students of which the present War Minister, Brosio, was another; they were all strongly influenced by two great Liberal lecturers at Turin University at the time, the historian, Francesco Ruffini, and the economist, Luigi Einaudi. But Gobetti also had working-class friends.

Turin, which had once been a capital city, had lost its bureaucratic population when it was succeeded first by Florence, then by Rome. Thereafter it became, above all, a big industrial town centred round Agnelli's great automobile industry from about 1900, and the Fiat workers were thenceforward in the van of Italian working-class agitation. They followed the Russian Revolution with passionate interest and Gobetti became profoundly interested in Communism too. In those days Communists believed that the State, having served its purpose, must wither away, and Gobetti discovered the

possibility of a liberal revolution. He and his friends were to be the 'liberal conscience of Communism' and safeguard liberty by, *inter alia*, promoting the control of industry, not by selfish employers nor a bureaucratic State, but by the workers themselves: precisely what the occupiers of factories were demanding before 1922. Gobetti's periodical *La Rivoluzione Liberale* continued after this to have so much influence that the Fascists decided on his elimination too, and he suffered the same fate as Amendola, dying in France at about the same time. It should be added that both Amendola and Gobetti, like Matteotti, knew exactly what risk they ran. Indeed, by 1925 it had become clear that he who criticized uncompromisingly would die, and people like Turati, Treves, Modigliani (elder brother of the painter and another Socialist deputy), Salvemini, Sforza, Pacciardi, Egidio Reale, and Facchinetti escaped abroad. Not until 1929 did Carlo Rosselli escape to Paris where he formed an anti-Fascist centre, and worked out his theory of *liberalsocialismo*, another plan for social reform combined with the safeguarding of individual liberties. The Rossellis later formed the *Giustizia e libertà* group, from which, as from Gobetti, the present Party of Action traces its descent.

While the Republicans, Socialists, and Radicals found refuge in France, Switzerland, or the United States; various young Communist leaders like Gramsci and Togliatti had gone off to Russia. Here it is worth breaking off for a moment to speak of Antonio Gramsci, a son of poor Sardinian parents, who in 1911 left his home for Turin, where he rapidly became the workingmen's leader. He seems, according to both friend and foe, to have been an attractive human being, brave, intelligent, austere, and exceedingly determined; though they held different views, he was good friends with Gobetti, who contributed articles to Gramsci's *L'Ordine Nuovo*. From the early days of the Russian Revolution, Gramsci saw salvation only in Leninist terms, and was largely responsible for the emergence of the Italian Communist Party at the Leghorn Congress in 1921. Though Togliatti remained there, Gramsci actually returned from Russia during the crisis after Matteotti's death in 1924. The next year the Communist Party was suppressed and Gramsci went underground, trying to direct some kind of Communist penetration into the Fascist organizations. He

was arrested in 1927, and at his trial in 1928 the public prosecutor frankly announced that 'We must prevent this brain from working for twenty years'. Gramsci's health was poor to start with, and ten years of Fascist imprisonment were enough to kill him. Many another anti-Fascist such as Scoccimarro or that other Sardinian, Lussu, suffered long years of imprisonment or confinement on the islands, but those who knew them all agree that, of the young men in the 'twenties, the most impressive were the two Turin figures of Gobetti and Gramsci, together with Carlo Rosselli.

While an *élite* of individuals of different ways of thinking went bravely to death, maltreatment, prison, and exile, and others drew back from public life in speedy disillusionment, it would be false to deny that there was a certain popular elation, kept up by a series of Fascist injections. The last successful one took the form of the Abyssinian war; after that the final reaction set in. Nationalistic nonsense everywhere arouses a number of primitive responses and the first *Risorgimento* (itself not spotless in this respect) was near enough to be psychologically misused. Many young people were undoubtedly enthusiastically Fascist because the whole affair appealed as much to their desire for service and sacrifice as to their natural brutality. Every one who had been frightened of losing property or status in the post-war years—industrialists, agrarians, and, above all, shopkeepers who disliked co-operative competition and small officials impoverished by the post-war rise in prices—was ready to welcome the New Order. While its D'Annunzio trappings intrigued and entertained the Italians, their natural quickness and cynicism protected them from accepting it with anything approaching to German conviction; an Italian, after all, could throw himself headlong into some tremendous Party display and mock at the whole thing the very same evening, and, if the young were often brutal, as they will be, the social tradition was humane.

What in fact did the New Order comprise? At first Mussolini—perforce, but this fitted in with Gentile—declared Fascism to be not a theory, but 'Pure Act' being accomplished, and it has been seen that by 1926 his dictatorship was complete. Always conditioned by this, there gradually followed the construction of a vaguely delineated Corporative State. Its

essential features were, in addition to the Duce, the Corporations and the Grand Council of Fascism. This latter body had been created early in 1923, but its functions were only fully defined by a law of 1928 amended in 1929. The Fascist Grand Council was created to provide the connecting link between Fascist Party and State, and in fact 'to establish a perpetuity of Chiefs of Government and Duces of the Fascist Party who shall be one and the same man'.[1] It consisted of about thirty people prominent in Party or State, some *ex officio*, some nominated by the Chief of the Government; the Secretary of the Party was Secretary of the Council and deputy for the Chief. The Chief of the Government 'calls it [the Council] when he considers its meeting expedient, and he determines the agenda'. The Council had to be consulted on all questions with a constitutional bearing such as 'the succession to the throne, the attributes and prerogatives of the crown' (a stipulation which was clearly distasteful to the House of Savoy), or 'the attributes and prerogatives of the leader of the government'.

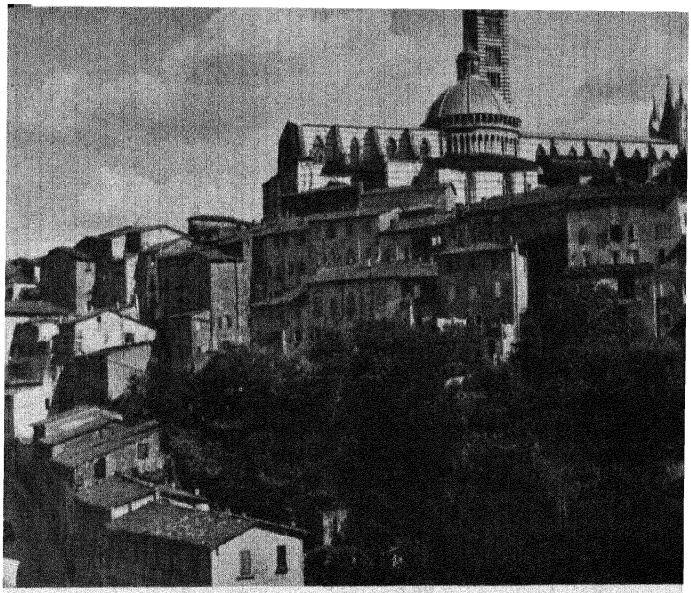
The corporative idea approximates closely to the Guild Socialism of which one used to hear in England many years ago, and it had long been advocated in an uncompromisingly anti-individualist form by the Italian Nationalist, Rocco. It has been seen that D'Annunzio had fondled such notions in Fiume; and, strangely enough, they had been sponsored not only by Syndicalists themselves, but also by the Papacy in the Encyclical of 1891; upon the basis of this, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg were later to attempt to build up their corporate Austria with Mussolini's help. It was claimed, in short, that society should be organized into groups or confederations of producers, both employers and employed being represented in each big unit of production. This was to put an end to the pursuit of individual interest; within each corporation employers and employed would be reconciled and go forward hand in hand to serve nothing but the national community. At first the industrialists who had backed Fascism in order to be rid of the claims to 'interfere' with them, which Giolitti had recognized after the occupation of the factories in 1920, frowned angrily, but by April 1926, when all strikes and lock-outs were for-

[1] Herman Finer, *Mussolini's Italy*, Gollancz, 1935.

bidden and they found they had to accept only Fascist syndicates of workmen, they were reconciled to the New Order. Twenty-two corporations gradually took form in which it was attempted to represent all the important facets of the industry or other activity in question: corporations, for instance, for the Chemical trades, the Clothing trades, Mining and Quarrying, Cereals, and so on. Each corporation, in addition to representatives of employers and employed, contained three members of the Fascist Party 'to represent the public'. The General Assembly of Corporations consisted of about 800 members unevenly distributed among the twenty-two component bodies; they and the confederations they represented were all directly or indirectly the Duce's nominees, and the whole organization was subject to the Minister of Corporations, whose name was mostly Mussolini.

The gospel of the Corporations was the *Carta del Lavoro*, approved by the Fascist Grand Council in April 1927. 'Work in all its forms', it declared, 'is a social duty. . . . The process of production, from the national point of view, is a single whole; its aims are united and identified with the well-being of the producers and the promotion of national power.' In return for the ratification of a number of socially accepted workers' rights, e.g. free Sundays, an annual paid holiday, extra pay for night work, and insurance supported by employers and employed but only 'co-ordinated' by the State, the employers were assured by Articles VII and IX that 'The Corporative State considers private enterprise in the domain of production to be the most efficient method and the most advantageous to the interests of the nation. . . . The State intervenes in economic production only when private enterprise fails or is insufficient or when the political interests of the State are involved.' There was also an ominous clause of the Charter (XXIII) which laid down that employers must employ the labour allotted to them by the corporative labour exchanges and these would always give preference to Fascists, particularly to those longest inscribed in the lists.

The Corporate State was, however, by no means complete with the Corporations, the Charter, and the Labour Court established for the settlement of labour disputes. It was necessary that it should 'bury the lie of universal democratic



VIII. TOWN AND COUNTRY IN TUSCANY

1. SIENA, SHOWING THE CATHEDRAL (*Black Star*)

2. PRATOVECCHIO AND RIVER ARNO (*E.N.A.*)

suffrage'. In 1928 a new Electoral Law was decreed by which the Chamber was in future to be chosen as follows: The Corporations and certain other associations were to submit to the Fascist Grand Council 1,000 names from which the Council would choose 400. The list of 400 was to be presented to the electorate to be accepted or rejected as it stood. The vote was now only to be given to men recognized by the Fascists as exercising a social function; there were vague provisions for the nomination of an alternative list in the unthinkable circumstance of the first one being rejected. 'Elections' were held in 1929 and in 1934, according to this, the 'plebiscitary' system. But even this was too democratic, and in 1938 it was decreed that the assembly of the Corporations should actually replace the Chamber; even plebiscites had become undesirable, and in 1939 the New Order was at last realized when the Senate (still nominated according to Charles Albert's *Statuto*) met with the Assembly of the Corporations.

It has been seen that the local administration of united Italy had been over-centralized, but there had nevertheless been elected municipal and provincial Councils with full grievance-airing possibilities until 1925, when local elections were held with 'unsatisfactory' results. Between 1925 and 1928 all elected local bodies were replaced by nominated committees, and the Prefects, hitherto criticized by the mayors elected by the Communes, were henceforward supported by *Podestà* appointed by the Ministry of the Interior in place of the mayors. This was the lining to the corporate mantle.

At the same time the penal code was grimly stiffened up by Rocco; it was necessary not only to encourage obedience but also to put the disobedient out of circulation. Long sentences of imprisonment were now easily incurred and the death penalty re-introduced. Education and the press were increasingly used as instruments to inculcate obedience, and a *rapprochement* with the Church was arranged with the same end in view.

In the 'thirties education was entrusted also with the inculcation of Fascist doctrine. For years the Duce had adroitly put off the demands of a public which loved to project elaborate political programmes, even if it tired of them before their execution. With his infinitely heterogeneous following and his own Socialist-Syndicalist past, he had contented himself with

such declarations as 'Our myth is the Nation, our myth is the greatness of the Nation. To this, which we shall make into a reality, we subordinate everything else.' (1922.) But in 1932 he consented to contribute an article on the doctrine of Fascism to the *Enciclopedia Italiana*.

> The man of Fascism [he or, some say, Gentile wrote] is an individual who is nation and fatherland, which is a moral law, binding together individuals and the generations into a tradition and mission, suppressing the instinct for a life enclosed within the brief round of pleasure in order to restore within duty a higher life free from the limits of time and space; a life in which the individual, through the denial of himself, through the sacrifice of his own private interests, through death itself, realizes that completely spiritual existence in which his value as a man lies. Fascism is opposed to Democracy, which equates the nation to the majority, lowering it to the level of that majority; nevertheless it is the purest form of democracy if the nation is conceived, as it should be, qualitatively and not quantitatively, as the most powerful idea (most powerful because most moral, most coherent, most true) which acts within the nation as the conscience and the will of a few, even of One, which ideal tends to become active within the conscience and the will of all—that is to say, of all those who rightly constitute a nation by reason of nature, history or race. . . . Not a race, nor a geographically determined region, but as a community historically perpetuating itself, a multitude unified by a single idea which is the will to existence and to power: consciousness of itself, personality. . . . Fascism . . . believes neither in the possibility nor in the utility of perpetual peace.[1]

These are the essential pronouncements, together with a Sorel-Gentile reference to 'the pragmatic veins in Fascism, its will to power, its will to be, its attitude in the face of the fact of "violence" and of its own courage', and the important assertion that 'For Fascism the State is an absolute before which individuals and groups are relative'. We learn from Mussolini also that Fascism is the conquering creed of the century.

What of the Corporate State in economic practice? The Labour Charter confirmed the price of the big industrialists'

[1] I have used the translation in M. Oakeshott's *Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 1939.

support of Mussolini, i.e. that private enterprise recovered the 'responsibility' which the working class had wished to share and was freed from interference so long as things went well. Between 1923 and 1927 Italian industry boomed and textiles developed the new artificial-silk branch, for which the best-known firm came to be Marinotti's Snia Viscosa. Further the lira was weak and unsteady, which gave exporters an advantage. In 1927, however, Mussolini insisted upon deflation and the lira was stabilized at the relatively low figure of 90 to the pound sterling.[1] As the world boom continued, Italian industry, after a crisis of its own, continued to develop on a reduced scale with it, thus suffering less than other countries from the shock of 1929; the increasing production of water-power until then,

in 1914–15	3,100,000,000	kilowatts
,, 1924	6,500,000,000	,,
,, 1927	7,600,000,000	,,
,, 1929	8,900,000,000	,,

gives some indication of the general development, while the importation of coal went up to 14,603,000 tons in 1929 (about the same in 1927, less in 1928). Deflation had emphasized the preponderance of imports over exports—about 3:2 in value in 1929—for the more big-scale industry developed in Italy, the more top-heavy was her industrial edifice liable to become,[2] owing to her lack of basic raw materials such as coal, iron and oil. Her colonial possessions aggravated the trouble, for they imported far more than they produced for export. Italian industry had now reached a culminating point and a momentous decision was long overdue. Italy might have continued to build up heavy industry on a big scale without raw materials as Switzerland had done if, as some Italians advocated, she had pursued a modest, pacific, almost neutral policy which would give scope to her natural commercial genius, keep foreign raw materials and markets available, and attract tourists to bring in the money her own people lacked. Or on the other hand

[1] Mussolini chose this figure in order to snub France. The depreciation of sterling in 1931 brought it down to about 60, but a Franco-Italian depreciation in 1936 brought the lira back to about 90.

[2] Exports and imports about balanced in 1901 after which the imports raced ahead.

she could make self-sufficiency her unrealizable aim. Fascism could but choose the path of *autarchia*, and this in fact clinched its alliance with the biggest industrialists who were eager to supply the arms and the uniforms for the wars which this policy brought in sight. In justice it must be added that the slump banished the idea of international free trade and drove every country, willingly or not, back upon its own resources: after 1929 Italy could scarcely have taken any other decision, whereas in the early 'twenties an internationalist approach to economic policy was the obvious line for Italy to follow, as it should be now. In any case there was one gap which could never be bridged. For all her water-power and for all the efforts she now made to develop the poor-quality coal of Sardinia and Istria, Italy could never do without some twelve million tons of hard coal from abroad. In 1929 she imported 48·7 per cent. of this coal from Great Britain and 37·9 per cent. from Germany, but what might not happen if this equilibrium were disturbed?

If the impact of the 1929 slump was less catastrophic than its impact upon Germany or Britain, it nevertheless brought about a critical situation. Judging, however, by Mussolini's remarks in the *Enciclopedia* in 1932, or, for instance, in a speech in honour of the Corporations in 1934, the Fascist State stepped in only too proudly and gladly, almost as if it were agreeably surprised to find so much justification for its claims. In practice the chief measure undertaken was that the State rescued the big banks at the price of acquiring complete control over them; from 1929 onward only the *Banca d'Italia* could issue notes. (It is interesting that the *Banca Commerciale Italiana*, originally sponsored by the Deutsche Bank before 1915, was nevertheless to finance an important movement against Mussolini in the war which he insisted upon fighting on Germany's behalf later on.)

From 1934, then, the policy of *autarchia* became the order of the day, with high tariffs and often the prohibition of imports from various countries until reciprocal quota arrangements could be made. By 1938 industrial production was still below the 1929 level, but in 1939 it surpassed it; this was due, however, to the increase in the production of armaments and everything to do with war, and was primarily linked with

Fascist foreign policy. As for the proportion of imports to exports, it remained obstinately approximate to the 3:2 figure; the only notable change was an increase of the proportion of finished goods exported and a corresponding reduction of their importation in favour of raw materials.[1]

The corollary of this industrial situation was the attempt to make Italy agriculturally self-supporting. The Fascist régime invested large sums in land reclamation and technical improvement, and put huge duties on the import of wheat. But it could not 'win the battle of the grain'; except when the harvest is phenomenally good Italy simply cannot produce enough wheat for her growing population, unless spaghetti should lose its national importance or some revolutionary reform fire the peasants with unheard-of zeal.

To sum up, the economic results of the attempt to set up a Corporate State were the following: the enormous concerns, like Fiat or Ansaldo or Montecatini, which were important to Mussolini in preparation for war, were strong enough to bargain directly with the Fascist Party and impose their policy on the Corporation concerned; they were rich enough, in fact, to bribe the Party with huge donations to its charitable undertakings. In this way they established a largely monopolistic system at the expense of smaller concerns. All this sent up their costs of production, which sent up prices and the cost of living. It may here be noted that, in spite of all its yearnings after social justice, the Fascist State increased indirect and decreased direct taxation, thus increasing the relative burden of taxation for the poor. At the same time the expansion of the giant concerns, though their factories were not all concentrated in one town, did tend to concentrate increasing human masses in big industrial cities, in spite of Party talk about keeping the people on the land. This tendency was stimulated by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, leaving post-Fascist Italy to inherit an inflated industrial population.

