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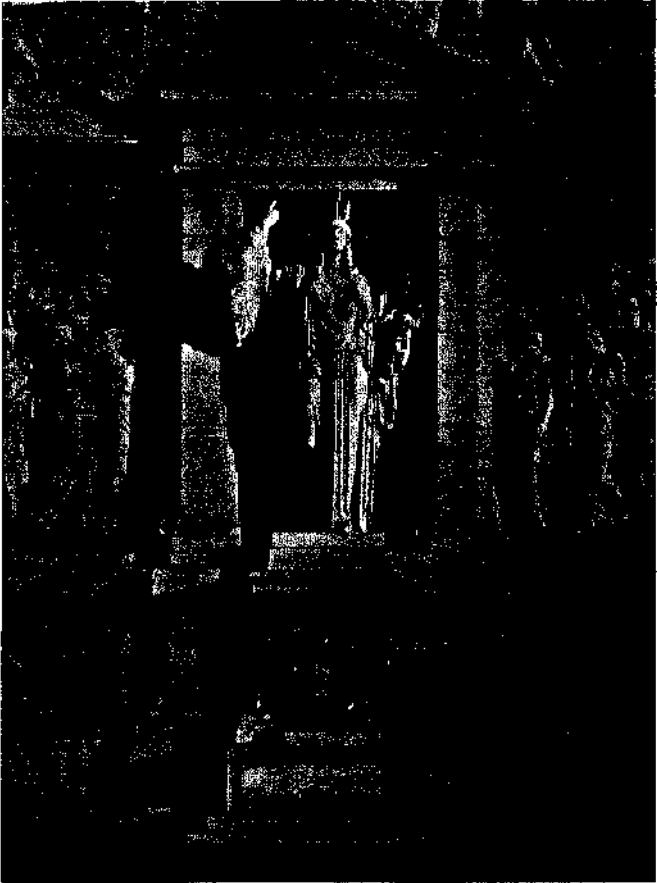


ITALY AND

MEDITERRANEAN TO-DAY

**THROUGH FASCISM
TO WORLD POWER**

THE SHRINE OF ITALY



The goddess Rome—*Roma Genetrix*. The statue forms the central shrine of the National Monument erected after 1870 to perpetuate the unity of Italy under the Crown of Savoy. In 1921 Italy's Unknown Soldier was entombed in the pedestal of the goddess, beneath the bronze wreath of oak and laurel. From its base Mussolini made his first speech as Prime Minister on October 30, 1922. The whole Monument forms an epitome of Italian history and aspiration. As a National Shrine and *Ara Patriae* it is the continual point of reference of the Fascist regime.

THROUGH FASCISM TO WORLD POWER

A HISTORY OF
THE REVOLUTION IN ITALY

BY
ION S. MUNRO

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TO MY FATHER

" Let us study these things; observing the state of times past, the doings of men, their governance, their counsels, and their endeavours; so that we may discern and judge rightly of things present, and foresee wisely things to come."

PREFACE

THIS book is a survey of Italian Fascism—its origins, growth and development; its principles and doctrine ; its application and mechanism. These three groups are dealt with independently, yet form one cycle of study.

Many people still think that the Fascist Revolution is merely a reaction against post-war International Socialism and Bolshevism,—a thing of cudgels and castor-oil, the overthrowing of a Parliament, and the seizure of power by a dictator of the Extreme Right. Such a description is woefully incomplete and wholly misleading. The seeds and roots of Fascism, as this book will shew, are to be found in a political terrain much deeper than that marked by any Communist menace.

In tracing the growth of Fascism a chronological method has been followed which unfolds its story from the foundation of the first *Fascio* (Fascist centre) in 1919 to the advent of the Fascist Corporate State as we know it to-day. But it has been necessary to include a brief recapitulation of Italian affairs long before Fascism was ever heard of. This necessity arises from the fact that Fascism is racy of the Italian soil and people; it has its roots in the particular circumstances of Italian history ; it has grown in a political atmosphere peculiar to Italy ; and it has a justification and explanation rising out of racial temperament—a temperament which is largely the heritage of Italy's long and complicated story. In this I have done no more

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than indicate the fibres which bind Fascism into the core of Italy.

In Part One the parties, policies, and conditions of pre-war Italy are dealt with in some detail. Without an appreciation of these, together with the role played by Italy in the Great War, no understanding of Fascism or the aims of Fascist Italy is possible.

Italy's rise to world power is specially identified with the development of foreign affairs ; but to follow Mussolini's foreign policy it is very necessary to begin with an examination of Italian external affairs under previous regimes, with particular attention to 1881 and 1915—turning-points not only in Italian but in European history—and with no less attention to the crucial episodes of 1859 and 1918. The national emotions which have their reactions in Italy's decision in 1881-2 to form part of the Triple Alliance, the decision to abandon that Alliance in 1915 (with the concomitant Secret Treaty of London), the chagrin of the 1859 Peace of Villafranca, and the disillusionment of the 1918 Versailles and kindred treaties, provide indicators which allow us to gauge the foreign policy of Fascist Italy to-day and to-morrow. These things are woven into the narrative of Part One of this book which culminates with the 1933 Four-Power Pact of Rome.

Part Two deals with Fascism as a political philosophy, and describes the means adopted to imbue the people with its ethical ideas. Mussolini has expounded his doctrine and Fascist political beliefs in a contribution to the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. Through the kindness of the *Capo del Governo* and the Directors of that publication, to whom I return my heartiest thanks, I am able to include in these pages that final and authoritative exposition.

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Part Three shows the Constitutional changes wrought by the Revolution Government in order to ensure the application of its principles ; it describes the framework of the Corporate State; and it gives the measures taken to protect and perpetuate *Fascismo*.

I am only too conscious of the limitations of a book which essays to cover such a comprehensive field. Every chapter could well form matter for a whole volume. Enough has been given, however, to give a reasonably full description of events and ideas—sufficient in any case to avoid unsupported generalisations.

In quoting Italian speeches and statements I have given interpretative rather than literal translations. With so many Italian words apparently similar to English words, Italian is at once superficially easy and profoundly difficult. The whole intent of a word practically common in spelling to the two languages has often a most different connotation. In such cases it is its connotation rather than its translation which I have sought out. But I have made one very important exception with a word which occurs very often in Fascist matters—*disciplina*. The word does not mean " discipline " in the popular English sense of an imposed chastisement as if by a schoolmaster or a sergeant-major. In Italian, discipline connotes self-respect combined with orderly unselfish behaviour as an outcome of an educated sense of one's responsibilities to society. The word has not moved so far away as our word from its Roman-Latin meaning. Having failed to find a clear single-word substitute for *disciplina* I have therefore just left it throughout the following text as " discipline," but its real meaning should be borne in mind.

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The material here assembled is from 1919 onwards mostly based on (1) research in the files of the newspapers of all colours contemporary with the events described, (2) Ministerial and Party speeches and manifestos, (3) Chamber and State documents, (4) Grand Fascist Council resolutions, (5) Fascist, non-Fascist and anti-Fascist publications, and (6) my own despatches made during eleven years' observation and daily annotation on Italian affairs.

Fascism is so much the creation of Mussolini that any history of it must perforce be a history of Mussolini. His name, thoughts, words and deeds therefore run through this history just as they run through the life of modern Italy, so that it is well-nigh impossible to detach the movement from its master-mind.

I have sought throughout this work to offer no speculation or extraneous comment, confining myself to facts in an historical sequence of cause and effect. Much of a polemical nature has been omitted where such has not basically affected the progress of Fascism and is therefore irrelevant to a constructive history of the movement. In fact, my ambition has been not only to record the progression of Italy to world power through Fascism but to provide the reader with enough material on which to form his own judgment on the future potentialities of Fascism, seen in the light of the present and the past.

I. S. M.

SALA STAMPA ESTERA,
ROME,
October 1933.

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THE SOIL

ITALY'S DIVIDED PAST
(TO 1870)

" Italy is only a geographical expression."
McTernich,

CHAPTER I

TANGLED ODYSSEY

Fascist link with Dante and Virgil. Memories of Imperial Greatness. Eleven Centuries of Division. Seventy Years of Unity. Victim of History. Holy Roman Empire. The Torch of Dante. Influence of French Revolution. Napoleon's Italy. The Habsburg Yoke. Risorgimento. National Beginnings.

IN order to understand the Fascist movement it is necessary to bring into focus the complicated background of Italian history, social and parliamentary. In certain aspects Fascism stands as the vindicator of patriotic ideals which have their first expression not only in the Risorgimento but in mediaeval times. In the choice of symbol and in some of its later manifestations and tendencies Fascism definitely links itself with Imperial Rome.

Illuminating as it may be to trace these threads which reveal the continuity of political aspirations, the real value of recalling Italy's past at this point lies in another direction. It serves to recall that Italy won her political independence only after about eleven hundred years of internal warfare and successive subjugations which moulded conflicting racial characteristics—characteristics which redoubled the difficulties and dangers of Italian parliamentary life after a national legislature had been finally achieved.

The social history of the Italian people is some two thousand years old. Their parliamentary history we can put down as sixty years. It is indeed a case of old wine in a new bottle—and this is one view of the Italian

THROUGH FASCISM TO WORLD POWER

situation which must be remembered when studying the ferment of Italian parliamentarianism which ended in the Fascist explosion. Such considerations may help to explain the reasons which handicapped the authority of the pre-Revolution Governments and made them unable to confront the modern crises provoked by the world war, and will show the Fascist reaction in historical perspective. A glance at the past is relevant to scrutiny of a regime which frequently invokes ancient trials and glories.

After the collapse of the Imperial influence of Rome, the Dark Ages brought centuries of incredible confusion during which the Italian people were divided among themselves under a shifting multiplicity of foreign masters—Saracens, Carlings, Byzantines, Hungarians, Saxons, Franconians, and Normans. Now and again figures like Pipin, Berengario, or Hugh of Provence emerge as Kings or Emperors of Italy, but with crowns that are only tokens of factional or temporary triumphs: crowns that denote not unity for Italy but division. Italy was the victim of the Germanic notion of a Holy Roman Empire—an entity which became "neither Holy, nor Roman nor an Empire." That Empire split the peninsula into fragmentary States which were used as stepping stones for the easier transit of the *Corpus Germanicum* to the source of its unifying idea—the Chair of St. Peter. It reduced the national story of Italy into a series of confusing footnotes to the history of Germany and the Church. All hope of unity disappeared in the turmoil of crude diplomacy and fighting which led up to the partisan wars of groups like Guelph and Ghibelline. The Renaissance blossomed in an Italy that was a bloodstained arena of dissension with

nearly all the races of Europe involved in adventures of conquest.

At the moment of what is perhaps Italy's fullest political disintegration, the early years of the Fourteenth Century, the figure of the first apostle of Italian unity appears—Dante. His prophetic vision of humanity and freedom ; the compass of his references to Italian place-names, enshrining them in an Italy made total and compact by the poetic inspiration of his language ; his thought; his choice of Virgil (foreteller of Rome as leader of the world) to be the shade for ever by his side in the search for the straight Roman way that was lost;—these things struck a patriotic spark, created a fiery star which became a conflagration over five hundred years later at the Risorgimento of the Nineteenth Century. It is a fire at which the Fascists of today still light their torches. We shall see how the Blackshirts closed the anniversary of the Tenth Year of the Fascist Revolution with a ceremony at Dante's tomb at Ravenna, on September 14, 1933, with a declamation of the Fifth Canto of the *Inferno*, the Sixth Canto of the *Purgatorio* and the Sixth Canto of the *Paradiso*,—Cantos which mourn the unnatural divisions into which Italy was divided, and recall the imperial destiny of Rome. The idea of Rome as a predestined fount of universal thought and rule is enshrined in Dante's *De Monarchia*. We shall hear the distant echoes of this theme in Mussolini's utterances on the Rome of the Caesars and of St. Peter. Dante's contemporary, Machiavelli, also gave council to which Mussolini lends particular ear. But Italy had still much agony to suffer before it rallied in answer to the wakening cry of Dante or to the advice of Machiavelli. The era following the

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death of Dante witnessed Italy rent in civil wars among the *condottieri*—the warrior chiefs who made the provincial capitals into strongholds of mercenary troops ; and the close of the Middle Ages saw the beginning of those combinations which were to culminate in the Eighteenth Century with the establishment of Austrian, Spanish and French rulers in Italy, sometimes as direct overlords, sometimes as the sacred allies of the Vatican—the fighting arm with which successive Pontiffs either directly or indirectly maintained temporal power over the Papal States covering the central third of the Italian peninsula.

The French Revolution had no second wave in Italy. It only served for the time being to bind tighter the bonds of the alien monarchies on the Italian race. In reaction, secret societies were formed to discuss these heady new notions of national liberty and personal equality. Associations were clandestinely formed for the propagation of the revolutionary creed of the "rights of man." But the arms of Austria and other throned powers were too strong for the sapling shoots of revolutionary ideas. Spies and secret police soon routed out the members of these conspiratorial organisations, and prison swallowed them. A definite influence however was created : an influence surprisingly moderate in tone. The extreme left of Italian political thought at that epoch was equivalent to the extreme right of the French legislature.

The rise of Napoleon and his assumption of an Italian crown seemed at first an internal affair of Napoleon's policy of Continental hegemony, and his coronation as Emperor merely the ironical emphasis of his policy. The event, however, proved to be of immense importance to the Italians. As a people

they had no national liberty to lose, and Napoleon's recognition that they were capable of self-government led to the granting of institutions based on Liberal ideas and gave the country its first taste of relative political liberty. He also extended Italy's northern frontier in 1811 almost as far as Merano. Mussolini on more than one public occasion has asserted the "Italianity" of Napoleon ; but I have never seen used what is perhaps the most potent complementary evidence of that "Italianity," namely, the particular beneficence of his rule in Italy. It has justly been described as liberal and enlightened. The fall of Napoleon and the Treaty of Vienna however reconfirmed the division of the Italian peninsula once again under the yokes of the Habsburgs, the Church and the Bourbons. The 1811 Alpine frontier was swept away.

Momentary hopes of liberal progress were raised in the Papal States and in the Bourbon south, but these only served as a warning to Austria for an extension and intensification of her tyranny in the north. But the spark flashed by Dante was now being fanned into spurts of flame by Mazzini. The sympathy and help given to Italians by Britain at this period has never been forgotten. It began that tradition of Italo-British friendship which remains a corner-stone of Italian foreign policy today. Mazzini and Garibaldi in their dreams of Italian unity saw political salvation in republicanism. Revolts began sporadically, and soon the Risorgimento—the Re-uprising—was in full flame. In succession, with many fluctuations of fortune and, be it noted, with several basic differences of aims and ideas dividing the insurgents themselves, the foreign usurpers were at last practically on the run.

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The Republican fervour of the liberating hero, Garibaldi, was deviated into new and more powerful channels by the intervention of Victor Emmanuel, Prince of Piedmont, on the side of the insurgents. The Republican and Monarchical tributaries were united in a rising torrent which swept away foreign domination from Italian soil. Under the long-sighted statesmanship of Cavour it was a monarchy that was ultimately established, and by 1861 two-thirds of the peninsula was a single kingdom, with Victor Emmanuel first real King of Italy, and Turin his capital.

Venice, the Trentino, Istria, Dalmatia, and the Papal States—all these forming part of the redemptionist programme—had not yet been redeemed. It is a somewhat common belief among those not familiar with Italian history that the present frontiers of Italy, encircling the old Southern Tyrol (now known as Alto Adige) and Istria, represent an opportunist post-war acquisition of Austrian lands which had never hitherto come within the range of Italian aspirations. It is not my province or intention to discuss the question of the rights or wrongs of the new acquisition, but it should be noted that Italy's claims go deep into Italian history. The Liberal apostle Mazzini declared, "Ours—if ever land was ours—is the Trentino. Ours are the inner Alps and ours are all the waters that descend to pour themselves into the Adige and the Gulf of Venice." Garibaldi was recalled from a march of conquest into these regions—an order from his new-found King which he reluctantly answered with his famous one-word telegram which spoke volumes, *Obbedisco*, "I Obey."

The flame was kept alive in 1896 by the erection of the national monument to Dante, not in his native

APOSTLE OF UNITY



Italy's monument to Dante was not erected at his native Florence nor at his grave in Ravenna, but among the northern Alpine heights at Trento. The figure of the poet stands there as the champion of an Italy with frontiers redeemed.

Florence, but at Trento, in the heart of the unredeemed Provinces.

It was Dante who immortalised Istria as Italy's frontier :

" SI com' a Pola presso del Quarnaro
Che Italia chiude e i suoi termini bagna."

This is an example of just one of the many threads which run unbroken through the whole complicated history of the Italian people right up to the present day. The first Fascist conflicts arose out of post-war pro-Austrian manifestations in these north and north-eastern frontier regions; and Mussolini's policy of preventing the Austro-German *Anschluss* is the latest expression of an Alpine problem as old as Italy itself.

The partial triumph of 1861 was followed by a decade of revolts, repressions, risings and propaganda in these unrecovered provinces together with intrigues, alliances, campaigns, treaties, plots and counterplots in which the new Kingdom of Italy, France, Austria, the Pope, and Prussia were all actively involved. Venice was at last restored to Italy by Austria, and the stronghold of the Papal States, Rome, was victoriously entered by the Italian national troops on September 20, 1870. The Italian capital had meantime been moved from Turin to Florence, partly to alleviate inter-provincial jealousies, but mostly to symbolise " a step nearer Rome." In 1872, Victor Emmanuel as King of an Italy, which at last comprised the whole peninsula except its Alpine doorways, made his solemn entry into his country's capital, Rome.

The vision of Virgil glimmered once more on the horizon of Italy's imagination.

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Such was the tangled Odyssey of the Italian people in their progress to national unity. The sum of their distracting and inchoate history marks the inheritance of the first Italian governments. Their task was to govern and at the same time to reconcile the anomalies of their 2000-year-old network of social histories—each with their own demands and traditions—with the exigencies of a new-found common parliamentary system.

In the following chapter we will examine what befell, and trace accordingly the beginnings of those circumstances which were later to find expression in the Fascist revolt.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW-BORN KINGDOM

Internal Differences. Effect on Parliament. The Statute and the Church. Decadence of Party System. Fascists as Fulfillers of Frustrated Risorgimento Aims. " Unredeemed " Italy in Austrian Hands.

As may be seen from the first chapter, the young Government of the new-born Kingdom of Italy began its work in 1871 with the following complication of handicaps to smooth running :

It represented profound traditions of culture but no parliamentary experience whatsoever.

It represented a complexity of conflicting internal interests with intermediate sub-traditions and habits of peoples, language, temperament, history and requirements arising out of the sectional isolation of the race under centuries of foreign rule.

It inherited the unresolved problems of the Trentino, Eastern Friuli and Trieste (Venezia Giulia) and Dalmatia,—all of which had formed an integral part of the Risorgimento programme of deliverance.

It therefore inherited a " traditional " enemy, Habsburg Austria.

The new Italian Government established itself by force in a capital which also remained the capital of the Power it had defeated—the Roman Catholic Church.

It represented a new-born nation against whom great Church or Continental alliances might be formed.

It represented a nation whose large majority accepted the religious dogmas of a Church which it politically opposed and had bitterly antagonised.

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It represented thinkers and soldiers, very many of whom had fought for a Republic with passion and accepted a Monarchy as an expedient.

It represented a country, sections of which had ancient Republican memories of local independence and glory—like Genoa and Venice.

It represented a people whose loyalty to the new-found regime was anchored, so far, only to the abstract ideas of political emancipation and national self-determination.

The Constitution on which the new Kingdom was based was "*il Statuto*" promulgated on March 4, 1848, by Charles Albert of Piedmont. It is interesting to note here one of the several strange anomalies of Italian history: the first Article of this Statute which formed the political rallying-point for Italy's successful opposition to the sovereignty of the Popes, nevertheless declares that "the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion is the sole religion of the State." Other religions were "tolerated."

The Church, of course, did not recognise the Kingdom of Italy nor the sovereignty of the House of Savoy. That recognition did not come until the Lateran Treaty of 1929.

The Statute of 1848 contains very generalised Articles touching the duties of the Monarchy, the responsibility of Ministers to the Crown and the rights of citizens. It became the point of reference for the mass of laws which gradually accumulated around it, known, in bulk, as the Constitution. This incrustation of laws consisted largely of measures enshrining the newly-accepted principles of democracy—the rights of man, the right of assembly, the liberty of the Press and rule by majority vote. These were the labels on the new bottles into which the

old wine was poured. The results were immediately apparent.

The first phenomenon was the rise and fall of the party system. Although they modelled their parliamentary procedure on the British system, the form rather than the spirit influenced the Italian pioneers ; the essential safeguard of the two-party system was ignored. Compact national government was therefore almost at the outset stifled and choked by the rank growth of a multiplicity of parties and groups whose programmes in many cases were more concerned with the heterogeneous and conflicting interests of the country, indicated at the opening of this chapter, than with the duty of governing the nation as a whole. This division of attention was coupled with vigorous explorations in ever new fields of political thought.

Almost at once there began (in the 'Seventies) what was dubbed *il sistema di trasformazione*—the game of merging and fading out party convictions to suit the political atmosphere of the moment. This meant the beginning of what became a chronic state of affairs in which no party could maintain a parliamentary majority without shedding some of its principles in order to gain the benefit of votes given to other parties and groups, each of which had also of course to make their respective sacrifices.

The " transformation system " however had one thing in its favour : it allowed Ministers with specialized knowledge in finance or foreign affairs to live through several Ministries. In the first crucial twelve months of the national Government's existence there were four Cabinet crises. In the first twenty-five years eighteen new Cabinets took successive office. When

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Mussolini took over in October 1922 his Cabinet was the sixty-seventh since the foundation of the Constitution in 1848—sixty-seven changes of Government in seventy-four years. These continual parliamentary crises made the Italian people victims of the fallacy which shelters behind the practice or rather the malpractice of democratic forms of Government. The party elected could practically never represent a majority, and the programme presented for the suffrage of the voters could never therefore be applied. Intermittent experiments with proportional representation came too late, for politics had become a profession and proportional representation and such essays merely moves in electoral campaigns.

Italians quickly learned that a majority *bloc* meant power and opportunity for the advancement of one particular set of interests at the expense of others. The election booth became a thing of vital importance to vested interests. Cabinets fortified themselves with subsidiary coalitions engineered in the lobbies of the Chamber. The fruits were to the victor. Politics became an end in themselves. The notion of national service which had inspired the Risorgimento changed for a parliamentarianism whose horizon was bounded by the inside walls of the two Chambers. Great men, patriots and statesmen, stood as national figures above the *melee* of parties ; but they too, in self-subjection to the principles of democracy, had perforce to have their feet in the clay-fields of parliamentarianism.

This disturbed manner of government buffeted along without undue danger to Italy until Italy's participation in the Great War. It continued during the war—to the grave embarrassment of Italian arms and to the imperilment of Italian cohesion. It stag-

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gered in face of the post-war social upheaval. Before the positivism of Mussolini the system collapsed.

It is of course not to be imagined that the political programmes advocated by all these parties of the pre-Fascist days were bad and only the Blackshirt programme of today good ! Patriotic and humane idealism was behind them with few notable exceptions. The trouble was that the democratic system as operated in Italy obviated the possibility of any one programme getting a reasonably continuous trial. The economic conflict of north and south also still further handicapped progress.

Despite these things the foundations of modern Italy were laid. The merit of much of the work carried out by the Fascists lies in the fact that they are the executors of projects planned by the old regimes, but frustrated in execution by the exigencies of their system. In later chapters it will also be seen that the Fascists were not the only ones who suffered thrashings and death for political principles. Liberalism and all it connotes played a great and noble part in the building of Italy ; but it opened the doors to forces which in its name were threatening Italy with chaos. Liberalism, as exercised in Italy, had outplayed its part when Fascism took over. It could no longer govern. Giolitti experimented by playing off one armed party against another to allow him some chance of getting on with the task of governing. Mussolini is taking no risks. He has a Fascist army.

I am inclined to think that the post-Risorgimento importance of the relations between Church and State—the so-called Roman Question—has been over-emphasized by most historians. After the first shock to the Catholic world, Italy's seizure of Rome was

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looked on as *a. fait accompli*, and left at that. None of the Great Catholic Powers were in a position to rally to the help of the Pontificate for the restoration of temporal powers. Refusing to acknowledge the unilateral Law of Guarantees drawn up by the Italian Government, the dispossessed Pope, Pius IX., decided to declare himself a voluntary prisoner in the Vatican. Among other unacceptable conditions the Law of Guarantees stated that the Church, instead of possessing the Vatican, St. Peter's and other stipulated ecclesiastical buildings, only "enjoyed" possession—a word which stripped the Papacy of sovereign rule.

Successive Popes reconfirmed the decision of Pius IX. ; but although the Roman Question was thus always very present in the minds of the people and of successive Governments, its reactions led more to ambiguities and makeshifts than to any definite trend in politics. Its real importance lay in its moral and not in its political implications. Neither Garibaldi nor Cavour wanted to quarrel with their faith nor to alienate a people from its Church. It is reported of Cavour that, nearing his death without having accomplished any hopeful step towards a conciliatory arrangement between the ancient Church and the infant State, he anxiously asked the Church mediator "to bring him an olive branch before Easter." The Fascists completed this gesture. After the 1929 Lateran Peace between Church and State, Mussolini had a bronze olive emblem placed on Cavour's grave, engraved with "From Fascist Italy to Camillo Cavour."

The rise of a new generation, detached from the anticlerical passions of the Risorgimento, paved the way for *rapprochement* overtures which ultimately came to full fruition under the Fascist regime.

CHAPTER III

IN THE PLAY OF THE POWERS

First Foreign Relations. British Traditional Role of Friendship. Disappointments with France. How Italy lost Nice and Tunis. Why Italy joined the Triple Alliance. Disillusionment with Austria and Germany. Under Heel of One and Thumb of Other.

FRANCE, Prussia and England all played parts in helping the Italian people towards independence.

England played a quiet moral rôle. Her shores became synonymous with harbourage for Italian idealists and political exiles, Palmerston and Gladstone by correspondence and encouragement, influenced the minds of Italian patriots in admiration of our political institutions. After the establishment of the Kingdom, England however held aloof from further identification with Italian aims and ambitions except to recognise Italy's interest in the Mediterranean. England was too remote and isolated to venture with help against Austria. True she invited Italian co-operation in the Egyptian expedition project of 1882, but by that time Italy had already reorientated her foreign active relations on the European map and the offer was not accepted, save as an acceptable sign of acquired prestige.

England's feelings of goodwill towards Italy never at any time suffered diminution, and Anglo-Italian relations between 1870 and 1914 remained undisturbed. As Allies in the Great War the friendship was signed with blood and sacrifice and has since continued, officially and unofficially, unimpaired.

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Italian relations with France and Germany on the other hand followed an erratic course and provide reasons for Italy's attitude in the Great War, and in matters of current affairs.

In 1858, Napoleon III. and Victor Emmanuel II. joined forces to drive the Austrians from Venezia Giulia and Lombardy. The bargain was that in return for the restoration of these two provinces to Italy, the Duchy of Savoy and the Commune of Nice were to be ceded to France. Lombardy was taken, when Napoleon III. suddenly signed an armistice with Austria which left Venetia in Austrian hands. The armistice of Villafranca in 1859 came as a sharp disillusionment to the Italians. The human background and dramatic reactions of this Villafranca peace are brought out in Mussolini's play of that name. The bitterness against France was not lessened by Napoleon III.'s insistence on the receipt of Savoy and Nice, and in continuing to occupy Rome with his troops as the iron hand of the Pontiff.

Just as Italy was gradually becoming united under the crown of Savoy, thanks to the policy of Cavour, so was Germany being united under the sceptre of Prussia, owing to the policy of Bismarck. Bismarck saw possibilities in the new southern Kingdom and it was with the aid of Prussian arms that the Austrians were driven out of Venetia, in the completed campaign of 1866. The frontier line however was a vulnerable one for Italy. There only now remained "unredeemed" the Alpine Trentino, Trieste and Dalmatia. It was the Prussian invasion of France in 1870 that caused the speedy withdrawal of the French troops in Rome for the defence of France. It was this withdrawal which facilitated the immediate capture

of Rome and the deposition of the Pope as a temporal sovereign.

In the same year when Victor Emmanuel became King of a united Italy, the Hohenzollerns assumed the Imperial crown of a united Germany.

The next act in the drama of the Italo-Franco-German triangle comes with the development in 1878 of an Italian Mediterranean policy. Italy had already a large colony of Italians in Tunis and, as a legacy from the old Kingdom of Sardinia and the Two Sicilies, it had inherited colonising agreements with the somewhat accommodating Bey. There was however also a colony of Frenchmen. It was numerically smaller than the Italian colony, but France was a stronger striking power.

In 1881 French troops, in course of a punitive raid against Arabs who had entered Algeria, occupied Tunis with a simple *coup de main* and established a Protectorate. Italy was outwitted. She turned to her old friend Prussia, or as Prussia now was, Germany. There was one embarrassing difficulty however. Germany had now knit Austria into close and indestructible alliance—and Austria was Italy's hereditary enemy. But Bismarck made it clear that any Rome-Berlin pact could only be part of a Rome-Vienna pact. Driven out of any possible *rapprochement* with France on account of the Tunis affair and isolated at the mercy of Europe, Italy accepted the bargain. In 1882 the Triple Alliance between Italy, Germany and Austria was signed—an Alliance only broken in the opening stages of the Great War.

As a result of this Alliance Italy acquired importance in the concert of Europe. But her most sinister adversaries were her new-found friends. No force of arms

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was used to re-establish her position in Tunis. With a grudging *modus Vivendi* series of agreements, the Italo-French position dragged on. Italy turned to other North African and Red Sea extensions and laid, after several set-backs, the foundations of her Tripoli, Cyrenaica and Somaliland colonies.

We have seen how France gave Italy abrupt disillusionments at Villafranca and Tunis. The Germano-Austrian disillusionment had a different character. It was creepingly slow : and the reaction was consequently more deadly. It was soon made clear that Italy was only a tolerated member of the Triple Alliance. Instead of ameliorating the traditional grievances of the Italian " unredeemed " areas, conditions from the Italian point of view were worsened. Italy's furthest north became virtually a vassal zone. The whole strength of the pan-German movement was concentrated on the infiltration and dominance of German culture. These Alpine valleys lay in the track of the *Mittel-Europa* push. The *Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein*, the *Tiroler Volksbund*, the *Sudmark* and similar organizations coerced and tempted Italian culture out of the way. At Vienna, the Habsburg policy of playing off one part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire against another was devoted at Trieste and in Dalmatia to inflaming Slav sentiments against Italy. Italian irredentist endeavours re-flared up in reply. Incidents and assassinations punctuated relations between these strange " allies."

Apart from these local sores, the Alliance with Berlin and Vienna led to another more subtle and undermining national danger. Germany's policy of " peaceful penetration " brought commercial prosperity to Italy's industrial north, but at the expense of industrial

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independence and *moral*. German capital manipulated Italy. The establishment by Germany of the *Banca Commerciale* in 1895 was the final seal of German control, which from then on made its influence felt even in the internal administration and Press of the country. The development of this policy naturally made some Italians and some regions extremely rich. There was nothing openly hostile in this infiltration. Indeed to those in the swim it was pleasant and profitable. And with the type of multiparty Government described in the last chapter there was no initiative strong enough to check control in the name of the Italian nation. There was no animus against the Germans. They made good business for the north-central provinces. Any angry feeling that existed was confined to the Austrians.

Italy was under the thumb of her German ally and under the heel of her Austrian ally. That was the position in 1914.

THE SEEDS

PARTIES AND PARLIAMENT
(1870-1915)

" It is not with words that States are held."
Machiavelli.

CHAPTER IV

TWO STREAMS AND A BRIDGE

The Socialist Stream. Republican Beginnings. Italian Minorities in Austria. Enter Mussolini. Strange Ultra-revolutionary Figure. He leads Armed Socialist Revolt. Movement quelled. The Nationalist Stream. Reaction against Giolitti. Imperial Aims. Socialists' and Nationalists' Common Irridentist Aims. Gabriele d'Annunzio and the Futurists as Connecting Link between Socialists of Extreme Left and Nationalists of Extreme Right.

IN the *milange* of parties, policies and interests depicted in the preceding narrative there were two particular streams of political evolution which were destined to be of fundamental importance to the theory and practice of Fascism. These two streams were Socialism and Nationalism. All the seemingly contradictory factors in the Fascist experiment can be traced to these sources. Orthodox Socialism and orthodox Nationalism are incompatible as political theories. It is safe to say that had there been no Mussolini there could have been no reconciliation of any of the principles which form the driving force of these two elements. It was from a fusion of the social teachings of Socialism and Nationalism that the Fascism of Mussolini was evolved. But this fusion was no sudden idea. It had nothing akin to the opportunist system of *trasformazione*.

At the very time before the war when Socialism and Nationalism were moulding the ideas which were to find their full expression in modern Fascism they and their exponents were mercilessly hostile to each other.

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Both were battling with Italy's problems, but for different reasons and by different routes of attack—differences which brought them into conflict with each other. Mussolini's line of political education and battie was along the Socialist route. It was his enquiring mind and dynamic personality that wrested Italian Socialism out of its orthodox stratum. The history of Socialism in Italy provides the key to the history of Mussolini, and the history of Mussolini is of course the history of Fascism. An examination of these two facts explains much.

One of the most significant characteristics of the Left wing of Italian political history is the diffidence with which the international aspects of Socialism were received, and the enthusiasm with which the purely social principles, as far as they affected the workers and the under-dog, were welcomed. As far back as 1871 workers' confraternities were formed to oppose internationalism and to fight their own social claims against Italian masters represented by the Parties of the Right, and the Italian middle classes represented by the Democratic parties of the Centre.

It is significant that in these early manifestations the embryo Italian Socialists found themselves ranged by the logic of things alongside the Republicans. As already recorded, these early Republicans were no wild destroyers. They represented a patriotic group whose principles had been dead-ended by a Constitution secured by a majority vote. After the establishment of the monarchy they became a respected political anachronism. But having by the turn of affairs become the Left, it was along their line of life that Socialism made its appearance.

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With the development however of the industrial revolution in Europe, international Socialism began to spread in earnest. From being exclusively an agricultural and artisan country, the north of Italy became the workshop of all Italy, a centre where workers were intelligent and cheap. The lack of raw materials precipitated economic difficulties which reacted unfavourably on the working classes who were often exploited. Isolated industrial spots in the south, such as the sulphur mines of Sicily, also suffered the effects of exploitation. Farm labourers were sweated.

International Socialism, carrying the old fabric of Republicanism, crept over a land where confidence in parliament had become weakened to vanishing point with a succession of economic scandals, broken promises and election tricks. By the 'Eighties an epoch of revolt, strikes, repression and imprisonment had begun.

Moving from extreme to extreme in its opposition to Parliament as the exponent of Constitutionalism, the ranks of the International Socialists were augmented by Anarchists ; and Republicanism moving ever to the Left became definitely subversive.

In 1892 however the Italian Socialists threw over the Anarchists and formed the Italian Socialist Party, introducing class warfare as its basis of action. The main stream of Republicans, as a tributary of the Left, followed the course of the new Socialist Party. The Socialists disliked monarchical rule on general principle, for to them any crown was a symbol of capitalist class exploitation. The Italian Republicans disliked monarchical rule because, by Party inheritance from the *Risorgimento*, they associated it with the oppression suffered by the Italian people under

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the Bourbons, Popes and Habsburgs. When the two streams of Republicanism and Socialism merged into one, the salvation of the Italian minorities in Austria became one of their avenues of most passionate propaganda. Without intention they became the champions of Italian nationalism and expansion, for only the extension of Italy's boundaries could envisage the liberation of the Italian minorities. In short, the Left had, in this matter, become the champions of the extreme section of the programme of the Right—a sacred section of programme which had been lost sight of by the Right in the parliamentary decadence already described.

But this Socialist Left was seldom at peace with itself. It split and re-split on the international issue: it split when confronted by any problem; it split on questions of internal reform; on questions of policy, theory and practice. And it shot off in bits before the impact of the new politico-philosophic conceptions then rousing men's minds. Fragments of the party hitched their wagons to the intellectual meteors of Marx, Sorel and Bergson.

The first general strike in Italy was in 1904 and it had its ignition point in a temperamental clash of theories between "reformist" and non-reformist Socialists. It is from this time onwards that we get glimpses in the Socialist ranks of a strange, eager, intolerant, ultra-revolutionary figure—in full tilt at the social order—a certain Benito Mussolini. Born of Romagna fighting stock, son of a father who was reputed to be a member of the First International; christened Benito in tribute to Benito Juarez, the Mexican revolutionary; brought up in a Province beset with agricultural labour agitation; an avid

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reader and searcher after new political gods, Mussolini brought strange lightnings into the stormy bosom of the Italian Socialist Party. Anti-clerical, anti-church, anti-monarchical, anti-constitutional, anti-democratic, anti-masonic, anti-nationalist, anti-colonist, he was anti-everything that savoured of the established order, including the reformist elements of his own Socialist Party. Mussolini as a youth was educated as a village schoolmaster. He later studied at Geneva under conditions of cold penury that make the traditional old-school Scots student's career seem munificent. In Switzerland he drank in Nietzsche and Nihilism ; bent the rigidity of Marxism with the violence of Sorel: streaked their materialism with the mysticism and waywardness of Schopenhauer : contrasted Bergson and Buddha and studied the subtleties of Machiavelli. In 1909 he went to Trent and there met and worked with Cesare Battisti, the irredentist martyr. Under the influence of Battisti, Mussolini became definitely irredentist, that is to say, he joined those who advocated the restoration to Italy not only of all Italians but of all districts where the Italian language was spoken. During this period Mussolini exposed the tyranny of Habsburg Austria in his writings, and laboured for the salvation of the Italian minority in Austrian hands. He added flaming sparks of racial patriotism to the turmoil of his restless revolutionary thoughts. Expelled from Austria he returned to Italy ; became editor of the Socialist *Avanti*, " Forward " ; opposed Italy ; opposed Austria ; opposed the Tripoli war of 1911 ; opposed fellow Socialists who visited the King; opposed Parliament and all its parties; fought duels ; organized strikes, led armed attacks ; wrote pamphlets, polemics, novels, poetry

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and planned plays—all of them knocking down established gods ; action first, last and all the time, with respite only when jailed. " I have been imprisoned eleven times," Mussolini told Emil Ludwig. " In Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Trent, Forll and several other places. And every time it was the same interval of repose that I would not have given up of my own free will! "

The drive of his tumultuous thoughts split up the party. In 1913 his notions began to be defined as " idealism,"⁵³ not because they were ideals but because in the prevailing order of things they were considered unreachable. Nevertheless Mussolini in the autumn of 1913 was nominated Socialist parliamentary candidate for the constituency of Forll, his native country. He failed to win the election ; and his brand of idealism was thereafter condemned by official Socialism. He was a man testing everything and throwing everything aside, yet always absorbing what lessons everything and anything could teach him. He was searching for new foundations—that was his idealism.

By 1914 Mussolini became the dictator of revolutionary Socialism. In the doctrines of proletarian insurrection and syndicalist direct action preached by Sorel, Mussolini found a solution, or thought he had, which answered his own eruptive temperament.

The extremists of the extreme rallied around him—fighting Socialists, out-and-out Republicans, Anarchists and Syndicalists—the Reds of the epoch. In June 1914 they launched an armed revolt against the State. After a clamorous Congress of Socialists in Ancona, the revolt broke out on June 12 and what are known as the " Red days " began. A railway and a general

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strike was proclaimed. Riots, mob warfare and barricade fights were staged in Ancona, Milan, Rome, Florence and elsewhere. Casualties among the Socialists and among the soldiers called out to repel them were many, but the total of fatal casualties were surprisingly few—about twenty—considering the extent of the rising and the fact that sometimes the demonstrators totalled about twenty thousand. The King's Palace at the Quirinal was guarded by troops.

In the face of this menace the Chamber adjourned for want of the legal number of members present to deal with the situation. And when it did open, the Socialists demanded its closure as a sign of mourning for their dead. This movement however was quickly quelled to a lull by Government measures, but the revolution simmered until the outbreak of the Great War confronted the Socialists and Mussolini with new complications.

The violence of the Socialists' reaction however had driven from office a Premier who for twenty-two years had dominated Italian parliamentary life—Giovanni Giolitti. A specialist in party warfare, he jockeyed the Centre parties to his will and exercised a virtual dictatorship over the Italian people with a severity scarcely exceeded in Fascist times. But his outlook was that of a shrewd electioneering agent. Parliament was his chessboard and the game was office. He had a genius for foreseeing crises—and resigning before they broke. Working behind the scenes he would at his well-chosen moment take up the reins again as the acclaimed saviour of the country from the crises which his policy and speculative party alliances had provoked. He professed and exercised no interest in foreign affairs. He was the master of a Centre whose Liberalism

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bartered away all principles in the market of compromise. He was the personification of the parliamentary generation which succeeded the heroic age of the Risorgimento—the generation which provoked the Fascist recovery of Italy.

While the Socialist-Republican Left was assailing the principles of democratic government and the authority of the State, there came into being a party of the Extreme Right which attacked not the principles but the practice of democracy as exercised in Italy. This was the Nationalist group. From mostly Florentine beginnings about 1903 the Nationalists coalesced into an official party in 1911. Disgusted with Parliament's neglect of the interests of the country as a patriotic national entity and further disgusted with the weakness of Parliament's colonial and foreign policy, this party became the champion of an aggressive conservative policy with Mediterranean expansion and Adriatic recovery as its watchwords.

In its expansionist programme it had the unqualified opposition of all Socialists. In its recovery programme its aims overlapped those of the Socialist-Irridentist groups—though the Socialists thought of this problem basically in social terms, while the Nationalists thought of it in territorial terms, like the old Republicans. Indeed the Nationalists professed themselves the champions of the Risorgimento programme. But in the sheer exuberance of reaction the Nationalists went much further.

Their political demands included not only the recovery of Roman Imperial North Africa and the reconquest of the Alpine Trentino, Venezia Giulia, Trieste, Fiume and Dalmatia, but included Italian claims on Malta, Corsica, Savoy, Nice and the Swiss

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Ticino. The inspiration of the Nationalist movement was militant patriotism with sabre-rattling vengeance. The party however had not sufficient strength to make any serious cleavage of current in the general maelstrom of pre-war politics but its influence lived to permeate Fascist policy.

A significant movement identified with Nationalist activities was the creation of the Dante Alighieri Society. Re-invoking Dante as the apostle of Italian patriotism, this society harnessed the cultural traditions of the Italian race to the militant and expansionist aims of the Nationalist Party. Its chief end was to preserve, by institutions and propaganda, the currency of the Italian language in the Trentino, Istria and Dalmatia, where Italians were minority groups under Austrian rule. This society now operates as a Fascist institution, raising Dantesque protests when the Yugoslavs twist the Dalmatian tail of the Venetian lion. It gives cry to Malta.

Between the right of Nationalism and the left of Socialism there glittered a strange connecting link. This link was not a party. It was a personality—Gabriele d'Annunzio. Now with one and now with the other, the poet gave exhilarating words and thoughts to each in turn, lending a certain magic surge of daring ideas and aspirations to the followers of the two political extremes. The Liberal-Democratic parties of the Centre were left in the void beneath the arch of his politico-poetical flights. Fluttering on the same weird parabola were the Futurists, who mixed up art, literature and politics in one extravagant gesture against the established *bourgeoise* order.

It was from the parties, people and programmes described in this chapter that Fascism was evolved. The

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question of intervention, the struggles of the Great War, the disillusionments of the Peace and the post-war upheaval all in succession augmented and finally united, as we shall see, their flow of ideas.

CHAPTER V

FATEFUL TREATY OF LONDON

World War Begins. Berlin's Blunder. Italy ignored when Austria invades Serbia. Declares Neutrality. Compensation Claims. Vienna's Refusal. The Entente's bid. Secret Treaty of London. Its Terms. Master-key to Fascist Foreign Policy. Italy breaks with the Central Powers.

THE sequence of events leading to Italy's intervention in the Great War on the side of the Allies and not on the side of the Central Powers (despite the Triple Alliance bond) has twofold importance in any study of the Fascist movement. In the first place it allows us, as already hinted, to see how the prospect of the war brought into acute prominence the two streams of Nationalism and Socialism, and laid the foundation of their unity in Fascism under Mussolini. In the second place it presents for the contemplation of the student a series of diplomatic acts and agreements destined to have strong reactions on Italy's post-war policy both before and after the advent of Mussolini to power—reactions which have still a dominating influence on foreign affairs.

The alliance of Italy to Germany and Austria has been described in Chapter III. together with the incidents which weakened the Italo-Austrian link. When Austria-Hungary sent its ultimatum to Serbia after the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Serajevo in June 1914 and moved in arms against Belgrade, neither the Austro-Hungarian nor German Governments consulted or advised their ally Italy

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concerning these movements. In this, the Central Powers violated the First Article of the Triple Alliance Treaty which pledged the signatory Powers to an exchange of ideas " on all political and economic questions which might arise between or among them and any other nations."⁵

The only reasonable explanation of this apparent blunder of Berlin-Vienna diplomacy (apart from a short-sighted disregard, it would seem, of Italy as a trusted and fighting force) lay in the knowledge that any disturbance of the Balkan *status quo* would be diametrically at variance with Italian foreign policy. Italy's interests were therefore coolly ignored before the major importance of what was the first step in the Germanic *Mittel-Europa* drive to connect Germany with the trade outlets of Mesopotamia and the East.

Austria on the other hand, by being an aggressor in this opening move against Serbia, saved Italy (also according to the treaty conditions) any obligation of joining up with the Austrian troops in their initial act of aggression. But there was another Article in the Triple Alliance Treaty which provided for just such a contingency as the action of Austria had created. This was the famous Article VII.

According to this Article the signatory Powers pledged themselves to prevent all territorial changes which might be disadvantageous to one or other of them, and to this end they engaged to exchange all information calculated to enlighten each other of their own intentions and those of other Powers. But if the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* in the Balkans, the Ottoman coasts, the Adriatic and Aegean islands became impossible and a temporary or permanent occupation were made by Austria-Hungary or Italy,

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such occupation, it was stipulated, could only take place after previous agreement between the two Powers—an agreement which had to be based on the principle of compensation for all territorial advantages that either of them might gain.

It can be seen therefore that the conditions under which Austria invaded Serbia in 1914 not only automatically left Italy neutral but entitled her to compensation.

On August 1 Germany declared war on France. On August 4 Britain declared war on Germany. On August 2 Italy informed Austria-Hungary that in the terms of the Triple Alliance Treaty a *casus foederis* had not arisen and that accordingly Italy proclaimed neutrality—a declaration which gave the Entente immediate control of the Mediterranean and enabled France to utilise elsewhere the troops assembled on her Eastern frontier.

Italy's neutrality however did not mean that she had broken away from the Triple Alliance ; negotiations were at once opened with Vienna for the settlement of the compensation claim under Article VII. of the Treaty—the price of her neutrality.

The negotiations continued until April 8, 1915, when Italy postulated her demands. These included the re-establishment of the Alpine frontier fixed by Napoleon in 1811—a frontier which passes roughly east and west at a point between Bolzano and Merano ; the cession of Venezia Giulia with a frontier line ending before the inclusion of Trieste ; the city of Trieste to be a free city ; the cession of certain Dalmatian coast islands ; recognition of Italian sovereignty at Vallona in Albania ; abandonment of Austro-Hungarian interests in Albania ; an amnesty for all political and

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military prisoners ; payment by Italy to Austria-Hungary of 200,000,000 gold Italian lire as compensation for fiscal loss ; and as a *sine qua non*, the immediate completion of all the above conditions.

Austria-Hungary on April 16, 1915, refused all these conditions, and offered as her limit the cession of a section of the Southern Tyrol from slightly north of Trent, conditional recognition of Italian rights in the Dodecanese islands, submission of the compensation figure to the Hague Tribunal, all to be post-war arrangements.

Italy was then faced with a choice of three decisions, all equally grave for her peace and future. She had either to knuckle down to Austria-Hungary's comparatively meagre offer and forego her traditional national aspirations ; or not to accept and yet remain neutral—an easy prey for a probably vindictive Germano-Austrian Empire in the event of a Central Powers' victory ; or join the Entente Allies for a bid by force of arms.

The Entente was only too eager to have Italy join them in the encirclement of Germany and to that end Italy was offered the realisation of all her aspirations, and more. Italy chose that solution. Based on a Memorandum signed by Britain, France, Russia and Italy, a secret treaty—the 1915 Treaty of London—was concluded.

It may perhaps be thought—what have all these pre-war Government negotiations and this Treaty of London got to do with the history of Fascism ? The answer is this. The progress of the negotiations with Austria-Hungary roused Italian public feelings to a pitch which imposed national sentiment on Parliament and created a new condition of mind which was to

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have renewed expression seven years later on the Fascist march on Rome—a state of mind fomented, as we shall see later, by the very elements which were summed up in Mussolini's first speech as a Deputy in 1921 and which in 1922 were crystallized in the first Fascist Government. As soon as Mussolini assumed power as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister he made the Treaty of London the touchstone of Italy's relations with France. And to this day it remains the touchstone. It is one of the master-keys to a study of contemporary Fascist foreign policy. The Treaty of London is therefore so very relevant to the history and understanding of Fascism that I make no apology for citing here at some length its salient points—and for inviting the reader's particular attention thereto.

In return for Italy "undertaking to conduct the war with all means at her disposal" as an ally of France, Great Britain and Russia, these three Powers engaged that "by the future treaty of peace" Italy would receive a northern frontier at its "natural and geographical" limits at the Brenner; the county of Gorizia and Gradisca on the north-east; the city of Trieste and its surroundings; the Istrian peninsula and islands; the Province of Dalmatia from Lissarika to Cape Planka with all shoreward valleys and practically all the islands fronting that stretch of coast; full ownership of Vallona in Albania with sufficient territory for military protection; the right to conduct the foreign affairs of Albania; confirmed possession of the Dodecanese; recognition "as an axiom" of the fact that Italy is interested in maintaining the political balance of power in the Mediterranean; the right to occupy Adalia in Asiatic Turkey; recognition of all Italy's claims to all those rights and prerogatives in

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Libya, North Africa, hitherto reserved to the Sultan of Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne ; recognition in principle of the right of demanding for herself certain compensations in the form of an extension of her African possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland, Libya and the colonial districts bordering on French and British colonies in the event of an extension of French and British colonial possessions in Africa " at the expense of Germany " ; facilitation by Britain of an immediate favourable loan of not less than £50,000,000.

The same Treaty also stipulated that the Adriatic coast from the gulf of Volosca down to the northern frontier of Dalmatia ; the whole coast of Croatia and the port of Fiume and adjacent islands; the whole coast from Cape Planka to the river Driu, with ports and islands, would be reserved for inclusion " in the territory of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro." A section of the coast was also " neutralised."

The above binding Memorandum was signed by all the four Powers concerned on April 26, 1915. Fortified with this secret treaty—like an invisible cloak of mail—Italy got busy. On May 3, 1915, she intimated to Austria-Hungary her rejection of their April 16 offer ; pronounced that it was obviously useless to continue with the violated Triple Alliance Treaty ; annulled it accordingly and proclaimed her complete liberty of action from then onwards.

On May 23, 1915, on the side of the Allies Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. On August 21, 1915, she declared war on Turkey, and in less than two months later against Bulgaria. It was not until August 28, 1916, that Italy declared war against Germany.

(In connection with this chapter see maps 2 and 3.)

CHAPTER VI

ITALY JOINS THE ALLIES

Nationalist Propaganda. Mussolini and War. Intervention Demands. Mussolini Expelled from Socialist Party. The "Popolo d'Italia." The Fight against Neutrality. Corradini and Corridoni. D'Annunzio's Magical Oratory. Italy Declares War.