Fascist propagandists always had a great deal to say about the employment their State provided by initiating public works, and the care it lavished upon the working people in their leisure time; their foreign friends always had a great deal to

[1] For the financing of the system see Ivor Thomas, *The Problem of Italy*, Routledge, 1946.

say about how they had 'tidied-up the country'. It is true that beautiful motor-roads were built, marshes drained, new public buildings constructed and strange clearances undertaken, like the construction of the Via della Conciliazione which has made St. Peter's seem to have fallen from heaven to earth, but the original programme could only be partially fulfilled. It is true that in 1925 a national Maternity Organization began to do good work. It is true that the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (founded also in 1925) provided music, theatre, travel, and certain social services more or less gratis for some two million clerks and workmen in their spare time. As for 'tidying-up', perhaps the best things the Fascists did were to insist upon certain pieces of social consideration which human beings (not only Italians) are apt to forget—they fined people for putting their feet on seats in trains which might presently be occupied by an innocent female in a light dress. But it never occurred to the Fascists' foreign friends that trains in Giolitti's Italy had run on time and that in a way Mussolini cashed in upon the prosperity which Giolitti had bequeathed and which the war and post-war years had not entirely dispersed.

The Fascists also had a great deal to say about Empire. Early in 1922 the Army had begun to follow up the Libyan war by pushing Italian authority inland in North Africa. But one cannot make deserts habitable, and though there was subsequently a great deal of talk about the colonization of Libya, it could only accommodate some thousands of Italian families costing the State a good deal in initial outlay. In November 1938, incidentally, on the analogy of French North Africa, the Libyan provinces were declared an integral part of the Kingdom of Italy, and all Libyans Italian citizens.

In the Preamble to the Fascist Party Statute (1929) it was written that the Party 'has always thought of itself as in a state of war, at first in order to combat those who were stifling the will of the nation, to-day and from henceforth to defend and increase the power of the Italian people'. It was obvious, indeed, that the Fascists would wish to wipe out the 'shame of Adua' and link Eritrea with Somalia as originally planned in the days when Menelik seemed amenable. From the 'autarchic', and even the population, point of view there was something to be hoped from Abyssinia, the climate of which was on

the whole healthy, and which was agriculturally fertile, able to produce serious quantities of three (for Italy vitally important) things—corn, cotton, and coffee. There was also a good deal of nostalgic talk about oil, rubber, and of course coal, but very little evidence to justify it. Thus Mussolini considered it worth his while to defy the League of Nations and attack Abyssinia in October 1935; by the spring of 1936 resistance was broken, in May Badoglio occupied Addis Ababa of which he was made Duke, and Victor Emmanuel was declared Emperor of Ethiopia. For the next few years, as in the case of their other Colonies, the Italians found themselves exporting more to Abyssinia than they could import from her, and the Second World War was upon them before any serious readjustment could be made.

CHAPTER VIII

CHURCH, STATE, AND EDUCATION IN ITALY

(a) *Church and State*

THE medieval conflict between the two great universalisms, the spiritual and the lay, Papacy and Empire, had racked Italy with wars and given every communal faction the opportunity to name itself Guelph or Ghibelline. The last remains of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation had been cleared away in 1806 by the first Napoleon, who, three years later, annexed the Papal States, symbol and safeguard—in theory at least—of the political independence of the Church on earth. But though he so powerfully stimulated the search for a new political structure for Italy, the Catholic Church eluded Napoleon: when he made the Pope his prisoner he himself became something of a prisoner of the Pope. In 1815 the peace settlement restored the States of the Church, the Papacy with its Temporal Power. In 1831 came the patriot rising in the Romagna, in which Louis Napoleon took part, and which brought Austrian and French garrisons until 1838. Then came the gospel of Gioberti and Rosmini and the brief day of a liberal Papacy in the person of Pio Nono, who spent the rest of his pontificate buried in the Ultramontane obscurantism of the *Quanta cura* Encyclical of 1864. In the eighty theses of the Syllabus of that year, declaring that 'the pontiff neither can be nor ought to be reconciled with progress, liberalism and modern civilization', he condemned so many of the accepted attitudes of the age that it seemed as if the influence of the Catholic Church could not long survive. The situation, from an Italian point of view, was doubly complicated by the political significance of Rome and by the confusion of mysticisms in Napoleon III's mind. To Mazzini and Garibaldi and the patriots of the *Risorgimento* as a whole, United Italy was unthinkable without the end of the Temporal Power and Rome as capital—history dictated this dogma which succeeding generations may have come to regret. Napoleon III,

in the days of his Presidency of the Second Republic, had sent a French army to Rome to drive out Mazzini and Garibaldi, because if the French did not do so, the Austrians would. In this way the French Emperor's interest became identified with the worst enemy of the Italian unity he had always advocated, and with advancing years the influence of his *dévote* wife divided even his sympathy: so late as 1859, at Villafranca, he accepted an Austrian proposal of Gioberti's federal plan, years after Pius IX's state of mind had made it wholly inapplicable. Two-thirds of the Pope's territory was now in Piedmontese hands, and at Christmas, it is interesting to note, Napoleon himself was advocating a Papal State consisting of Rome and no more than the territory immediately around it. Fortunately for the future, Pio Nono never set up the Temporal Power as a dogma and contented himself at the Vatican Council (1869–70) with completing the Counter-Reformation by insisting upon Papal infallibility, with, indeed, 'proclaiming the absolute nature of the Pope's spiritual dominion almost at the very moment that the last remnant of his secular Kingdom was wrested from his grasp'.[1] *Force majeure* removed the French garrison from Rome and the path lay open for the armies of Victor Emmanuel. Pius IX refused to recognize the 'Cisalpine usurper' upon whom he rained anathema until the end of their respective days.

'The Catholic Apostolic and Roman religion is the sole religion of the State.' This was the first sentence of Charles Albert's *Statuto* and had certainly been insisted upon by that king himself. Later, with Cavour, the aim to be realized was defined in the Liberal formula of 'a Free Church in a Free State'. Since the Pope was intransigent the Italian Government had to legalize the position as best it could, and provisionally passed the so-called Law of Guarantees, according to which the State retained certain controls over the Church, but left the latter virtually free with regard to the crucial matter of ecclesiastical appointments.

For the next half-century Church and State did their best to send one another to Coventry though, since Italians were involved on both sides, things did not really work out in so

[1] D. A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy*, Oxford University Press, 1941.

cut-and-dried a fashion: there were always clericals who condemned the Temporal Power and anti-clericals with Giobertian leanings. Exciting incidents sometimes occurred, as in 1889 when Crispi approved the ostentatious tercentenary celebration of Giordano Bruno, whose statue was erected in the Campo de' Fiori, the very spot where by the orders of the Church he had been burnt. In some ways the *Dissidio* suited both parties quite well. The new State was able to adopt completely secular educational and marriage laws, and sometimes amused itself by giving to unfrocked priests appointments in the State Universities from which the orthodox priest was debarred. With regard to foreign policy, in 1905 the Italian Prime Minister Fortis privately defined the position as follows:

> There is one voice which is heard and obeyed from one end of the world to the other, the voice of the Pope. It is of great value to us that that voice is Italian. But that is possible only on one condition: it is necessary that the world be convinced that the Pope, though an Italian, is international, independent of all influence. The day on which that conviction might be clouded by a doubt, the Papacy would not be of the least use to us. Hence our policy. We must be on bad terms with the Pope . . . bad enough to make it clear that the Papacy has nothing to do with the Italian Government.[1]

It is claimed that Leo XIII, the Pope who brought the Catholic Church back into relation with the modern world, held a similar opinion from the Papal point of view.

The first important attempt at reconciliation was made during the Peace Conference in 1919, but the establishment of the Fascist régime, once the Pope was convinced of its stability, brought an agreement really into sight. The old atheist and priest-baiter, Mussolini, could not tolerate even a spiritual State within the State and was bound to try to harness Catholicism to Fascism, the more so since the Church seems to have been depending increasingly upon American and British funds. Pius XI, however, held that only by clearly defining a boundary between Church and Fascist State could he now preserve the independence of Catholicism. This caused him

[1] Quoted by Binchy—op. cit. Fortis's remarks were not published until many years later.

to make the 1929 agreement, which, in some people's view, involved the policy of the Vatican far too closely with that of a temporary government of Italy.

The Lateran instruments of 1929 consisted of the Treaty or *Conciliazione*, which recognized the Roman question as settled, and of a Concordat: one dealt with the past, the other with the future, but Pius XI insisted that they should be regarded as parts of one whole. By the Treaty a Vatican sovereign State was re-established, but of Lilliputian dimensions; it embraces 109 acres with St. Peter's as its centre; the Piazza with the Bernini colonnade is Papal territory, but in general lies open for Italian feet to tread without any frontier formalities. Secondly the Treaty arranged for the payment of an indemnity of 1,750,000,000 lire to the Pope for the various losses inflicted upon him since 1870, and this involved the transfer to the Papacy of Italian Government stock for more than half the sum in question.

By the Concordat, Catholicism was restored as the religion of the State, a return, that is to say, to Charles Albert—but this applied only to Italy, not to her Empire. The Law of Guarantees had sanctioned a State veto upon the nomination of the clergy; this was revoked by the Concordat, according to which the ecclesiastical authorities only had privately to pre-notify the representatives of the State, which thus retained an obscure theoretical veto; though it is not known to have been used, anti-Fascist Catholics have objected that Mussolini might in this fashion have vetoed a future Pope. On all marriage questions, the attitude of the Church was in future to prevail (this, of course, means that divorce cannot be admitted in Italy), and civil marriage was no longer to be legally necessary. Religious instruction, which had been made compulsory in the elementary schools by the Gentile law of 1923, was now made compulsory in the secondary schools as well, and the Church could object to university appointments it disliked. On the other hand the suppression of the Catholic scouts and the extension of the Fascist organization of youth meant that Fascist precepts implanted in the *Balilla* mind far outshone the religious teaching at school; and, as the Fascist training of youth became compulsory, the Church was faced with the planting of Fascist notions in the minds of its future priests.

The Lateran Agreements did, in fact, bind the Catholic Church to the Fascist State fairly closely, both economically and morally. This did not conflict with Catholic doctrine with regard to the powers that be, and, although Catholics were divided in their reactions towards Fascism, they not only detested Marxism, but their attitude towards democratic principles was indicated by the dictum: 'The evils of Fascism are accidental; those of democracy are substantial.' It was only in 1938 when Mussolini succumbed to Hitler's dictation and adopted and enacted racialism that Fascism became unacceptable to the Church.

(b) *The Schools*

The strikingly uneven distribution of wealth is to some extent reflected in the development of education in Italy. At the time of her unification 73 per cent. of her population was illiterate, though an astonishing number of the oldest and most distinguished seats of learning were to be found within her frontiers.

The *Lex Casati*, a decree promulgated in November 1859 by Victor Emmanuel II, was in 1877 applied with certain modifications to the Kingdom as a whole. According to this the communes were made responsible for the provision of free, compulsory elementary schools for children from 6 to 9; in larger centres, where there were secondary schools, the elementary schools were also to provide education for all children from 9 to 11. Like much Italian legislation, this was only partially realized; twenty-five years later only 65 per cent. of the children between 6 and 9 were in fact being educated as the law required. Nevertheless, a noticeable improvement had been achieved, for at the same time under 50 per cent. of the population over six years of age was now illiterate, the lowest percentage being 17·7 for Piedmont (and Lombardy was much the same) and the highest 78·7 for Calabria. From that day to this the possibility of free schooling for children from 9 to 11 has remained uncertain—in spite of many protests—and sometimes in the villages it is non-existent.[1] Since the early twen-

[1] Italy later agreed, at an International Conference at Washington, to free, compulsory education up to the age of 14, but has never found the means to bring it about.

tieth century working people have to some extent made up for this with the help of Socialist Party institutions and other forms of voluntary evening school or popular university.

For parents who could afford, unlike the big peasant and workman mass of the population, not only to do without their children's help, but also to pay a fairly low school fee, a choice had to be made when their children reached 11. They could either be sent to so-called middle or classical schools, the *ginnasi* and *licei* chosen by the big majority, or to technical schools introduced by the Left in the 'eighties, or to schools where they would be trained to become elementary teachers; there was also a choice between State schools and private schools, most of the latter being some sort of Catholic organization. It was necessary to pass State examinations in order to enter the public service or become a student at the universities.

The quarrel with the Vatican kept Italian education a lay affair in the State schools, though some of them provided religious instruction all along. The lay or secular emphasis was increased when in 1911, owing to the unequal standards prevailing in different parts of the country, nearly all the elementary schools were put under central Government control. It should perhaps be observed that while school education on an average was appreciably cheaper than in England, up to this very day no school scholarship system of any kind has been introduced except on paper.[1] This is an example of how tenaciously, in spite of many egalitarian cravings not only among the poor, the eighteenth-century conception of education as a privilege held its ground in Italy—education, that is, as distinct from the mere overcoming of illiteracy.

An abuse which the 1911 centralization failed to alleviate was the extremely low rate of pay for elementary school-teachers, which has meant that men are less and less willing to be employed in this way, leaving a growing majority of women teachers[2]—the classes are mostly boys and girls together. The price confusion of the first peace year, 1945–6, in Italy aggravated this situation, so that an elementary male

[1] See *Carta della Scuola* below. Under Fascism the children of Party members sometimes had privileges.

[2] In 1901–2 the number of female students training to be elementary school-teachers was 19,044, while the males numbered only 1,329.

or female school-teacher in Lombardy, after nine years' service, was receiving just about half the pay of an unskilled factory hand.

Meanwhile, in the early days of the twentieth century there was a ferment of discussion of reform in teaching methods. Like some of their contemporaries in England, Radice and the other reformers complained that teaching was stifled by what was in Italy a Jesuit inheritance, too narrowly classical a curriculum, and too little initiative left to the pupil. Many new plans were projected, but it was not until 1923, when Professor Gentile was Minister of Education, that a number of them were actually codified into the series of laws called the Gentile Reform. It was rather by accident than by any Fascist design, indeed it was before Fascism had crystallized into any clear shape, that these reforms became law and were designated by the name of the man, then still a Liberal, who came to be Fascism's apostle. The general tendency of the Reform, not all of which was carried out in practice, was to give greater freedom in choice of subjects to the individual pupils, while, in accordance with Gentile's Idealism, increasing State control of the schools. The technical schools were abolished and replaced by scientific middle schools (*licei*) and by training schools for trades. The Minister was in urgent need of more secondary schools, and therefore gave State recognition to about two hundred religious schools in return for their acceptance of control; this meant that they were subsidized if still taxed. In accordance with Gentile's religious philosophy (he considered that orthodox religion fitted an early stage of development), religious instruction was now made compulsory in the elementary schools, while the secondary or middle schools were specifically excluded from this change until the Concordat in 1929.

Gentile did not remain in office very long and much of his Reform, which brought confusion into the *licei* but benefited the elementary schools in several ways, otherwise remained on paper; from 1926 onwards, moreover, education was more and more distorted by the harsher Fascism which had now unmasked itself. In this year a stop was put to the further opening of non-State institutions for secondary education. From now on, the machinery was gradually constructed for the

Fascist education of every young Italian from the nursery until manhood, and school instruction—like the Catholic Scout movement which was later suppressed—was obliged to compete with the compulsory enrolment of every child from 4 to 8 years old in the *Figli* or *Figlie della Lupa*, from 8 to 14 in the *Balilla* or *Piccole Italiane*, and from 14 to 18 in the *Avanguardisti* or *Giovani Italiane*. Physical and civic education were henceforth to be imparted through these institutions in what had previously been regarded as spare time. Thus by the time the Concordat imposed religious instruction upon all secondary schools, the effect could only be to confuse the more tractable child completely between the Catholic doctrine provided at school and the glorification of violence preached a little later on the same day. Children rather of the 'tough' variety willingly absorbed the Fascism, which always had a pirate-game appeal to the immature mind, and sneered at the religious instruction, which, by the way, was thrown together with all other subjects into one school text-book, the *libro unico*.

This state of affairs was attenuated as it always would be in Italy (in sharp contrast with the literal totalitarianism of the Germans) by a certain inefficiency on the one hand, and on the other by the obstruction provided by large numbers of people who accepted Fascism because their families would otherwise starve, but whose inherited humanism gently resisted Fascist pressure all the time; it must be recorded that one or two of the most enlightened educationists were not at first averse to the *Balilla* organization, which they hoped would introduce a more practical element into education. It was characteristic of the general situation that Bottai, a cultivated cynic who was by then Fascist in little more than name, became Minister of Education in the later 'thirties; it was in his day that further reforms were introduced, to be finally summed up in February 1939 in the *Carta della Scuola*. A year or so before this piece of codification Bottai had identified himself with plans for making the teaching of history, for instance, more interesting by its study through the writings of the period under discussion—a plan which gave scope fo. a tendentious choice of texts —and with a project for the introduction of practical work, not into the time reserved for *Balilla* activities, but into the hard-pressed hours still reserved for the school. In 1937, also, all

the Fascist youth organizations for children up to 18, hitherto collectively entitled *Opera Nazionale Balilla* received the new and impressive name of *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* (G.I.L.).

While the military character of the G.I.L. was newly emphasized, the *Carta della Scuola* now decreed the fusion of school and youth movement. It declared that

> In the Fascist order, the scholastic and political age coincide. School, G.I.L. and G.U.F.[1] together form one instrument of Fascist education. The obligation to frequent them constitutes the scholastic service which is undertaken by the citizen from his earliest age up to twenty-one years. (Declaration II.)
>
> Access to studies and the further pursuit of them are regulated solely according to the capacity and attitude demonstrated.... The State colleges guarantee the continuation of the studies of capable, not of well-to-do, young people. (Declaration III.)
>
> From the elementary school upwards, practical work is to have its part in every curriculum. Special shifts of work, regulated and directed by the scholastic authority, in workshops and laboratories, in the fields, on the sea, are conducive to a social and productive consciousness fitting to the corporative order. (Declaration V.)

Neither the practical work nor the availability of continued studies for the capable rather than the well-to-do ever materialized in the short time left to the régime.