WHEN the Great War ultimatums were flashing across Europe and the nations were mobilising for the terrible conflict, the Italian Nationalists wanted their country to go to war at once. It would appear that it was the psychological effects of war that they sought rather than the pursuit of any particular foreign policy. The Nationalist party first wanted the Government to fight against the Allies. Then they swung round very quickly and became openly in favour of casting aside the Triple Alliance ties and declaring war on Austria. Anything, in short, but neutrality. The great influence of Giolitti however was brought to bear on the Centre parties who were in office, and the whole weight of his support and all his activities were in favour of neutrality. But in face of the colossal foreign affairs crisis which was shaking Europe to its foundations Giolitti still revealed his Chamber mentality, not reckoning the rising tide of national feeling. After the Government, sensing the country's mood, had broken with Austria and made a pact with the Entente as above described, Giolitti was accused of plotting for the fall of the Cabinet (Salandra was Premier) in order to facilitate

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the acceptance of desperate offers from Berlin as the price of neutrality.

The revelation of his declaration that Italy could obtain " a good deal " from Austria without fighting led to the complete collapse of his veiled dictatorship. He abandoned Rome, the most reviled man in Italy—for the moment.

It was the Nationalist Party which had aroused this storm of public opinion : but it was a Nationalist Party accompanied by strange allies—the ultra-Socialists of Mussolini. After a first short phase of neutrality—before the immensity of the impending world conflagration could be visualised and before its reactions on world Socialism could be computed—Mussolini realised that Italy must fight or be swamped. In war he also saw the creation of a state of things which, he thought, would make realisable the great social insurrection which had failed him in the Red days earlier in 1914. " Today is the war," he cried, " tomorrow the revolution."

The emergence of Italy from a war which would blast society to its roots would mark the moment for a proletarian revolution for the reorganisation of the State. With such arguments Mussolini in his Socialist writings called the Socialists to arms—"Today history is made in the trenches, tomorrow we will make it in the streets." Behind this was sheer patriotism—a patriotism revealed in such phrases as " The question ought to be looked at, remembering to be a Socialist, but also, and above all, remembering to be an Italian." Other similar indications from Mussolini in the *Avanti* are : " If war is revolutionary, every good revolutionist ought to take part" ; and " Are Nationalism and Class two opposite conceits ?

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Let us rather see if it isn't possible to find a basis of conciliation in the Nation, which is an historic reality, and Class, which is a living reality." The expression of these and similar arguments led to his dismissal as Editor of the *Avanti*, but at once, on November 15, 1914, he founded the *Popolo a'Italia* for the dissemination of his propaganda.

His aim now became to effect that conciliation of Nation and Class, and to reach it through a Republican revolution after the war had rescued the Italian minorities under Austrian rule and had welded Italian unity in the crucible of war. The idea of any conciliation of the classes on no matter how revolutionary a basis, together with the idea of intervention in the war, was anathema to the Socialists, and so on November 24, 1914, Mussolini was expelled from the Socialist Party.

The motion of expulsion reads : " This assembly, in face of the manifest violation of Party discipline committed by Benito Mussolini with the publication of the *Popolo a'Italia* and with his writings in opposition to the deliberations of the Party, maintains any discussion superfluous, orders his expulsion forthwith, and warns his followers. Long live Socialism ! Down with the War ! "

In next day's *Popolo d'Italia* Mussolini wrote these prophetic words : "I will have my revenge later on. Those people who expelled me have me in their blood and love me. They have demolished me because they have not understood me. They will yet say to me : ' You were a pioneer and a precursor ! ' That will be by revenge ; but it will also be my justice."

Within ten days there had been founded the " Fascio of Revolutionary Action " for the pushing of interven-

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tion. Its immediate objective was to carry its banner to the parties of the Left—to the Republicans, Socialists, Anarchists and Syndicalists. By January 25 there were 50 Fasci (group centres) with a total membership of 5000. By February there were 105 Fasci with 9000 members, and the movement had become known as "*Fascista*."

From Austria a piteous cry was raised by the Italian minorities, pressed into service in armies hostile to Italy. "Sixty years of waiting and of martyrdom under Austria has been enough," wrote the irredentist leader Cesare Battisti. "Our cry is a cry of despair." Mussolini who, it will be remembered, had worked and laboured with Battisti, heard that cry—and irredentism became the leading passion of the Fascio of Revolutionary Action, just as it was the leading passion of the Nationalists.

The fortunes of these two extreme parties of Left and Right were linked in irredentism as a cause for war. The orators of both parties began to find themselves on the same platforms, in the same piazzas ; and accordingly there was noticeable a growing humanitarianism in the arguments of the Nationalists, and a growing nationalism in the outlook of the Fascio revolutionaries. There was no pact whatsoever between them, but nevertheless each was strongly influenced and tempered by the other. Their campaign made rapid progress.

As well as the shouting vanguard which wanted to rush headlong to war as the saviours of the Italian minorities, the main body of the Italian populace moved with gathering momentum in favour of intervention. The Neutralists under Giolitti tried to stop this movement by bringing into play all the many

FOR THE ALLIED CAUSE



Mussolini—the central figure with hands crossed—at the moment of his arrest at the instigation of the Giolitti Liberal Government for preaching intervention on the side of the Allies against the Central Powers during the early 1915 neutral phase of Italy.

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manoeuvres of which they were capable—arrests—that of Mussolini among them—sequestrations, corridor bargains and the creation of Cabinet crises. But in this case they found that they were dealing with the Italian people not as a ballot box but as a nation.

The Centre parties in the industrial north had long hesitated in favour of neutrality, because they saw that hostilities against Austria must eventually mean hostilities against Germany—a nation with whom their business interests were very deeply involved. Austria and the Austrians were hated, but not so Germany and Germans. Germany was disliked by the more analytical among Italian thinkers in a vague way, for it was felt that German business influence was becoming an incubus. Germans as individuals on the other hand were admired and liked. It nevertheless became patent that, with continued neutrality, a day of reckoning would come for Italy. Men of the Centre, like Professor Salvemini, vigorously pointed out these home-truths, with such expressions as " Don't let us deceive ourselves. If this war ends with the downfall of the Entente Powers, the neutral States no less than the conquered will fall under the yoke of the victors. The Austro-Germanic *bloc*, after its victory, will have no need to assault Italy in order to enforce servitude. It will be enough for them to command—and we to obey."

On the same argument Mussolini wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia* : " If neutrality continues, Italy to-morrow will be a nation abject and accursed : a nation condemned without autonomy and without future. The barrel-organ man, the boarding-house keeper and the shoeblack will continue to represent Italy in the world ; and the world of the living will

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once more give us a little compassion and much disdain ; we will be a country conquered without fighting for ourselves, dead before born."

Just as the revolutionary interventionists thus began to encompass the outlook of the Centre, so did the Centre begin to encompass the outlook of the Nationalists and revolutionary irredentists. " I have never been an irredentist," wrote Professor Salvemini in *War and Neutrality*, " but we must repair the error of 1866 and complete the work of unification and of national consolidation—and the time is now or never. We do not wish the present European crisis to close without the annexation of the Trentino and Venezia Giulia to Italy." These quotations are a few out of hundreds that could be made to reveal the awakening of militant national consciousness—a consciousness which swept parliamentarianism of the old school to one side and paved the way for the acceptance of the Fascist idea.

Prominent among the figures specially emblematic of this new spirit of patriotic loyalty were two men of very different schools—Enrico Corradini, founder of the Nationalist Party, and Filippo Corridoni, Syndicalist agitator. The quality common to them both was an unbounded love of Italy and the Italian people, together with a burning faith in the restoration of their country's greatness. The intervention campaign brought the full and passionate dedication of their talents to the one cause. Both were forerunners of Fascism and as such are highly honoured in the Valhalla of the party. Corridoni died in the trenches. Corradini lived to see the post-war birth of Fascism and was largely responsible for the official fusion of the Nationalist and Fascist parties in 1923. The spirit of

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these two men, it might be said, entered into Mussolini and there had their final and their full expression. He made their vision live.

Into this ferment of thought stepped the poet D'Annunzio. In May 1915 he arrived in Rome. His oratory roused the people to ecstatic heights. Demonstrations in favour of going to war swept the country, and Prime Minister Salandra's war ultimatum to Vienna in the same month had the spiritual bulk of Italy behind it,—but it left the Giolittian neutralists and the orthodox Socialists full liberty to embarrass the course of Italian arms and to hinder victory. In the name of the principles of Liberal government a defeatist minority was left free to exercise its manoeuvres and pursue its propaganda in the Chamber, in the country and even in the trenches.

THE ROOTS

IN THE CRUCIBLE OF WAR
(1915-1918)

' To die is not enough."
D'Annunzio.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWO ENEMIES

Foes at the Front and Foes in the Chamber. Untiring Defeatist Propaganda. First Effects of Russian Revolution. The Turin Tumults. Effect of Common Sacrifices at the Front. Country before Party.

DURING the Great War Italy had two sets of enemies to fight : those who faced them in the trenches at the front and those who tried, in and out of Parliament, to make Italy's intervention in the war ineffective.

The defeat of Giolitti's neutralist endeavours was to prove a factor of extreme importance for the future of Italy, not because he was defeated but because he had used the Chamber and his command of the party system as his weapons—and it was popular feeling which overthrew his campaign. It was a moment in which Italians realised that Parliament did not, and did not want to, represent them. In face of the tremendous issues of neutrality or war Giolitti's parliamentary machine had broken down : popular will, in its real democratic sense, prevailed.

As soon as Italy entered into the war, Giolitti retired to his country place in Piedmont as if his country's great decision had been a petty personal quarrel with himself. Deprived of their real head and master, the elements of the Centre and Left parties broke up—many of them renouncing their Giolittian ways and joining the growing parliamentary majority under the premiership of the National-Liberal Salandra. Never-

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theless, the other elements of the old parties continued in the Chamber to baulk the Government's war policy and measures—behaviour which surely amounted to betrayal of the soldiers bearing the actual tribulations of conflict.

While the Centre *bloc* weakened with Giolitti's absence, the orthodox Socialist Party grew stronger and more bold. Apart from such drastic and dramatic assertions of his constitutionalism as the shooting down of strikers at Cerignola, Candela, Castelluzzo and elsewhere, Giolitti had minimised Socialist opposition by a discreet distribution of measures in their favour. His removal caused a more solid re-affirmation of Socialist principles inside and out of Parliament.

Another factor which favoured the initial growth of defeatist propaganda was the absence of its hardest opponents—the Nationalist leaders, the Mussolini revolutionaries, and the tens of thousands of young volunteers who had answered the cry of militant patriotism. All these ardent interventionists were at the front, practising what they had preached. And so, in a sense, the Socialists and the pro-Germans had things their own way for the development of an insidious propaganda against prevailing general feeling.

It must be noted that pro-Germanism in Italy did not, and for good reason, have the same stigma attached to the term as in Britain. As I have already shown, Italy's grievance against Germany was subtle and indirect. It had nothing in it to inflame the popular mind. There were many interests which had benefited from German co-operation. This condition of mind was taken full advantage of by the Socialists and other defeatists on the parliamentary and constituency fronts.

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Many Socialists however—without identifying themselves with the Mussolini group—chose for war when once the die had been cast, and distinguished themselves as patriots in giving support to the Cabinet or on the field. In fact it was a Socialist deputy, Bissolati, who consolidated the interventionists in the Chamber ; but thirty-six deputies of the official Socialist Party sat in the Chamber in organised hostility to their country's endeavour. Backing them were the great organs of the Giolitti press, such as the *Stampa* of Turin and the *Tribuna* of Rome. In Italy there was therefore lacking that single-purpose action which Britain had at once secured by the establishment of a Coalition Government.

A partial break-through on the Trentino front caused a Cabinet crisis, which was resolved by nominating the seventy-eight-year-old deputy, Boselli, as successor to Salandra. He represented no party and so he was considered just the kind of man wanted to rule a Cabinet representative of all parties. Although a negative solution, it meant the creation of what amounted to a national Cabinet. It was this Cabinet which eased Allied doubts by declaring war on Germany.

The greatest trials on the " home front " were however yet to come. After a second severe winter in the Alpine trenches, the disaster of Caporetto gave new heart to the defeatists. The effects of the Russian Revolution began to be felt. Russian-Socialist manifestoes calling on the Italian troops to lay down their arms were showered from Austrian aeroplanes over the war areas, and the Socialists openly redoubled their anti-war campaign. The shock of Caporetto, however, had a lively effect on the people. The

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danger wakened a national feeling which was expressed in united action. A new line of defence was established on the Piave, a new commander-in-chief, General Diaz, took charge of the Armies, the fighting forces were reorganised.

Nevertheless the opponents of the war never ceased their attacks. From the Socialist benches there rose the continuous chant, " Not another winter of war." In co-operation with the Russian Socialists an extensive anti-war programme was carried out all over the country. The people were told that they were being fooled. Agitation in some centres broke out into tumults. Anti-war rioters in Turin induced the workers in the ammunition factories to come out on strike, and the electric current for the leading engineering shops was cut off. On August 24 troops intervened and the attempts to sabotage Italy's war effort were stemmed. Efforts were made to set up Soldiers' and Workers' Councils.

Another thing which did little to help matters was the deliberate misinterpretation of the spirit of the appeal for peace launched by Pope Benedict XV. Taken up by the Clerical Press and misused by all the political elements hostile to Italy's participation in the war, the Pope's appeal was twisted into a defeatist influence. The Austrian planes, which had been dropping down bombs and Socialist leaflets, changed the latter for copies of the Pope's peace appeal, while however still continuing with the bombs.

To fortify the Government, leaders of all the parties were convened. Giolitti returned from his retirement and gave his help, if not his goodwill, to the work of winning the war. A new Cabinet was formed under the Democratic-Liberal Orlando. The newspapers

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dubbed this the "Fascio Ministry"; but of course the term was used in its limited sense of a Ministry bound together, and had nothing to do with the so far unborn Fascist idea or Party.

The Italian people withstood all the political onslaughts of the Socialists, pacifists and enemy agents who so persistently and unsleepingly attacked the nation's *moral*. By the spring of 1918 the new commander-in-chief had repelled a great Austrian offensive, and in autumn the Italian army began its counter-offensive which ended in the sweeping victory of Vittorio Veneto. The Austrian forces were destroyed or captured, and on November 1 Italy dictated its armistice terms.

What I have tried to bring out in this chapter is a twofold factor : (1) The Italian victory was gained despite unbroken war-opposition activity which had sometimes great strength and influence even in the Chamber ; and (2) it was public feeling which influenced Parliament and not Parliament which influenced public feeling.

This latter point is of considerable importance as indicating the decline of public complacency in political manipulation. It marked a starting-point of popular assertion against the democratic system which had become debased on account of the reasons traced in earlier chapters of this book. The national mind was being, as it were, prepared to appreciate the principles which later, under great post-war provocations, found expression in Fascism.

As well as this, however, there were other influences—great positive influences, which moved the country during the war towards new ideals which indeed became Blackshirt ideals. These influences were born,

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not among the politicians and the parties, but on the battlefronts. The difficulties of terrain and climate which the Italian armies overcame demanded an extraordinary degree of personal sacrifice on the part of the troops. The knowledge of this common sacrifice acted as a new-found bond among the soldiers drawn from all parts of the peninsula—parts whose interest had heretofore been considered antagonistic and competitive one to another. It is not too much to say that the aspirations of Italian national unity symbolised in the Risorgimento had their completion in the trenches against Austria in the Great War. The war proved a supreme endeavour which demanded, and got, union among the troops in action. Their tasks and achievements raised their vision high above Parliament and Party. They beheld only *Italia*.

CHAPTER VIII

A GLIMPSE AT THE BATTLEFIELDS

Difficulties of Terrain. Some Battle Figures. Interventionists in Action. Battisti Strangled. Corridoni Killed. Marinetti, d'Annunzio, Mussolini Wounded. Spirit of Fascism.

LET us try to reconstruct in a simple visual way the strategic handicaps confronted by Italian arms. The terrain favoured Germany and Austria. The extensive, low-lying, northern Veneto plain is bounded on the north, east and west by mountains and is intersected by three rivers, the Piave, Tagliamento and the Isonzo, which flow southward. The rivers are, very approximately, parallel in their level courses across the plain. The Trentino wedge of Alpine mountains, penetrating south, forms the north-western wall of this amphitheatre of war. The plain at its eastern end finishes abruptly against the steep barrier-face of the Carso plateau. Map Number Two, inside the covers of this book, while intended to display the frontier positions, includes the principle place-names of the war zone.

Austria's pre-war frontier sliced the eastern sector of the Veneto plain and on the north and north-west it included the southern foothills of the Trentino salient. In both areas the Austrian line lay well within the Italian side of the gateway mountain barriers ; but when war was declared Austria withdrew to heavily fortified defensive positions on the precipitous face of the Carso and seized the Trentino passes into Italy.

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Italy's 1915-16 actions consisted in carrying by assault the Carso positions while at the same time holding in check Austrian advances from the Trentino, where a break-through would have caught the Italian armies like nut-crackers.

It is not my intention to do more than recall the phases of the war on these fronts. "It is in the trenches that the roots of Italy's new-found glory are to be found" — I had often heard this phrase and others similar during the last eleven years of Fascism and had indeed paid very little attention to such utterances, thinking them more or less picturesque propaganda slogans. A visit to the scene of the Italian war zones opened my eyes to what the Italian soldiers had accomplished.

I confess I was amazed when I looked on the bulwarks of the Carso. These heights are nothing but broken, jagged rock—like the Krithia gullies of Cape Helles at Gallipoli, but mountainous, and with a series of rugged abutments each as large as the frontage of the Somme. It could be seen how every hill captured was at once open to flanking fire from adjacent hills. The Italian concentration positions on the plain were overlooked like a chessboard. The Carso hills range about 800 to 2000 feet in height with a frontage to the Veneto plain descending in cliffs and ravines.

These positions were stormed, captured and held until October 1917, when the Austrian break-through further north at Caporetto necessitated a complete abandonment of the hard-won Carso, and a total retirement to prevent the isolation of the Carso armies. With lateral communications and any contact impracticable on account of the topographical

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character of the land as above described, and with the lines of retreat confined to bottle-neck passes which in turn debouched on to the exposed Veneto plain, there is no wonder that the retreat took on the characteristics of a rout, because no rearguard action on any extensive scale was possible until the troops were clear of the mountains and the naked plain.

The miracle to me is that the forces were so rapidly rallied and consolidated on a line of defence. Driven back to the line of the Piave river the Italians consolidated there and held it, until in turn, at the final victory of Vittorio Veneto in October 1918, they routed the Austrians and regained possession of the Carso barrier and the plateau beyond it on the road to Trieste. And, of course, during all these phases they had to hold back the Austrians from overwhelming them in the rear through the passes of the Trentino Alpine salient. Most of the fighting was above the Alpine snow line.

The principal 1916 Italian drive was through the town of Gorizia, which lies at the foot of a cup of hills with Mount San Michele and Mount Sabotino flanking and dominating it. These hills, rising steeply from sea-level, have been declared " sacred zones " by the Fascist Government. They have been preserved, like some of the British areas in France and Flanders, so as to allow visitors and " war pilgrims " to study and re-picture the war.

The formidable Austrian defences high on top of the cliffs are revealed. Sabotino is hewn into galleries like Gibraltar, only much deeper. All trench positions are cut out of the living rock or made of boulders which stand today as when first blasted. Both Sabotino and San Michele were taken with the

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bayonet without preliminary bombardment and under flanking enemy fire. At the foot of this hill is the war cemetery of Redipuglia. It includes 30,000 of the Italian dead of all arms, eighty per cent of them unidentified, who fell in the initial capture of these hills and the Garso heights.

Mussolini has ordered that the further 54,000 dead lying in small isolated graveyards scattered over the Carso front be gathered into one great monumental sanctuary also as part of Redipuglia. The remainder of Italy's half-million dead is in military cemeteries back on the Piave unbroken line of resistance and on the Trentino Alpine front to the north-west.

For the final drive of the war General Diaz, the commander-in-chief, had 57 divisions (51 Italian, 3 British, 2 French and 1 Czechoslovak divisions and 1 American regiment) totalling 912,000 all ranks. Opposed to him were 63 Austro-German divisions totalling 1,070,000 all ranks, of whom 300,000 were taken prisoners at Vittorio Veneto, in which 58 Austro-German divisions were engaged. In this final and conclusive action the Italians lost 33,000 men.

In all, Italy mobilised for the war 5,903,000 men. Of these, in the closing phases of the war, Italy had 1,987,000 officers and men in the front-line Italian battle zones. In other war areas Italy had 50,000 troops serving with the French armies in France ; 96,000 in Albania and 49,000 in Macedonia. The Italian dead, through direct war causes, is calculated at 680,000 ; and the wounded at 1,050,000. These are all factors very cognate to a study of the Fascist Revolution. They are figures frequently quoted by the Fascists in justification of Fascist policy*

A GLIMPSE AT THE BATTLEFIELDS

While Parliament and people were conducting and suffering the war in face of an unsleeping defeatist minority, and while the soldiers were experiencing the bitter conflicts of which I have given a most summary outline, there was gradually spreading over all Italy, as already indicated, a sense of unity such as mere legislation had never accomplished in the fifty odd years of the Kingdom's existence. The regions of Italy became merged in their mingled blood. The common cause brought north and south into oneness of effort and sacrifice. The Risorgimento had pieced Italy together, but these pieces were fused into a whole in the furnace of war. This new feeling was caught in its rising tide by the men who had been prominent in the intervention campaign—and this national surge of patriotic sentiment they exploited by personal example.

Cesare Battisti, Mussolini's friend and inspirer of the irredentist Socialist days at Trento in 1909, left Austria to fight on the side of Italy. Captured at Monte Grappa in 1916 he was tried by Austrian court-martial, convicted of "desertion" and strangled at the stake. Today he is one of the most honoured martyrs of the Fascist calendar: one of their most often invoked symbols of patriotism.

Marinetti the Futurist, who had been arrested along with Mussolini for intervention speeches at Milan, fought as a volunteer, was badly wounded and was twice decorated for valour. Corridoni, as already mentioned, was killed in action. The poet d'Annunzio served throughout the war and lost his right eye during an air flight after bombing Trieste.

Castellini, one of the Nationalist Party founders, was killed with Italian volunteer forces in France along with two of the sons of Garibaldi.

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Mussolini on the declaration of war left the *Popolo a'Italia* to become a private soldier of the 1884 class in the shock-troop Bersaglieri corps. In his "letter of farewell" to the *Popolo d'Italia* he wrote: "When these words are before the eyes of our readers, I shall be beyond these wickedly drawn frontier lines which must be cancelled, because they are a peril and a shame too long endured. I do not need to tell you that I am happy. . . . The masses are sound. My feelings are therefore clear and optimistic. . . . But we—who are preparing to endure the hardships of winter in the trenches and are confronting the dangers of fighting men—do not wish to be stabbed in the back. Be therefore ever on the watch. We shall fight. Fight also you."

The fact that Mussolini served with a Bersagliere unit during the war had considerable influence years later when the Fascist March on Rome was being secretly organised. The history of the Bersaglieri regiments is strongly identified with the Risorgimento struggles. As a corps it is passionately Monarchist.

Mussolini took part in the Carso campaigns until February 1917, when he was wounded by a bursting trench-mortar. When picked up, lacerated and inert, and taken to the field dressing-station, it was found that there were forty-two fragments of metal embedded all over his body. After a slow and painful recovery Mussolini was invalided out of the army in May 1917, when he returned to the *Popolo d'Italia* and the task of fighting the defeatists on the home front.

In this chapter I have cited the names of those interventionists to whom reference has already been made in earlier chapters. They represent, numerically, merely a few of the leading figures behind whom

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were ever-growing legions of followers. They formed a group which had great influence in the general ferment of the nation. The facts of war, even in their more exhausting and hopeless moments, were knitting Government and people more and more together ; but while this was an unconscious movement born of facing a common great peril, the old interventionist group strove by word and deed to make the nation conscious of its coherence. They voiced the country's destiny. That is why the same strange mixture of revolutionaries, poets and nationalists became the exponents of latter-day Fascism. They were the people who did not forget.

And in Mussolini's " War Diary," among his simple record of the pastimes, thoughts and pains of soldiering in alternate relief zones and fire-steps amid Alpine winters, there are the revealing flashes of thought which show that Fascism has its real roots deep down in the mud and blood of the trenches.

CHAPTER IX

THE LONDON TREATY QUALIFIED

The 1915 Secret Pact Affected by U.S. Entry in the War. The Succession States. Greek Mix-up. New Russia. Turkish Spoils. Effect on Fascist Policy.

DURING the progress of the war the 1915 Secret Pact of London and other inter-Allied pacts of the kind were adjusted and altered as the unforeseen circumstances of the conflict veered and changed. The principal circumstances were (1) the entry of the United States of America into the world conflict, (2) the potential formation of succession States out of the land of the potentially defeated Central Powers, (3) the ambiguous position of Greece, (4) the collapse of the Czarist and the rise of revolutionary Russia ; and (5) the prospective defeat and dismemberment of the Turkish Empire.

The alterations caused by these factors had considerable influence on the diplomatic conditions on which the Peace Treaty delegates eventually based their projects during the Paris settlements of 1918-1919. They also affected the whole atmosphere of the Peace Conference. These influences were mostly to Italy's disadvantage and they must here be taken into account because it was this change of atmosphere which caused the first violent reaction of Mussolini against the Allies when he created the Fascist movement.

The new things introduced by the five above-mentioned considerations were, as far as they affected

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the course of Italy's history, briefly, as follows :
(1) The entry of the United States brought into European diplomacy the Wilsonian watchword (or catchword if you like) of self-determination. America joined the war with free hands and under the banner of the liberation of peoples. Secret treaties were ignored.

(2) Serbia, as one of the Allies and as a potential succession state, getting an inkling of what was to befall in the Adriatic under the secret 1915 arrangement, saw to it as early as 1917 that a way was opened to soften down the Treaty of London terms. The Pact of Corfu, signed in July 1917 between the Serbian Government and the " Yugoslav Committee," paved the way for the eventual formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, otherwise Yugoslavia—which was to be Italy's new Adriatic neighbour in the place of Habsburg Austria. An Italo-Yugoslav agreement was thereafter worked out and signed in Rome, by which the Italian and Yugoslav delegates pledged themselves to settle all particular territorial controversies on the basis of the principles of nationality and the rights of the people to decide their own fate, in such manner as not to injure the vital interests of the two friendly nations—interests which were to be defined at the moment of peace.

(3) The ambiguous position of Greece, jockeying about as half-foe and half-ally, and further jockeyed about in Lloyd Georgian diplomatic tangles in the Near East, eventually led to confusion between promises made to Italy and also made to Greece.

(4) The collapse of Czarist Russia and the rise of revolutionary Russia meant the replacement of the Imperial Benckendorff who had signed the 1915 Treaty of London by a Kerensky who repudiated the

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secret diplomacy of the Czars : and Kerensky found the Allies tentatively anxious to bolster up his Menchevist Russia against the growing Bolshevist storm-clouds.

(5) The prospective dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was not envisaged in the 1915 Pact of London. It referred, it will be remembered, to the acquisition of territory " at the expense of Germany." France and Britain in 1916 adjusted this little matter between them, so that a partition of Turkish possessions was also understood. Italy intervened for her share in the spoil and in April 1917, as a derivation of the Anglo-French 1916 Agreement, the Treaty of St.-Jean-de-Maurienne was signed. This treaty reserved the Smyrna-Adalia zones in Asia Minor to Italy, " subject to Russia being allowed to express its opinion."

The five above factors are not—they cannot be—presented in any strict order of time or effect. They had repercussions on each other and they each caused repercussions on the Treaty of London, Italy's vital document. Every item of Italian peace and foreign policy was affected by that inter-Allied agreement.

THE SAPLING

ONE AGAINST MANY

(1918-1922)

" There is a continuity of history in those who fought and conquered in the trenches and those who made the March on Rome."

Mussolini.

CHAPTER X

MUSSOLINI RAISES HIS FLAG

The Rise of Socialism. Cabinet Divisions. Strike Era Begins. Socialist-Communist Bloc Founded. Mussolini's first Fascio Founded. Its Programme. Labour and ex-Servicemen. First Provincial Fasci. Consistency of First Economic and Foreign Policy with Policy To-day. The Fascist Objectives.

IN the preceding chapter I have more than once written of the "unity" which Italy found in a hard-won victory, but that sense of unity had to suffer many blows in the aftermath of war before it became a dynamic post-war assertion.

As soon as the Armistice lessened the national tension, the Socialists, exalted by the clamorous triumphs of the Extreme Left in Russia, Germany, Hungary and Austria, redoubled their efforts to add Italy to the growing number of nations in Europe which were apparently rallying to the red flag of Internationalism. The Italian Government—with its stability weakened by principles which allowed these subversive notions to take root and flourish, and with its authority compromised by the ties and obligations of party *blocs*—had neither the strength nor the necessary will to check this rising tide.

Sergeant Mussolini, however, in his "War Diary" had noted in October 1915, "Here at the front no one says, 'I am going back to my village'; but instead, 'I am going back to Italy.' Italy thus appears, perhaps for the first time, in the conscience of so many of its sons as a single and living reality; in short, as a

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Fatherland." But the feelings created during the months following November 1918, by demobilisation delays, by wildfire Socialist propaganda, and by Governmental indifference caused the liberated soldiers to return to their Italy—but to the slogan of "the factories to the workmen and the land to the peasants."

The discussions prior to the departure of the Italian delegates to the Paris Peace Conference led to divisions of opinion in the Cabinet and in the Chamber—divisions which were seized on and exaggerated by the Socialists with disturbing effect on the already shaken public mind. A sense of disillusionment spread with almost panic rapidity. From propaganda the Socialists, fortified with support from Moscow, passed to action, and ex-soldiers found themselves being mobbed, and the era of strikes began. Against this rising and unchecked tide there were ranged only a few helpless people in the Government, some disorientated groups of ex-servicemen and the vigorous leading articles of the *Popolo d'Italia*. Round this paper there rallied many of the same Futurist, Nationalist and d'Annunzian elements which had united for the intervention campaign three years before.

In February 1919 the Italian Unitarian Socialist Party concluded an alliance with a Red revolution bloc of the Left and the Russian Bolsheviks. As a result the dominating Italian Communist Party was shortly afterwards founded. This event was celebrated with a "Red Day" manifestation in Milan, when the Italian national tricolour flag was publicly torn down and insulted, the ex-servicemen execrated, evacuation of the redeemed frontier areas demanded, a proletarian mobilisation advocated and the imme-

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diate unconditional release of imprisoned deserters insisted upon. This demonstration, marked with tumult, was repeated in the other provincial capitals.

On March 20, 1919, the Socialists officially proclaimed that their programme was to lead the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Red regime. Four hundred thousand Reds thus revealed that they intended to assert their destructive will on the forty million people of Italy : and Parliament revealed that it was, as a whole, unable, and, in part, unwilling to prevent this imposition.

Mussolini's answer was to augment the written word by direct action. In a small hall beneath his lodgings in Piazza San Sepolcro, Milan, he convened a body of less than two hundred followers, and on March 23, 1919, the first *Fascio di Combattimento* came into being. In name and idea it was a reinvocation of the interventionist *Fascio* whose work we have already described: but where it had been a combative unit for the furtherance of the continuity—albeit revolutionary—of Italy's Risorgimento war of national redemption from the foreigner, this time it was a fighting unit for the salvation of Italy from Italy itself.

The party emblem depicted on the title-page of the first number of // *Fascio*, the original weekly organ of Mussolini's *Fascio di Combattimento*, shows that the original *fascio* was not that of the Roman lictor's rods, but the union-in-strength bundle of sticks immortalised by Aesop. The engraving on *Il Fascio* is a hand grasping a bunch of saplings. The immediate aim of these first Fascists is clearly stated in the programme drawn up at that historical meeting in the Piazza San Sepolcro. This programme — / *Postulati dei*

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Fasci per Ia Costituente—includes the following main points :

We wish : (the document runs)

i. To rally all those who moved for intervention in the war and who, now that the war has been triumphantly won, feel called upon to prevent the sabotage of peace.

2. To create Fascist centres which will send delegates to a great meeting of Italian interventionism.

3. That that meeting be consecrated to the solution of the fundamental problems of our nation.

4. That from that meeting there arise an anti-party, namely a Fascist organisation which will have nothing in common with the " credos " and " dogmas " or " mentality " or, above all, with the " prejudices " of the other parties.

5. That this Constituent of Fascists be the prelude to a Constituent of the Italian People. The *Fasci* ought to be the framework enclosing the energies of the ex-servicemen. The old parties are cadaverous relics and it should not be difficult to bury them entirely.

To sum up :

We do not present problems : we present solutions.

We constitute the organ of agitation for the handling of these problems.

We, if it be necessary, will convert the organ of agitation into an organ of action for the solution of given problems in a manner and in a style dictated by our will and by events.

Long live the *Fasci per Ia Costituente*—and now to work without delay.

23rd November, 1918.

MUSSOLINI.

Mussolini's initial movement was among the working-men of Italy. The demobilisation had poured tens of thousands of ex-servicemen on to the unprepared labour market. The labour organisations, while handicapping the employment of these men by

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the rigid application of trade-union rules, welcomed them to swell the numbers of organised revolt. In November 1918 Italian workmen were divided among three organisations : the Confederation of Work, the Italian Syndical Union and the Italian Union of Work. The Union of Work had been interventionist, but that expression of its pre-war patriotism became swamped under post-war disillusionment. In the Syndical Union the epoch of strikes which opened in 1919 became more and more political and less and less economic. Differences concerning questions of pay and working-hours sunk to secondary importance as the Union concentrated its efforts towards inflaming the masses on purely political and social issues.

Many of the first Constituent Fascists were Syndicalists who had broken with their own Union ; but it was as ex-soldiers that the Fascists sought out their earlier supporters. Nevertheless the presence of this revolutionary Syndicalist element was to prove a most important factor in the development of the Fascist idea which now has its fulfilment in the Fascist State. The records of that first meeting reveal that the principles of a Corporative State were tentatively discussed and measures taken for the furtherance of the Syndicalist ideas of co-operation which now forms the national productive " totalitarian " basis of the established regime.

While Mussolini was making this effort to gather the ex-servicemen round his newly erected emblem of the *Fascio* of unity, the Socialists, by the formation of Soldiers' and Workers' Councils, were making special endeavours to disintegrate the consolidarity which the fraternal spirit of the trenches had created through suffering and endurance among the troops from all

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parts of the peninsula. It was the attack on the victory and on the men who had achieved that victory which roused Mussolini as much as the social peril to which his country was being exposed. His exasperation was heightened by the conviction that the Government and diplomats were preparing, under the excuse of Wilsonian patronage, to concede away that which had been so hardly won. His feelings are expressed in leaders in which, for instance, he writes : " We interventionists who took part in the war cry out— ' Stand back you Socialist jackals, it is forbidden to divide the dead. They are not of Party but of Country and of Countries. They are humanity.⁵ We will defend our dead against all defamation.

" Do not fear, O Glorious Spirits : we will defend you even at the cost of digging trenches in the piazzas and streets of our cities." Again, " People who have fought for four years and have given victory to the world do not accept patrons and tutors. Let Wilson speak to America—where no one bothers about him any longer—instead of working off his ignominious frauds on our blood." When this was written Mr. Wilson had been enrolled as an honorary citizen of Rome.

Other early documents which reveal the first ideas of the Fascists are to be found in the provincial archives. They reveal a combination of Socialist and Nationalist programmes—but with a certain spiritual dedication of all endeavours to the vindication of the fallen and the co-operation of the classes under safeguard. These were the essentially new things in the embryo movement. A typical example of this is seen in the manifesto issued in 1919 by the *Fascio di Combattimento* of Montepulciano in Tuscany. I choose this one

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for quotation because it shows how quickly the Fascist leaven began to influence semi-rural centres far removed from the direct personal influence of the Milan *Fascio*. The Montepulciano *Fascio* includes passages like these :

" The Fascist ideal is germinated in the name of the dead and the wounded. We do not fight against those who work but against those who in the name of holy ideas sow hatred among the masses. We struggle against a parasite *bourgeoisie*, but we defend a productive *bourgeoisie* which provides indispensable elements for the development and progress of whatsoever regime.

We wish the formation of a national technical council of work and industry, of transport, health, communications, etc., elected from the professional elements as a whole or of the masters, with legislative powers. The question of the regime is subordinate to the moral and material interests, present and future, of the nation gathered together in its reality and in its historical sequence. For this we are without prejudice for or against existing institutions.

We wish a social legislation equipped with the necessities of those new demands, especially with regard to taking care of the disabled and old workmen, either agricultural, industrial or clerical: representation of workers in the functioning of industry not limited to such things as concern the welfare of the personnel and the systematization, technical and moral, of the great public services.

We wish the immediate coordination of all those associations of ex-soldiers and of war-wounded towards whom we and the country owe gratitude in an unmistakable and tangible form.

We wish a strong taxation on capital of a progressive character ; the revision of all war munition contracts and the sequestration of all war profits.

For foreign affairs we demand :

A. The Treaty of Versailles revised and modified in those parts which are obviously inapplicable, or whose application

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can be the foundation of formidable hatreds and new wars.

B. The effective application of the Treaty of London, the annexation of Fiume to Italy, and the care of Italians residing in the lands included in the Treaty of London.

C. The gradual untying of Italy from the group of Western plutocratic nations, through the development of our productive international forces.

D. The bringing together of the enemy nations—Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, Hungary—but with an attachment of dignity and always taking into clear account the supreme necessities of our northern and oriental frontiers.

E. The creation and intensification of friendly relations with all the peoples of the East, including the Governments of the Soviet and South-Eastern Europe.

F. Revindication in regard to the colonies and the rights and necessities of the nation.

These and similar initial indications of policy have their special interest when compared with the achievements of today—achievements which are still consistent with such early guiding principles. Indeed the above quoted six points on Foreign Policy in 1919 might have been written in Italy to-day.

But the real work confronted by the San Sepolcro nucleus concerned action rather than thought, conflict rather than contemplation. As already seen, their lines of attack radiated against several objectives. They ranged against: (1) the unconstitutional Socialists and the Reds, (2) the Constitutional parties whose ineptitude had made the Red risings possible, (3) all international elements—Bolshevik, Socialist, Masonic and Clerical—whenever and wherever they impinged detrimentally on Italian affairs, and (4) the Peace Treaty delegates and policy, especially on the Fiume question. By a political anomaly, the Fascists at this

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phase of their evolution were, in the name of order, anti-constitutional, republican and revolutionary.

We will now trace, in separate sections, the progress of these fourfold conflicts from the first San Sepolcro Fascist days of March 1919 until June 21, 1921, when Mussolini as a newly elected Deputy carried his war from the piazzas into the citadel of the Government.

CHAPTER XI

BATTLES WITH THE REDS

Red Terrorism. First Fascist Congress. Plans to Oppose Reds. Fascists and Anti-Red Groups. Mussolini stands for Parliament. Not Elected. Arrested Instead. Strike-ridden Italy. Factories Seized. Communists in Control. Inept Government. Pitched Battles. Giolitti back in Power. First Fascist Syndicate at Milan. Corporate Idea takes Root. The Communists and Socialists Split. Government against the Fascists. The Diana Massacre. Position in Alto Adige. New Elections. Thirty-three Fascists Returned. Mussolini Deputy.

IF you turn up the principal newspaper files in Italy (except those of the *Popolo d' Italia*) for the year 1919 you will find very little about Mussolini or Fascism. Instead you will read an unbroken record of Socialist violence, strikes, bombings, assaults and triumphant capturings of factories and municipalities. As a kind of indeterminate *obbligato* to the strident news of Red doings you will find endless parliamentary debates, " scenes in the Chamber " and electioneering manoeuvres. In short you will find a state of affairs which makes it seem miraculous that Fascism could live at all. But if you carefully trace the records you will discover with what extraordinary courage, determination and sacrifice the Fascists gradually began to stay and then to dominate the sweeping tides. Their ultimate success proves that Mussolini was right in his war-time recognition that Italy was at last indeed united ; but it required his leadership and inspiration to make people realise it wholly for themselves.

The rapid growth of his movement in face of the merciless forces of disintegration seems to justify

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the claim that he was Italy's man of destiny whose highest achievement was the revelation of Italy to herself. The reconstruction of Italy under his genius during the last established decade of his regime was a great work, but no matter how colossal, how unique in the annals of governmental administration, his essential contribution to Italy was that vital spark which he struck among his first followers in 1919. The tremendous odds could not quench it. In travail it shone brighter. Its light spread in the fury of the combat against it. And all because it reflected the united national conscience which Mussolini had divined before *Italia* had really divined it herself.

The Socialists used terrorism as one of their principal means of persuasion. The spring of 1919 was marked by a general strike with conflicts and incidents all over Italy. This strike was the answer of the Reds to the Government because the Cabinet had forbidden public manifestations in honour of Lenin. During all summer there were clashes between the Reds and the police—with the inevitable strikes of protest. Shops were pillaged in Milan, Turin, Bari, Messina, Genoa, Pisa, Naples, Verona, Perugia and Florence.

In July 1919 a Socialist Republic was declared in several centres, notably in the valleys near Bisenzio. After considerable bloodshed the insurgents were bought off by an imposed 50 per cent reduction of food retail prices. The revocation of this un-economic concession, shortly afterwards, started new troubles.

In August the Anarchists began to add systematic bomb-throwing and dynamiting to the general Red endeavour. Bombs were thrown in theatres. Helpless theatre audiences were to become a favourite

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target. In the midst of Red propaganda for an amnesty for war deserters, the Italian army was demobilised. In September this amnesty was given and the released deserters were, on demand, granted practically all the same rights as the loyal ex-combatants.

Gathering together the tiny Fascist units which had intimated adherence to the San Sepolcro Constituent, Mussolini in October 1919 presided over the first Fascist Congress, when he outlined a plan of action to purge the country of the Reds, to enforce order and to justify the ex-soldier, the dead and the victory. This congress was held in Florence. One hundred and forty-eight *Fasci* centres were represented and it was announced that sixty-eight more *Fasci* were in course of being formed. The delegates represented some 45,000 inscribed members. Every *Fascio* sent five delegates. The Reds assailed it and the congress ended in a revolver fight.

This congress was timed for the beginning of a general election campaign when Fascism had to put into practice the resolutions for unity passed by the delegates. The tendency was to mobilise all the intervention forces of the Left, but the attitude of the Republicans and Masons made this impossible, as some also had controlling interests in the interventionist associations of the Right. The Mussolini Fascists included partial expropriation of capital in their programme—a project aimed at the war profiteers and the great banks, which were more concerned with speculative industry than with banking. This part of the Fascist programme, however, drove a wedge between the interventionists of Left and Right. The difficulty was the distinction between interventionists as such and as members of political groups. There were anti-Com-

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FIGHTING DAYS



Fascists entering Ferrara after its capture from the Reds. At the head of the *squadristi* column is Balbo and Grandi.

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munist Socialists who had come over to Fascism but were nevertheless hostile to the Fiume and Dalmatian claims inscribed on the Fascist banners.

An attempt was made to form a *bloc* with a powerful association known as the Union of the Demobilised, but this fell through. The Fascists stood alone, the Demobilised putting up their list of parliamentary candidates under the insignia of a steel helmet—a forerunner of the Germanic Stahlhelm organisation, but professedly of the Left.

The Fascist "list" consisted of nineteen candidates. The first name was Benito Mussolini, the second was the Futurist Marinetti, and it included the name of the *Maestro* Toscanini. The other names were those of men of all previous political colours down to ex-Anarchists. But as Fascists they had a measure in common: with one exception they had all been war volunteers and with two exceptions they had all been wounded or decorated for valour.

It was on this "list" that the Fascists of the Left—that is, the followers of Mussolini—first made public use of the *fascio* of the Roman lictors, emblem not only of the strength of unity but also a token of discipline and a symbol of past triumphs. The *lictor fascio* was decided upon at a Fascist reunion on October 23, 1919. The associations of war volunteers and many of the Arditi shock troops rallied to the Mussolini Fascists.

The non-Mussolini Fascists of the Right acted under the title of "the *Fasci* of Patriotic Assurance" and selected the Star of Italy as their emblem. In November the general elections were held.

Mussolini polled only a few thousand votes and neither he nor any of his eighteen fellow Fascists on the "list" were elected. The general victors throughout

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the country were the Socialists and the new Popular Party—of whom more hereafter.

In the *Popolo a" Italia* Mussolini consoled his followers for their defeat by asserting that after all their effort was only " a limited and circumscribed affirmation."

On the night following the declaration of the poll the Socialists spread the news in Milan that the body of a man identified as that of Mussolini had been found in the Naviglio canal. A Socialist procession marched in triumph to siege the headquarters of the Fascists. During this march a bomb was thrown, wounding a dozen or so of the demonstrators. For this a general strike was proclaimed for the morrow, and meanwhile the police arrested some thirty Fascists and perquisitioned fifteen revolvers and a Verey pistol found in the safe of the *Popolo d'Italia* offices. Mussolini was by this time known to be very much alive and a mandate for his arrest was issued and executed. He was taken to police headquarters, questioned for two hours concerning the arms and then put in a cell. As the possession of the revolvers in a locked place was not a prisonable offence, the hand of the Socialists through Premier Nitti was seen in the procedure and there was considerable local public protest. Mussolini was released in twenty-four hours.

The scenes in the Chamber after these elections were marked with anti-monarchist demonstrations, the Socialists at the opening of Parliament in December leaving the House in a body as the King entered. The year 1919 ended with strikes all over the country.

Diplomatic differences with Italy's war-time Allies ; a *coup de force* at Fiume ; trouble with the Socialist Congress of Berne, with the Freemason Congress of

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Paris and with clerical party trade unions (all of which shall in turn be surveyed) added to the complications of the situation which confronted the Fascists at the beginning of 1920—a situation which piled itself up in social disaster as the year progressed.

The year broke with a renewed epidemic of strikes. In January 1920 the railwaymen, postal workers and employees of all public services joined in a strike which seriously compromised national economy. The Carrara quarry workers went on strike. The printers of Pesaro, the tramwaymen of Verona, the bank employees of Bologna, iron workers at Milan and Pola followed suit. At a National Council meeting of the Italian Socialist Party it was proposed that the Party be reformed on a Soviet basis.

The railway lines were bombed at Milan, Arezzo and Ancona. In Cremona the Fascists managed to break up a Red procession, but in Florence they suffered in grave tumults with the Anarchists under Malatesta. Twenty-five were wounded in this side-show alone. Threatened by reprisals the Nitti Government failed to enforce order.

More Government measures were taken against the Fascists than against the Reds. Trains operated by Fascists who were non-union men, and trains carrying troops or officers were shot at and bombed. Under Red pressure the Government punished some of the railwaymen belonging to the Milan section of the State Railways who were "culpable of having remained at their posts during the January strikes." At Pisa the Reds took a short cut to the same sort of "justice" by opening revolver fire on such "culpables."

By February 1920 the number of Fascists in Milan alone had increased to 1800.

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Not counting innumerable and irresponsible more or less small local strikes all over the country, 200,000 employees of the chemical industries were on strike in February ; local and State public service employees of all Italy came out in March, with seizure and occupation of factories in Piedmont and Naples by the Reds. The Nitti Government fell and was reconstructed. After this, deficits in every department of the State budget were announced in the Chamber ; and the Socialist mayor of Milan was dismissed because he had consented to hoist the Italian flag over the Municipal Buildings. As a further complication the Fascist and the shock-gangs of the Socialists on some occasions joined forces in their common antagonism against Nitti, although no alliance was tolerated. Ireland during the height of the Sinn Fein-Black and Tan trouble was a Sunday school treat compared to the state of affairs in post-war Italy.

In April 1920 there were 70,000 men on strike. The invasion of factories grew bolder, and to this was added the invasion of private estates with destruction of farms, crops and livestock. By this time the nerve of the victimised public was at breaking point.

In Milan alone that month 350 doctors, 350 midwives and 80 veterinary surgeons were prohibited from continuing their work of social mercy ; food was at a premium and the Bologna Chamber of Work ordered the refusal of bread to all who did not belong to the Red organisations. There were strikes in 308 Communes. Meanwhile the Fascist numbers were steadily growing while at the same time their roll of members was being cut down by casualties in the fighting and rioting.

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The Mussolini Fascists were not the only people who banded together to confront the rising hordes of strikers. By this period there had sprung into being several anti-Red associations whose membership was also drawn from interventionist sources. There was the Anti-Bolshevist Popular Union, the Committee of Civil Organisation, the National League, the *Fascio* of Patriotic Assurance. Organisations such as these aimed at vindicating the war victory, but they were all of anti-Labour mentality : strike-breakers without heed to what any particular strike was about. In March 1919 Mussolini tried to unite these several anti-Red units. Although they and the Mussolini Fascists had the same immediate objectives in view as far as restoring order was concerned, the effort to work together failed for what may best be described as incompatibility of temperament.

At Viareggio in May 1920 a Red insurrection on a grand scale broke out and army and naval forces were mobilised to check sabotage. But agrarian violences spread in the north of Italy and one incident recorded in the contemporary local Press is the burning alive of fifty head of cattle and the stampeding and abandonment of 20,000 head.

The Communists by this time had taken control of the situation which the Socialists had created and the Liberals tolerated.

In reaction against the forces of disorder the Fascist numbers by May 1920 had risen to 27,000 with 3700 *Avanguardisti*. The latter, mostly young men who had been too young for active service during the Great War, began as a students' corps of advanced-guard Fascists, first organised in March. In May Nitti left office as Premier and in June his Ministry fell—

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the national budget then showing a deficit of 14,000,000,000 lire. The Fascists waged war against Nitti in all Italy. In Rome the armed Party police, the *Guardie Regie* which Nitti had formed, fired on a group of unarmed students who were singing the Risorgimento patriotic song, Mameli's hymn. Eight of them were killed and forty-two wounded.

In June 1920 there were 12,000 railwaymen on strike in Southern Italy and in North-East Italy 30,000 peasants began a "white revolution" whose aim was land seizure. They descended on Treviso, where there was violence and devastation.

During this month the Government decided to renounce Italy's position in Albania. The Albanians rose against the Italians while they were retiring on Vallona. The Reds seized this opportunity to pour propaganda among the troops embarking at Ancona to reinforce their beleaguered comrades. The consequent tumult—half-revolution, half-mutiny—was with difficulty suppressed.

An international strike was ordered, it is said by the Amsterdam Internationale, for July 20-21, 1919. It was to be a 48-hour complete paralysis of Europe to show solidarity with Russia. British workmen as a whole refused to take part in it. France compromised with a half-hearted 24-hour cessation of work. But Italy, the least able to withstand the results, plunged into it with chaotic inconsequence. Many of the Italian strikes were thus organised from abroad to prove "solidarity." In this the Italian workman was often the dupe of foreign interests as well as the catspaw of foreign Labour.

It was during these events of 1920 that Ramsay MacDonald as a Socialist leader paid a fraternal visit

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to his Rome comrades. I would venture to believe from what he then saw of Italian conditions that he returned to London, at least inwardly, a chastened man.

In desperation the country cried out for a saviour—and Giolitti answered the call. The leader who had been hounded out of Rome in 1915 and who had been execrated during the war was welcomed back to the capital in July 1920. He at least was a man who knew how to handle the parties and a ray of hope shot through the storm-clouds when he came back to his old familiar ground in the Italian Chamber; but things had gone too far for mere parliamentarianism to check. The flush of victory gave life and boldness to the forces of anarchy. These yelling mobs, armed, organised and determined, constituted the harvest of tares which Italian misuse of the democratic system had sown.