Another clause prepared for an important reversal of the measures of Gentile by cutting down the possibilities for choice of studies at the universities, so that a child who had been sent to a classical *liceo* at the age of 11 or 12 would only be allowed from such a school to proceed to study arts, law, or political science at a university. It is true that a subdivision in secondary education was now envisaged between middle school (*scuola media*) and *liceo*, so that the choice in type of *liceo* should not have to be made until the end of the *scuola media* to which a child would go from 11 to 14. The only paragraph of the *Carta*, already anticipated in a decree issued eight months earlier, which came into practice was declaration XXVI. This created the *Ente Nazionale per l'istruzione*

[1] *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti*, see below.

media e superiore (E.N.I.M.S.) as 'the organ of propulsion, co-ordination and control of all non-Royal [i.e. non-State] Schools'. The intended effect of this was clearly the *Gleichschaltung* of the so-called private schools, which, reduced though they were, had retained a slight degree of independence. It was noted with interest by Catholic commentators that the *Carta della Scuola*, which was approved by the Fascist Grand Council on 9 February 1939, was not published until 15 February, five days after the death of Pius XI, the Pope with whom the Concordat had been made.

(c) *The Universities*

The exuberant wealth of universities in Italy is easily explained by Italian history. It is claimed that the school of medicine at Salerno near Naples, which owed something to the late survival of the Greek language in Southern Italy, was the first recognizable university in Europe; it certainly existed in the ninth century and was already famous in the eleventh. About this time legal studies also became important at Bologna and Pavia,[1] although the universities of those towns do not claim to have existed as such before the second half of the twelfth century, making them roughly contemporaneous with the Sorbonne and Oxford. These universities seem to have begun as guilds of mainly 'foreign', i.e. extra-regional, students who were obliged to band together in order to protect themselves. In 1158 Frederick Barbarossa granted certain privileges to several groups of non-Bolognese students in Bologna, where the residential college was soon to be heard of; one of these groups or 'universities' was Tuscan, another Lombard; others came from further afield. In time Barbarossa's charter was extended to all the universities of Italy. In 1222 a migration of students from Bologna led to the foundation of the University of Padua, where Tasso was a student and Galileo professor of mathematics from 1592 to 1610. The universities of Naples, Modena, Rome, Perugia, and Parma all arose in the early thirteenth century, and those of Florence, Pisa, Siena, and Turin in the fourteenth, when the university of Pavia was also re-

[1] Pavia University under the Fascists did, a little extravagantly, celebrate 825 as the year of its foundation.

founded by Duke Galeazzo II (1361). With varying fortunes, university life continued through Renaissance and foreign domination. In the late eighteenth century two of the pioneers of modern science were at work: Volta who made his first electrical experiments at Pavia University, and the physicist, Avogadro, who was a professor at Turin. To the philosophical tradition at Naples sufficient reference has already been made, while the importance of the Italian schools of jurisprudence in preserving their inheritance, both of civil and canon law, can only with difficulty be exaggerated.

In the first period of unity seventeen universities had been taken over from their former rulers by the new Italian State, at Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Genoa, Macerata, Messina, Modena, Naples, Padua, Parma, Palermo, Pavia, Pisa, Rome, Sassari, Siena, Turin. Of these Naples was the largest with nearly 5,000 students early this century, Turin and Rome coming second and third with 3,500 and 2,500 respectively. In addition there were small universities at that time not recognized by the State at Camerino, Ferrara, Perugia, and Urbino, and, further, a number of engineering and commercial and other technical institutes—of these a commercial higher school founded by Bocconi in Milan in 1902 was later recognized as a university and has become increasingly important. A few residential colleges were also taken over by the new Italian Government, the Ghislieri and Borromeo Colleges founded at Pavia in Counter-Reformation days, and the Scuola Normale at Pisa founded as a branch of the Paris École Normale in the French days of 1813 and revived by the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1846. These were the only examples until the present day of any attempt at a scholarship system, as in each case the students competed for admission and then received their keep and education gratis; they were themselves expected to become teachers in the universities or at least in the senior classes at schools.

In the fully recognized universities the medieval tradition continued in the sense that law and medicine were the favourite subjects of study—every one who hoped to become a State official above a certain grade required a doctorate in law. A university education was, as elsewhere on the Continent, relatively cheap, and soon after the unification the number of

university students proceeded to multiply in an almost alarming fashion; this phenomenal increase has, with the interruptions caused by two wars, continued up to the present time. Whereas the number of university students totalled 13,065 in 1882, of whom 4,801 were studying law and 4,428 medicine, in 1902 it totalled 27,900 of whom 8,385 were studying law and 9,055 medicine.

Professor Gentile was aware of this tendency and of the threat to standards of work if the number of students continued to increase, and it seems that he therefore aimed at a reduction in the number of the universities. Despite Fascist contempt for the intellectual life, exactly the opposite, in fact, took place. In the Fascist period new State Universities were opened at Milan, Bari, and also at Florence where the university founded in 1321 had, after a very brilliant career, disappeared in 1472 at the height of the Florentine Renaissance when dull legal studies were certainly at a discount. In the Fascist period, also, Ferrara and Perugia became State institutions, Camerino and Urbino were recognized as 'free' universities, and the acquisition of Trieste had brought yet another name on to the list. Owing to the anti-Clerical attitude prevalent among the professors employed in the State Universities during the period of the Roman Question, there had for many years been a movement aiming at the foundation of a Catholic University free of State control; the efforts of that inconstant moralist, Padre Gemelli, to achieve this were at last crowned with success, and the 'free' Catholic University *del Sacro Cuore* was founded in Milan some two years after the end of the First World War. The Gentile legislation disappointed the Catholics by extending a certain State control to the 'free' universities as well.

As time went on Fascism showed itself more and more hostile to the free spirit of learning, the humanist heritage of Italy. The universities also became to a large extent prisoners of the Party, first with the oath to 'the King, his royal successors and the Fascist régime' which in 1931 was demanded from every professor in the State Universities, then with the compulsory enrolment of the students in the para-military *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti* (G.U.F.); all other young people from 18 to 21 were obliged to join the *Giovani Fascisti*. Each

spring, every young person who had followed the prescribed courses and reached the age of 21 was then at the *Leva Fascista* received with suitable Fascist rites into the Party. Only G.U.F. members might return to their work, while every one else was conscripted for full military service.

The faults of the Italian educational system before Fascism were, many of them, common to Europe as a whole. The fact that the big majority of university and school-teachers were civil servants had a stereotyping effect and was bound later on to place these people at the mercy of a totalitarian régime. Most types of education were cheaper than in England and there were less rigid class distinctions between different types of school; on the other hand the working-class child, however brilliant he might be, had little hope of education beyond the age of eleven. At the same time more and more rather mediocre people crowded to the universities solely in order to qualify for State jobs, to be turned out, later on, in ever-growing quantities of ubiquitous *avvocati* or as superfluous medical men.

Fascism in the educational sphere, as in every other, diminished the virtues and aggravated the vices of the system. True it caused new schools and the new *Città Universitaria* outside Rome to be built, but these were old projects which any other government might have carried out. The whole educational machine was now devoted to the production of good soldiers, either military or bureaucratic, who would obey with energy but neither reflect nor criticize. It might have been expected that the writing down of 'intellectualism' would have led as in Germany to a restriction of the number of university students, and this, in the interests of better quality, might have been advantageous. On the contrary, under Mussolini the number of students continued to rise steeply, while the proportion of people who became students for any other purpose than to qualify as Fascist State officials dwindled into insignificance. The lack of contact between student and professor, always a Continental fault by Oxford or Cambridge standards, became even more marked.

Students had played no small part in the rise of Fascism, and until the late 'thirties the student state of mind was overwhemingly Fascist, with certain rare and remarkable exceptions; it may be noted that the ban on foreign travel probably

increased a foolishly chauvinist state of mind in many young people. The catch-phrase *Libro e moschetto, Fascista perfetto* ('A book and a gun make a perfect Fascist') gave its name to a student newspaper, which furiously attacked inadequate Fascism, especially among professors. For among them, on the other hand, in strong contrast to the Nazi enthusiasms of the German academic world, there was a very different spirit, especially after the early years of ambiguity had passed, when even a Croce had failed for a moment to grasp the full significance of the Mussolini revolution. In 1931 a small number of professors such as Venturi, De Sanctis, De Ruggiero, and the Ruffinis, father and son, had the courage (as well as, be it said in no unkind spirit, the essential economic means) to refuse to take the oath. Others who remained in the service of the Fascist State yet taught in a spirit diametrically opposed to it, and, later on, played leading parts in the resistance to the German occupier—Padua University, in particular, was in this way to become glorious. The cynicism and diminishing faith of Fascists like Bottai, and Mussolini's lip-service to the glories of a classical and even humanist tradition, provided various loopholes for Italian ingenuity. Indeed, a certain intellectual snobbery induced the 'First Roman' to allow foreign literature of a quite un-Fascist character to be translated into Italian. Thus anti-Fascists could keep in touch with the world outside Italy.

Thus on the eve of the Second World War the mind of Italy had been fettered but not strangled.

CHAPTER IX

DEBIT ACCOUNT

WHAT does Italy to-day owe to Fascism? Had the country been genuinely unified or purified by Mussolini? Had he achieved an equilibrium between town and country, or North and South, or between its social classes?

It has been seen that the Italian Corporate State had made industrial life harder for the very poor and more profitable for the very rich, while tending to depress or crush the small industrial concern which is natural to Italy, with her restricted home markets and supplies.

The agricultural population had come off very little better. A certain number of peasants had been settled on the land reclaimed near Rome and elsewhere; some of Fascism's keenest sponsors in 1921–2 had, however, been the big agrarians, and nothing had been done except on paper [1] to tackle the question of the *latifondi*, though as a system it worked as a brake upon production except in rare cases and had, indeed, caused a serious and continuous deterioration in Sicilian productivity. The undercurrent of resentment and latent land-hunger of the many poor peasants with dwarf holdings was in no way assuaged by the Corporative State.

Already before 1915 the proportion of small State officials, clerks, shopkeepers, all that for lack of a better name we usually call the lower-middle class, had been very high in Italy; I have referred to one explanation of this, the large number of small country towns. These people, as elsewhere, were very susceptible not only to Nationalist talk which gave them an agreeable sense of importance, but also to Fascist railing against Marxism: they wanted to keep 'above' the working class. Their sons were already overcrowding the Universities in order to prove themselves to be *intellettuali* and not workmen. Fascism, without giving them much other satisfaction, increased the number of small State jobs in at least two ways—by centralizing the

[1] In July 1939 the Duce announced that 500,000 hectares in Sicily were to be converted from large estate into small holding.

administration even further, and by creating the Corporative machine, which alone involved the services of a personnel of something like half a million; the Party itself, apart from the Corporations, also employed a number of servants of this kind. This left a huge burden behind for a defeated and bankrupt Italy after the Second World War.

Under Mussolini *podestà* and Prefect referred everything to Rome, which expanded with quite unnatural rapidity; it left Naples behind and overtook Milan in size (1938 approximate population figures: Rome 1,269,000, Milan 1,197,000, Naples 915,000). Northern indignation waxed high over the swarms of *funzionari* now drawn into the demoralizing atmosphere of Rome, the city still played up as a symbol of heroism by the Fascists. On the other hand the number of Southern State officials who invaded the North continued to increase. Thus, increased centralization brought greater friction without greater efficiency.

How did Fascism, 'most moral, most true . . .' actually compare with the system of Giolitti? In the early years of the century it was rare for Italian politicians to be personally corrupt, perhaps rarer than in France, but political bargains were the regular thing—one voted for Giolitti in return for a local grant. In Fascist days that sort of bargain could not be, because one had to vote for Mussolini anyway. It had then become axiomatic that all jobs depended upon subscribing to the Party in more senses than one, a compulsory prostitution in itself of every one who held other views. Secondly we have seen that powerful employers obtained industrial monopolies in return for subscription to Fascist Party funds. Thirdly these funds were then used to provide charity or entertainment (*Dopolavoro*) in such a way that the recipient should feel an obligation to the Party. In fact Fascism made charity into a political weapon, a practice which the Nazis developed so that it is still in far too frequent use on the Continent, the more since its dangers increase in starvation periods. In the actual matter of local government itself, there were no elected bodies where local needs could be discussed, and the *podestà* or the Prefect was afraid of the authorities in Rome. If something needed to be done its champions might succeed by subscribing to the Party's charitable funds, but as the years

passed by it was more and more a matter of getting some one in Rome to offer the Minister concerned or his Secretary something they wanted. In parenthesis it should be added that Mussolini, who was sometimes Minister for nearly everything, is not believed to have accepted favours himself: only in the last year or so of his régime people sometimes made offers to Clara Petacci in order that she should press their point with the Duce. On the other hand the wealth of Ministers like Ciano and Volpi (the electricity king) came to be a byword for corruption.

Italy is a country where personal, and especially family, relationships are very important, and where 'knowing some one' is always likely to help in no derogatory sense; it is not therefore a country lacking in benevolent people who will support useful projects disinterestedly. But the over-centralized system of Giolitti, of which Fascism turned out to be something of a parody, attached a price in Rome to the needs of, say, Liguria, where nobody need have thought of any bargaining. Where Giolitti's centralism was slightly counterpoised by the local initiative of some freely elected Socialist municipality or co-operative organization, Mussolini's was offset only by the sometimes zealous activity of some nominated *Dopolavoro* organizer. And whereas Giolitti allowed criticism in parliament and the press, Mussolini transformed both these institutions into the very instruments of his despotism.

How did the Italians react to the Fascist system? A small minority of the industrial working-class stuck to its Socialist and its Communist principles and was remorselessly pursued and eliminated by the Fascist Secret Police. After all, no one abroad would be likely to know about them—Italian prestige would not suffer. As the years went by, the Socialist survivors were inevitably discouraged; the extraordinary fact which afterwards emerged was that certain Communist cells were kept going all the time. It is, moreover, characteristic of Italy (as compared with Nazi Germany) that neither lock-outs nor strikes were ended by the law which abolished them.[1] But the

[1] H. Finer, op. cit. This book gives an interesting table showing the percentage of employers who had joined the Fascist organizations in 1933: the percentage of employees is higher, presumably owing to irresistible pressure. The percentage of agricultural employers, as of those concerned with the professions and arts, is low.

Italian working class as a whole was very poor and had little choice but to join the Fascist organizations, without membership of which there was a serious risk of unemployment without relief, at least from 1927 onwards; in the 'thirties unemployment increased considerably. Most of the working people accepted whatever *Dopolavoro* would do for them with a good grace—one used to meet very 'jolly' parties of them on Italian steamers—and they enjoyed their theatre and Verdi or Puccini; it might all be accepted with more or less cynicism according to the mood of the moment. A number of quite simple people did not notice the rise in the cost of living, but only the bread and the circuses.

The 'lower-middle' class was perhaps most content, though Fascism did nothing for it except to provide an apparently infinite number of small official jobs and the illusion of security of savings. Wealthy people could afford a much greater independence; we have seen that great wealth gave power virtually to dictate to the needy Dictator. Perhaps the most educated people were most consistently hostile to the régime, which was sufficiently sensitive about its reputation to treat them less roughly than it treated working men, that is if they were at all well known. The toleration of Croce and his *Critica* is the classic example, but it is interesting also to observe that a number of uncompromising anti-Fascists who fell into the hands of the Fascist police survived the sentences inflicted upon them and are actively occupied in Italy to-day; the shorter-lived Nazi régime was faced with relatively fewer opponents other than Jews, but it is difficult to think of many survivors. Even after 1926 there were attempts on Mussolini's life and there were always some intellectuals working politically against the régime—one spirited Republican developed so passionate an interest in football that he persuaded the Fascists to allow him to visit international gatherings and in this way he kept in touch for years with his friends in exile. The young poet, Lauro De Bosis, and the writer, Mario Vinciguerra, formed what they called a National Alliance; they attempted to arouse the King to the iniquity of the system he countenanced. Vinciguerra was condemned to twelve years *confino* in 1930, while De Bosis never returned from his flight over Rome to drop anti-Fascist appeals in 1931; there were trials of anti-Fascists

in Turin and in Milan in the next few years. Some people consider that Fascism suffered its first big losses in popularity when Mussolini began to interfere in Franco's favour in Spain; certainly many anti-Fascist Italians made haste to join the Spanish Republicans—three with very gallant records were the Italian Republican leader, Pacciardi, and the two Communists, Luigi Longo and Giancarlo Paietta. Carlo Rosselli also went to Spain and this led to the murder of both him and his brother in France in 1937 on the thirteenth anniversary of the Matteotti crime. Finally it may be said that the chance person one met in Italy, in the writer's experience, was hostile to Fascism, while the chance person in Germany thought well of the Nazis: it is axiomatic that one does not judge only by words in a country which has ceased to be free.

The Fascist Party attracted genuine idealists from all classes in Italy in its early days; above all ardent youth responded to its call. As in all parties of the kind, the Duce's very opportunism provided a suitable response to widely differing aspirations. But though the young continued to enjoy singing songs of self-exaltation, the elation of the 'twenties gave way to cynicism and disillusionment within the Party in the 'thirties.

Nothing perhaps caused Fascism to lose more support than the gradual realization that it was bound to lead to war. For the best and perhaps also for the worst reasons, the Italian nation utterly detests war. Traditionally it prefers to win things less cruelly and more subtly, if they are to be won. Organized violence may be tolerated while it appears to be nothing but pageantry, but when it brings death and destruction and the break-up of family life, or even the prospect of these things to so imaginative a people, then it is scarcely to be borne. Besides that, it requires people to be angry and to hate for far too long. The Abyssinian war was not popular to start with, anti-Fascists even hoped that the régime was taking a grave risk. But when the League of Nations condemned Italy's action, it seemed to Italians, as it seemed to many Englishmen at the time, that the English and the French were trying to forbid the Italians to do only what they themselves had done earlier, and in the end success in Ethiopia brought the applause which success will always bring.

From 1936 onwards Italy's alinement with Germany became

evident. After Hitler's visit to Rome in May 1938, it was duly impressed upon the Italians by anti-Jewish legislation on the German model in July 1938, although Mussolini himself had publicly rejected the racial criterion only a few years before. There existed an anti-Jewish paper, the *Tevere*, financed by the Germans, but it is true to say that no European country was more innocent of anti-Semitism than Italy, more unsatisfactory, that is, from Goebbels' point of view.[1] The anti-Jewish laws, to which all the leading Fascists except the pro-German Farinacci were opposed, were sabotaged and the truce with the Vatican seemed to break down. Whereas surviving leaders of the *Popolari* had been compelled, especially since 1929, to remain completely passive, Gonella's articles now made the *Osservatore Romano* the most popular newspaper in Italy until the Pope agreed to give up political news. It began to be felt that Mussolini was no longer free to resist the orders of Hitler; the German Alliance had been unpopular all along, and good Fascist patriots now turned against it as a menace to the national independence of Italy.