With a policy successively suave and violent Giolitti tried to repress the universal turbulence ; but unction and blows only fed the flames. Then he tried his master-game of working off one party against another, and of seeking freak alliances to manoeuvre his Government into effective control. In this he invited the Fascists to join cause with him in fighting the Socialists—even as a Communist group once asked the Fascists to join them against Nitti, and as (in later history) the *Mafia* of Sicily made overtures of co-operation. The Fascists in some cases openly assisted the Government forces in combating subversive strongholds but the alliance was refused, just as the Communist and *Mafia* proposals were rejected.

Mussolini kept a free hand for the " direct action " principles laid down at the original San Sepolcro Constituent Assembly. But to the swelling forces of

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Fascism there was by now added the sympathetic attachment of all ex-servicemen and the frank support of the Nationalists, Mussolini's allies in the interventionist days. The affair of d'Annunzio at Fiume (yet to be woven into the general picture of this period) had, thanks to the poet's knowledge of the value of political symbolism, given a great contribution to the idea of emblems, flags, salutes and insignias which were now becoming part and parcel of the Fascist movement.

The Communists and Socialists flew the Red flag but did not wear the Red shirt, for was not the Red shirt the uniform of Garibaldi? Those who were Socialist Republicans wore Red shirts, because had Garibaldi not been a Republican at heart? The Nationalists wore Blue shirts; and eventually the Fascists, Black. These were not things of parade but of identification. It took a bold man to wear them: for it was the bomb, the revolver, the rifle, the bludgeon and the knife that they invited.

As the Fascists grew stronger, the Socialists grew more compact and desperate. Fights became characterised with ferociousness. Incidents of personal heroism and of bestial cruelty, of patriotic self-abnegation and of bloody revenge, of martyrdom and murder punctuate the pages of the history of this social upheaval.

The theories of George Sorel found their organised expression in the assault squads of the Fascists.

Pitched battles were fought at Ferrara and Bologna in the summer months, and the Red Guards still terrorised all Italy. They controlled the movements of the *bourgeoisie*, insulted battle flags which had braved the victories of the Isonzo and the Trentino. Officers were man-hunted. Two were killed and eleven

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wounded in one August night in Savona, and in other reactions five were killed near Siena, seven killed and ten wounded near Florence, and three killed and seven wounded near Naples. Incendiarism began ; and shops, factories, ports and sheds were bombed and fired. A textile strike ended with 7,000,000 lire damage to the workmen and 50,000,000 lire loss of production to the nation.

During September 1920 the Reds captured and occupied many of the principal factories in Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria and Naples. The Red flag was hoisted on all steel and iron works. Murders and massacres were recorded as everyday incidents, but the public, hardened as it had become, was specially shocked with the acts of Red violence in Turin during the general occupation of the extensive factories there. Red tribunals were set up and two Fascists were arraigned before it and executed "judicially." The Government did not intervene in this seizure of property nor against the abuse of justice. The factories were gradually given up after seventy-five days of negotiations in which the Red Confederation of Workers dictated their terms to the owners.

In the middle of continuous fighting new elections loomed up in October and the Fascists for the first time had their candidates all over the country.

By the autumn of 1920 the economic effects of the disastrous life which Italy had been living began to be realised by thousands who had been duped into believing in the Red rising. Against the impressive fall of the lira, the dollar went to 26.75 ; the franc to 170 ; and the Swiss franc to 424. In the Bologna region alone the damage suffered during the past ten months of agrarian strikes amounted to 122,200,000 lire.

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The Blackshirt organisation increased in effectiveness. The Reds grew more maddened—always driven by their own extreme Left. The Pro-Russian Socialists in October tried to initiate a "bloody day" for all Italy, and the signal for this was an alarming group of simultaneous bomb outrages in hotels and restaurants. The reaction of course led to more bloodshed. Faction fighting raged everywhere. Reds who would not shout "Long live Italy" were killed by Fascists : Fascists who would not shout "Long live Lenin" were killed by Reds : and both Reds and Fascists were alternately coddled and killed by the Government's *Guardie Regie*.

In this month of November 1920 the first Fascist Trade Union—the Italian Confederation of Economic Syndicates—was created at Milan and the first *Fascio* abroad was constituted. The former represented the opening move for a co-operation of capital and labour, and it also represented a set-off to the Socialist "Labour Chambers" established in every town in Italy. The latter was an effort to check misrepresentation of Fascist aims among the Italians abroad where, in France and elsewhere, they came under the direct propaganda of International Socialists.

As a reaction against Giolitti's order to Government troops to drive the forces of d'Annunzio out of Fiume, the Fascists organised a violent demonstration against the Government in every province in Central and Northern Italy. In this they met with Government opposition and more conflicts broke out. In certain places like Trieste and Milan the Blackshirts raised barricades in the streets and an insurrection was attempted. This failed.

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The shooting of the ex-servicemen's leader, a lawyer called Giordani, in a fracas with Socialists at Bologna on December 21, 1920, raised the temper of the Fascists to boiling-point. From then on they fought as avengers. Four hundred Fascists were arrested in connection with the insurrection attempt. The year 1920 closed with Fascism stronger than ever in numbers and determination, but with all its local headquarters occupied by the military on the orders of the Government.

An important event happened at the beginning of 1921 : at the Socialist Congress of Leghorn the Socialists and Communists broke their official alliance. It is true that the scission had the immediate result of making both branches even more extravagant in violence ; but it was the beginning of the end—as far as a Bolshevik *coup* in Italy was concerned. The Communists who had fought in the ranks of the " Red Guards " left that fighting unit to the Socialists and created new political shock troops which they called *Arditi del popolo*.

Against these the Fascists redoubled their war, and in turn the Blackshirts became the particular and selected target for Communist attack. At Modena they bombed a Fascist funeral procession and in February a battle was fought in Florence where sixteen dead and two hundred wounded were left on the piazzas. An army lorry carrying marines and *cara-binieri* to Florence was ambushed by the Communists and fifteen of the regulars massacred. Public feeling began to veer violently away from the Reds and Fascist prestige rose in ratio ; and when on March 23, 1921, Anarchists flung infernal machines among an innocent audience at the Diana Theatre at Milan,

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killing twenty and wounding fifty, including children, infants and women, the Milanese rose in their thousands to aid the Blackshirt avengers.

The faction war began to take on a new character. The Reds, from being the general aggressors whose policy was wholesale assault, were from now on on the defensive, but with a system of defence based on terrorist attacks. The Fascist action squads—the *squadristi*—from being the defenders of the public became the punitive arm of the public. The change was psychological rather than material, for to outward view the same old fighting went on.

In Istria, Gorizia, Southern Tyrol (Alto Adige) and the Trentino—that is, in the territory annexed to Italy from Austria as the result of the war—the Socialist regime, linked with Internationalist Socialism, had made it clear to the Slavs and Germanic population that Italy's rule over them was a mere temporary affair that would soon be swept away at the approaching Red dawn. The people in these regions believed this—and who could blame them, when neither the voice nor the authority of Rome ever reached them. This Socialist teaching opened the door wide for other propaganda—that of the Slav and Germano-Austrian Nationalist Associations. The pre-war *status quo* seemed complete. The former Slav and German regional and municipal administration carried on ; the portrait of the defeated Emperor Francis Joseph still hung in the offices and council chambers of the town halls ; an official visit of the King of Italy to Bolzano was boycotted by the natives ; and if the Red flag was flown on Government buildings it was only as a makeshift to hold the mast until the Double

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Eagle could once more be taken out of the chest and unfurled aloft. The penetration of the Italian language was completely ruled out and local men concerned themselves with candidates for the Austrian Chamber. Everything Italian was systematically belittled and ridiculed.

In an examination made by Mussolini he reported that during this period there was an anti-Italian movement run by the *Deutscher Verband*, a branch of the *Andreas Hoferbund*, with headquarters in Munich. This association claimed Italy as far south as the suburbs of Verona. Immediately after the Armistice Italy expressed its willingness and gave its undertaking to allow all local customs and languages to remain unchanged ; but as soon as the Italian troops of occupation were demobilised the people denied that Austria had ever lost the war or they their country. Italian firms and the Italian language were boycotted at the Bolzano Sample Fair ; pan-German propaganda ran unchecked ; the *Deutscher Verband* forbade the dismissal of the Austrian mayor of Merano ; insults were levelled at the Italian King and Constitution ; the Post Office was exercised from Innsbruck. Four German Deputies were returned to the Italian Chamber with the declared programme of doing nothing but insist on the Germanity of the Alto Adige. Their aim was autonomy. These points were later laid before the Italian Chamber by Mussolini in his maiden speech.

To the Fascists and especially to the interventionist elements among them this state of affairs—this " betrayal of Dante, Mazzini, Garibaldi and the seven hundred thousand dead of the Great War "—was like a red rag to a bull. It increased their fury against the

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Government which allowed these things to go on unchecked and it led to a series of punitive raids in these border areas. It also explains that sternness of the Fascist Government in later days, for it was a reaction, not against a non-Italian populace as such, but against a condition of mind into which that populace had been duped. It was nevertheless the populace that suffered during the phase—from 1919 to 1925—when the Fascists were recovering the spirit of November 4, 1918 (the Armistice), as the real starting point for its national transformation process on political and economic grounds.

While these Fascist raids of the spring of 1921 were going on in the North and North East the Socialists and Communists found the Blackshirt in wait for them with attacks and reprisals all over Italy. It developed into guerilla warfare and between January and May over six hundred fights involving casualties are recorded. The Government tried to make peace between these factions, but in vain. With the occupation of Pordenone on May 9 the Fascists of the Veneto revealed that the forces of Mussolini were now capable of expeditions in force. This expedition was carried out in consequence of the authorities confessing that they were incapable of dealing with disorders which had broken out following the murder of a Blackshirt.

Even in these tumultuous times of ever-present conflict and immediate harassment, Mussolini had his vision of a new Italy before his eyes. Addressing the workmen of Ferrara in April 1921 he told them : " Rome is our point of departure and of reference. It is our symbol and our myth. We dream of a Roman Italy, that is, an Italy wise, strong, disciplined and imperial. Much of that imperial spirit surges in

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Fascism. Roman is our lictor. Roman is our unit of *combattimento*. Roman is our pride and courage." These words he again repeated on the tenth anniversary of Fascism, dedicating them to the idea of a Roman, an Augustan peace.

On May 15, 1921, the general elections were held. This time thirty-three Fascist representatives were returned and at the head of them was the ultra-revolutionary Republican but Fascist Mussolini. For the first time he now carried his campaign on to the floor of the House—the *Forum Romanum* of modern Italy.

CHAPTER XII

OTHER CONFLICTS : LIBERALS, CLERICALS, MASONS

Liberal-Democratic Idealists. Adulterated Principles. Lack of Unity. Socialist Cohesion. Rise of Catholic Popular Party. Don Sturzo's Christian Socialism. Its Fatal Demagogic Character. Italy the Dupe of International Socialism. The Masonic Role. French Influence. Nationalist wholehearted and ex-Servicemen's half-hearted Support of the Fascists.

THE foregoing chapter shows the rise and reaction of Fascism against the Italian Reds. If you remember at the end of Chapter X it was pointed out that the Red war was but one of the fronts which engaged the attention of the Fascists. There was also the front against the Constitutional parties ; that against the " International " elements; and that against the Paris Peace Treaty delegates and policy.

Sufficient has already been told to indicate the antagonism and clashes between the Blackshirts and the Constitutional parties. These Constitutional elements manoeuvred in vain against the Socialist deluge. Men of the old school like Nitti and Giolitti, operating in the name of democracy, were politicians trying to check the spread of the post-war Bolshevik virus with doctored drugs from those bottles bearing the faded and defaced labels of Palmerstonian and Gladstonian Liberalism.

There were, however, groups in the Chamber and in the Senate who still represented the pure and unadulterated principles of the Liberal-Democratic schools—just as there were thousands of Liberals and

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Democrats in the country who maintained the standards of their political creeds. But there was no unity among them. In sub-expressions of Liberalism they were mostly split up in groups which crystallized round the names of particular leaders like Salandra or Orlando, or who found their response in the philosophies of Benedetto Croce. Leaders and philosophers were unable to carry their dogmas through the complicated ramifications of Italian political life. All strength became dissipated and lost in the effort, while in face of the post-war social menace their voices were like the pipings of small birds among the howls of political wolves.

Nevertheless many Liberals, with a determination that did more honour to their courage than to their powers of facing facts, suffered and were later martyred for their theoretical cause.

Giolitti, nominally a Liberal, secured his long following not by the preaching of his faith but by his system of controlling Italy through provincial office-bearers whose jobs were the price of their allegiance. The Prefects were his instruments. Taking nothing for himself, he developed political corruption as a fine art. The graft machine which was perfected in pre-war days failed to function in the post-war days of the Red terror. His Prefects did not like being shot. Fascism also waged war against these aspects of Liberalism, but it was not until the events of the autumn of 1922, when the Communists and Socialists had been eliminated as a national menace, that the Fascist war was concentrated against the Constitutional parties.

In the 1919-1920 period under immediate review the only cohesive and organised party was the Socialist

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Party. In that lay very much of its strength. But in the midst of political turmoil, and almost parallel with the beginnings of the Fascist programme, there sprang into being another totally new party which played a highly important part in the balance of political power. This was the Popular Party.

The Popular Party was a Catholic Centre party. Thanks to the peculiar relations existing between Church and State in Italy following the affairs of the Risorgimento, Italian Catholics boycotted the politics of their liberated Italy. This abstentionism had an official Church flavour, the Holy See in 1895 assuming responsibility for the announcement that the notorious Catholic slogan "*Non expedit*" signified a prohibition. The boycott proved a boomerang measure and the *non expedit* veto gradually became an exception rather than a rule.

With the Gentiloni agreement of 1913 the Church, under the Pontiff Pius X., and the State, under Giolitti, arranged a *modus operandi* whereby Catholics could take part in elections without compromising themselves with either of their two masters. But in the post-war upheaval of 1919 the Catholics formed their own party and openly entered the lists as the Italian Popular Party.

The new party centred round the figure of the priest Don Luigi Sturzo, secretary and inspirer of the party and one of the ablest politicians of his epoch. The programme of the Popular Party, inspired by Christian ethics, came like a banner of redemption into the godless strife of the Communist-dominated political arena. The rise of the Popular Party was a phenomenon even swifter than the rise of Fascism ; by November 1919 the Populists represented nearly a fifth of the Chamber

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and their votes came a close second after those of the orthodox Socialist Party.

It concentrated on the organising of non-subversive trade unions, but it adopted the demagogic trade-union principles which, in effect, divided master and man. This fact proved its ultimate undoing when confronted with the uncompromising legions of the *Fascisti*.

Don Sturzo, suspended between the Church and State ; given full authority by neither yet responsible to both—had a task of the kind which foreshadows political and in a sense personal martyrdom. Subtle and adaptive, he developed the progress of his Party, pursuing the line of least resistance. He did this by steadily insinuating Christian Socialism into the general Socialist body politic. In agrarian centres this had great success. But although abjured from violence, the co-operation of his peasant followers with the Socialist " White " peasants in their seizures of land sometimes made the line of differentiation difficult to define.

Don Sturzo also manoeuvred his Party as a balance of power in the flux of parties and groups in the lobbies of the Chamber. This meant that his Party became just another factor in the old game of parliamentarianism. With the return of Giolitti this method had been revived with all its evils, so that Don Sturzo, despite his Christian idealism, contributed to that blighting process which was to lead to the final disintegration of the democratic system of government in Italy. Don Sturzo was therefore assailed by the Fascists because his Party was considered as a sometime flanking support of the Socialists ; because he was considered to contribute to demoralising

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parliamentarianism; because the Fascists were on principle against the idea of the Church, through its clerics, mixing in the affairs of the State ; and, principally, because the Popular Party trade unions, like other existing unions, were the negation of Fascist trade unionism with its theories of co-operation. Had there been no social turmoil in Italy, the Popular Party trade unions would doubtless have evolved towards the abstract idea of co-operation ; but Don Sturzo tried by peaceful penetration and influence to reach an ideal which Mussolini was ultimately to realise through open conflict and revolutionary intransigence. His methods were not fitted to the times.

In a sense Mussolini also included the Populars in his antagonism against international influences. Although not representing the Vatican, the clerical flavour of the Populars, with their priest-leader Don Sturzo, identified them with the Church politically militant—and to Mussolini the immersion of the Church in the secular affairs of Italy recalled the ties which in the name of the Church had bound Italy through the ages to the successive yokes of the Holy Roman Empire, of the Habsburgs and of France.

In a like " internationalist " sense, though of course for very different reasons, he combated the Communists and Socialists as internationalists who were attempting to work out universal ideas at the expense of Italy's hard-won nationalism. The Communists represented the long arm of Soviet Russia, against whom, however, Mussolini had no quarrel as long as it confined its social experiments to Russia.

The international Socialists he denounced as the agents and dupes of the ex-enemies—for was it not

through them that the peace-defeatist propaganda found its widest outlet among the new foreign minorities inside the "redeemed" frontiers? "The Socialist Congress of Berne," said Mussolini in the *Popolo (Italia)* of February 18, 1919, "would throw us once more in chains below the feet of the Hohenzollerns."

Although in his pre-war revolutionary Socialist days Mussolini had led the resolution (at the turbulent Socialist Congress of Ancona) that Freemasonry and Socialism were incompatible, it was a different shade of reasoning that led him to continue his war against Masonry in this post-war Fascist period. The Italian Freemasons, Francophile in tendency, had thrown the weight of their tremendous influence in favour of intervention in the war and had worked strongly for that end—although the infiltration of masonically appointed officers in the army did not guarantee that the best and most competent soldiers were in command. By 1917, however, the prestige which the Masons as interventionists had gained in 1915 was counteracted by the belief that in June of 1917 a Masonic Congress in Paris, with the concurrence of the Italian delegates, had agreed to work for a peace programme which denied to Italy all the frontier objectives for which she had indeed entered the war at all. And so, when in 1919-1920 the Allies were discussing the Peace terms in Paris, it was felt that the Grand Orient of France was taking Italian Masonry in tow as the agents of a peace which would, like the Socialist peace discussed at Berne, place Italy once more in subjugation to her traditional—but now conquered—foes.

This leaves us to deal with the fourth and most difficult "front" on which the Fascists waged war—

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that of the Peace delegates at Paris : with Fiume as a battle-centre. As the 1919-1920 events in Paris have repercussions which basically affect the sequence of Mussolini's foreign policy right up to today—and to unknown tomorrows—it is important, even at the risk of being tedious, to make a fairly complete examination of the facts.

Before leaving the question of the parties and passing to the Paris Peace Conference it is necessary to record that there were also parties which gave support to the Blackshirts in these fighting days—the same parties which had rallied together in the pre-war days of the intervention campaign. The Nationalists, with a will as strong but with means less bellicose, threw themselves into the fray against the subversives. Their fighting Blueshirt squads often fought shoulder to shoulder with the Blackshirts. In fact, in the Rome districts they were for long more in evidence than the Fascists as the champions of order against disorder.

The poet d'Annunzio also banded together a fighting group, but his exploits and those of his men are almost exclusively identified with events in Fiume—arising out of the unwelcome decisions of the Paris Peace Conference.

It would have been thought that the ex-servicemen would have particularly rallied to the insignia of Mussolini. Thousands of them did—but as individuals at this epoch—not as an organised *bloc*. They had formed their associations—ex-Service and War Wounded—but had not yet orientated themselves away from the powerful propaganda poured on them by the Socialists. The associations as such stood aloof—the individual members going either Extreme Right or Extreme Left or doing nothing in a mood of exas-

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perated disgruntlement. The attitude of the ex-soldiers towards Fascism was also complicated by the fact that many of them were Masons. By 1920, however, the associations and the great majority of their members swung into sympathy, but not yet into co-operation, with the Fascists.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEBACLE AT VERSAILLES

§D'ANNUNZIO JUMPS A CLAIM

Peace Conference Hopes. Wilson the God-man. A Shattered Idol. Italy's Peace Claims. Complications with Greece. The Response. "Fiume or Death." The Italians dig Themselves in. Americans in Fiume. Mussolini at Fiume.

D'Annunzio marches on Fiume. Forms a "Constitution." Fantastic Style. Origin of the Blackshirt. Giolitti back in Power. He creates Fiume a "corpus separatum." Consequent conflicts. Allied conference on Fiume opened.

THE high hopes raised by the victory of Vittorio Veneto were speedily dashed at the table of the Peace Conference in Paris.

As we have seen at the end of Chapter IX, Italy's ambitions had been qualified in some directions and extended in others. The fortunes of war which had coincided with the negotiations for the 1917 Rome agreement concerning the future of Yugoslavia saw an Italy strained and anxious—a different Italy from that which in less than a year from that date was to inflict on the enemy what was perhaps the only conclusive pitched battle in the whole history of the war.

Convinced, not without reason, that the Italian victory had directly precipitated the collapse of the Central Powers, Italy, to the urgent shouts of the Nationalist elements, looked to the Peace Conference for her prize, namely, the fulfilment of the 1915 Pact of London. Wilson was hailed as the God-man come to end wars by so dividing the spoils that the con-

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querors would be satiated and the conquered paralysed for all time.

Disillusionment was swift—as far as the satiation of Italy was concerned. When Wilson paid a visit to the Italian capital in 1919 he was at once enrolled as an honorary citizen of Rome. Within a few weeks his name was execrated, though it still stands engraved along with those of such illustrious citizens as Virgil, and Petrarch on the tablets of the Capitol. The first disillusionment arose from the fact that Wilson did not recognise the 1915 Pact of London. He did not approve of its terms and said, moreover, that he had not been officially informed of its clauses before or during America's entry into the war. The precise details of the Pact of London were in fact not known with certainty to the British public until they were published from the Russian secret documents by the Russian revolutionaries in the winter of 1917 ; but its general provisions had been an open secret almost from before the ink had dried on the signatures of its four champions, Grey, Cambon, Imperiali and Benckendorff.

Wilson was antagonistic to it. The Revolution Russians had of course already repudiated it. The British and the French acknowledged on principle their obligations : but, with the document apparently compromised, Lloyd George confused its issues on the one hand with his own Grecian schemes and on the other with compliance in Wilson's Yugoslav preferences. Clemenceau gave it a sort of *staccato* attention, searching the letter rather than the spirit of the Pact, inveighing against it wherever it threatened to encroach on French interests present or potential. The supplementary Treaty of St. Jean, touching the partition of Turkey, was also compromised by the fact

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that Russia was no longer an Ally—although it is difficult to understand why this should affect it, as its terms involved only Russia's "expression of opinion" and not its veto.

In this unfavourable atmosphere the Italian delegate Orlando began his work as one of the "Big Four" at Paris. While Italy was plunged into the social chaos described in the last two chapters, the diplomatic battle of the Allies at the Peace Conference waged wearily along, with, on Italian questions, Wilson sulking, Lloyd George sailing on side winds, Clemenceau growling, and Orlando alternately protesting, weeping and making slam-door exits.

Foreseeing that the claim to the section of the Dalmatian seaboard would be considerably curtailed owing to the Wilsonian thesis of self-determination and that the strategic justification of giving that coast to Italy would be negated in view of the prospective new state of Yugoslavia plus a League of Nations, the Italians took a leaf out of the Wilsonian book and demanded a plebiscite for the town and port of Fiume on the Adriatic, claiming it to be not only Italian but *Italianissima*.

Italy asked for (1) the "unredeemed" territory on the basis of the 1915 Pact of London, (2) colonial compensation at the expense of Germany on the same basis, (3) colonial compensation at the expense of Turkey on the basis of the tributary Pact, (4) reparations, and (5) a Fiume plebiscite, in accordance with the Wilsonian self-determination formula.

In spite of the fact that all these items were settled in a manner unsatisfactory to Italy, and in spite of the fact that during the actual negotiations it was obvious that things were going unfavourably for the Italians

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in a general sense, the Italian delegation and the Italian public (or rather the non-Socialist Italian public) became obsessed with one point in their programme—Fiume. Fiume became "the Adriatic problem" and as such it inflamed Italian passions until the other problems, all much more important, were allowed to fade out before it. At the Peace Conference Italy revealed no statesmanship, no breadth of view, nothing but a frantic concentration on acquiring Fiume—a port without hinterland : a port which in its potential competition with the new Italian possession of Trieste and the old port of Venice must have been obviously, even then, an unwanted encumbrance. But, thanks to the poetic frenzy of d'Annunzio, it became a symbol of Italianity and therefore "sacred." As Nitti, who was no friend of the Fascists and who was also no friend of Orlando's, says in his book, *L'Europa senza Pace*: "During the Conference in Paris Italy took practically no interest in the problems which affected Europe, of people, of raw materials or of the new States, but concentrated her strength on the question of Fiume."

Let us see how Italy fared in her five above-noted demands, (1) Unredeemed territory : she got the Pact of London Alpine watershed line by the Brenner on the north and the Julian line with the Istrian peninsula, all according to the Pact. (2) Colonial compensation at the expense of Germany : as a set-off against mandated territory to Britain in Africa of 1,825,950 square kilometres and 752,200 square kilometres to France and 54,000 square kilometres to Belgium, Italy was promised Upper Jubaland. (In 1924 an area of 90,000 square kilometres was ceded by Britain.) (3) Colonial compensation at the expense

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of Turkey : Smyrna, contrary to Italian expectations, was left to Greece—a gift which led to the post-Great-War Greco-Turkish War, which in turn led to Grecian disaster. Eventually, when this position was somewhat cleared by the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, Italy's claims to the abandoned rights of the Sultan in Libya and the Aegean Dodecanese Islands were confirmed. A tripartite agreement was then also signed recognising " the special interests of Italy in Southern Anatolia." The Kemalist reaction against the Sevres Treaty annulled by force of arms all the chances and advantages which Italy might have had in Anatolia.

By way of compensation for the huge mandated territories taken by Britain and France, Italy was offered a mandate over Georgia—which was then an independent country and only wanted military aid against Bolshevist Russia, which soon overran and took it. Italy wisely refused this mandate.