The details of Mussolini's diplomacy matter little to Italy to-day, but the results of his megalomania are of first-rate importance to his unfortunate heirs. Fascist foreign policy, whether wise or not, was remarkably successful until 1935. At that time Mussolini appeared as the most powerful statesman in Europe. He had installed a subservient government in Vienna and made himself the champion of Hungarian revisionism against the Little Entente. His position in the League of Nations was strong because, ever since his bombardment of Corfu in 1923, he had kept Geneva in a state of anxiety lest he should leave her. Even with the Little Entente and in spite of the murder of the King of Yugoslavia (probably by I.M.R.O. people with connivance in Italy) he was making headway and extending Italian influence throughout the Balkan peninsula. Democracy was already at a discount, and if a choice must be made between Dictators, the Balkan rulers preferred the less suffocating proximity of Italy to that of Germany; at the same time Mussolini was still able to play the mentor to Hitler. As

[1] I refer to Goebbels' statement that he gauged the value of a country, from a National-Socialist point of view, by its reaction to anti-Jewish propaganda.

for British power in the Mediterranean, it no longer appeared to be overwhelming.

Up to this time relations with France had been unsatisfactory. Fascist propagandists were in the habit of referring to the Italians in Nice, Corsica, or Tunis as 'unredeemed', and indeed there was incessant bickering over the application of the Tunis Conventions of 1896. Early in 1935, thanks to the complaisance of Laval who was then in power, Mussolini achieved a *rapprochement* with France. There was a settlement of the schools disputes in Tunis by which the Italian schools would actually be maintained until March 1955 and then become private under French control; Italians born in Tunis up to 1965 could retain Italian nationality. Mussolini for his part made concessions to the French in Africa; with these he succeeded in obtaining something of a blank cheque for the future actions he contemplated. He was already subsidizing part of the French press, and was able to strike at anti-Fascist circles in France by instigating the Rosselli crime in 1937.

Thus excellently equipped the Duce launched his African venture. His Ethiopian proved to be a Pyrrhic victory. The half-hearted imposition of sanctions against Italy seemed only to stimulate Italian bellicosity, yet Mussolini's proud quarrel with the moribund League created his dependence upon Germany and led to his ultimate ruin. Germany, hitherto dependent upon Italian support, now ostentatiously played up the role of Italy's only political friend, and the German occupation of the Rhineland in March 1936 made Germany's friendship appear the most valuable one could have. The Germans themselves were interested in the economic possibilities of Abyssinia,[1] and it suited them excellently to step into the breach and give Italy the economic help of which sanctions sought to deprive her. It was of decisive importance that, in 1936, Great Britain only supplied 9,000 tons of coal to Italy while Germany supplied nearly 6,000,000, and from this time onward remained Italy's essential source. Italy, now impoverished by the Ethiopian War, could no longer attempt to compete with German economic pressure in the Balkans; Italo-German interference in the Spanish Civil War, where Mussolini had counted on quick easy success, drained Italian resources still further.

[1] e.g. The Societa Mineraria Italo-Tedesca in Abyssinia.

Though the Italian armament manufacturers were kept as busy as we have seen, Italy was to enter the Second World War most inadequately prepared.

Talk of the Rome-Berlin Axis began to be heard before 1936 was over; the Duce's visit to Germany in October 1937 profoundly impressed him, and the following year revealed him as the helpless vassal of Hitler. In March 1938 Catholic-Corporate Austria was swept away and the swastika hoisted at the Brenner. In September Mussolini enjoyed the illusion of seeming to arbitrate and at the same time of seeming to establish a pro-Axis peace, which filled many Italians, as it did all *Munichois*, with false hopes. In a last desperate effort to show that she too was still capable of aggression, Fascist Italy followed up the German occupation of Prague in 1939 by attacking and annexing Albania in April; though Valona had been promised to Italy in 1915 there was no enthusiasm over this except perhaps on the part of Ciano. In May 1939 came the German-Italian Steel Pact, the penultimate nail in the coffin of Fascism.

There followed a last period of illusory hope. The nation sympathized warmly with the Poles during the summer of 1939, and old anti-German tradition was stimulated by the irritation of feeling the shadows of Schacht and Himmler fall across the land. When it leaked out that Ciano had resisted Ribbentrop's dictation in August, his popularity was sensibly increased. Only with Germany's sensational successes in the following spring were the baser chauvinists who exist everywhere stirred up in envy; they and Mussolini, like the Nationalists in 1914–15, were afraid of arriving too late to share in the spoils. While Hitler probably wished for Italy's intervention, the Reichswehr preferred her neutrality. When Mussolini finally made up his mind, there was only one person who might yet have withstood him; but Victor Emmanuel allowed Italy to 'stab France in the back' on 10 June 1940, and many of Italy's truest patriots were almost more horrified than the French.

CHAPTER X

THE SECOND RISORGIMENTO

THE three years 1940–3, during which the Italians were forced to fight as Germany's allies, have been obscured in the national recollection by the period of their resistance to Germany. This is not simply a matter of psychological convenience. Popular sentiment, quite apart from the staunchly anti-Nazi *élite*, was from the beginning hostile to the German alliance and sympathetic to the British, from whom it hoped more seriously than in 1915 the rescue of European freedom. There was no elation this time when war was declared, and surprisingly little genuine satisfaction over the plight of France; the early successes against the British in Africa evoked next to no enthusiasm except in the press. As for the annexation of the province of Ljubliana in 1941 and the offer of the crown of Croatia to the Duke of Spoleto, it was much the same thing. The only true elation of which I have heard was that of several anti-Fascist youths who, condemning the attack upon Greece, went on to the battlefields there deliberately unarmed and were killed. Italians who returned from fighting in Greece or in Russia were mostly heard to say that they had felt they had no right to be there. Many of them found Russia interesting, the standard of living even lower than in Italy but the people intelligent and everything different from what propaganda had described.

The Italian soldiers were generally ill-equipped from the beginning; they naturally fought badly except on rare occasions, and their losses in prisoners were tremendous. They suffered severely from physical conditions in some of the Balkan fighting, and the retreat of their soldiers from Russia was an appalling experience. All the time their dislike of the Germans was growing into hatred, hatred for these allies who sacrificed them in North Africa and left them to fall by the wayside in Russia, or forced them to collaborate in the savage occupation of a country like Greece. There were, of course, Blackshirt regiments which hoped to emulate the S.S. and behaved out-

rageously in Yugoslavia; but other Italians, out of something between demoralization and sympathy, began quite early to smuggle arms to Yugoslav Partisans. Even the professional Italian officer type, narrow and rigid in outlook, came to resent very bitterly the insolent contempt his German colleagues offered him. And the Germans were always better equipped and better fed.

During this period the Italians had to endure the first series of air attacks from the British. Daily life became much more difficult, and, as the Fascist Party began to disintegrate, its members became increasingly cynical and their attempts to organize rationing or air-raid defence or anything else increasingly corrupt. Every day German police and economic interference became more evident—Italy now depended for every ton of imported coal upon Germany—and the sour jokes about the German occupation of Italy more stale. This was the net result of the first period of the war, this and the loss of thousands of prisoners who were to be exiled from their families for years.

With the Gestapo unblushingly established in Italy, it seemed superficially less possible than ever to resist the régime in any way. But now there was an outside world which was fighting Hitler and Mussolini, and though it was dangerous to do so one listened to the B.B.C. and longed to act on its proposals. In justice to Italy it is necessary to emphasize that serious plans for political resistance leading to batches of arrests existed before the winter of 1942–3 which was so disastrous for the Axis, while in the early spring of 1943 the workmen of Turin, and then of Milan and other Lombard centres, organized the first successful strikes in all Europe against a terrorist régime. The usual assumption that the Italians never stirred until the Allies were in Sicily is false.

There were two main currents of opposition before the fall of Mussolini, a working-class movement and a separate activity among the other classes. Though they had been thoroughly intimidated, and though the younger men had been taken for the army and many others sent off to work in Germany, hunger and air-raids and the knowledge that labour was indispensable spurred the workers on. There were sometimes demonstrations in the south, where the peasants and fishermen were starving, against local Fascist authorities in villages or small

towns, but it was difficult to follow these up. The industrial towns were another matter. In October 1942 the R.A.F. raided Genoa, where the Ansaldo shipyards offered an important target. When crowds gathered in air-raid shelters, there were demonstrations in favour of peace *and liberty*. Socialist organization had survived with relative success in Genoa, and Socialists quickly followed up these demonstrations with anti-Fascist posters, leading to an incident when soldiers were ordered to shoot at a crowd. It is not surprising to find the Fascist authorities complaining even earlier of the Fiat workmen as 'weak and sentimental pacifists', and on 12 March 1943 40,000–50,000 of them came out on strike, nominally to insist upon already promised compensation to bombed-out workers, but a workmen's committee soon circulated a leaflet demanding peace *and liberty*. Some directors of Fiat showed sympathy, while the authorities were obviously at a loss; they agreed to the economic demands in order to restart work, and only subsequently arrested and hanged some reputed ringleaders.

It has been seen that philosophy, literature, politics, journalism, and the arts are less dissociated from one another in Italy than elsewhere, and non-working-class opposition during the war took the forms one might expect, but especially that of printing clandestine reviews. *Oggi*, for instance, which had been recently suppressed, was continued in secret, and Meuccio Ruini began his *Ricostruzione* 'underground'. There was another activity in Florence, where aristocratic society ran theatricals in which the King and Mussolini were figures of fun. It should be added that almost every report that came out of Italy during these years referred to the disrepute into which not only the régime but specifically the Monarchy had fallen.

Above all, though it was still fairly dangerous, especially with Gestapo agents in the land, there were endless small meetings to discuss tactics and the major strategy of a political programme. There were three main trends of thought, though in 1941 and 1942 they mingled indefinitely with one another; the agility of the Italian mind and amiability of Italian character always make political, and with them personal, divisions more fluid. At this time men like Cattani and Brosio, who represented the more passive, Liberal attitude of Croce and Einaudi, met

together with young Communist intellectuals like Amendola's son. Brosio, moreover, had been Gobetti's friend and linked up with those who represented the inheritance of the *Rivoluzione Liberale*, the idea of a synthesis between Liberalism and Communism. There were others still who stood for the kindred Florentine tradition of the Rossellis and *Giustizia e Libertà* and a greater pride in Mazzini and the First *Risorgimento* than Gobetti ever felt. This Florentine influence finally proved itself dominant, and by 1942 a new underground party had emerged which chose to revive the name of *Partito d'Azione*. Directors of firms like Pirelli and Fiat showed sympathy; the fact that influential members of the *Banca Commerciale Italiana* in all sincerity did the same has, of course, been used as a propagandistic weapon against the Party of Action, but made it into a going concern.

This formation undoubtedly grouped together a majority of the most intelligent and devoted 'bourgeois' Italians, and, though as a Party its life was destined to be short, it enjoyed a glorious career. In January 1943 it published the first number of its paper *L'Italia Libera*, in which its aims were formulated. This programme is not merely interesting, but also important; it summed up the best political aspiration since Giolittian politics had broken down, and expressed the dearest political aims of Italy when she was liberated in 1945. Indeed, it may be questioned whether political stability will be achieved in Italy if all this is to be shelved as revolutionary exuberance. The demands of the Party of Action were as follows: (1) the abolition of the Monarchy—co-responsible with Fascism for the country's ruin—and a return to separated powers, i.e. an independent judiciary alongside a strong executive controlled by representative bodies. (2) Decentralization with local self-government, but without the sacrifice of poorer to wealthier regions. (3) Nationalization of all dangerously large banking and industrial concerns, with restoration of liberty to small ones; co-ordination of the national economy with safeguards against the dangers of bureaucracy. (4) The gradual transference of all land to the possession of him who works on it; in accordance with the geographical diversity of the country this would mean either peasant proprietorship or co-operative working of the soil. (5) Restoration of the freedom of labour to

IX. THE RESISTANCE

1. ITALIAN PARTISANS IN PISTOIA 2. INTERROGATING NAZI PRISONERS
(Photographs lent by Signor Parri)

combine, and the establishment of self-government (i.e. workers' control) in industry. (6) A democratic European federation within a world organization for peace, with safeguards for freedom of economic movement.

In March 1943 the Party of Action circulated a special number of *L'Italia Libera* to celebrate the Turin strike, and in the next few weeks there were serious strikes in Milan and other Lombard towns. Clandestine Communist papers, *L'Unità* and *Il Garibaldino* (for the young), had been circulating for some time, and in the spring of 1943 the Socialists revived *Avanti*, and the *Confederazione Generale di Lavoro* or Italian T.U.C., suppressed by the Fascists in 1926, was secretly resurrected. Mussolini, urged on by Himmler, tried a last dose of terrorism by appointing Scorza to be Secretary of the Fascist Party, but there were none the less labour demonstrations on 1 May, and the loss of Tunis a few days later strengthened the opposition. It seems that at the beginning of June a group representing at least four parties—Liberals, Socialists, Communists, and a Catholic party of Christian Democrats were mentioned—conveyed a message to the Quirinal that, unless peace were made by the end of the month, resistance to the Monarchy would become active. There was also a fascinating glimmer of Giobertian revival, for people began to discuss whether, since the King and the Prince of Piedmont were so thoroughly discredited, political authority could not temporarily be delegated to the Pope. With such ideas in the air a Christian-Democrat Party was soon to emerge more clearly to take up the heritage of the *Popolari*.

The King and the generals began to be seriously afraid. All the evidence suggests that, while they remained in sympathy with Fascists like Grandi and Ciano who had opposed the acceptance of anti-Semitism and subjection to Germany, they feared above everything a genuinely democratic revolt which would probably demand the Party of Action programme at the least. A detailed account of Mussolini's fall would be irrelevant here. What matters with regard to Italy to-day is that the King contrived to use the vote of the Fascist Grand Council against Mussolini at the end of July to put a professional officer, Marshal Badoglio, at the head of the Government. Instead of receiving peace and liberty, the much tried Italian nation heard

that the war against the Allies was to continue. Socialists like Buozzi, who had hurried back from exile, were invited to co-operate with Badoglio, and papers like the *Corriere della Sera* were allowed to shed their Fascist mask, but troops were sent to Milan to be ready to shoot at the people, some working-class leaders were arrested, and the press was subjected to a military censorship at least as severe as that which Mussolini had imposed.

The mere news that Mussolini had fallen from power created a great outburst of Italian joy and elation, perhaps the greatest of its kind since 1860; the people anticipated heaven on earth, peace and goodwill at last. Instead they were given forty-five bewildering days of Badoglio, punctuated with terrible Allied bombardments of Milan and Turin, and finally the Armistice in September. Reliable evidence does not justify the foreigners' idea that the Italians panicked madly during air-raids—it is true that they were often undefended but they reacted very much as other human beings did. A young officer in Milan who kept a diary just then noted on 20 August how admirably people had helped each other in the raids. 'These people,' he added, 'who have lost everything they possess, in the elemental grip of pain and of death, stand firm and hope . . . and then last night in the moonlight young workmen danced to a concertina in the street in front of a ruined house. This is the tragic land of Italy—how is any foreigner to understand?' These raids spelt for the Milanese as for the Parisians an extraordinary emotional strain and perplexity which the British were spared, that of being bombarded by those whom they regarded as their friends; most of the Italians preserved a strange and remarkable poise—they cursed the Germans when the British killed their children and destroyed their homes. All through the forty-five days the Italians hourly expected the British to land near Genoa or Spezia, and yet all the time they knew that the Germans were systematically digging themselves in; all the time the Italians fondled rumours that Hitler too had been overthrown.

Then came the Armistice whose terms one might not know: it was only to be understood that Italy had surrendered unconditionally. The Allies could not even save Rome: instead the Germans rushed in. Wherever they could they disarmed the

Italian soldiers, stunned into passivity, the more since they sometimes witnessed their own officers help the Germans at the time. It was significant that in Milan and Rome, and certainly elsewhere, the working-class leaders offered men and arms to the military command with which to resist the Germans, but in each case the offer was refused. In Rome on 10 September it appears that General Carboni received an offer from 2,000 workmen, which was made through the present Minister of Finance, Scoccimarro, and his Communist friends; Carboni replied, as he also did to the Actionists, Lussu and Baldazzi, that there was no immediate need. Thereupon small groups of present-day Romans went out with what arms they had and fought the first Germans who advanced to occupy the capital; Persichetti of the *Partito d'Azione* was killed in such action on the very same day; and there were numbers of boys of 14 or 15 who fought with strange courage and were overtaken by death. It was largely boys of this kind who rose up and drove the Germans out of Naples in their *Quattro Giornate* when the Allies arrived there at the end of the month.

It was a dreadful fate which now befell the Italians. The majority of them were subjected to a Nazi occupation made particularly savage by desire for revenge against a treacherous ally. It is characteristic that the Italian workmen already in Germany had, among all the nationalities gathered in labour bondage there, the reputation of being the most effective saboteurs; they were now degraded to the lowest slave category, to be starved and tormented together with the Poles and the Jews. In France, Croatia, Greece, and Crete, indeed wherever Germans and Italians were stationed together, the most spirited Italians tried to turn on the Germans but were usually overpowered and punished more savagely than deserters. In the Dodecanese members of the Regina and Cuneo divisions either joined the Allies or fought alone against the Germans, then escaped to Turkey and Egypt. At first they were received as co-belligerents but when they begged to go home to fight the Germans there, they found themselves little by little degraded to the status of prisoners of war.

It was disappointing enough that the Allies had apparently made no military use of the forty-five days and that the Germans could say 'See what comes of trusting the Anglo-

Saxons'. They followed this up by the rescue of Mussolini three days after the armistice, and by the sponsoring of a neo-Fascist régime which was to become the ill-famed Republic of Salò. The 'Italian Socialist Republic', as it afterwards was called, with the resurrected Duce as its chief, had at least three propagandistic trumps which it proceeded to play. (1) It denounced the Monarchy, which was now more unpopular than ever because the King and his son were considered to have ignominiously run away from Rome in September. (2) It declared that neo-Fascism was about to realize the Socialism for which Fascism had stood but which its capitalistic supporters had sabotaged. (3) It played up the air war, in which the Allies did often seem to the unmilitary observer to be reckless as to what they destroyed.

At the time of the exultation over the news of Mussolini's fall, every one in Italy had envisaged an imminent German collapse, peace and the return of the prisoners, and an Italy welcomed to the democratic fold. The anti-Fascist exiles had returned from abroad, and they and their friends who had been concealed in Italy for years had now exposed themselves completely to the revenge of the Gestapo and its neo-Fascist protégés. As these people went into hiding or escaped into Switzerland, it might have been expected that the Italians would sink to the depths of demoralization and despair. Instead they achieved something little short of psychologically miraculous in the next eighteen months, something for which the tormented world had no attention at the time and which too many Italians have forgotten to-day—clandestine resistance is compelled to efface its own traces.

There were some Alpini in the mountains near Lecco who refused to be disarmed and there were other small groups of the army which contrived to do the same. There had been isolated deserters before and a certain amount of gentle sabotage. From the very day of the armistice, however, enthusiastic young Actionists and Communists disappeared from the towns to form Partisan groups in the mountains; this happened particularly in Piedmont. The first entry in the records of the first Alpine division of the Cuneo Partisans ran: '12 September 1943: twelve men; among them Duccio Galimberti'. Already addressing the crowds on 26 July at

Turin and Cuneo, this young member of the Party of Action had formulated the profound conviction of the best Italians at that time, that they themselves must fight against Hitler, and that it must be a war waged by the whole people in order to cleanse it of the Fascist stain; it must indeed be a second and this time a whole people's *Risorgimento* against the German oppressor.

Everywhere where there were Alps or Apennines, small groups of Partisans gathered together. Lombardy was unfavourably flat, but here, too, a regional command was established, led by the brilliant young explorer, Leopoldo Gasparotto, another member of the Party of Action and son of a democratic ex-Minister and Minister-to-be. There were others like the young Milanese architect, Filippo Beltrami, without political antecedents, who worked day and night to rescue the wounded in the air-raids in August, then gradually developed the conviction that there was no other course he could pursue but to organize armed resistance to the Germans. Galimberti was later tortured and killed by neo-Fascists, Gasparotto imprisoned and tortured for six months, then murdered by the German S.S.,[1] while Beltrami fell in battle. These are irreparable losses for Italy to-day.

Little by little a network of Partisan companies was organized. The Party of Action groups bore the *Giustizia e Libertà* motto —there was a Rosselli division 1,000 men strong at Florence— while the Communist Partisans usually called themselves Garibaldini. These two were the most prominent, but there were also the Matteotti divisions of the Socialists and a Christian Democrat (Tito Speri or Fiamme Verdi) division near Brescia; none of these labels was exclusive of non-party people, and there were groups independent of all party flavour. The latter were often commanded by some British officer who had escaped from a Fascist prison camp at the time of the armistice. Later on, Allied officers often landed by parachute to co-operate with the Italian Partisans. These latter were only able to arm themselves lightly and it would be absurd to suggest that their military value to the Allies was high. But they harassed the Germans in every sense of the word and individu-

[1] Gasparotto wrote to his wife from prison in April 1944, 'We shall soon return now, purified by this experience'. He was 41.

ally they proved again of what great personal courage Italians are capable when they respond to some genuine inspiration.

Italian ingenuity was suited to impromptu fighting of this kind, and even more to the political tasks of the *Resistenza*. Socially if not geographically, the armistice of September 1943 seemed to make one nation in Italy as nothing in her history had ever done before. For the period of active resistance to the Germans, the working people and the other classes, already drawn together during the summer of 1943, were able at last to unite. Whether in Ruini's and Bonomi's Committee of National Liberation in Rome, or in Pizzoni's and Parri's in North Italy with headquarters at Milan, all anti-Fascists from Liberals on the Right to Communists on the extreme Left were represented and firmly allied. It was not very long before every town and village had its local Committee of National Liberation (C.L.N.).[1]

The neo-Fascist Republic had been established at Salò with glamorous offers of socialized industry, and Graziani had agreed to become its Minister of War. The Allies' strategy had been disappointing and their air-raids were devastating, particularly for clandestine resisters whose communication possibilities were often destroyed. And yet the majority of the Italians who were immediately called up by the neo-Fascists for military service disappeared to become Partisans; it was noted that in general only the professional officer type and half-criminal juveniles offered their services to Mussolini. Italian soldiers in special picked divisions, who were sent off to Germany to be freshly trained, mostly deserted when they got back to Italy, and they, too, often joined the Partisans. There was fairly certainly less 'collaboration' than in France.

Three main activities were organized by the Committees of National Liberation—the collection of supplies for the fighting Partisans, the sabotage of industrial production (perhaps most helpful to the Allied war effort) and the clandestine press. Various industrialists helped by providing food, boots, and so on, and Pizzoni as a banker was instrumental in arranging that the *Credito Italiano* in Milan should provide credits to

[1] These three letters, standing for Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale, became of particular importance. When A.I. was added, it stood for Alta Italia (Upper Italy).

big firms like Falck and Pirelli who used them to finance the *Resistenza*. Enrico Falck of the big Falck steel-works, a supporter of the Christian Democrats, was one of many employers who conspired with their workpeople to reduce production to a minimum in their factories: he has himself described how from a few Communist cells in July 1943 among the 12,000 hands normally employed by his firm, by the beginning of 1945 each of his factories was the scene of busy C.L.N. activities. In Milan and Turin the workmen excelled in short sit-down strikes on some plausible economic pretext. And there were longer strikes too, at Milan in December 1943 and March 1944, and at Turin in June 1944 when a fresh Fiat strike impeded the German intention to remove the Fiat plant to Germany. It must be remembered that the modern industrial plant of Northern Italy was of the greatest interest to Germany.

The clandestine press was of paramount importance to the morale of this intensely journalistic nation, and it was astonishing with what speed and luxuriance it sprang up. It is not very easy to print secretly for long without being discovered, and there were constant arrests, but each paper cropped up again with little delay. Of course they appeared irregularly, but each party brought out a news sheet and some kind of periodical in each important centre nearly all the time. There were various editions of the Liberal *Risorgimento Liberale*, *L'Italia Libera*, *Avanti*, *Unità*, and there was the Christian Democrat *Il Ribelle* at Brescia. There was, moreover, good political discussion and exhortation to be read in these papers; it is characteristic that the gifted young writer, Elio Vittorini, worked with Eugenio Curiel on the Milan *Unità*. Curiel was something of a Gramsci in character, full of plans for progressive democracy and the realization of true freedom; he was fresh from prison in the autumn of 1943 and was killed by neo-Fascists in February 1945 at the age of 32, one of innumerable Communist victims. A clandestine press was important for the Partisans in the mountains, and communications were mostly so difficult that they themselves produced newspapers too.

Resistance meant more than all this; it meant facing the unspeakable terror of the Nazi S.S. Blackshirts had been cruel

Feldkommandantur Mantua

AVVISO

In data 19 Settembre sono stati passati per le armi secondo la legge marziale i seguenti soldati italiani:

Binder Luigi
Corradini Mario
Pasconi Attilio
Rimoldi Francesco
Arisi Giuseppe
Bianchi Giuseppe
Colombo Bruno
Colombi Mario
Carli Alessandro
Peggenini Luigi

perchè hanno sparato su di un reparto di soldati germanici in marcia. In tale occasione venivano feriti due soldati germanici.

Mantova, 20 Settembre 1943

Der Feldkommandant.

X UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION

German announcement of the execution of ten Italians because two German soldiers had been wounded by Italian patriots at Mantua shortly after the Armistice

(*Lent by Signor Parri*)

but whole-hog S.S. methods were new to Italy. There is still to-day a shadow across the S.S. torture-houses, the Pensione Jaccarino in Rome, the Regina Hotel in Milan. A lifelong gaoler of the San Vittore prison in Milan went completely to pieces over the S.S. tortures of Jewish children there at the beginning of the Nazi occupation. Very soon San Vittore was full of Italian patriots; it was extraordinary what they endured and how rarely they broke down and betrayed information. A typical hero of the time was Count Giannantonio Manci of Trento. He came from a keenly Mazzinian family, was an intimate friend of the Battisti family and of the Republican leader, Pacciardi, whom he smuggled out of Italy along with Buozzi and many another anti-Fascist in the 'twenties. He was about young Gasparotto's age, and in 1943 he too became a Partisan only to be captured by the enemy in the following year. Subjected to the grimmest tortures, he preferred to throw himself out of the prison window for fear that any confession be extorted from him. To their shame it must here be recorded that certain neo-Fascist agents, such as the notorious Carità or the ruffian Koch and his friends, were apt pupils of the Nazis and indulged in all the worst sadisms at the patriots' expense: it suited the Germans to make use of such instruments. The Italians are reputed to be cowards in war and their friends find reasons for this in the hypersensitive, imaginative character of this nation, but no one has explained the fortitude shown by the patriots of the Second *Risorgimento*. Did they borrow inspiration from the martyred saints painted in their churches in the pre-nationalist period of painting?

Persecution became wholesale as it did in other occupied countries at the time. Partisans entrusted with urban activities killed or kidnapped Germans or neo-Fascists whenever the going was good. The Nazi-Fascists accumulated large reserves of hostages by indiscriminate arrest, and murdered them in answer, in the rough proportion of ten to one. Three famous instances were the execution of the three hundred and thirty hostages in Rome in reply to the attack on German soldiers in the via Rasella, the shooting of Milanese hostages later at the Piazzale San Loreto, and a subsequent mass execution of citizens of Padua. It should be noted that the University of Padua had become C.L.N. headquarters in the Veneto, its

Instituto di Chimica producing explosives for Partisans. This was mainly due to the distinguished Latinist (and Communist) Professor Marchesi, who made an openly anti-Fascist appeal to the students in the presence of neo-Fascist officials in the autumn of 1943 (whereupon he was compelled to escape to Switzerland), as also to Professor Meneghetti (Party of Action and now Rector) who endured an unspeakable imprisonment.

There was not only the shooting of hostages to be dreaded, but every time one's father or husband came home late, one feared that he might have been deported to Germany, perhaps to the torments of Mauthausen, an ominous name for Italian ears since Italian prisoners had been kept there during the First World War. It was normal at the time for people to be impressed in street or cinema and sent off to Germany as they stood, as additional labour. And then there were the Lidices, many a village obliterated[1] because it had sheltered Partisans or helped British prisoners to escape to Switzerland. The present writer was familiar with the case of a Piedmontese village called Boves which the Germans destroyed because Alpini Partisans had taken a few Germans prisoner there; the population was beaten up and the men deported to Germany and a little later it was announced that Boves had been destroyed by the Anglo-Saxon pirates of the air.

At the end of May 1944 the neo-Fascist 'last offer' to the Partisans to surrender or in future be shot in the back if found in possession of arms failed to shake the *Resistenza*, and at the beginning of June the Allies entered Rome. Bonomi suceeeded Badoglio as Prime Minister in the South and soon after General Cadorna was parachuted into Northern Italy to co-ordinate the C.V.L.,[2] as the united Partisans were now called. In August came a tremendous fight for Florence, where the C.L.N. patriots freed the city north of the Arno before the Allies arrived; the Tuscan capital had long been a Party of Action stronghold and the Rosselli division distinguished itself. Soon France was liberated and hopes were high, and at the beginning of September the Partisans—Garibaldini under Moscatelli (afterwards mayor of Novara), together with some of

[1] It has since been computed that 10,000 houses were destroyed and 4,000 badly damaged in this way.

[2] *Corpo Volontari della Libertà.*

Beltrami's men and youths led by the Christian Democrat, Di Dio—were able to liberate the Val d'Ossola. This piece of territory was adjacent to Switzerland and normally generated Milan's water-power. From the beginning, the patriots, who were inadequately armed, did not know whether they would be able to hold Ossola—it depended on the Allies—but they wished to do as Mazzini had done at Rome in 1849, to establish a symbolic if temporary régime, one that should express the national aspiration independently of all Allied political influence. A *Giunta* of seven members was popularly chosen under the Presidency of a Socialist, a much respected doctor named Tibaldi. Food supplies had been all but exhausted by the neo-Fascists, but great care was taken that some 150 neo-Fascist prisoners, mostly half-criminal boys, should be fed as well as the rest of the population. And during the six weeks of Ossola's freedom, the people there, hungry as they were and aware of the danger of reprisals, showed understanding and devotion; they responded warmly to the efforts made to establish autonomous elected groups as the basis of a genuine regional self-government. Alas, the Nazi-Fascists returned with irresistible armaments and reconquered the Val d'Ossola, and there was a long sad winter before the spring of liberation.

It would be ludicrous to imply that every Italian had thrown him or herself into the *Resistenza* movement; every student of politics knows that such things cannot happen over any length of time. A large proportion of the people was too tired and too poor to do more than try to keep alive, especially the hundreds of *sfollati* (bombed-out). On the other hand, for some twenty months all classes of the population contributed to the Second *Risorgimento*. Whereas the First *Risorgimento* was the activity of a small educated stratum, leaving artisans and peasantry hostile or untouched, the new *Risorgimento* embraced the working classes; though the peasants easily resented the Partisans at first, towards the end many peasants joined them. This was partly because the priesthood, which had damned the nineteenth-century patriots, now supported the *Resistenza* warmly. And everywhere this time the women played a part.

There were a thousand incidents which might repay the telling, but here two of which the writer was exactly informed at the time must suffice. At Erba near Como, at the end of

December 1943, two neo-Fascist militiamen were killed by a cyclist who then disappeared; thereupon thirty people were arrested, including a well-known Milanese citizen, Puecher, and his son, Giancarlo, who was twenty-two years old. At last it was decided that of these hostages twelve should be imprisoned for thirty years and only young Puecher should die. At the end Giancarlo took each of the neo-Fascist soldiers who were to shoot him by the hand and said, 'I am dying also for you'. After that only one shot wounded him and the officer was obliged to draw his revolver.

A priest who joined the Partisans in the Trentino came secretly to Switzerland in the last winter of the war and there committed to paper the following:

> Clorinda Menguzzo was a girl of my part of the country, full of life and courage and candour. She confessed to me often and her soul was as white as the snow of our mountains. I did not wish her to join us in the *maquis*, but one might as well have pleaded with the wind. . . . Often she went alone to the Feltre heights and Mount Grappa to fetch and carry orders for our battalion. . . . She was captured by the Germans on 9 November 1944 and murdered after three days of torture. The deacon of our country went to the German command to plead for Clorinda, whereupon they imprisoned him in the next cell, and this was a blessing for in this way he heard Clorinda's last conversation with the German S.S.:
>
> *A German to Clorinda*: We want the names of the other Partisans. If you give them to us we will let you go, if not we shall kill you.
>
> *Clorinda*: I have given you my name and that is enough.
>
> *German*: Consider that we shall kill you in a few minutes.
>
> *Clorinda*: I shall die willingly, my conscience is tranquil.
>
> *German*: Think of your twenty years and speak.
>
> *Clorinda*: To me it seems beautiful to die at twenty.
>
> Then they took her out and threatened her and asked, 'Is it really so beautiful to die at twenty?' and she answered, 'It is better to die heroically at twenty than to live fifty years and be murderers like you'. Whereupon they beat her to death. . . .

In Tuscany a gifted musician who was not Italian by birth said to me: 'The Resistance period was the most beautiful

period in my life although I was entirely deprived of my music all the time.'

During the winter when Bologna was at last taken, the neo-Fascist Republic was evidently in a state of putrefaction. A former friend of Croce called Cione was allowed by Mussolini to found a 'democratic' neo-Fascist wing, but nothing availed to prevent the ever-growing desertion from the Party's Black Brigades and the other neo-Fascist formations. At last the strength of Nazi Germany was broken and between 25 and 28 April the Partisans swept into the cities of Northern Italy. The Germans did everything they could to avoid the ignominy of surrendering to these 'brigands'; they negotiated with the Americans in Switzerland, they negotiated with the Archbishop of Milan, offering as the one card they still held to hand over the North Italian industrial plant intact. But they did not blow it up, as they had destroyed the Florentine bridges, because they knew that the Partisans had taken all the requisite counter measures. The patriots' losses during the preceding twenty months are computed to have been over 20,000 killed[1] and about 40,000 wounded and missing; there are about 10,000 orphans of Partisans in Venetia alone. With the taking over of the administration by the C.L.N. representatives in each district, the Italians believed themselves at last to be free. Mussolini and Farinacci were shot, and the Milanese relieved their feelings as they passed Mussolini's corpse where it hung in their city for three days; after the ruin he had brought to Italy some people marvelled that he had not been made to suffer more.

[1] In addition about 20,000 members of Italy's regular armed forces died fighting on the Allies' side and over 20,000 were wounded or reported missing.

CHAPTER XI

ITALY TO-DAY

AND now the Italians have had to wake from the *Resistenza* dream, and they have been rubbing their eyes, wondering whether they have awakened in 1849 or in 1919. All the old problems seem to face them, but they have been aggravated and there are new ones besides. The generation of Manci and Leopoldo Gasparotto, whom Fascism failed to pervert, has lost its best men, North and South were forced apart by the war, the shadow of poverty has lengthened, and the outside world is without comprehension.

The colonies must be written off. Is it quite fair that pre-Fascist possessions should be lost? Never mind. But the frontiers of Italy herself are in question; the Austrians, the Yugoslavs, even the French have put in claims for which the Fascist period supplied justification. When Italy received Istria and the South Tirol she ranked as a Great Power and was not bound by any international obligation to her non-Italian-speaking citizens. The pre-Fascist régime, especially with Count Sforza at the Foreign Office, showed no oppressive tendency, and in 1921 men like Reut-Nikolussi were freely elected to the Italian chamber to represent Italy's German-speaking Tirolese. But the Fascists, obsessed with ideas of national uniformity, proceeded to persecute the German- and Slav-speaking population, and tried to ignore the French traditionally spoken in the Val d'Aosta and the Waldensian valleys between Susa and Pinerolo. The Fascist petty official from Southern Italy was even more hated by the citizens of Bolzano or the Val Pellice than by those of Venice or Milan.

The German-speaking subjects of Italy were something of a problem in Axis days, and in 1939 it was agreed between Berlin and Rome that the German-speaking population in Venezia Tridentina should opt for Italian citizenship or departure to Germany on 31 December of that year. Out of 266,985 of them, 185,085 voted German (some of these already being German citizens), and according to the records of the Italian

frontier authorities, 77,772 of them had left Italy by 1 September 1943. After the armistice the territory concerned was annexed to Germany and as thoroughly Germanized as the time allowed; it was prepared as part of the last Nazi 'Redoubt', and at the end of the war was the refuge of many of the ugliest Nazis, neo-Fascists, Vichy French, and the like. This was the Trentino and Alto Adige as received by post-Fascist Italy from A.M.G. at the end of 1945; with a celerity which appeared almost rash she had already issued decrees (laws were not yet possible) to safeguard the use and teaching of the German language, and allowing persons who had opted for Germany in 1939 to apply for the restoration of their Italian citizenship. For present-day Italy the whole of this territory is important for two main reasons. The first is practical—a matter of precious electric power-plants. The second is moral or sentimental according to one's point of view. Austrian resistance to the Nazis was negligible, Italian resistance magnificent. Is it, then, thinkable, the Italians wonder, to take from Italy in favour of Austria? It may be that their view is also coloured by the fact that many of the worst S.S. offenders in Italy were people from the Alto Adige. It is only this area, the province of Bolzano, which need be in dispute. Bissolati was against its annexation in 1919, and, since strategic frontiers seem to have lost their *raison d'être*, one may doubt the practical wisdom of wishing to hold the Brenner in 1946.