In North Africa Italy was promised, by Britain, the rectification of her Cirenaica frontier with Egypt. (This was accomplished in 1925, the Egyptian Government completing the British obligation.) Italy was promised, by the French, the rectification of her Tripolitania-Tunisia-Sahara frontier. (This, a slight matter merely involving facilities for a camel route was eventually accomplished.) Italy asked the rectification of her southern Libyan frontier and advanced her claims, as the succession state to the Sultan's territory, to the lands leading to Lake Chad. This was practically all refused. Some of the oases commanding the northern approaches to Chad were offered to Italy if she would occupy them at once and guarantee to protect the French Sahara from Arab tribal raids. The Italian Government, at the time, as we have

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seen, could not guarantee itself against Communist raids in the cities of Italy, far less Arab raids in the heart of the Sahara ! So this offer, like the equally impossible Georgian one, was declined with thanks.

(4) Reparations : Italy got her quota for reparation, but the figure and its subsequent adjustments concern European history as such rather than Fascist affairs. (5) The Fiume plebiscite and the Adriatic : on this fateful issue the Italians began their discussions with one material advantage. This was the fact that in accordance with the Armistice terms the Italians were entitled to occupy all strategic points on the Adriatic seaboard. So they quietly established themselves in all the places earmarked for them in the much disputed Secret Treaty of London. Even in diplomacy possession is nine points of the law.

In addition to occupying points definitely assignable by the Treaty, they also placed their military forces at locations designated independent and neutral, like the area round the Gulf of Cattaro, and in Albania.

And they also planted themselves on one special point which did not appear in the Treaty at all—Fiume, where Croat troops had also quietly dug themselves in. In fact, when the Peace delegates first foregathered in Paris, the Italians were already in possession of all, and a little more, of the European territory to which they considered themselves entitled by the laws of right and conquest. To ease the situation a little, the Croat troops in Fiume were withdrawn and substituted by Americans.

To understand the mood of Italy at that time, it must be remembered that all the regions occupied by them represented, on the north and north-east, land which they had redeemed with the sacrifice of blood

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and treasure " in the name of the sacred aspirations of the now-fulfilled Risorgimento " ; while, on the Adriatic east, the occupied regions represented land over which they also had spilled blood and treasure in rescuing the Serbian army, the Serbian King and the Serbian refugees from annihilation and capture by the Austro-Germanic armies, and in protecting Albania and Montenegro from being overrun.

The embryo Yugoslav State, however, saw a menace to their plans of independence in these Adriatic ports of Armistice occupation, so on petition to the *Entente*, the Italians withdrew from some points and the remaining Italian occupation was changed to, or rather supplemented by, inter-Allied occupations at crucial places, including Fiume. No sooner was this done than incidents began to break out, and conflicts, especially with the French troops at Fiume, added irritation and danger to the whole European *Entente* situation, already critical enough.

Becoming fixed with the idea of possessing Fiume, the Italians began a violent propaganda for their cause. " Patriotic " associations sprang up locally and on the peninsula, with activities which split opinion in Socialist-ridden Italy and ran counter to the moves of wavering Governments whose " imperialism " was subject to the exactions of electioneering " platforms."

Fascists, Nationalists and many ex-Servicemen threw themselves vigorously into the campaign, demanding the annexation of Fiume to Italy on all sorts of grounds from sentimental to strategic. It was also alleged that British shipping interests were working for the preservation of a non-Italian Fiume. The port had been the Adriatic outlet of Hungary, and with the

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repartition of its hinterland all shipping traffic would be killed—as it has been. This aspect of the case, together with the anger against the Allied handling of the whole Conference in Paris, caused the Italian annexationists to include all the Allies in their polemical attacks.

In May 1919, just one month before the Versailles Treaty was signed, Mussolini visited Fiume and, speaking in the Teatro Verdi, denounced "the incredible ingratitude of France, the bad faith of the prophet Wilson and the imperialist aspirations of Anglo-Saxons and Greeks"—which were causing Italy "to lose the benefits to which she was entitled."⁵⁵ As a solution he announced that "the first thing to be done is to banish foreigners from the Mediterranean, beginning with the English."⁵ As a general outline he suggested: "We must give every possible aid to the revolutionary movement in Egypt—that ancient Roman colony, the natural granary of Italy, which has 200,000 Italians among its inhabitants. There is also Malta, where an Italian irredentist movement has been set on foot. As for France, she must lose her Mediterranean Empire, beginning with Tunis, which is already Italian by its population. And what will happen to Fiume? The question is already settled. Just as Italy made herself, so must Fiume act for herself. The decisions of the four old idiots in Paris will have no effect on the sanction of the Italian people."⁵⁵

This speech reveals the excited and uncompromising mood under which the Fascists and the Nationalists laboured. It was a speech made "in the name of the sacred dead."⁵⁵ In conclusion Mussolini exclaimed that "just as Italy had entered the war of 1915 with the cry of War or a Republic, the country's cry today

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is ' Fiume or Death.' " That evening a call was made for a volunteer corps for the annexation of the town. The drilling of this corps added still another anxiety to the (constitutional) Italian and Allied occupying forces ; but the movement spread and " Fiume or Death" became another battle-cry in the social derangement of Italy.

In the midst of this ferment the soldier poet Gabriele d'Annunzio suddenly sprang into world limelight. Gathering a group of followers around him at Ronchi, near Trieste, he marched on Fiume, entered the town and occupied it in the name of Italy. His forces, known as the Legionaries of Ronchi joined up with the swelling numbers of the " Fiume or Death" legionaries and their joint methods were those of the Mussolini Blackshirts on the peninsula, save that instead of opposing only Communists and demagogues they defied the Italian Government itself, plus the Allied troops of occupation.

The poet set up a " National Council/⁵ framed a " Constitution " and organised things on a picturesque and, to the northern mind, *opera-bouffe* basis. But it was play-acting with real bullets in the guns. Many of his emblems and much of his symbolism were adopted by the Fascists, to whom to this day he remains a great if somewhat aloof hero, living at his fantastic house on Lake Garda, with the title of Prince of Montenevoso, named after the frontier mountain of that name.

Maps i, 2 and 3 contain, except for the North African hinterlands, the vital points of reference mentioned in this chapter.

Post-war events as far as the fighting Fascists were concerned did not allow much time or opportunity for

A POET IN ARMS



Gabriele d'Annunzio, surrounded by his "General Staff," making his first open-air address in Fiume, **after his seizure and occupation of that seaport in 1919 "in the name of Italy"** and in defiance of the Italian Government **and the Big Four at Versailles.** (Photo by courtesy of Mr. Thomas Morgan of the United Press of America.)

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picturesque display. Business was too serious for uniforms or parades. It was not until after the Fiume affair in 1921 that the black shirt was generally worn as an officially recognised dress of Mussolini's followers. The black shirt is a derivation from the *fiamme nere* which decorated the tunic collars of the war-time *Arditi* shock troops. Different regiments have different coloured patches of cloth cut like zig-zag pennons and sewn on the collar. They are known as "flames," and "black flames" and the death's head of the *Arditi* were dedicated by early ex-service adherents to the Fascist cause. The next step from the *sewn flamme* was the introduction of a black scarf. Garibaldi had made all Italy familiar with the idea of a coloured shirt as the symbol of a liberating cause, so the change from black scarf to black shirt was a natural suggestion when increasing numbers and more formal assemblies demanded a distinctive dress of recognition. The Fascists had also the example of the Blueshirt Nationalists before them.

Gabriele d'Annunzio let loose the full powers of his invective against the Allies in turn. When it came to England's turn he said, in a typical passage here quoted from the *Vedetta d'Italia* : " Fiume is as invincible as she has ever been. True, we may all perish beneath her ruins, but from these same ruins the spirit will rise again strong and vigorous. From the indomitable Sinn Fein of Ireland to the Red Flag which unites cross and crescent in Egypt, rebellions of the spirit, catching fire from our sparks, will burn afresh against the devourers of raw flesh, and the oppressors of unarmed nations. The voracious Empire which has possessed itself of Persia, Mesopotamia, New Arabia and a great part of Africa, and yet is never

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satisfied, can, if it so wishes, send its aviator-murderers against us, just as in Egypt it was not ashamed to massacre insurgents, who were armed with nothing more than sticks." England, however, sent no " aviator-murderers " but let the poet stew in his own rhetoric. It was Giolitti who did the " murdering " by ordering an Italian battleship to bombard the headquarters of the National Council.

In election clamour against the Home policy and the Peace Conference policy of Nitti that Minister was swept from office and, as already noted, Giolitti was, with almost equal desperation, swept back into power. Determined—against the rising temper of the country and the increasing strength of the Fascists—to expel d'Annunzio from Fiume, Giolitti, with Count Sforza as Foreign Minister, signed the November 12, 1920, Treaty of Rapallo with Yugoslavia. This treaty, among other things objectionable to Fascist opinion, recognised the independence of Fiume as a "*corpus separatum*" At the same time Albania was evacuated and the clashes between the Blackshirts and the Government forces broke out all over Italy as an additional war to that of Blackshirts versus Reds already described.

In May 1920 Giolitti had already ordered the blockade and bombardment of Fiume—measures half-heartedly done by troops whose sympathies were largely with the victims of their orders. By 1921 negotiations for a " conference " of the Allies on the Fiume question had been opened and were moving along, while in the town many parades were held and considerable blood spilled in an atmosphere which became ever more complicated on account of economic as well as political shortcomings.

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Now I must ask the reader to perform the not too easy task of superimposing the sequence of post-war events from November 1918 to May 1921 described sectionally in this and the previous three chapters—"Mussolini Raises his Flag," "Battles with the Reds and other Conflicts," and "The Debacle of Versailles." The sum-total of these extraordinary happenings represent in some measure the state of Italy when Mussolini was elected to Parliament—his hand against everyone. An appreciation of these prevailing conditions will allow an understanding of all that lay behind his first speech in the Chamber—a speech which is an important landmark in the history of Fascist progress and policy—the first official step towards what was to become world-power.

CHAPTER XIV

MUSSOLINI ENTERS PARLIAMENT

His Place in the Chamber. Maiden Speech. Alto Adige Again. Foreign Affairs. He attacks Communist Doctrines. Co-operation of Classes and of Capital and Labour foreshadowed. Roman Peace with Vatican also foreshadowed. He offers factional Disarmament. Fascism and Violence. Mussolini's Rhetorical Method. Clear Vision of Future.

WHEN Mussolini, firebrand revolutionary and unorthodox patriot—more accustomed to the barricades, the public squares, prison and the leader-writer's desk than to the formalities of the Chamber—first took his seat as a Fascist Deputy in the Parliament which he had so often and so thoroughly reviled, he selected a place at the extreme right top-hand corner of the amphitheatre of benches facing the Presidential bench. For some time he did not open his mouth. Lean, not with the leanness of a naturally thin man, but lean with the struggle of life in which *Italia* came always before self, he sat there watching, watching, watching. The bigness of his determined jaw at that epoch was outdone by the bigness of his eyes. They blazed as he looked from face to face studying his opponents.

Around him were massed his thirty-two fellow Fascists, all of them equally unorthodox and with a devil-may-care look about them that was disconcerting. Mussolini was thirty-eight years old and the average age of his fellow Blackshirt deputies was twenty-nine. In support and seated next to the Fascist group were seventeen Nationalists. This *bloc* of

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forty-nine faced the 400 odd hostile deputies, ranged in their formidable Centre *blocs* under Giolitti and the Populars, and the compact Socialist *bloc* with its big Communist tail on the extreme left facing the Fascists across the well of the House.

Apart from the cohorts of the Socialists, the legions of the *Fascisti* and the inner circles of the electioneering factions, Mussolini at this phase had no particularly outstanding place in the political gallery as far as the general masses of the public were concerned. His name was known, but it was not yet one which counted in the popular imagination as anything particularly constructive. The few non-political people today who can recall meeting and appreciating Mussolini when he first came to Rome as a simple deputy preen themselves as pioneers of prophecy. Perhaps that more than anything else can convey an idea of the place he held. In other words—if he had failed in the summer of 1921 he would never have been heard of outside the byways of parliamentary Milanese and party annals. But he did not fail ; and those in the Chamber who were rebuffed in any attempt to patronise the new deputy little imagined that he was Italy's " Man of Destiny".

Mussolini made his first speech as a deputy on the debate which followed the Crown Speech delivered by the Liberal Premier Giolitti. It was June 21, 1921, and the Chamber was packed—and stifling in the summer heat. The speech is of importance in any survey of Fascism : it represents not only the first official exposition of Fascist policy towards specific questions confronting the country, but it reveals the first formal indications of Fascist principles which now form part and parcel of the State.

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Declaring that his matter would be " anti-democratic, anti-Socialist—and, being anti-Socialist, also anti-Giolittian," he passed at once to an attack on Giolitti's claim that the Alpine barrier was all in Italy's power. Mussolini then gave in detail " the result of my personal enquiry into the Alto Adige situation." The data given in my earlier chapter dealing with Tyrol conditions in 1919-1920 are partly taken from this report of Mussolini's enquiry. In conclusion, Mussolini demanded the dissolution of the *Deutscher Verband*, the immediate deposition of certain pan-German officials, the creation of a new Province and the strict observance of bilinguality in all public and administrative acts. He also told the four German deputies " to tell them beyond the Brenner and there make it known that we are at the Brenner and that we will remain there at all costs." This straight talk got the applause of the Government, the Premier Giolitti intervening to declare, " We are all agreed on that."

He then turned to the Adriatic frontier and attacked Giolitti for the Treaty of Rapallo and the consequent bombardment of Fiume. Criticising the Government's policy *vis-d-vis* Yugoslavia, he asked a question which reveals that his belief in the necessity of Peace Treaty revision is a thing of no recent birth. In fact we have already seen it at the time of the Fascist foundation Constituent. He asked : " What are the orientations of our foreign policy in face of the vast furnace of discord which the Peace Treaty, or rather the various non-Peace Treaties, have left in all parts of the world ? "

Mussolini, whose party had been swept up on to the political platform by the convulsive upheaval of home affairs, surprised the Chamber by thereafter entering

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upon what is now recognised as a typically Mussolinian schematic survey of foreign affairs. His special wrath was reserved for the pusillanimity of the Government in abandoning Montenegro into the hands of Serbia, and he spoke against the British Zionist movement in Palestine, adding in parenthesis that his words were not to be taken as indicating any anti-semitism, "which would be something new in this Chamber, which recognises, as I recognise, that the sacrifice of blood given by Italian Jews in the war was most great and generous."

Concluding his observations on the Giolitti Government's foreign policy by declaring that the Blackshirts would always be in opposition to the "sceptical" "*blasi*" and "career" style of Count Sforza, Mussolini turned to home affairs and defined the attitude of Fascism towards other parties, beginning with the Communists.

In one sentence he revealed the basic weakness of Communism: "Communism is a doctrine which sprouts in times of misery and desperation. When property and possessions are decimated, the first thought that springs into the human mind is to divide all things in common so that there may be a little for everyone. But that is only the first phase of Communism—the phase of consumption. After that there is the phase of production—which is enormously difficult. It is so difficult that even that great and formidable expert, who answers to the name of Vladimir Ulianoff Lenin, has found it more refractory than bronze or marble when he has to work with human material."

Turning then to the Italian Communists he said: "I know you because some of you are my spiritual

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children. I know you with a sincerity which may appear cynical because I was the first to infect you when I introduced into the circulation of Italian Socialism a little of Bergson mixed with much Blanqui. The neo-spiritualistic philosophies with their continuous fluctuations between the metaphysical and the lyrical are most pernicious for small brains. These philosophies taste fine to the palate, but you've got to digest them. Those of my friends, or enemies." (Cries from the Extreme Left, "Enemies.") "That at any rate is specific. Very well, then. Those of my enemies who swallowed Bergson at twenty-five have not yet digested him.

"As long as Communists talk of dictatorship of the proletariat or of a more or less preciously absurd republic there can be nothing but conflict between us."

In this declaration we see foreshadowed Mussolini's system of co-operation of the classes to which he referred more definitely when in this speech he dealt with the Italian Socialist group. He drew a distinction between those aspects of Italian Socialism which represented a movement of workers as such and a political party. To trade-union programmes which faced economic realities, improved social legislation and safeguarded the workmen he lent his approval and support, but only when detached from the Socialist political party and its doctrines. In a phrase which is the essence of his revolution he said : "We deny the existence of two classes, because there are many more than two classes. We deny that all human history can be explained in terms of economics. We deny your internationalism. That is a luxury article which only the elevated can practise, because peoples are passionately bound to their native soil.

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" We affirm that the true story of capitalism is now beginning, because capitalism is not a system of oppression only, but is also a selection of values, a co-ordination of hierarchies, a more amply developed sense of individual responsibility."

Mussolini then turned to the Popular Party. He recalled that the Fascists neither preached nor practised anti-clericalism. Citing several points from the Popular Party's policy concerning social and educational institutions, Mussolini expressed himself in accord, but he indicated that there was something greater between the Church of Rome and the Italian State than mere party play : " I affirm that the Latin and Imperial tradition of Rome is represented by Catholicism . . . and I think that if the Vatican definitely renounced its temporalistic dreams—and I believe that it is already on that road—Italy could furnish the Vatican with the material help that a profane Power has at its disposition." From this it can already be seen that it was the historical and not a religious impulse which moved Mussolini towards the Reconciliation affected eight years later.

With reference to the question of Church and State it may be noted at this point that the tension of the " Roman Question " during these post-war years had considerably lessened. I have already made reference in an earlier chapter to the fact that the rise of a new generation brought a more dispassionate mentality to consideration of this problem. The passage of years also made it abundantly clear that Italy had come to stay. Negotiations were therefore opened as early as 1918 for a *rapprochement*. It was discovered, however, that as long as the subject lay undiscussed then the existing nominally unilateral *modus vivendi* worked

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reasonably well ; but as soon as the topic was tabled in the Chamber the parties aroused old passions and no progress was made. Orlando, in failing to reach an agreement in 1918, admitted that only a strong Government could carry through any such reconciliation. The Premiers Nitti, Bonomi, Giolitti and de Facta—whose years of office spanned 1919-1922—all failed in their efforts to solve the Roman Question. Giolitti indeed finally dismissed it as insoluble, saying that "parallels could only meet in infinity."

Concluding his first Chamber speech as a deputy with a reference to the conflicts, armed conflicts, of the parties in Italy, Mussolini said that it was useless for Giolitti to say that he wished to restore the authority of the State. "The task is enormously difficult because there are already three or four States in Italy who contend for the probable or possible exercise of power. To save the State it is necessary to perform a surgical operation." As for Fascist violence, he offered to disarm and to desist if the other parties would do likewise. He also called on all parties to disarm in spirit as a supreme necessity of peace.

"Violence for us is not a system, it is not a code and less still is it a sport. It is a hard necessity to which we are put. But let me add—we are ready to disarm if you in your turn also disarm, above all in spirit. . . . We are all at a decisive period ; loyalty for loyalty. Before we lay down our weapons, disarm your spirit." It is interesting to reflect that this formula for home faction disarmament is practically the same as that which Mussolini advances today for European national disarmament.

The speech made a great stir. It had an incisiveness

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unusual in the Italian Chamber. It was straight hitting—Left and Right.

It had also that discomfiting quality which was later to be developed as one of Mussolini's most formidable and subtle rhetorical diplomatic methods both in home and foreign affairs ; that of inferring the responsibility of others. A problem is defined ; its Fascist solution involving reciprocal conditions is tabled ; a refusal of the other side to accept these reciprocal conditions is claimed as inferring non-Fascist responsibility for the consequent continuation and aggravation of the problem and also infers consequent Fascist self-protective freedom of action fortified by self-righteousness. The possible fallacy lies in the original definition of the problem. This is just an interpellated thought which occurs on re-reading this first Chamber speech—a reflection on the method and not on the substance of that historic and indicative discourse.

For the purposes of this history we are more directly concerned with the substance : in that we can see the continuity from the past in the fact that first and foremost Mussolini deals with the question of Italy's northern frontiers and Adriatic gateways. The torch from the beacon of Dante, thrown forward by Mazzini to rekindle in the cannon flames of Vittorio Veneto, almost quenched by the blows of scythe and hammer, but seized and whirled aloft by d'Annunzio, reglimmers with steadier rays caught up by Mussolini confronting Parliament.

This speech is also of interest because (supplemented by his leading articles in the *Popolo d'Italia*) it shows that Mussolini's thoughts on great questions such as co-operation between capital and labour, the corporative system, reconciliation between Church

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and State, and Rome as the recovered centre of universal ideas were already present in his mind long before he ever came into power or had indeed any reasonable prospect of ever assuming power.

Those who make the wrong kind of criticism against Mussolini and Fascism are fond of saying that the original Blackshirts had a programme based only on opportunism and that Mussolini throughout the years has added new developments to his creed always on that opportunistic basis. Evidence, as we have seen and shall further see, reveals that from the first hour Mussolini possessed a clear vision of what are now the established and greatest achievements of his regime. What deceives the superficial critic is this : Mussolini often in an almost casual and abstract manner includes in his early speeches references to his principles of policy, and it is not perhaps until years later that he—and usually with almost dramatic suddenness—proceeds to apply them or to advocate them as issues for immediate solution. In other words, he voices his ideas, then keeps them latent until the most favourable moment for their application and deliverance, be it days or years. In " timing " his political and diplomatic punches Mussolini is a past-master.

But we must pull ourselves away from reflections on Mussolini's speeches in general and his first Chamber speech in particular in order to rejoin him, as observers, once more in the fray of action among the political and faction wars which still raged despite his plea for disarmament of hand and spirit.

CHAPTER XV

TOWARDS REVOLUTION

Resignation of Giolitti. Socialist Premier Bonomi. 6000 Fascists assail Ravenna. The Sarzana Ambush. A Fascist-Socialist Truce. Fascist Split. Mussolini resigns Office. Resignation Rejected. Fascist Congress Convened. Mussolini Insists on Unity as Price of Leadership. Unity Proclaimed. Mussolini Returns. Preparing to Become a Regular Parliamentary Party. The Monarchy Question. Mussolini's views. Republicanism Jettisoned. Reasons. The Garibaldi Parallel. The Army and the Industrialists. Liberal Overtures. Udine Speech. Crystallization of Doctrines. Congress of Rome Again. Fascists Become an Inscribed Party. The Communists' Last Strike. Broken by Black-shirts. Election of Achille Ratti as Pope. Importance to History of Fascism : Reasons. Facta Becomes Premier. Nation Depressed. Foreign Policy Failures. Mussolini Ready for March on Rome.

AFTER Mussolini's first Chamber speech of June 1921, the period from then until September 1922 (just before the Fascist march on Rome) contains a series of events of great importance in the progress of Fascism : (1) the fall of Giolitti and his succession in office by the Reformist Socialist Bonomi, with consequent reaction against the Fascists and the beginning of a number of Cabinet crises which completely undermined effective government, (2) Mussolini's change from republicanism to monarchism, (3) the constitution of the Fascists as a political party, (4) the death of Benedict XV. and the election of Achille Ratti as Pope, (5) the final attempt of the Communists and their complete defeat together with all other subversive groups, (6) the beginning of the straight fight between the Fascists and the " demo-liberal " constitutional parties, and (7) the occupation by the Fascists

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of "morally strategic" points in Italy. Let us trace these things.

Shortly after Mussolini's speech Giolitti tendered his resignation, not on account of any reasons connected with Mussolini's criticisms, but as a parliamentary manoeuvre in the established Giolittian manner. He saw that a Government crisis was brewing and he dissolved the Chamber and sought a re-shuffle. State employees, as foreseen, began another agitation which led to another strike. Disorders broke out afresh over Italy and the Fascists waged street and highway warfare against the Socialists and the Communists. In the summer of 1921 Giolitti was replaced by Bonomi, a Moderate Socialist with a reputation as a good administrator.

I have shown how Giolitti as a matter of policy blew sometimes hot and sometimes cold on the Fascists. With Bonomi there was no equivocation. It was either a case of "friend or foe." Fighting grew fiercer and the Blackshirts, with the rising consent of the people, grew bolder. They broke strikes and heads with equal zeal. They fought equally in Rome and Trieste. They organised a mass attack of six thousand Blackshirts on Socialist-held Ravenna. Making a similar raid on Sarzana, the Fascists found the road on the orders of the Government barred by *carabinieri*. The Blackshirts were fired on and dispersed, leaving several dead and wounded. Armed Communists then set on them from ambush and completed the rout with atrocities. Eighteen Fascists were killed and thirty-five seriously wounded. In July at Grosseto fourteen Communists were killed in a fight with the Fascists. The Popular Party formed part of the Bonomi Government majority.

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During the autumn months of 1921 there was a dramatic episode in the history of Fascism. Discontented with evidence of disunity among the Fascists Mussolini resigned his leadership. For three months the Blackshirts were deprived of his command and then he was hailed back as *Duce* of a re-united party. The details of the affair are as follows :

During July 1921 the leaders of all parties were satiated with the endless bloodshed which was reducing the political and social life of the country to ruin. Mussolini and Bonomi got together and framed the basis of a truce, and on August 3, 1921, a Pact of Pacification was solemnly signed under the auspices of the President of the Chamber. In this document the Socialists, Trade Union and Fascist leaders undertook to put a stop to acts of violence, Mussolini signing on behalf of the Fascists.

It only required a few days however to make it apparent that the political "shock troops" and riotous squads of all the factions were no longer tolerant of command. The Communist and Anarchist elements were still strong enough to manipulate the policy of the Moderate Socialists, and strife involving Socialist participation increased rather than abated. The international influences among the trade unions in like manner negated all official control over strikes and strikers. The Fascists in various provincial centres refused to lay down their arms in the midst of the unabated *milie*. The Blackshirts of Romagna (Mussolini's native province), of Veneto and Reggio Emilia point-blank declared that they did not subscribe to the terms of the Pacification Pact.