To the Italians, however, it seems that they fought the 1915–18 war to complete the redemption of Venetia, and they cannot believe that their Allies of that time can wish this to be undone. Even more critical than Venezia Tridentina is the question of Venezia Giulia and Trieste. The danger from Germany has 'gone underground', but Yugoslav claims stand for the encroachment of the U.S.S.R. There is no doubt that the Fascist Government treated its Slovene and Croat minority —variously estimated as between 350,000 and 600,000— atrociously; on the other hand, Slovene and Croat sentiment beyond the frontier was always chauvinistically anti-Italian. The question, it is well known, is complicated by the fact that Trieste and the other towns are mainly Italian with a Slav hinterland. Zara and Fiume are inevitably lost to Italy, but though for extraneous reasons Trieste and Fiume have not

flourished as ports since 1918, there is a good deal of irrational sentiment in Italy, especially about Trieste, in addition to economic considerations about Istrian coal. There is also considerable bitterness that the help given by anti-Fascist Italians to Tito's Partisans against Germans and neo-Fascists has been so speedily forgotten, while some Italian Communists in Trieste, equally embittered by what they regard as lack of Allied understanding, profess to prefer Tito—in spite of recent Yugoslav atrocities—to the inadequately purged and still over-centralized domination of Rome.

There seem to be something more than 70,000 French-speaking citizens of Italy. The Fascists had denied their existence and they joined readily in the *Resistenza*. In the valleys west and south-west of Turin they are reputed to be Waldensians; they are, at all events, Protestants and descendants of Milton's slaughtered saints and the only compact group of Protestant population in this overwhemingly Catholic land. In the early days of resistance the Waldensians were enthusiastically interested in General de Gaulle, but it was to the Val d'Aosta in the North that some of de Gaulle's officers later began to lay claim, with partial support from the local clergy. It seems, however, that these French-speaking groups will be content with the linguistic freedom which post-war Italy wishes to ensure to them.

Minority questions have brought out the distrust engendered in the outside world by twenty-one years of Fascism. There is much European thinking in Italy, but the wisest men are saddened that the *Resistenza* has failed to receive European recognition, while the foolish are saying 'Why be humble? it never pays', and are even trying to re-start colonial propaganda. In Rome in the winter 1945–6 there were posters demanding that Italy should become a neutral State and others crying out for the return of the colonies.

'Why has the *Resistenza* gone unrecognized?' many Italians ask themselves and find the reply: 'Because it essentially came from the parties on the Left.' A century before, the Great Powers had trembled before Italy's Reds, and the Tories at Westminster had complained of Lord John Russell's revolutionary action towards Italy; the result had been the shelving of federal and republican plans and the lamentable career of

the House of Savoy, the sponsor of Fascism. When Britain, allied with Communist Russia, called upon Europe to rise against Hitler, the Italians in the spirit of Galimberti had believed they were fighting also to cleanse their own land, this time to make an Italy, not of decayed feudal territories pieced together by a retrograde king, but a federal Republic where social justice should reign. But now the old problem of Monarchy versus Republic was complicated by the Anglo-American conquerors who occupied the land. They took up the attitude of Metternich after the fall of Napoleon—that they could only recognize, not the C.L.N.,[1] but the last legitimate authority, however discredited it might be. Charles Albert's *Statuto* must prevail at least until a Constitutent Assembly could be elected, and Victor Emmanuel's last-moment repudiation of Fascism be accepted. The British in particular could not be persuaded that in Italy the Monarchy may no longer act as a unifying symbol, and they were convinced that Republicans must be ruffianly fellows. How often is one asked by Italians why the British do not understand that it did not make sense to be told to undo Fascism and yet keep the King who was praised by Mussolini for having welcomed 'the most daring political and social innovations'.

In the nineteenth century, Republicanism had sometimes been condemned as nothing but an old municipal form, but in 1943 some of the most respected Piedmontese nobles rejected the House of Savoy. In both centuries Republicans had been particularly honoured for their disinterestedness, the legacy of Mazzini. It has been seen that Italians of great integrity are hypersensitive about any suggestion of a reward or a favour; this, with the history of the Bourbon dynasty in Italy, made them suspicious of any court, especially of that of Victor Emmanuel III, who is famous for his wealth. Now the Resistance had been a Republican movement and this was so evident when Rome was liberated in June 1944 that Victor Emmanuel retired from public life. The Prince of Piedmont was nominated regent with the title of *Luogotenente del Regno*, but it was generally supposed that he would disappear when the Constituent Assembly met; the talk of the succession of his young

[1] A.M.G. expected to dissolve all C.L.N. bodies in the process of 'taking over'; in practice they did not generally insist on this.

XI. HOMELESS

A DESTITUTE FAMILY IN A SUBURB OF NAPLES AT THE END OF THE WAR

son (born 1937), with a Regency Council, also died away. In 1944 Prince Humbert was probably more unpopular than his father—it was noted that his salutation to Roosevelt in 1943 had been couched in the same words as his salutation to Hitler in 1940, and the feeling that the Allies were forcing him on Italy was strong; the formula of the 'institutional truce' sounded hollow, since the Prince's new position enabled him to gain considerable influence. In 1945 his position undoubtedly improved. Except possibly in Piedmont the peasantry in Italy has not that mystical attachment to the dynasty which is found elsewhere. But the ubiquitous *petit-bourgeois* were susceptible to monarchical attractions, and the professional officer class, bound by its oath to the Crown, was royalist. Further, all conservative politicians, whatever party name they bore, in

their anxiety as to the wisdom of envisaged reforms found themselves drawn back to support of the Monarchy as an institution with a past, even if disreputable; they felt it would be more difficult to find a President of the Republic who could resist the demands of mere demagogy. The atmosphere was such that if a public figure did not express Republican views it was safe to suppose that he was privately in favour of the House of Savoy—for there was no other dynasty able to replace it. At first Ministers insisted on taking an oath to the Nation, but, until the time when a Constituent Assembly could be elected, government had to be by princely decree countersigned by a Minister, and it was easier to slip back into a provisional allegiance to the representative of the Crown. Yet on the eve of the Monarchy-Republic referendum, to judge by cartoons in such satirical weeklies as *Cantachiaro*, the *Luogotenente* was at least as discredited as King Edward VIII at the end of his reign. The political observer was bound to feel doubt as to whether the Savoyard dynasty could contribute to the social peace and stability which Italy is seeking.

When Northern Italy was liberated at the end of the war, the zenith of *Resistenza* hopes had been reached. Young Partisans dreamt of sweeping away all the old, the corrupt, the unjust. There was to be a true *Epurazione*. Everything was to be confiscated to be used by the people—in Milan every restaurant was at first taken over for the workers by the representatives of the liberating C.L.N. There was next to no material left in the factories, but it was decreed that the North Italian workmen might not be dismissed; they were to help reorganize industry until there was more work to be done, to confiscate war profits and distribute them to the community, and set up Councils of Management to ensure that future profit be socially distributed or reinvested. Representatives of the C.L.N. were appointed as prefects and mayors, and they were determined to govern the country until elections could be held; this time the people should not be cheated of the fruits of victory.

Of course the C.L.N. possessed neither economic resources nor anything but negative political experience. Many rank-and-file Partisans were toughs; they were all of them hungry and powerful for the moment and they acquired evil hangers-on. And so there was plundering and pillage, and technicians

were sometimes driven out of the factories from motives of jealousy or private revenge. Allied Military Government saw this kind of thing, and a few officers who had fought with the Partisans found it difficult to say that there was more to them than this. Allied Military Government was afraid of revolution, disarmed the Partisans, and sometimes reinstated the local officials who had served under Mussolini.

In June 1945 the first C.L.N. Government for all Italy was nominated in Rome with Ferruccio Parri in Bonomi's place as Prime Minister. Parri, a member of the Party of Action, had been one of the foremost leaders of the resistance in Milan, and he represented the *mystique*, the 'myth', of the national anti-Fascist uprising. He was a Republican of fastidious integrity, so anti-Fascist as often almost eagerly to admit himself in the wrong. He was now faced with an incredibly difficult task. In a time of acute political and economic crisis he had to govern the country only provisionally because no law could be passed until a Constituent Assembly could be elected. Yet without legislative authority an electoral law must be framed. Without legislative authority the country was to be purged of Fascism. The Allies had a right according to the armistice terms to veto every decision of the Italian Government, and they actually administered Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, and Venetia until the end of the year.[1] The armistice is in force until Peace can be signed and until then Italy's frontiers cannot be determined, and the Allied Commission and Allied occupying troops remain as an odd mixture of Allies and conquerors.

Between June 1944 and June 1945 Bonomi's two governments had contained the representatives of different C.L.N. parties with conflicting views, but in that year there was no programme but to support the Allied war effort, as all the parties were eager to do. But with the Liberation, when it came to peace-time problems, the social classes fell apart and old party cleavages reappeared. At the same time a strong inter-party obligation was felt; they must each be given exactly the same chance to assert themselves before it came to elections. Owing to the prominence of Bonomi and Ruini, a sixth party

[1] After 31 December 1945 they were only in full military occupation of Venezia Giulia and Friuli (Udine).

had a little unnecessarily been added to the other five, a group of people who had a small following in the south and called themselves the party of the Democracy of Labour—they were what might have been called radicals earlier. Their admission to the C.L.N. meant that Parri had to distribute ministerial posts as mathematically as possible between six different groups. This was so meticulously done that while the Ministry of Finance (roughly the equivalent of our Inland Revenue Department) was given to the Communist, Scoccimarro, the Treasury was placed in the hands of the most conservative party, the Liberals. Thus, when the exhausted population most needed a lead from its Government, the Government was very nearly paralysed.

There has followed a period of moral collapse and despair, one of those profoundly Italian reactions to disappointment when, as Monelli says, every virtue of the Italians is viciously inverted, and cynicism and pessimism reign supreme. They had over-idealized the British and Americans before they arrived. The Allied soldiers turned out to be ordinary men who neither knew nor loved Italy; they readily accepted invitations from industrialists who had formerly fêted Fascist leaders. There were two reactions to this. The first was one of 'Let us get all we can out of them by fawning and flattery', the second was 'The man of honour is obliged to boycott them'.[1] Just as great was the reaction against the Resistance movement, which was suddenly announced to have been nothing but brigandage, to have made no contribution whatever to the discomfiture of Hitler, and so on. A typical case was that of the lawyer who, having been a splendid Partisan enduring great hardship in the *maquis* without a murmur, before the end of 1945 had returned to his native town and was getting notorious Fascists off the punishments due to them. Why? Oh well, nothing was worth while now and he wanted to have his house, which had been bombed, rebuilt.

In 1944, as in 1848 or 1860, North and South had exchanged exhortations in favour of the liberation of Italy, but the problem between them had not thereby been solved. The division

[1] Monelli in *Roma 1943* expresses his anxiety as to what the Allied Armies will tell the world about Italy after the better type of Italian has preferred to avoid them.

of the country between Allies and Germans seriously shook Italian unity—'The hatred between them is as great now', a good judge said to me in 1945, 'as the hatred between the two Irelands.' The *Resistenza* was inevitably Northern, and as soon as the *Resistenza* began to be discredited, the South gladly took up the catchwords against the Partisans. The South, having suffered more destruction during the war, felt more bitterly than ever against the greater resources of the North. The Northerners, observing the unsavoury Black Market excesses of Rome, attributed all delays and corruption to the unhappy effects of the atmosphere of the capital upon men like Parri, who were to have freshened up Rome with the *vento del Nord*.[1] Since the North was so keenly Republican, the Neapolitans said 'Another bankers' Republic like France before 1940? No, not for us.' And those of them who rejected the Northern House of Savoy spoke seriously of breaking away. Sicily, with a residue of arms left by the Allied armies, became the scene of a series of small Separatist risings. All this was part of the Italian passion for making political plans and part of the too great awareness of the intricacies of every problem, which makes Italians pessimists when they are not elated. It was probably nothing but an expression of the general *malaise*.

The economic problems of 1919 and the following years had been new ones unknown in nineteenth-century days. Now in 1945 the problem of raw materials and power for industry was reduced to basic terms: the machines had been saved and the workers might not be dismissed, but there were neither power nor raw materials, and Germany had virtually ceased to produce coal. The war had not merely brought about the destruction of the power-plants in the South, it had tremendously reduced agricultural production and caused grave damage to the invaluable olive trees. Italy, never able to nourish herself well, was left with an alarming shortage of fats and the nationally loved wheat. In so disorganized a country, where it had become more than ever a virtue to break rules because they had been made by Fascists or Germans, it might have been impossible to work an efficient rationing system. The Govern-

[1] People in Milan regretted the handing back of the Northern provinces by A.M.G. to Rome on 1 January 1946, because it re-subjected them to the Roman bureaucrat.

ment certainly attempted nothing but to guarantee with U.N.R.R.A.'s help a small bread ration and occasional minute allotments of other things at controlled prices; it was too weak to resist the pressure of rich restaurant-owners and the owners of the big estates which still covered about a quarter of Italy.[1] British visitors to Rome who did not stay long were indignant at the lavish meals (served at enormous prices) in the restaurants—they did not see the starving people in the slums, so poor that they were selling Naafi tins whose contents they could not afford to consume, and the visitors did not know that the Allied authorities had appeared to support the Liberal Party with its big landowners, at the expense of those parties which were pledged to serious agricultural and administrative reform.

The A.M. lire printed for the Allied Armies of Occupation were among the factors which caused a far more serious inflation than after the last war. The rise in prices was startling, especially for the North when it came to be liberated. The 'lower-middle' class, with its fixed salaries and depreciated savings, suffered accordingly.

To this Italy of 1945 and 1946 streams of Italian prisoners were trickling home all the time, from Mauthausen and the other concentration camps of Germany, from America, from Britain, from India, from the Middle East—poor prisoners, they have indeed seen the worst of both worlds! Gino de Sanctis travelled with Italian prisoners of war returning from the Middle East in that first winter of peace. Not British rations but hate had kept them alive, he wrote in the *Giornale del Mattino*, for 'they hate first the Germans who dragged them into the war, then their own General Staff which armed them inadequately, then the British who have kept them as prisoners, then the anti-Fascists who helped the British, and finally they hate the present Government which—according to them—has not given them a thought'. (He met Cuneo division men too, whose fights against the Germans had availed them nothing later with the British.) Obviously every-

[1] The peasants with small holdings could not sell on the Black Market on a big scale, while the big landowners were known to resist the attempts of the Government to buy up their oil, which they preferred to sell privately at enormous prices.

thing was better in the Fascist Italy they had left, except something which they scarcely noticed—that they were free now to complain as loudly as they wished.

The bitterness of the returning *reduci*, who then found themselves without work, combined with that of the mass of petty officials who were driven by prices to sell their furniture even when they were able to keep their poorly paid jobs. Everybody called every one they disliked a Fascist, but naturally there was an embittered residue which was really Fascist, and a few of the inevitable young people who made a cult of Mussolini as a much maligned hero. People who for good or bad reasons feared the social changes which are probably inevitable, neo-Fascists, Monarchists, rich men, idealistic individualists such as anarchists and others, tended to group themselves together in furious hostility to the Six Party Government, the *Esarchia*. Though the more cautious Christian-Democrat leader, De Gasperi, replaced Parri as Premier, the C.L.N. political parties were to blame for everything—this was the campaign most successfully sponsored by Guglielmo Giannini in his notorious weekly *L'Uomo Qualunque*, 'The Ordinary Man'.[1] The tone of this publication, if remarkably vulgar, was one of proud Common Sense—indeed this was the name Giannini chose for a daily paper he brought out rather later. Common sense, it turned out, was a Bolshevik-bogy pseudo-Fascist state of mind, prevalent among Nazis in Germany before Hitler came to power. Ignoring the fact that modern political liberty has only existed in States with at least two active political parties, Giannini demanded in the name of liberty what he called an administrative instead of a political state; by this he meant a state without parties governed by non-Party Ministers who were technical experts, along the lines of Papen's 'Cabinet of Barons' in 1932; he wished his experts to include the surviving but aged Premiers of pre-Fascist days, Orlando and Nitti. By playing up every one's temporary grievances, especially those of the overgrown 'lower-middle class', Giannini had a mushroom-growth success, and decided, as those who decry parties often do, to found a Party himself, the *Fronte del Uomo Qualunque*. He held his first Party Congress in Rome in February 1946, which,

[1] Or perhaps more exactly—'Just any man'.

thanks to prodigies of organization and the support of certain Liberal and Monarchist groups with whom he allied himself, appeared to achieve considerable success, and anxiety was felt by genuinely anti-Fascist opinion as to the electoral strength the *Qualunquisti* might reach.

It has been seen that to govern in Italy in 1945 and 1946 was an all but impossible task, the task confided to the unfortunate six Parties. The foreign observer, irritated by the delays and confusion of this provisional period, was bound to admit not only that the outside world was equally to blame, but also that there was an astonishing activity, a fertile agitation which may not have been in vain. A consultative Assembly was nominated to tide over the period before a legislative body could be legally elected, and the old Chamber in Piazza Montecitorio was re-enlivened with its animated debates. All pre-Fascist deputies automatically became *consultori*, but more recent public figures appeared on the benches, including a number of women, the largest group of whom were spry-looking Communist girls wearing a good deal of red. It was amusing to see how even the Liberals disliked sitting too far on the right, though there was nowhere else for them to sit—one was often reminded of Professor De Ruggiero's comment on the Italian Chamber after 1876—that 'the non-existence of a conservative opposition . . . impaired the political education of the Left'. The public galleries were nearly always overcrowded, especially with women.