In face of this situation Mussolini declared that evidently he had made a mistake in believing that the

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Fascists were united and that without unity there could be no leadership and no peace. Accordingly on August 17, 1921, Mussolini sent in his resignation from the Executive Committee of the Party. On August 19 the Committee and Council refused to accept his resignation, saying that such a serious decision could only be dealt with at a National Congress of Fascists. An agitation for the convening of such a Congress was immediately set on foot and amid seething Fascist excitement a Great National Congress of Blackshirts was opened in the Augusteo Concert Hall in Rome on November 6, 1921. The meeting lasted two days. On the opening day Mussolini appeared as a *dimissionario* and took no active part in the discussions. On the second day a Fascist arose and recalled the beginnings and growth of the Blackshirts "from a handful of resolute men to ten thousand men, from ten thousand to fifty thousand and from fifty thousand until today when we are three hundred and ten thousand," and then pointing to Mussolini he exclaimed, "And there is the man who has made this possible." Cheering began and Mussolini was called on to speak. He explained the reasons for his resignation, saying that where there was a conflict of views and policy he could not lead them, but if they undertook to unite and follow one direction he would return and lead them through thick and thin. Grandi then stood up and declared in the name of the Congress that they all promised to be as "one solid block of granite." Grandi and Mussolini embraced and to the acclamation of the Congress Mussolini thereupon returned to the Executive fold and became from that moment the undisputed and sole head of the Fascist movement—*il Duce*, the man who must be obeyed.

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The Fascists, despite the fact that they had representatives in the Chamber, had not constituted themselves a formal political party. In order to advance their campaign at all points both within and outside the Chamber they began to move more and more towards the creation of a definitely inscribed party. In that tendency there arose in Mussolini's mind at this period of the Fascist movement the necessity of choosing to continue as a republican movement or of acknowledging the monarchy. His aim was not to destroy the Italian Constitution but to create a system of government that would really govern.

Against the idea of monarchy Mussolini's sentiments had always revolted, but against the House of Savoy and its reigning head Victor Emmanuel he had no quarrel whatsoever—indeed he had wartime memories which linked his admiration and sympathy with his sovereign. When ill in hospital he had first met the King, and again later, when he lay so severely wounded in the hospital of Ronchi, Victor Emmanuel made a special visit to the bedside of the suffering revolutionary Socialist.

The meeting is recorded as having been particularly impressive and each recognised in the other a man confronting to the utmost the perils of the war for the salvation of Italy. There is however only assumption, only understandable assumption, for saying that the impressions made on Mussolini in these war years—when he saw the King untiring in his attendance at the front, and when he saw the King's cousin the Duke of Aosta leading the Third Army which he loved—influenced him in his fateful choice in 1921. To outward view there was no sentiment in Mussolini's

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decision. He elected for a monarchist party as the best expedient for the political future of Italy.

In the war waged against both subversive and constitutional parties and factions, Republicanism had never been declared a fighting issue by the Fascists. In fact, the sweeping Republican programme of the Reds had put the theoretical republicanism of Mussolini more and more into the background of Fascist principles; and Fascist hostility to the demo-liberal parties was directed not against the monarchical State but against what the Fascists considered to be their betrayal of the State, namely their failure to govern in the name of and for the protection of the State.

Knowing the House of Savoy and its head to be valiant patriots of united Italy—living symbols indeed of that unity first achieved under Garibaldi and Gavour—Mussolini realised their high and important symbolic place in his dreamed-of post-war Italy with its *Risorgimento* programme completed by the inclusion of the new frontier provinces. Surely in such a greater Italy the Crown of Savoy must be the emblem of completion, and surely it should prove a great and unifying ally in the task of national consolidation.

In a sense it was history repeating itself. Like the Republican Garibaldi in 1861, Republican Mussolini in 1921 accepted the dictates of statesmanship and deviated his course in favour of the Savoy monarchy. In both cases these two figures of Italian history were great enough to subordinate their personal ideals to national emergency. They each had only one standard of conduct, one touchstone of policy and action, one question which they asked themselves when faced with crucial issues—"What is best for Italy?"

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Also, with numbers of adherents and sympathisers which were growing almost by thousands daily, Mussolini foresaw that to insist suddenly on the Republican character of his movement would be to break, perhaps even in provincial *blocs*, the cohesion of his followers, as well as to invite attacks from a fresh angle.

There is another reason which would doubtless influence Mussolini in his decision. In the event of the success of his projected revolutionary *coup* the maintenance of the sovereign power in the hands of the ruling King would simplify the position from an international point of view. With a revolution developed inside the existing monarchical system, Mussolini was thereby automatically assured that the *de jure* quality of his revolution existed at the same moment as it became *de facto*—thus avoiding the necessity and probable complications of requiring any change in recognition of his regime by foreign States.

By becoming monarchical the Fascists also fortified their position with sympathisers in the Regular Army. We have seen, for instance, how Mussolini served with the Bersaglieri of Risorgimento tradition. It is difficult to imagine this great regiment, with its popular war-time memories of Sergeant Mussolini, turning against a monarchical Mussolini. Indeed there is reason to believe that in the depots of the corps the Blackshirts found unofficial facilities. The abandonment of a republican programme also restored confidence among the industrialists ; but it is a mistake to assert, as some do, that they financed the revolutionary movement. Subsequent events shew that Mussolini, irrespective of whatsoever aid, did not sacrifice his independence of action or policy. The masses and

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strike-weary Labour already were rallying to him. The adherence also of the industrialists and strike-smitten Capital therefore marked an all-important but unprejudicial step towards that eventual co-operation of Capital and Labour which was the greatest and most difficult part of the Fascist leader's plan. It is also a fact that in the search for a Ministerial solution of the parliamentary failure to check the disintegration of government, the King—unostentatious but ever alert to his country's interests—made contact with Mussolini months before the March on Rome.

During this phase of Fascism there were certain negotiations opened between Mussolini and influential Milanese Liberal representatives, such as Senator Albertini, owner of the all-powerful *Corriere della Sera*. The trend of these conversations was to see if Mussolini would consider coalition, and if so, how many Cabinet seats would satisfy the Fascists. Mussolini's demand for eight portfolios was refused. The discussion ended—and Mussolini moved to the organisation of the March on Rome with the consequent Blackshirt assumption of fifteen Cabinet posts plus the Premiership.

Mussolini's views are expressed in a fighting speech delivered to the populace of Udine on September 20, 1922. The date and the place were chosen to give added significance to his words—Udine, capital of a recovered Province ; September 20, anniversary of the September 20, 1870 capture of Rome by the Italian national troops of the Risorgimento.

" I think it is possible to renew the regime in a profound way without touching the monarchy," he said. " Mazzini himself, Republican and master of

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Republican doctrines, did not consider these doctrines incompatible with a monarchical pact for Italian unity. He submitted. He accepted. It was not his ideal, but one cannot always realise ideals. We will therefore leave the institute of monarchy out of our play, which will have other more obvious and more formidable goals. We will also leave it aside because a great part of Italy would look with suspicion on a transformation of the regime which would go to such a point. We would perhaps have regional separatism. At bottom I don't think that the monarchy has any interest to put obstacles in the way of what at last must be called the Fascist Revolution. It is not in its interests, because if it did it would at once become a target, and, once a target, it is certain that we would not be able to spare it, as it would be for us a question of life and death. Why are we Republicans? Because in a certain sense we see a monarchy that is not sufficiently monarchical.

" The monarchy should represent the historic continuity of the nation. . . . We must avoid that the Fascist Revolution puts everything at hazard. We must not give the impression to the people that everything must tumble and that everything must be rebuilt. One thing that must be done is clear, however : the demolition of the whole Socialist-Democratic superstructure,"

The sentiments expressed in the Udine speech were part of the move towards the transformation of the fighting Fascist units and their adherents into a regular political party, with a party creed and programme. At this time Mussolini wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia* a leading article which he entitled " Towards the Future." In it he said, " Should Fascism become a

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Party ? After long reflection and close examination of the Italian political situation I have come to answer in the affirmative. The origin and course of the Fascist crisis which carries us to this cross-road creates for us a dilemma : either to make a party or to make an army. And to my way of thinking the problem solves itself in these terms : we must constitute a party, but one so solidly bounded and disciplined that it can, when necessary, change itself into an army capable of going into violent action, be it in attack or in defence."

And again in the *Popolo d'Italia*, under the warmer title of " Towards a Party " he writes a few weeks later voicing the necessity of having a party doctrine. For this he chose a simple and historic formula—" Fascism can and ought to adopt as its body of doctrine the Mazzinian phrase, ' Thought and Action.' "

Working further towards the party idea he again writes in October 1921—" To be a party is a gesture of courage. It is a sign of youthfulness and daring ; an act of faith. It demonstrates that Fascism can undertake work of a positive nature in order to reach immediate and meditated ideals ; and this fact alone will give the lie to all those who maintain that we have no virtues beyond those of a pugilistic nature. Now is the time to yoke up the plough and, like the ancients, drive a dividing furrow around our ' *Citta quadrata*.' That and nothing else is the party. That will signify the salvation of what is alive and immortal in Fascism and will prepare it for its task of to-morrow : the government of the nation."

Mussolini's statements foretelling a regime of selection and self-discipline, his speeches and writings in favour of monarchy, the Church, and class collabora-

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tion, caused a certain amount of alarm, criticism and division among the Fascists. Many also could not appreciate his politico-philosophic writings on the function of the State. But those who ceded from the movement at this juncture only served to strengthen its chances and prestige, while the solid body which approved of the orientation, or rather the evolution, of the movement redoubled their strength in practical and moral consolidation. Many, however, still adhered whose ideas went no further than the opportunist and pugilistic stage.

On November 6, 1921, the Fascists opened the Congress in Rome to which I have already referred. The members attended as representatives of irregular scattered groups of *Fasci di Combattimento*. They left as representatives of a regular political unit—77 *Partito Nazionale Fascista*. But, as Mussolini told them in Congress, the party was one which was to add a moral code to its political code.

In his programme for this Congress and for Fascism as a Party, Mussolini reveals that the principles established in Italy today were already established in his mind. He also reveals how, in the midst of political contentions and faction fights, his mind was ever working on conceptions of politico-philosophy as the springs and aims of all his actions. For instance, in this programme Mussolini says, "The nation is not merely the sum-total of living individuals, nor the instrument of parties for their own ends; it is an organism comprising the unlimited series of generations of which individuals are merely transient elements—it is the supreme synthesis of all the material and non-material values of the race, and the nation has its legal incarnation in the State." From these

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premises there issues the conclusion that the State includes all, represents all—race, nation and individual concrete and spiritual.

Having thus defined the State in terms that made his conception of it appear nothing less than the very body and breath of Italy, he proceeded to argue how its supreme mission could only be fulfilled by an executive parliamentary and technical system devoted to considering all issues in the light of the State instead of in the light of political parties which represented merely competitive interests or theories.

And again he showed what a definite and leading place foreign affairs held in his thoughts. A conception of prestige abroad was, it can be seen, always hyphenated in his mind with his conception of discipline at home. With words of defiance he re-asserted Italy's claim to the historic and geographical unity round Alpine and, specially, Adriatic-Dalmatian frontiers ; and he emphasized the role which Italy could play as a champion of the Latinity of the Mediterranean.

These references to foreign affairs were merely an affirmation of policy. What is of more importance at this point is his affirmation of principles as above described in his definition of the State and its functions. It is only at the milestones of the march of Fascism that Mussolini pauses in the fray to voice his political *pensiero*. But step by step, gradual but always consistent, his idea can be traced from these first far-off days of 1904 when speculations of social thought first sent ideas flying among his surprised Socialist comrades. We have seen how, through *azione* which includes world-war and civil-war, *pensiero* becomes more and more clear—notably at the formation of the con-

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stituent of the *Fascio di Combattimento* in March 1919, at the Florence Congress in October 1919, and now at the Rome November 1921 Congress, with Fascism at length a Party.

In 1904 and other pre-war years he was, as I have already said, testing and discarding all creeds, trying every byway in his search for direction towards the perfecting of Governmental ideals as he felt them. By 1919 he had found the road, and by the autumn of 1921 he was on the way for the conquest of power and the application of his now completed theory of rule.

Everything now moved to a *coup de main* with Rome—Italian and Imperial—as his inspiration and goal.

We have seen how the Communists and Bolsheviks lost their insurgent driving force after the split with the Socialists in January 1921 and how their activities in consequence became more desperately violent but sporadic. Fascist, Nationalist and Government action, backed by an ever-rising flood of public opinion, had gradually driven out the Red terror. Nevertheless these subversive forces still remained alive and ready to revive their attempts on the social life of the nation. During the late summer of 1922, when the Fascists were strengthening themselves as the National Fascist Party, the Communists made what was to prove their last organised effort to recover their lost ground.

In an article entitled "Preludes to the March on Rome," written by Mussolini and contributed to the review *Gerarchia*, he himself gives an account of these last efforts of the Reds. "In August 1922—that is two years after the Red occupation of the factories and only three months before the March on Rome—Bolshevism in Italy had been so little liquidated that it

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attempted by means of the notorious 'Alliance of Work' to recover its full mastery of the political situation and perhaps also power. It signifies nothing that there were also Socialist elements in the 'Alliance of Work.' The character of that body was anti-Fascist and Communist, since it was the Communists who imposed their will. Its object was clear: to break Fascism with a series of street tactics combined with a politico-parliamentary manoeuvre. The constitution of the * Alliance of Work/ the secret of the names of its directors, the ubiquity of its centres showed that the general strike was able, according to circumstances, to change itself into an insurrection in the real and full meaning of the word."

The strike referred to was a general strike organised by the "Alliance of Work/⁵ which opened with lightening rapidity all over Italy in August 1922. There were the usual violent incidents. After an initial surprise success for the Reds, the Fascists, now an army of some 400,000 fighting men, were mobilised. They took over and ran all the public services; assailed the strikers, their papers, leaders and headquarters; harried out Communists and their Socialist allies; and called on the strikers to return to their work, giving them a time-limit of twenty-four hours. Before this display of energy and resolution the strike completely and miserably collapsed. Socialist town counsellors were driven out and in Milan and Genoa the Fascists occupied the City Halls.

"With the defeat of this general strike/" writes Mussolini, "Fascismo inscribed one of the finest and most bloody pages of its history. It was a clearing out of the last den of its adversaries. It was a demonstration to Italians that it was possible to substitute the

Government and at the same time guarantee the continuity of the life of the nation. From August 1922, with the definite defeat of the 'Alliance of Work,' there remained only two forces on the Italian political scene : the demo-liberal Government and the armed organisation of Fascism."

Before following the course of the contest between these two remaining forces I must record an event which happened earlier in the year—an event which had no immediate influence whatsoever on Fascism but one which was in later years destined to be of immense importance in the history of Fascist Italy. I refer to the election of Achille Ratti, on February 6, 1922, to the headship of the Roman Catholic Church as Pope Pius XI.

As a papal nuncio and bishop, Mgr. Ratti was in Poland during 1919, when the Bolshevik invasion of that country took place. He refused to leave his post in threatened Warsaw when the rest of the Diplomatic Corps retired to the safety of Posen. And to him falls the credit of securing the liberation of many prisoners and hostages held by the Bolsheviks. He was therefore a man who knew at first hand all that Bolshevism and Anarchism really meant. In 1921 he was nominated Archbishop of Milan. He was therefore a man who knew at first hand what that Milan citizen and anti-Red firebrand, Benito Mussolini, with his local newspaper the *Popolo d'Italia* and his Fascist forces, was doing to save Italy from a fate such as he had seen Poland suffer. The Archbishop was also a patriot: a man too of "thought and action," with clear ideas in his own head, and unusual will-power. His election as successor to Benedict XV. brought therefore to the throne of Peter in Rome a Pontiff

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presumably predisposed to appreciate the work of Fascism as far as he saw it. His independence of character also created conditions for the settlement of the Roman Question. In his decisions he has proved himself to be as untrammelled by the College of Cardinals as Mussolini by the Chamber of Deputies. His accession to power must also have meant a decline of official Church support for the Popular Party, as it was composed on demagogic lines which often affiliated it to the Socialists, whom the Pope in his experience knew to be the door-openers to Communism. The subsequent attitude of the Vatican bears out this supposition.

Throughout the year 1922 the Government went from crisis to crisis, Cabinets rising and falling like cards. Bonomi's Cabinet was re-shuffled three times and then collapsed. Facta, a *protigi* of Giolitti, was put into power; but he had no control over his Ministers, almost every one of whom represented political, personal, productive and regional interests inimical one to another. The summer of 1922 saw more crises for Facta, but he managed to construct yet another Ministry.

The Fascist handling of the August general strike above described revealed the presence of an authority stronger than Facta's Cabinet. The country was sick to death of Governmental crises and party disorders and social unrest and general incompetence. A succession of economic difficulties and scandals stretching over the whole year undermined public faith in all political leaders. The budget debit balance piled up by millions of lire, industry lived from hand to mouth, commerce was at the mercy of graft, and affairs like the collapse of the *Banca di Sconto*, in-

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volving the loss of the savings of millions of Italians, all affected and depressed the nation.

In foreign affairs too they knew that things concerning Fiume were being dissipated in words, that Baros had been ceded to Yugoslavia, and that Italian interests in the Peace Treaties were being pulled along at the tail of France and Britain from Conference to Conference. Mussolini's hour for a *coup* was all but ready. It only remained to make his dispositions and fix the zero hour for a march on Rome.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MARCH ON ROME

Mussolini given full Party Powers. Blackshirt Activity in the Alto Adige. The Position there. And in Naples. "Quadrivirate" Appointed. Military Dispositions. The Church's Precaution. Fascist Diplomatic Mission. Proclamation of Mobilisation. Its Assurances. Facta orders State of Siege and Arrests. Order Revoked. Contact with King. Mussolini refuses a Portfolio. Blackshirts move on Rome. Mussolini offered Premiership. Fascists enter Rome. Mussolini Accepts. First Audience with King. Speech at Unknown Warrior's Tomb. Mussolini becomes an International Figure. Demobilises his Troops. Calls his First Cabinet Meeting.

MUSSOLINI had always been the leader, in life and spirit, of the the Fascists ; but in view of the pending push he was formally given official powers by the Party Council at a meeting in Rome in September 1922. From then on he was not only *de facto* but also *de jure* "il Duce del Fascismo."

I have already spoken of his activities in the northern regions. His movements there, together with the Fascist action at Bolzano in the Alto Adige (Southern Tyrol) and another action in October at Trento, were directed towards showing Italy that the Fascists were more capable of governing than the Government. It might be called a phase of moral strategy.

In Bolzano the Blackshirts occupied the Town Hall and the schools, ordered the dismissal of Austrian officials and the disbandment of the local civic guard, who still wore the uniforms and emblems of the Austrian army. They opened the Austrian schools as Italian schools. In short they established Italian

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sovereignty over a German-speaking minority. This minority of Tyrolese highlanders represented one of the most disciplined and orderly races in Europe ; and the Fascist action against them was not intended to be a gesture of tyranny over a conquered people. The fault lay not with the Tyrolese, but with the Rome Governments.

As we have seen, promises made after the Armistice in the form of a "gentlemen's agreement" to respect the local language and institutions, were, in the immediately succeeding period of Italian social chaos, accepted, thanks mostly to pan-German agitators, as meaning local language and institutions to the exclusion of Italian language and institutions. Nitti had led them to believe that he would grant them local autonomy; Bonomi had not prevented them boycotting the King's visit; Giolitti and Facta left them to their own devices both politically and economically ; and the Socialists and Masons through international channels encouraged them in their defiance of the Italian Government. The Popular Party also confused the issue, because, as Catholics, they were not unfavourable to the continuance of Church arrangements which ignored frontiers. Fascist reassertion in these war areas roused Italy to a sense of its war-won rights and power.

From the North Mussolini then switched attention to the South. On October 24 he convened a great Congress of Fascists in Naples. Over 35,000 Black-shirts were present. In another speech such as he had made in Udine he foretold the approaching move to seize power. But he did so with a certain rhetorical style intended to keep the Government uncertain as to his real time-table and intentions.

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After the Naples speech Mussolini returned to Milan and to the offices of the *Popolo d'Italia*, which then became the headquarters of the diplomatic side of his revolutionary project,—a project already privately arranged, because at a secret midnight meeting in the Hotel Vesuvius in Naples on October 22 the decision to march on Rome had been taken and the first dispositions made. At that meeting were Mussolini, Balbo, De Bono, Grandi, De Vecchi and Michele Bianchi, the Party Secretary. Already Mussolini had formed a "Quadrumvirate" for military and political action. The members of this Quadrumvirate of the March on Rome were Balbo, De Bono, De Vecchi and Bianchi.

At the Hotel Vesuvius meeting it was arranged that the plan for the conquest of power should be as follows : (1) occupation of public offices in the principal cities, (2) concentration of Fascist troops at Santa Marinella, 50 miles northwest of the city, for the invasion of Rome at Tivoli 26 miles east, and at Monterotondo 16 miles up the Tiber from Rome, (3) Operation Headquarters at Perugia, (4) strong reserve troops at Foligno, (5) an ultimatum of dismissal to the Government, (6) advance of the three columns into Rome and occupation of the Ministries at all costs, and (7) Southern Fascists to provide flank protection for moving columns.

In the event of defeat : (1) the Blackshirt troops were to retreat north-east into Umbria, covered by the Foligno reserves. (2) The constitution of a Fascist Government in one of the towns of central Italy. (3) Rapid advance and concentration of the Blackshirts of Mantua, Cremona, of Emilia and the Romagna. (4) Renewed advance on Rome.

Mobilisation was secretly fixed for October 27, and

BEFORE AND AFTER " THE MARCH ON ROME "



Mussolini, with the Tricolour sash over his black shirt, inspecting the Fascist Concentration at Naples on October 22, 1922, just prior to the March on Rome. The late Michele Bianchi is in front. Behind him is General de Vecchi (now Italian Minister to the Holy See).



Mussolini, in his new-found capacity of Prime Minister, making his first public ceremonial meeting with King Victor Emmanuel after the successful conclusion of the March on Rome.

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the Quadrumvirate on October 24 set up their General Command Headquarters in Perugia. General De Bono, who had commanded an Army Corps on the Trentino front during the war, took command of the operations. Balbo took command of the troops in the field. Bianchi did liaison staff work. De Vecchi, as head of General Staff along with Grandi, took the most delicate task of all—that of persuading the Government and the King to invite Mussolini to form a Government.

The Holy See—sensing a fact which had even yet not seriously penetrated Government headquarters—namely, that the Fascists were brewing something serious and sudden, sent a message to Perugia asking what were the intentions of the Fascists with regard to the Church. The answer was that orders had already been given that the churches were in every case to be strictly respected.

On October 25 the zone commanders got their final instructions. On the same day De Vecchi and Grandi came to Rome to open their diplomatic mission. They made contact with the two Liberal leaders Salandra and Orlando. De Vecchi told them to advise the King of the patriotic and loyal aims of the Fascists and he asked Facta to resign the Premiership.

Facta wired to the King, who was at San Rossore in Tuscany, advising his return to the capital. As to the question of retiring from office, Facta played for time. On October 26 Facta had not definitely answered. On October 27 the Fascist " Proclamation of Mobilisation " was launched. It read :

FASCISTS! ITALIANS!

The hour of decisive battle has struck. This time four years ago the national Army broke up the enemies' supreme offensive and paved the way for victory. Today the army

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of the Blackshirts re-affirms that mutilated victory and, pointing desperately to Rome, it re-leads it to the glory of the Capitol. Today all ranks, *principes et triarii*, are mobilised. The martial law of Fascism enters in full vigour. Under the orders of the *Duce* the military, political and administrative powers of the Party Direction are assumed by a secret *Quadrumvirate* of action with a dictatorial mandate.

The Army, reserve and supreme safeguard of the nation, ought not to take part in the struggle. Fascism renews its highest admiration of the army of Vittorio Veneto. Neither does Fascism march against the forces of public order. It marches against a class of faint-hearts and inefficients which for four long years has never known how to give a government to the nation. The productive middle classes know that Fascism wishes to impose only order on the nation and help all the forces that augment its economic expansion and well-being. The workers, in field and factory and office, have nothing to fear from Fascist power. Their just rights will be loyally cared for. With unarmed adversaries we will be generous : but with others, inexorable.

Fascism draws the sword to cut the Gordian knots which bind and paralyse Italian life. We call on God and the spirit of our five hundred thousand dead to witness that only one impulse drives us, that we harbour only one will, that one passion alone inflames us :—to contribute to the salvation and the greatness of the Country.

FASCISTS OF ALL ITALY!

Maintain like Romans your spirit and your strength. We must conquer. We will conquer. Long live Italy ! Long live Fascism !

IL QUADRUMVIRATO.

On the day that the Proclamation was issued a great many things happened. The military part of the programme was carried out all over Italy according to plan and without resistance. The country was already with them to a large extent. Provincial cities were taken over. The three columns for the actual

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March on Rome moved to their appointed jumping-off stations ; the reserves, flank troops and the northern general reserve took up their appointed locations.

It is estimated that about 70,000 men were on parade in Central Italy and Rome areas. In Perugia the town administration was assumed by the Black-shirts. At ten in the morning the Headquarters there intercepted two Home Office telegrams, one ordering a state of siege and the other ordering " the immediate arrest by whatsoever means of all the members of the secret Quadrumvirate and assistant leaders." Three hours later came another wire revoking the order of the state of siege.

In Rome the diplomatic mission worked feverishly on that October 27. The King returned to the Quirinal. Grandi scored the first victory : after twice seeing Orlando, Orlando went to Facta and persuaded him of the necessity to resign. That night the Facta Cabinet handed in their portfolios.

The next move—that for the formation of the new Government—lay with the King. Victor Emmanuel sent for De Vecchi. Grandi and De Vecchi were received in audience. The first thing that the King said was : " I desire that all Italians know that I signed no decree for a state of siege." The order had been issued by Facta before submission of the decree to the King, who, when he saw it, refused to sign—the order being then, as we have seen, at once revoked.