Each of the Parties, the six and others besides, held Central Committee meetings and national congresses, and the party, like the non-party, press was prolific—political theory can never have been more hungrily discussed, though a little more preparation of the resolutions debated might sometimes have clarified the issues. Among all the political groupings, a number of new ones like Zaniboni's Social Democratic Union or Bencivenga's Democratic Centre may be dismissed as purely ephemeral. Even between the major parties there was a remarkable fluidity, probably salutary, so that the Left wings of the parties more to the Right merged with the Right wings of the Leftist parties. The Left-wing Liberals, for instance, who were Republican, were often difficult to distinguish politically from men like La Malfa and the formerly Liberal

Professors De Ruggiero and Salvatorelli in the Right wing of the Party of Action which split off, it is true, in February 1946.

The name of the Italian Liberal Party has grievously misled the Anglo-Saxon world. It disputes with the Republicans the claim to be historically Italy's oldest party, tracing its descent directly to Cavour. It has, however, until the present been rather a tendency than a party, a tendency influencing such different men as Giolitti and Gentile, and itself considerably influenced by Croce. It represents an Italian characteristic, the pursuit of pure politics without social content. Purely political individualism was a Renaissance survival; with the development of industry and the enfranchisement of the masses, Liberal practice, as opposed to its theory, was liable to become Giolittian.[1] This weakness of the Liberal Party in Italy is accentuated by its landowning members from the South. 'The liberalism of Southern Italy is the expression of a narrow class of "bourgeois" landlords which has inherited almost unchanged certain rights of the old feudal lords, living on rents or . . . the margin of agricultural production, and devoted to the liberal professions or to public life. . . . No southern Italian, either before or after 1848, realized that the elevation of the agricultural masses might be a factor in the reconstruction of the State.'[2] This party of brilliant sticklers for unqualified individualism, whose record since 1922 had been upright rather than heroic, was felt by the rest of the country to show singularly little comprehension of Italy's most urgent needs, having grown older without learning very much in the last twenty-five years.

The other historic party is that of the Republicans who still faithfully wear Mazzini's ivy-leaf and favour the name of Giuseppe (with Ligurian abbreviations) by which they are true to Garibaldi too. In their doctrine they have been brought to abandon Mazzini's desire for a unitary state and to adopt the federalism of Cattaneo. When they held their Congress in the University of Rome in February 1946, the beards and hats flowed exactly as they might have in 1849. They are, above all,

[1] De Ruggiero, op. cit., held that the extension of the franchise in itself reduced politics to a system of bargaining for practical concessions.

[2] De Ruggiero, ibid.

political purists and symbolists, a mixture of intelligence with *naïveté*, of theatrical gesture with austere personal sincerity which has to be known to be believed. The Republicans have personal links with the Party of Action and the Socialists, and in the clandestine period they joined the C.L.N. here and there, for instance in the communal committee for Milan, but once Italy was liberated they disapproved of the *Esarchia*, as necessitating ignoble compromise. Though the Republicans have always been a small party and remain so now when Italy may be more republican than she ever was before, they retain certain strongholds such as the old Papal town of Ancona in the Marches, where they headed the poll (just beating the Communists) at the municipal elections in the spring of 1946.

The Party of Action has been found lacking for a period of peace-time reconstruction. It split badly at its national congress and lost its already small though excellent rank and file. The Party of Democratic Labour is a standing joke for the comic papers, as having more Ministers in the Cabinet than members in the country.

It had soon become clear that there were in Italy, as in France at the same time, three mass parties, two so-called Marxist and one associated with the Catholic Church. The Socialists showed the greatest nervous anxiety with regard to their 1918–22 past of which they were acutely conscious. They and the Action Party had 'abstained' from Bonomi's second Government, but they were haunted by the Aventine error, and kept the *Esarchia* together after that at the price of painful concessions, while the Communists remained in the Government all the way through. The Socialists were also acutely aware of the error of their quarrel with the *Popolari*, and were at great pains to insist that their party was not anti-Clerical. Both Socialists and Communists, moreover, underlined their attachment to parliamentary democratic forms; they were determined not to irritate the country by any more talk of dictatorship, whether proletarian or not. And as between one another the Marxist parties were eager to avoid their old mistakes—they must never again cu. one another's throats. This last principle led to a long discussion of the merits and demerits of a policy of fusion between Italian Socialists and Communists, who were already bound by a pact of unity agreed to

in exile in 1934. Despite all determination there was a good deal of bitter feeling between the two, the Socialists objecting to Communist opportunism and dependence upon the instructions of Moscow. The Communists, for their part, could complain that the Socialists were showing such an anarchical tendency to break up into groups, fusionists, Right wings following different individuals such as Saragat or Greppi, anti-fusionist revolutionaries like Pertini and Matteotti's son and so on, that the unfortunate working class would not know which way to turn. The unstable character of the Socialist leader and Italian Deputy Premier, Pietro Nenni, was also disadvantageous.

In Resistance days there had been all kinds of Communist groups, including followers of the southern Trotskyist, Bordiga; in Rome in the days of the greatest glory of Russian arms a Trotskyist, a Leninist, and a Stalinist clandestine paper were circulated. But after liberation, party discipline was established and well illustrated by the all too exemplary organization of the Party Conference opened at the end of December 1945. The character of Togliatti, Gramsci's successor as leader of the Italian Communist Party, is much in dispute; not so his evident intelligence. In spite of the painful embarrassment of the Trieste question, the Communist Party has not melted away as some of its adversaries prophesied. The municipal elections have shown that both the Socialist and the Communist Party have an important but not overwhelming proportion of the electorate behind them. Of course, the Communists are accused on the one hand of accepting former Fascists as Party members, on the other of receiving Muscovite gold. The dispassionate observer can only say that, while they are particularly successful in organizing self-help—their Party social services are voluntarily performed by Communist doctors after hours—and there is no evidence of external help in such things. There is, moreover, a remarkable if fanatical spirit of devotion which powerfully attracts some of the best young men and women; their favourite slogan is not the class war, but the solidarity of the people.

To the First *Risorgimento* the Church was hostile and the Monarchy a valuable instrument, in the Second the reverse might almost be held to be true. This and the heroism of many

simple priests gave strength to the heirs of Sturzo, the *Democristiani*, in the Committees of National Liberation. The Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Schuster, who had been prominent in the negotiations for the surrender of the Germans and followers of Mussolini in Lombardy, followed this up by an impressive Pastoral Letter read in the churches on 28 October 1945. He therein declared that it was the duty of the clergy to interest themselves in politics, about which in a true democracy it was their function to instruct the people. Upon this he insisted because 'the future constitution, like the Albertine *statuto*, might decide the destinies of Italy for many decades, perhaps for centuries'. The priesthood proceeded to obey these instructions, to the indignation of life-long anti-clericals, and the position of the Christian-Democrat Party was fortified by the formation of the Cabinet under the Presidency of De Gasperi, first Clerical Premier of Italy, before the end of the year. Since then it has become increasingly clear, the more since the electoral law has enfranchised women, that this Clerical Party is the largest single party in Italy. There are many current jokes about the conservative leadership and progressive rank and file of the Christian-Democrats, but they seem, as a Party, to supply some kind of political haven other than *qualunquismo* for the neglected but important *petit-bourgeois*. There is, of course, the reverse side to this hope. Already in so short a time the Christian-Democrats have acquired a reputation for accumulating the administrative key positions in the State, and there is a strong tendency for the 'lower-middle' class, with its eye ever on appointments, to look to this party above all others for preferment. It will be the task of the Constituent Assembly to prevent, if it sees fit, the possibility of a clerical Giolitti.

The Christian-Democrat Party of to-day, unlike the *Popolari*, is smiled upon by the Pope. In 1939 Pius XII had succeeded to the throne of St. Peter, to be faced not merely with the racialist heresy, but in the following years with the utter destruction, both military and economic, of that Italian State with which his predecessor had allied the Catholic Church. Protestant Europe was probably weakened by the defeat of Germany in 1945, and there was a tendency in Western Europe, as in Italy itself, towards governments showing considerable

Catholic influence. Power in the world was now essentially divided between individualist, capitalist America (i.e. the United States) with many million Catholic citizens, and Communist Russia. The Italian Communists had been strong in the national movement of resistance to Germany out of which anti-Fascist Italy had been born and Russia seemed very close in the north-east, but American troops were in occupation of Italy.

At the beginning of 1946 Pius XII announced a tremendous, indeed, if the word were permitted in this context, a revolutionary change in the policy of the Church. Harking back to an epithet often used by Benedict XV,[1] he declared the mission of the Church to be supernational (*sopranazionale*) and created 32 new Cardinals of whom only 2 were Italians, thus for the first time in history allowing non-Italians to prevail in the Sacred College (42 out of 70);[2] particular emphasis was laid upon the representation of the New World and especially upon that of the United States.

It is too early to judge this apparent swing-back to universalism of the Universal Church. 'Will the next Pope be American?' was a current if unpopular question in Rome at the time, while on the other hand it was insisted that papal administration was still almost exclusively in Italian hands. Some Italians saw a new Italian world-supremacy foreshadowed, which would recompense Italy in other ways for the humiliations of the Armistice of 1943 and the embryonic Peace Treaty. Others asked themselves whether the Pope had not missed a very great opportunity by associating the Church with America, and ignoring the widespread craving, amongst so much poverty and beside such great wealth, for a return to a socialistic Christianity in the humbler spirit of the Gospels and St. Francis.

In spite of the demoralization and pessimism of the public, and in spite of their own lack of experience as administrators,

[1] Benedict XV was Pope during the 1914–18 war and inclined towards the Central Powers. Pius IX founded new American bishoprics and American seminaries in Rome.

[2] The Cardinal of Genoa, a newly named United States Cardinal and Galen of Münster, died shortly afterwards, leaving 40 non-Italians and 27 Italians.

the Ministers representing the Six Parties managed, not only to live from hand to mouth, but, in collaboration with the *Consulta*, to work out an electoral law. Its main features were universal male and female suffrage, simple majority-voting as in England where the communes were small, and proportional representation (*scrutin de liste*) where they had above 30,000 inhabitants. The proposal of a compulsory vote caused violent altercations as the parties on the Left were strongly opposed to it; it was finally decided that small fines[1] should be imposed upon those who failed to vote for the Constituent Assembly. More difficult was the compilation of the registers after the disasters which had swept over the land; many old records had been destroyed and many upright people had become accustomed to living with forged personal documents in the clandestine period. The first local elections since 1925 were nevertheless held in 5,638 out of some 7,300 communes on various Sundays during March and April 1946. Out of 104,391 communal representatives elected, 36,070 were Christian-Democrat with 6,247 sympathizers, and 42,806 were Socialist, Communist, or Party of Action, the Socialists showing themselves slightly stronger than the Communists. Liberals, *Demolaburisti*, Republicans and *Qualunquisti* gained 1,922, 1,307, 999, and 504 seats respectively. There were a number of independents and local group representatives, besides 1,838 belonging to a concentration of the Right. Roughly, this gives a fairly even balance between the Centre and the Left; at present it is tilted towards the Centre, but when the big cities like Rome and Turin come to vote, the Left is likely to catch up. This local voting, which was not compulsory, attracted very great public interest, as Italy had led one to expect. For further voting of a purely political kind 2 June 1946 had now been chosen. On that day two momentous events were to take place: the election of a Constituent Assembly and a referendum on the Monarchy-Republic issue. The gloomy comment of a well-known anti-Clerical anti-Fascist was 'We shall now have to choose between a Clerical Republic or a Fascist Monarchy'. Since the Parties on the Left were Republican by definition and the majority of the Christian-Democrats had declared against the Monarchy,

[1] Even these were dropped in the end.

it seemed that the sands were running out for the House of Savoy.

The economic record of the provisional period was negative, but what else could it be? All the competent Italians combined with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to work out a programme of importation, but as only a part of the required raw materials was forthcoming from abroad, North Italian industry could only keep going at about a third of its capacity. In January an agreement between employers and C.G.L. allowed for a gradual dismissal from February onwards of workmen for whom there was no work; it was hoped that the spring would bring an economic revival to counteract the alarming prospect of vast unemployment. The land question had merely become more acute, Communist propaganda in favour of a 60:40 division between *mezzadri* and owners having stirred up feeling in Tuscany and Emilia, especially round Siena, while conditions on the *latifondi* in the South were as evil as they ever have been.

One of the worst problems to be faced in Italy in 1945 was that of the reorganization of education. Owing partly to the outbreak of war the *Carta della Scuola* had never really come into operation, and school life had later been thoroughly dislocated, owing particularly to a lack of teachers and the destruction of many school buildings in the war. With the return of peace it was only possible to allot one schoolhouse to two schools, so that each child had only half a day's education from the State. Often the political party organizations provided lessons and, with the help of U.N.R.R.A., a meal during the hours left free. The linking of politics with social relief was a dangerous inheritance from Fascism, but it was necessary that any available relief be supplied. An interesting school was started by the historian and member of the Party of Action, Professor Codignola, in the poor Santa Croce quarter of Florence. Here the children did everything for themselves, including the concoction of a midday meal from tins provided by U.N.R.R.A.; their political ardour was satisfied by the setting up of their own tribunal, the judgements of which were carried out with emotional solemnity. There seem to be possibilities here of an improvement upon the tradition of the children's hostility to all the authorities at school. Among the

other reforms most under discussion are the extension of elementary education, the development of a scholarship system, and the end of the choice between classical and scientific *licei*; Professor Marchesi is the leading advocate of a uniform classical secondary-school education.

The end of the war brought the students back to the universities, which were more overcrowded than ever before. By the end of 1945 there were nearly 30,000 students at Rome, and over 20,000 at Naples. In the issue for January 1946 of the new periodical, *Belfagor*, Professor Omodeo of Naples University—another well-known 'Actionist'—described recent changes there. Seventy-two scholarships of 12,000 lire each had been given for the academic year 1945–6, in addition to eighty scholarships to ex-service men. In order to raise the quality and reduce the quantity of the students, Omodeo desired higher fees with more help to intelligent but indigent students; he also hoped for greater student participation in University life.[1]

Belfagor is one example of the tropical luxuriance of periodicals which have come back into Italian life. There is a strikingly large number of serious daily papers published in every considerable city. 'Stupidity much too creditably dressed up' was the characteristic comment on Italian journalism made to me by one of its younger perpetrators. But it is pre-eminently the periodicals which demonstrate the intelligence and vitality of this people. Wherever one turns one finds the writers of 1920 still prolific, and younger men at their side—all the more eloquent, it seems, after the period of compulsory silence. Florence is still headquarters, as it were, with periodicals like *Il Ponte* and with Eugenio Montale and Arturo Loria writing in *Il Mondo*. In Milan *Critica Sociale* has been revived with the mayor, Antonio Greppi, as its editor, and there are a host of other publications, such as Francesco Flora's *La Rassegna d'Italia*. In Rome one of the best reviews is the weekly *Nuova Europa*[2] the pillars of which are Mario Vinciguerra, the historian Salvatorelli, and the philosopher De Ruggiero, together with Alberto Moravia and occasionally Corrado Alvaro. There is only one striking break with the pre-Fascist past and even that

[1] Professor Omodeo died suddenly in April 1946.

[2] Temporarily forced to cease publication Spring 1946.

is only superficial; in 1944 Croce brought *Critica* to a formal end because, as he wrote of himself, with the fall of Fascism he felt like the man in the fairy story who had lost his shadow. During 1945, however, two Crocean *Quaderni della Critica* were published, and there is no sign as yet that they will not continue. But there is among younger people an inevitable reaction against Croce's optimism, a reaction which often takes the shape of *esistenzialismo* and homage to Sartre.

D'Annunzio, poet and playwright, had died in 1938 and the great Sicilian playwright, Pirandello, two years earlier. Of the other writers known before Fascism, one of the ablest novelists, Riccardo Bacchelli, who produced his most celebrated book, *Il Diavolo al Portelungo*, in 1927, is working in Milan. Moravia's fame still rests mainly upon the remarkable first novel, *Gl' Indifferenti*, he produced in 1929 at the age of 22. Two other contemporary prose writers, both of them Southern, must be mentioned again here: Corrado Alvaro and Elio Vittorini. Alvaro writes mostly essays and short stories, though he made his name with a novel about Russia, *L'Uomo è forte*, in 1938. Vittorini is the author of *Conversazione in Sicilia* and of a novel about the *Resistenza* called *Uomini e no*; he is much read at present and is regarded as the Steinbeck of Italy; he is also editor of the review *Politecnico*. Among the prose writers of Italy to-day it is difficult to pick out dominant trends. The favourite form is the essay or short story and the character that of a period of fluidity and ferment, when frontiers between literature, politics, philosophy are, even for Italy, particularly indistinct: Carlo Levi's admirable book on the Southern peasant is typical. By contrast with Anglo-Saxon writing, the absence of the psychoanalytical approach is striking; the Triestino, Italo Svevo, seemed too Austrian in Italy where there was never anything like the English cult of Freud and Proust. Ignazio Silone, though undoubtedly successful journalistically in Rome, is possibly too didactic as a novelist to be fully appreciated in Italy.

Some exquisite poetry has emerged in the last generation. It has been said that all through history until the unification, Italian poets have expressed the emotions of exile. After the Carducci-Pascoli-D'Annunzio period, Fascism recreated within Italy herself the traditional feeling, the anguish of living

in banishment, unfree, in a country not one's own. The great living poets are Giuseppe Ungaretti, Eugenio Montale, and Vincenzo Cardarelli, the last the poet of the fantasies of his own insomnia; Ungaretti lived years in France and may be said to stand close to Paul Valéry. Another Triestino, Saba, is admired, yet he also is felt to be foreign. Two younger poets of promise are Quasimodo and Penna.

Of modern composers Respighi is best known, while younger men of promise like Dallapiccola and Petrassi are at work today, and as an executive musician there has been none greater in the world than Toscanini, who, having in a moment of aberration stood as a Fascist candidate at the elections in 1921, has vindicated the cause of freedom ever since. He has a brilliant successor in the person of De Sabata. Gigli and Toti Dal Monte are still the foremost opera singers, but no one has come into sight to inherit the well-deserved fame of the great actress, Eleonora Duse, so much loved by D'Annunzio and justly ranked with her contemporary, Sarah Bernhardt, for the quality of her art. It may be noted here that while Diaghileff's ballet was never adored in Italy as it was in England or France, *Barabau* was written for Diaghileff by the Italian, Rieti, and Cecchetti of Turin taught Lifar.

Italian painting continued in the earlier twentieth century to be dependent on Paris, where Amedeo Modigliani ended his short life in 1920. Giorgio De Chirico is known to the world for the Hellenic horses and pillars he painted in France, though in earlier days he painted exquisitely traditional portraits in the Umbrian manner. Of late the road to Paris has been barred, and in the present generation painters like Renato Guttuso may be on the way to something more specifically their own; the emotional content of their work has been enriched by their personal experience of the *Resistenza*. As for architecture, there has been plenty of good modernist work, of which the Città Universitaria at Rome or Michelucci's station at Florence are examples. But here, as with painting, it is a little as if, after the pre-industrial glories which ended with the eighteenth century, modern Italy has not yet discovered herself.

What then is the outlook for Italy? There are Italians and others who despair of her future. They see no solution of the

problem of her poverty, they reject her as incapable of living successfully in the modern mechanical world—her pre-national, pre-industrial triumphs lie in inevitable ruins. The political avidity of her people is sterile, it will never lead beyond empty Utopianism and thence back to Fascism. Her geographical position condemns her to disappear as no more than a battle-ground between East and West.

It has become fairly clear to those who have recently studied the poverty of Italy and of south-eastern Europe, whose agricultural population is too dense, that the solution of their problem lies in the further development of industry; in this direction Italy with its wealth of engineers and skilled workmen may hope for very great success.

Here it is fitting rather to examine Italy's political hopes. The universal demand of politically minded Italians, formulated in the teeming newspapers and periodicals, in Corrado Alvaro's *L'Italia rinunzia?* or in *Roma 1943*, is expressed by Monelli in this way: 'This people of ours created the communes, the republics and the *signorie* of the Middle Ages, yet in the last seventy years it has not been able to produce a governing class' (*classe dirigente*). Rightly or wrongly the Giolitti governmental machinery was condemned in 1915 and the return of Giolitti in 1920 regarded as a major cause of the national catastrophe of Fascism; the almost pathological reaction of the parties on the Left when the Right urges the employment of Nitti's or Orlando's or Bonomi's experience is due to a conviction that to complete that circle is vicious—those people will always bargain some kind of Fascism back into authority. And Fascism, of course, was the ultimate disaster from this point of view. While doing lip-service to Pareto's stress upon the importance of a governing class, it set out to breed servility in the official in the place of all sense of responsibility, and, by expanding the State service, it corrupted a still larger proportion of the people.

How can post-Fascist Italy solve this among so many other problems? It is primarily a question, not of childishly demanding the abolition of politics, but of creating a different spirit among the senior civil servants as well as the party leaders who become their temporary chiefs. The large and ubiquitous aristocracy may have valuable service to do the State yet. The

majority of its members may be selfish and comically *dix-huitième* in their inability to live without flunkeys and butlers to surround them—the idea of receiving guests without an elaborate paraphernalia would leave many of them gasping. But they have their *élite* of men of so beautiful a learning and courtesy combined with public spirit that it would be wanton to bar their service in any way.

The other classes were clumsily struggling to gain political experience when Fascist obscurantism banished them to collaboration, imprisonment, silence or conspiracy. This means that to-day the State has to depend either upon the type of bureaucrat who accepted Fascist obscurantism or the Parris who have no administrative experience. A man like Ugo La Malfa, who was reputed to be the only competent administrator in Parri's government, was lucky enough to survive the clandestine period, though he was scarcely over 40, and to have had administrative experience in the *Banca Commerciale* without professing the Fascist faith. Some competent officials have been evicted for too great fidelity to Fascism, while others left undisturbed at their posts inevitably inspire mistrust. In other words, the problem of the *Epurazione* is one aspect of the problem of a governing class.

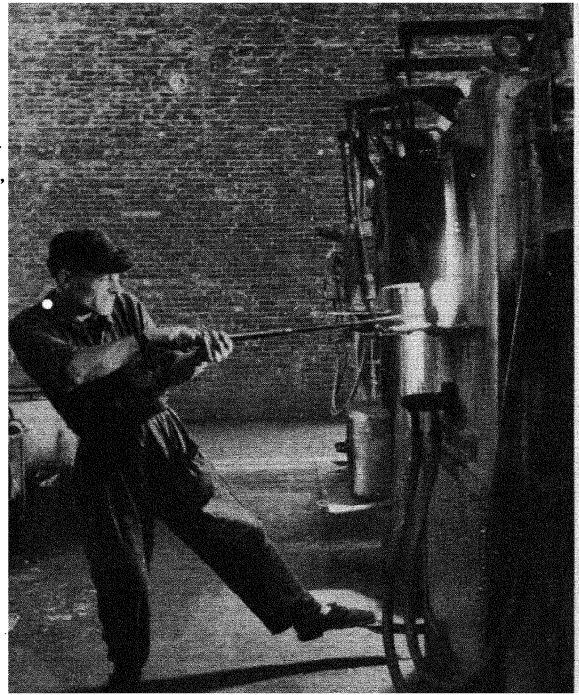
All over Europe, for better or for worse, the pre-industrial governing class is being replaced by one which necessarily rejects the Renaissance conception of politics without social content. The Italians start with all kinds of historical handicaps in this process, but there is probably no fundamental reason why they should never succeed. As long as they are poor it will all be more difficult, because poverty always facilitates corruption and reduces the money available for a scholarship system to make *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. Yet the great opportunity created by the overthrow of Fascism has not yet been lost. The mass of the people, industrial workers and peasants, want about the same degree of reform, and much of the middle class might still be enlisted to accept—even desire—the very same things if certain big interests are unable to stir up *petit-bourgeois* prejudice.

One is constantly told by Italians and foreigners how politically stupid and backward and apathetic their working classes are. Yet if one frequents political meetings, it is remarkable

XII.
INDUSTRY

FIAT WORKERS, TURIN

(Press Service, Fiat)



to observe what interest and lucidity the working people show. Indeed, one may pick up much more from their comments than from the orators' speeches. They were not in any doubt that they wanted the Constituent Assembly to be elected with no more delay, and were quite certain that they did not want the pre-Fascist Ministers, the Orlandos and the Nittis, brought back; somehow they knew all the gossip about Nitti's financial tie-up with America. Further they knew that Giannini boosted Nitti in *L'Uomo Qualunque*, and about the latter they felt so strongly that if they saw you reading a *Qualunquista* notice in the street they would warn you that *Qualunquismo* is no better than Fascism. Indeed a workman in Milan—anxiously, not angrily—tore down a Giannini poster for fear that I should finish reading it. This brings one to a favourite Italian controversy in 1945 when Socialist or Communist printers refused to print articles they considered Fascist, at which Liberals protested on behalf of the freedom of the press.

What do the Italian working people want? In Italy they all scribble their political feelings on the walls and it is not unimportant to see what comes out. At the time of the country's liberation, in the working-class quarters of Rome or other cities, the universal demands were 'Death to the King', 'We want a people's Republic', 'Nenni and Togliatti to the Government'. The people cares little about the disputes between Socialist and Communist leaders, who are not working men, and benevolently regards Nenni and Togliatti as all the same thing. Another typical sentence was painted in gigantic lettering along the right bank of the Arno in Florence: 'Christ was a Socialist and preached Equality and Fraternity, so why do the priests always defend the lords [*signori*] and never the workers?' For though they ask for Ministers from the 'Marxist' Parties, these Marxists love Christ and St. Francis. There is still a Christian-Socialist group, and there was a Communist Party which called itself the Christian Left until it dissolved itself at the end of 1945, at the Vatican's request if rumour be true. This Italian people is not brutal or violent; on the contrary, it believes in human rights, in Christian justice. And sometimes it acts on these beliefs in an undisciplined way. In the autumn of 1943, with the Germans in Rome, there were several spontaneous 'occupations' of unused palaces and parks

which were converted to communal use, and in the spring of 1945 such actions by Partisans were general. In a number of places, as in 1920, peasants helped themselves to unused land.

All this is, after all, a simplified version of the programme of the Party of Action, as printed in January 1943, and can also be accepted by the Christian-Democrats. The simplicity of the peasant and workman approach may be salutary in a country where politicians, without the mental confusion of the Germans, easily fall in love with complication. The task of framing the necessary legislation should not prove overwhelming; it must find a disciplined way of redistributing the undisciplined wealth of certain industrialists and landowners without reduction of the national resources. There seems little hope of social stability until some such redistribution can be made.

It would be useless to expect the Italians suddenly to develop steadily, though one cannot ignore the fact that the local elections held in the spring of 1946 showed a striking fidelity to regional tradition—for instance to Socialism in Milan—as well as an immunity from the pseudo-Fascist demoralization of a part of the press. Certainly the Italians are phenomenally difficult to govern, particularly on account of their temperamental instability. The new Constitution may be a failure and there may be fresh convulsion and tumult to come, but elation and despair are the stimuli of creative genius, and there is so much vitality in ferment that it seems possible that at one moment or another something superlative will be conceived. Perhaps, instead of in painting or poetry, Italy will suddenly bring forth a political work of art. From Machiavellian intellect and Franciscan spirit there might be born a political synthesis which would solve the problem of the modern State.

EPILOGUE

THERE was a time when every English gentlewoman of distinction read Italian, and it may be that the Italians of to-day are spiritually more akin than we ourselves to our own Elizabethans. The Italian who reads Shakespeare understands him as no Frenchman will; indeed he feels the intimacy of co-nationalism with our Renaissance literature. Though the Elizabethan writers seldom travelled so far as Italy, they lived in a world of Italian feeling, of swift hypersensitive reaction, of directness of emotion. It is strange that Milton, who in 1638 and 1639 joined with so much satisfaction in the intellectual life of Rome, of Naples, and above all of Florence, was a part of that very Puritan revolution which, profoundly affecting our national character, turned us away from Catholic Europe.

Two centuries later, when one might have thought that influences such as that of Wesley or of the House of Hanover, culminating in Queen Victoria, would have widened the gulf between England and Italy, it was above everything a popular and 'No Popery' sentiment in our country which fastened with enthusiasm upon the idea of the liberation of Italy. 'In 1864', Professor Trevelyan has written, 'Garibaldi came to our island to receive, as the redeemer of Italy and the chosen hero of England, an ovation so tremendous that it frightened Europe and even Palmerston himself. . . .' There are other historians who have held that it suited Palmerston to tease Napoleon III by adroitly stirring up popular excitement against the French garrison in Rome, but popular excitement there certainly was; it had led to a number of big demonstrations in England and the recruitment of a British Legion six hundred strong. That this joined Garibaldi too late to be useful and showed the usual insular weakness in countries where wine is cheap does not alter the fact of a general enthusiasm in England in favour of the first *Risorgimento*.

The Italians were right in attributing a share in the discomfiture of the Neapolitan Bourbons to Lord John Russell and Gladstone. From that day to this all Englishmen have been

conceived of by Italians as blameless fighters for liberty and lovers of Italy; here there is no anti-British tradition to overcome as in France. When it came to 1940, both in spite of and because of Mussolini, the B.B.C. was enthusiastically applauded, especially by Italians on the Left. When the Allied forces arrived in 1943, many Italians expected the British Army to be officered by Byrons. 'As for news,' Byron wrote to John Murray in 1821, 'the Barbarians are marching on Naples, and if they lose a single battle all Italy will be up. . . . Letters opened!—to be sure they are, and that's the reason why I always put in my opinion of the German and Austrian scoundrels: there is not an Italian loathes them more than I do.'

There was a quite other British tradition in Italy of which the B.B.C. pardonably omitted to remind its Italian listeners, that of the English 'milords', as Professor Trevelyan has described them, 'swelling with the pride of Waterloo, each with his carriage, family, footman and *Quarterly Review* complete' who 'looked with an indifferent contempt on Austrians and Italians, priests and patriots, and with hostile inquisitiveness at the rebel poets of their own race and caste'. Some twenty years earlier, in 1799, Nelson's behaviour at Naples 'left a stain on his glory which time cannot efface'. With a professional sailor's ignorance of politics (it must be admitted that our diplomatic representative in Naples shared his views), he interfered on behalf of the Bourbon régime, and, refusing a capitulation upon honourable terms, handed over the Neapolitan *élite* of the day, who had risen in favour of the French, to a terrible Bourbon revenge. After all, to Nelson these Neapolitans were a revolutionary rabble which had sided with his enemies.

Perhaps many Allied soldiers (not quite justly) felt the same towards the Italians as they fought their way through Italy in a campaign memorable for its heavy cost in casualties. There was also much bitterness among the British over the treatment of prisoners by the Fascist armies in North Africa, treatment which was sometimes due to the fact that the Italians themselves were hard-pressed and short of all supplies. Nor is it realized even to-day how much help the Italian civilian population gave to British prisoners who escaped in 1943; the Allied Screening Commission by the beginning of 1946 had identified

nearly 100,000 Italian families as deserving recognition for this.

On the whole it is true to say that the British, except for isolated persons with some particular background, no longer have a line of mental or moral approach to Italy. The mechanics of the future appeal to many of them more than the politics of the present or the aesthetics of the past, and they are attracted by an imperial scale of things; in this setting it has been natural for senior officers arriving from the Middle East to forget quite frankly that Italy was even European. As for the highbrows, soon after the First World War they forsook Italy for Spain or sometimes for Germany.

The Italian anti-Fascists, having hoped for an army of friendly young Socialists, now too readily suspect all the British of being 'reactionary' and snobbish. It is always easier for British soldiers or diplomats abroad to consort with the rich who can speak English and afford to entertain them. But quite apart from this, the British have had a continuous and hitherto prosperous history—why should they advocate drastic reform? They have, indeed, many reasons to be essentially conservative, and they regard with suspicion an Italy with revolutionary ideas. They do not understand that, in a poor and in some ways backward country, the inequality of wealth is more flagrant and therefore becomes odious, the rich are greedier about their wealth because they are more frightened of poverty, and this forces the rest of the inhabitants to feel more hostile towards them and probably necessitates state interference. In other words, poverty and social inequality in Italy not only stimulate bribery, theft, and corruption, but induce political landslides to the left.

Other more authoritative persons have formulated a future British policy towards Italy; here it has only been sought to describe and interpret Italian behaviour for those who may, after all, be seeking a line of approach. The essay above was written in March and April of 1946, but it has not in any way been disproved in the intervening five months. The draft of the Peace Treaty with Italy has realized many of the Italians' worst fears. The results of the municipal elections accurately forecast the voting in the national elections on 2 June: the Consulta, where no one wished to sit too far to the right and

the public galleries were nearly always overcrowded, exactly foreshadowed the Constituent Assembly which met in the same building at the end of June: the brisk Marxist young women have become legally elected deputies instead of provisional nominees. The Monarchy has fallen as it was reasonable to foresee; only its fall has perhaps narrowed the appeal of the Church to the people of Italy, for the Church interfered a little too openly on behalf of the House of Savoy, and, in doing so, seemed to revive Clerical versus anti-Clerical disputes which had fallen into abeyance.

During May 1946 the election campaign was enlivened by the phenomenon of the 'comizietti', or little meetings, in Rome, Milan, and elsewhere. These one could not have foreseen and they were perhaps sufficiently remarkable for a sketch of contemporary Italy to be incomplete without some account of them. Every evening a crowd of clustering, intermingled groups was to be found in the Piazza Colonna in Rome or the Galleria in Milan. All ages and classes were represented, boys of fifteen, soldiers back from P.O.W. camps in Britain or India, anti-Fascists back from concentration camps in Germany, workmen, clerks, intellectuals. Discussion was spontaneous, open to every one who was able to edge his way into the crowd. Monarchists had begun the thing but Republicans played back with zest. And order was maintained without a vestige of police force, either Italian or Allied, though every one was tremendously in earnest.

These are the notes made after an evening of the kind in Rome: The first group of eight or nine people were debating whether the right to strike was incompatible or not with political liberty. In the next group a simple, amiable, rather worried soldier in uniform was saying that he was a Monarchist because a country counted more in the world if it had a king; Stalin, he maintained, had shown more respect for Roumania for this reason. The next group was being addressed by a man who declared that Italy would have to make great efforts to get back her empire which was a necessity for her. 'But our empire was a mockery and a burden, and we are lucky to be rid of both empire and emperor,' exclaimed an opponent with a sarcastic eloquent face.

'But who is to take the lead if we do not have a king?'

'We can surely find some one who is more of a man than Umberto', and there were the usual grins that were always evoked by that kind of remark.

'Anyway he is a Fascist and plotting a *coup d'état* with his generals and admirals.'

Nearby was standing a young Genoese doctor in naval uniform. He was worried about a great many things and fell into more serious conversation with a young writer who happened to approach. 'Of course one must be for the Republic because the referendum can only go in favour of the Monarchy through some trick and by so narrow a majority that there is sure to be civil war, and then we shall be murdering each other in the name of Italy as we did after Mussolini's fall. After all, there are a great many desperate people about; I might be one of them myself, if I were the type, for I have a wife and child and they pay me 6,500 lire a month (less than seven pounds sterling).'

'It is so unfortunate that the Monarchists insisted on this referendum, which has exacerbated the whole situation; if it had gone as the rest of us wished and we had simply been called upon to elect the Constituent Assembly, which would then itself have voted on the institutional issue, things need not have become so embittered.'

'Of course that is only too true. But now the important thing is to get a really big majority for the Republic so that it may be stable and unchallenged. I am afraid Communist propaganda for the Republic alienates more people than it wins. I am a Right-wing Socialist myself. We have had enough dictation. And above all, if the Monarchy divides us, only moderation can unite us in the future.'

Other groups were discussing the relations of Church and State and yet another who should be president. When De Gasperi was suggested some one objected that he was a Monarchist.

'He has never said so.'

'That proves it—he dared not admit it.'

'Anyway it might be a good thing to have a Monarchist as first President of the Republic. Didn't the French do that with MacMahon?'

'No, Sturzo would be the ideal President for us nowadays.'

'But that would be impossible because he is a priest.'

And so one emerged from the crowd, a little battered but exhilarated, and full of reflections on the future of Italy. Not only social, but also psychological, barriers, those which the loud-speaker has so much augmented between orator and audience, were swept away by the 'comizietti'. This public had arrived at the political maturity of being both tolerant and profoundly concerned, while it debated with a frankness which, after a generation of Fascist terrorization, could only be regarded as astonishing. Many who remembered the last *dopoguerra* in Italy twenty-five years before believed that these discussions were evidence of a remarkable change, as if this people had, after all, progressed along the path traced out by its natural humanity, in spite of its bitter and tragic experiences in the meantime.

On 16 June 1946 the old Republican tricolour flag with *Dio e popolo* inscribed across it, which Garibaldi had lowered there in 1849, was re-hoisted on the Campidoglio by Pacciardi, after ninety-seven years. The crowd was tremendous. Tears trickled silently down the faces of many heirs to the Republican tradition, tears of hope but also of anxiety for the new Republic born on the twenty-second anniversary of the murder of Matteotti and the sixth of Mussolini's declaration of war.

INDEX

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