The King asked Salandra to form a Ministry with Fascist participation and that evening De Vecchi and Grandi telephoned to Mussolini at Milan telling him that Salandra had offered him a post in the Cabinet. To this Mussolini replied, " Refuse participation

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because I do not wish the Fascist victory to be mutilated." Salandra then gave up the charge and suggested Mussolini as Premier.

With the Blackshirt legions now closing into the approaches to Rome, affairs got to an impatient stage. By next morning Mussolini was informed that the King had invited him to come to Rome to form a Ministry. On receipt of the official invitation he left at once for the capital. By this time the advanced guards were at and within the gates. Mussolini broke his journey at Santa Marinella to review the moving column and see it entrain. Amid scenes of great enthusiasm he continued his fateful journey. On October 30 Mussolini in black shirt was received by the King.

In answer to the Royal greeting Mussolini replied : " I bring to Your Majesty the Italy of Vittorio Veneto reconstructed by a new victory." He then presented his list of names for the first Mussolini Ministry.

Outside the Quirinal Royal Palace the Blackshirts were massed, and a demonstration of loyalty was made when Mussolini left the Palace gates as Prime Minister of Italy.

All three columns were now in Rome, bivouacked in the piazzas. The official estimation of the total strength which entered Rome is a little over 50,000 men. Mussolini's first speech as Premier was to a mass muster of these men before the National Monument erected in memory of the Risorgimento. Forming part of this Monument is the Unknown Warrior's Tomb. With that as a background the *Duce* said :

Italians ! In the record and in the celebration of the great victory of our arms, the whole nation has refound itself and adjusts its conscience to the hard necessities of the moment.

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The Government intends to govern and shall govern. All its energies will be directed to assuring peace at home and to augmenting the prestige of the nation abroad. Only with work, with discipline and with concord will our country definitely overcome all crises and march towards an epoch of prosperity and greatness.

As a first reassuring display of discipline he ordered the immediate evacuation of his Blackshirt troops from Rome. Within twenty-four hours they had gone in good order—a feat which was, incidentally, an extraordinary good bit of staff-work. Over all Italy the concentrations were demobilised—the general populace, the forces of public order and the regular soldiers all rallying in friendship around the returning *Fascisti*.

It is difficult nowadays to realise that even when Mussolini on that October day of 1922 became a national figure—despite the great past which he had played in events ever since the interventionist pre-war days—neither he, nor his character, nor his history, nor his appearance, nor his movement was known, far less understood, outside of Italy. When it became necessary to telegraph reports of the March on Rome with descriptions of the new situation to newspapers abroad there were foreign observers, with an intimate knowledge of Italian political affairs as seen from Rome, who found themselves hard put to it to give a pen-picture of Mussolini or to explain what Fascism was all about. I cite this as evidence of the apparent suddenness of the rise of Mussolini's name abroad. In Italy, especially in the north, much was known of his *azione*, but mighty little of his *pensiero*. Practically no Correspondent in Rome had set eyes on the man. They knew of him as the *Duce* of the *Fascisti*—a fighting party who chased Communists in the provinces,

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worried Deputies in Rome and broke strikes. They heard the March on Rome called a Fascist Revolution. And from what they saw of it in the streets of Rome they thought it a singularly tame revolution—a sort of walk-over.

The outside world, together with a surprising number of Italians, did not realise that the March on Rome was merely the culminating point of applied revolutionary action extending, as we have seen, back to 1919. And there was another thing that thousands of others even wearing black shirts did not realise—that the March on Rome was merely a starting-point of applied revolutionary thought. To the populace of Italy Mussolini was just a new leader who had come to end misrule and to set the national house in order. That was all they knew ; and after their post-war agony it was surely enough. He came : and was hailed as a saviour.

THE TREE

MUSSOLINI TAKES OVER
(1922—)

" Combattere, Gombattere, Gombattere."
Mussolini.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRST SPEECH AS PREMIER

Collaboration Efforts. First Reforms and Changes. Mussolini warns the Chamber. Home Policy. Key Phrases. He speaks to the Senators on Liberalism. On "Constitutional Rails" Blackshirt Militia Founded. Grand Fascist Council Created. Movement Grows in General Popularity. Liberals lend Support to Fascist Government. Polemical Issues. "Big Stick" Arguments. Comparative Calm.

MUSSOLINI did not attempt to exploit his victory by any immediate construction of a Ministry entirely Fascist ; neither did he attempt any sudden creation of a purely Fascist State. His first work was to patch up the broken parliamentary machine, to put government into motion and to initiate a return to internal tranquillity and financial stability. When he took over, the national budget showed a deficit of seven thousand million lire—a millstone on the neck of a nation like Italy which has to purchase its raw material abroad before it can start to manufacture for home supplies and for export. The administrative and economic machine creaked at every coupling.

Mussolini decided to try to begin his reforms on the structure of the existing State. For this purpose—and to give reassurance at home and abroad—he invited the collaboration of all the Constitutional parties, and between Ministers and Under-Secretaries he formed his first Cabinet of 15 Fascists, 3 Nationalists, 3 Liberals of the Right, 6 Populists and 3 Democrats, he himself taking the portfolios of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs *ad interim* as well as that of Premier. It has to

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be noted that this was not a Ministry of Coalition. No concessions were made to the parties represented in his Cabinet. That system was dead and gone as far as Mussolini was concerned. It was a Ministry of "collaboration."

On the day that he formed his Government, Mussolini resigned the editorship of the *Popolo d'Italia*, handing over his desk to his brother Arnaldo. He then left Milan and established himself in Rome the Capital.

The first flash of the Mussolini nature was revealed to the outside world in connection with his handling of the Italian Ambassadors. Being men of the former regime, and recognising the revolutionary aspect of the March on Rome, the Ambassadors at once offered their resignations from their posts in the foreign capitals of Europe. The resignation of Count Sforza from the Ambassadorship in France was announced (according to Fascist accounts) in the Paris Press before it had been tendered to the new Government in Rome. Mussolini, to whom Count Sforza's foreign policy, or rather his method of developing Italy's foreign policy, was anathema, peremptorily told the diplomat to withdraw his resignation and to stay at his post until relieved of it by Governmental command. The formal act of dismissal came a few days later. With this and a few other incidents of a similar nature among some of the Civil Service staff it became at once patent that someone of an uncompromising and masterful nature had not only mounted the Government saddle but had also taken a firm grip of the reins. Mussolini chose General Diaz, victor of Vittorio Veneto, as Minister of War and Admiral Thaon di Revel, identified with naval victories against the Austrian Fleet, as Navy Minister. This choice at

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one stroke bound the interest of the fighting forces with those of the nation and Government and created an immediate identification of the war-time victory spirit with the new regime. This feeling was further developed on November 4, Italian Armistice, or Victory Day as they call it, when ceremonies and parades were for the first time since the war held all over Italy with whole-hearted Government backing and undisturbed popular acclamation.

Measures were at once passed to ensure the loyal adherence of the bureaucratic machinery of the State, and to simplify the country's fiscal system. Then on November 16, 1922, Mussolini made his first speech as Prime Minister. In this he outlined his programme to the Lower Chamber and to the Senate. The violence of his opening remarks in the Chamber and the resolute hammer-blow intimation of his intentions shook up Parliament and made the country take notice.

He told the Deputies that they were in the Chamber that day thanks to his clemency. " Revolution has its rights," he said, " and I am here to defend and develop the revolution of the Blackshirts. I refused to make an outright conquest as I could have done. I put a limit to my actions. With my three hundred thousand armed men, prepared to dare everything and ready, almost mystically, to obey my orders, I could have punished those who have defamed and bespattered Fascism. I might have made this bleak hall into a bivouac for my platoons. I might have closed down Parliament altogether and created a Government of Fascists alone. I could have done that, but such—at least for the present—has not been my wish."

Before his astonished listeners had recovered from this attack on their weakness Mussolini told them that

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he had formed a mixed Government not with the idea of having a parliamentary majority—"today I can perfectly well do without that"—but in order "to gather together in aid of a gasping people all those who, with minds above parties, are desirous of saving the nation."

Mussolini then turned to policy and programme : and, just as he did when he made his maiden speech as a Deputy, he began by a survey of foreign affairs, despite the national concentration of attention on the internal matters of the moment following his *coup*. For convenience' sake I will consign the foreign-policy section of his speech to a subsequent chapter devoted to the foreign affairs and international repercussions of the new regime.

For home policy he reiterated the three words : economy, work and discipline. The following are key-phrases from his speech which reveal the whole aim and intention of Mussolini:

By work is meant that of the productive middle and working classes of town and country. No privileges to the former and no privileges to the latter ; but the protection of all interests that harmonise with those of production and of the nation.

Episodes of violence are sporadic and peripheric : nevertheless they must cease.

The citizens no matter to whatsoever party they may belong may move about freely : religious cults will be respected, particular regard being paid to the prevailing one, which is Catholicism : statutory liberties will not be injured : respect for the law will be exacted at all costs.

The State is strong and will demonstrate its strength against everybody, even in the event of possible Fascist illegality.

The State does not intend to abdicate before anyone whomsoever.

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Whoever rises against the State will be punished.

It must not be forgotten that beyond the minorities engaged in militant politics there are also forty millions splendid Italians who work, reproduce their species and perpetuate the deep strata of the race, and who ask, and have the right, not to be thrown into chronic disorder, sure prelude to general ruin.

As sermons are evidently not sufficient, the State will provide armed forces to protect it. The Fascist State will perhaps constitute a single police force, perfectly equipped, of great mobility and of high moral spirit. The army and the navy, no longer influenced by changes of parliamentary policy and reorganised, will represent the supreme reserve of the nation at home and abroad.

I do not wish, as long as it will be possible to avoid it, to govern against the House ; but the House must realise its particular position, which renders it liable to be dissolved within two days or two years.

We ask for full powers because we wish to assume full responsibility.

Without full powers you know that it would not be possible to economise even one lira.

But we do not intend to rule out the possibility of willing collaboration, which we will cordially accept. All of us have a religious sense of our difficult task.

The country encourages us and awaits. We shall give it not further words but facts.

We are taking a formal and solemn pledge to balance the Budget—and we will balance it.

We wish to follow a foreign policy of peace, although at the same time a policy of dignity and firmness,—and we will do it.

We have undertaken to give order to the nation,—and we will give it.

In peroration Mussolini made an appeal to the House and nation by saying : " Let us work with a pure heart and an active mind towards ensuring the prosperity and greatness of the country," and ended,

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" Thus may God help me to bring my arduous labours to a victorious end."

On a vote of confidence in the Chamber the Mussolini Ministry was given 306 votes against 116 and 7 abstentions.

On November 17 he carried his arguments to the Senate. It will be recalled that Senator Albertini of the *Corriere della Sera* had made overtures to Mussolini, before the March on Rome, for a Liberal-Fascist Coalition Government. In course of a debate on this November 17 in the Senate, Senator Albertini in a powerful speech recalled the glories of Liberalism and Italy's indebtedness to Liberal doctrines—all as a warning to the Fascists not to upset a system on which the Constitution of Italy was based.

In reply Mussolini said : "I owe a special answer to the Senator. I admire his firm faith in pure Liberalism ; but allow me to remind him that Liberalism is the child of two revolutions : permit me to recall that Constitutionalism in England, Liberalism in France—in fact all the complex of ideas and doctrines which take the name of Liberalism and form among them the Nineteenth Century—issue from a fierce revolutionary torment of peoples, and that without that fierce revolutionary torment Senator Albertini would not today be able to table his eulogy of pure Liberalism."

Mussolini then asked the Senate how would it be possible to get out of the internal crisis " which every day becomes more agonising and preoccupying." A Ministry of transition was no longer able to resolve the problem of a nation divided against itself. He then said : " After long meditation, I concluded that only a surgical operation could make the two States

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into one State and so save the fortunes of the nation." Reverting to his wish to end violence, and giving proof of his desire that his Revolution avoid bloodshed, he told the Senators : " I have not gone beyond certain limits. I am not in the least intoxicated with victory. I have not abused that victory. What was to have prevented me from closing Parliament and declaring a dictatorship? Who could have resisted a party which has not only 300,000 inscribed names but 300,000 rifles ? No one ! "

He then somewhat reassured the uneasy Senators by saying : " I have at once put the Fascist movement on the rail-tracks of the Constitution. I have made a Ministry of men from all parties in the Chamber, . . . but I look to technical values. Political etiquette does not interest me." Defining, on this occasion, his Ministry as a " coalition," Mussolini concluded by calling on " God and the People—the binomial of Mazzini" to aid him in accomplishing "the Third Renaissance " of Italy.

A week later the Chamber with a vote of 275 against 90 approved a revolutionary measure conferring " full powers " on Mussolini.

The Government thereafter settled down to carry out its plan of work—reorganising finances ; reviving industrial and agricultural production so long hindered by strikes ; reforming the bureaucracy, national and provincial ; trying to stop the bloody clashes which ever and again broke out between isolated bands of Fascists and Socialists. To discipline and control the innumerable decentralised bands of armed and elated Fascist *squadristi* they were in January 1923 enrolled in a formally constituted body known as Fascist Volunteer Militia for the Defence of the State.

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This became a Government recognised internal army whose primary allegiance was to Mussolini.

This was followed by the creation of the Grand Fascist Council—a consultative and advisory body under Mussolini and the Quadrumvirate of the March on Rome. It ranked—and still ranks—superior to Parliament. What it proposes today, Parliament does tomorrow.

The ex-servicemen and war-wounded associations were granted juridical recognition as public institutions with special rights, and the "Red Guards" of Nitti were disbanded. Propaganda was begun for the full development of Fascist syndical trade unions. In an atmosphere of relative calm and hope such as the country had not enjoyed during its whole post-war experience the Italian people rallied more and more to Mussolini and his Fascists. The minority Opposition in the Chamber, Senate and Press did not cease its criticism of the new order, but public opinion overwhelmed them. Many of the Liberals of the Right and Centre cast in their votes and support in favour of the Fascists and very many of the intellectual classes either actually joined the Fascist movement or else adhered to the rapidly growing army of flank supporters—the *fiancheggiatori*.

As the application of his programme moved from social and labour to industrial and financial problems each group thought themselves either menaced or favoured in turn, and so one heard of Mussolini, now as "an agent of the capitalist classes," now as "an ill-disguised Socialist." But in his speeches, in the *Popolo a'Italia* and in his action he insisted on the impartiality of his projects. The welfare of the nation was his only professed criterion, and collaboration his means.

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The insistence of the Fascist trade unions, conceived on a collaborative employer and employee basis, in competition with the old unions ; a Governmental campaign against the Freemasons ; and a project of electoral reform opened the doors for polemical discussions and conflicts during the spring and summer of 1923. But a tour with carefully arranged speeches of local colour carried out by Mussolini in all parts of Italy, including the South and Sardinia, quickly restored popular enthusiasm, despite many incidents of Fascist aggression against their opponents in the provinces. Those who remained faithful to their theories of democratic rule were silenced by the general reaction of public opinion in favour of order. Those who refused to be silent or attempted to thwart the work of the Government were cudgelled or otherwise tortured by being forcibly fed with castor-oil. Other repressive measures directed against opponents and critics were begun. The freedom of the Opposition Press in its attacks against the regime was curtailed : but so far the real Fascist *versus* anti-Fascist campaigns had not started.

The more the Communists and Socialists were silenced the more the Centre Democratic parties reasserted their activities. As we have seen, the Fascists fought the Reds with revolver and with knife : the democratic critics were confronted with " big stick " arguments. The epoch of wholesale and chronic strikes with their attendant international disorders and social upheaval was too recent in the public mind for any popular resistance to be made against the methods of the new masters. For Italian national life 1922-1923 encompassed a period of comparative internal tranquillity.

CHAPTER XVIII

A NEW TONE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Key-Points from First Speech. Treaties, Debts. A Word to Europe. A Warning to Turkey. Entente Relations put to Test. Policy "Nothing for Nothing" Uncertainty abroad. Nationalist Claims. Mussolini in London. King George and Queen Mary in Rome. Conciliative Step with Yugoslavia. Trade Treaty Policy. Deep but Unruffled Waters. The First Disturbance.

IN that opening address which Mussolini delivered to Parliament on November 16, 1922, he changed Italian foreign policy from negative drift to positive drive. If the old party leaders were nonplussed by his downright and outright attitude towards home affairs, the chancelleries of Europe were no less nonplussed by his straight talk on foreign matters. It was something quite new to hear Italy talk in this way : here was a tone which did not suffer patronage : here instead was a surprising talk of rights with assertions for their furtherance. Let us follow the same course with this foreign affairs section of the speech, citing its key-phrases in Mussolini's own words.

The fundamental orientations of our foreign policy are as follows : peace treaties, good or bad as they may be, when once signed and ratified are to be executed. But treaties are not eternal : they are not irreparable. They are chapters in history, not an epilogue of history. To execute them means to test them. If in the course of execution the absurdity of treaties becomes evident, this may constitute a new fact which opens out the possibility of subsequent examination.

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Trade treaties between two Powers are more useful for the purposes of European economic reconstruction than complicated and confused plenary conferences, whose woeful history everyone knows.

We intend to follow a policy of dignity with national utility.

We cannot afford the luxury of a policy of insensate altruism or of complete surrender to the designs of others. *Do ut des.*

The Italy of today counts, and absolutely must count.

My formula is simple—nothing for nothing.

For many reasons of an economic, political and moral character, Italy does not intend to abandon her war Allies ; but Italy must subject herself, as also her Allies, to a courageous and severe examination of conscience,—an examination which has not been faced from the Armistice until now.

Rome stands in the same line with Paris and London.

Does an *Entente* still exist in the substantial sense of the term ? What is the position of this *Entente vis à vis* Germany, Russia and the possibility of a Russo-German alliance ?

What is the position of Italy in the *Entente*,—of Italy which has lost,—not alone through weakness on the part of her government,—strong positions in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, while some of her fundamental rights are being brought back into discussion ; of Italy which has had neither colonies nor raw materials and is literally crushed under the weight of debts contracted in order to achieve the common victory ?

In interviews which I shall have with the Prime Ministers of France and Great Britain I propose to face, with all clearness and in all its complexity, the problem of the *Entente* and the consequent problem of the place of Italy within the *Entente*.

The hypothesis will arise out of this examination: Italy will either become really a homogeneous block with her Allies, with equal rights and equal duties ; or Italy, her hour having sounded for resuming her liberty of action, will arrange loyally the protection of her interests by means of another policy. I trust that the first eventuality will materialise. 163

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A foreign policy like ours—a policy of national utility, of respect for treaties, and of just clarification of the place of Italy in the *Entente*—cannot be labelled an adventurous or imperialistic policy in the ordinary sense of the word.

We wish to follow a policy of peace ; but not, however, of suicide.

Italy will keep her pledges of assistance to Austria and will not neglect to undertake action of an economic nature also *vis d vis* Hungary and Bulgaria.

When Turkey has had that which is due to her she must not claim more. At a given moment it will be necessary to say to Turkey : " Up to here but not beyond ! At no cost."

Italy considers that the hour has now arrived for considering in their present reality our relations with Russia, pre-scinding from its internal conditions, in which, in our capacity as a Government, we do not wish to interfere,—in the same way that will not allow foreign intervention in our affairs. We are therefore ready to examine the possibilities of a definitive solution.

As to the post-war economic-financial problem, Italy will maintain that debts and reparations form an indivisible binomial.

Despite its declarations in favour of peace the speech, at one stroke, made Italy an unknown quantity in the concert of Europe. In it Mussolini asserted liberty of action within the *Entente*, and if that were not conceded on terms of equality, then he threatened to resume liberty of action outside the *Entente*. That move put Italy in play between the ex-Allies and the ex-Central Powers. It was Mussolini's way of reminding France and Britain of the unredeemed clauses of the 1915 Secret Treaty of London.

Instead of haggling for an Adriatic bargain he put the whole issue of his future relations with Paris and London to the test. It was the first time that Italy had really turned on her war-time Allies and demanded

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that they take notice of her. Complacency was a little disturbed.

Mussolini's dictatorial policy for Turkey sent a momentary thrill of uncertainty through the Governments of those countries which for the first time began to fear the possible penetration of Italy into Near East affairs.

For the first time, also, the Italian Government, through this speech, publicly and officially contributed principles of policy for the general reconstruction of European and world affairs : qualified revision of peace treaties ; and the interdependability of reparations and war debts.

Apart from Mussolini's defiant phrases there was another factor which added to foreign disquietude. It was patent that he had taken the Nationalist Party and its affiliated associations to his bosom ; and it was accordingly feared that Italy was about to begin a dictatorial application of that Party's foreign policy.

The Nationalists, as we have seen, had a reactionary outlook on foreign affairs. To them the Mediterranean was *Mare Nostrum*, " Our Sea." Nice, Savoy, Corsica, Malta, Tunis and even Egypt were places which, according to them, had been purloined from Italian sovereignty and ought to be restored. They insisted on the Latinity of the northern Alps. They invoked the old Roman place-names of the frontier posts; and odd remnants of Roman dialects preserved in the remoter valleys were unearthed as battlecries against pan-German claims. To them the Adriatic was an Italian lake, and their kindred institutions like the Dante Alighieri Society quoted the poet to point their claims to Dalmatian shores—claims which were augmented by the architectural evidences of the culture

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left by Venetian conquests. The sculptured seals of the Lion of St. Mark on towns from Fiume to Spalato were not to them mere archaeological relics but challenges to reconquest.

These anxieties, and the first shock which several aspects of his Chamber speech on foreign affairs had aroused abroad, died down however to some extent in face of the pacific and constructive steps which marked Italy's foreign contacts during the first twelve months of Mussolini's rule.

Trade agreements were drawn up with Switzerland, with the Baltic States, with Canada and with South America. The way was prepared for economic collaboration. Ties with the Entente in fact were strengthened by the Premier's attendance at an Allied Conference at Lausanne and by his visit to London in December 1922, when he conferred with Bonar Law, Poincare and Theunis on the debts and reparations questions, tabling his thesis that they formed one and not two separate questions. Anglo-Italian friendship was reconfirmed in May 1923 by the Royal Visit to Italy of King George and Queen Mary.

Fears that Mussolini, in view of the still unresolved Fiume and Adriatic questions, was nurturing hostile intentions against Yugoslavia, were quietened by a conciliative step taken by the Premier almost as soon as he assumed office. Recognising that the Fiume affair must be settled somehow, he decided to make the best of the Treaty of Rapallo; and the Conventions of Santa Margherita formed the basis of agreement with Belgrade. Accordingly, in February 1923 terms were concluded whereby the Italians evacuated the Sussak sector of Fiume but remained in what was now, according to the agreement, the "Free State" of

MUSSOLINI IX LONDON



Press Portrait Bureau

Fascism's first collaborative contact with the Allied Powers' Mussolini during his visit to London in December 1922 in conference with the late M. Poincaré, Mr. Bonar Law and M. Theunis when the Italian Premier first officially announced that Italy considered reparations and war debts as one inseparable problem.

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Fiume. This included the Delta and Porto Baros, which Count Sforza had conceded to Yugoslavia. They also agreed to withdraw from all other points of the Dalmatian seaboard except Zara.

This arrangement, however, was unsatisfactory for everyone—Italy, Yugoslavia and most of all for the " Free State " itself. But it afforded the resemblance of relief to the Adriatic tension. The economic impossibility of Fiume's existence as a *corpus separatum* was left out of count for the time being.

Developing his policy of bilateral commercial treaties, Mussolini continued during this 1922-1923 period to sign trade agreements with France, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Spain. His Government approved the Washington Conference for naval reduction. In short, foreign opinion became reassured with the peaceful and constructive methods being followed by this revolutionary and outspoken leader of a new Italy.

So far no question had been raised by any foreign Power which could put Mussolini's principles to a crucial test. All the *do ut des* business was on a basis of reciprocal respect. And Mussolini at this phase of his policy himself raised no vital issue to challenge his neighbours.

Abroad, as at home, he was, in fact, quietly building up the prestige of his Government and country, making good the losses of the past ten years, and strengthening Italy for whatsoever eventualities might befall.

That was the position until August 1923, when the relative tranquillity of Mussolini's Government was rudely shaken into violent action. And this first shock was in foreign affairs, an Albanian and Corfu incident with the Greeks.

CHAPTER XIX

GUNS AT CORFU

Italian Mission murdered in Albania. Mussolini holds Greece Responsible. Ultimatum to Athens. Corfu Bombarded. Refugees Hit. World and Geneva Reaction. Greece Accepts Italy's Terms. The Fiume Crisis.

AN Italian topographical military mission was, during August 1923, carrying out a delicate task to which it had been entrusted by the Peace Conference of Ambassadors, namely, a local survey of land for a demarcation of the Greco-Albanian frontier. The Greeks were anxious that any deviation of the frontier should not compromise their complete mastery of the Corfu straits ; and the hostility of the Greek population began to manifest itself against the mission as they saw it working its way south into the zone which compromised their interests. That the work of the mission was merely to gather data and make a topographical report did not lessen the animosity of the Epirite natives, an animosity which also had expression in the Greek Press.

On August 27, a group of men reported by eyewitnesses to be dressed in Greek uniforms, but believed to be bandits, ambushed the Italians in their car near Yanina. The entire mission, consisting of a general, a major of the medical service, a lieutenant, a soldier chaffeur—all Italians—and an Albanian interpreter, were massacred in cold blood.

News of this reached Rome on August 28. Mussolini's measures were immediate and energetic. On

the same night the Italian fleet at Taranto was mobilised and the next day his Government presented Athens with a peremptory Note asserting the responsibility of the Greek Government in that it did not afford adequate protection to a mission which was operating in conjunction with the Greek authorities, and that the Greek Government had not checked an inflammatory Press. The Note then demanded the fullest explanations and most solemn public apologies, an immediate and severe enquiry into the affair, a ceremony of expiation in Athens Cathedral with specific honours to the Italian flag, the arrest and execution of the murderers and an indemnity of fifty million lire.

The Note was of course an ultimatum—it gave the Greeks twenty-four hours to accept the terms—and it came as a surprise packet for those who looked on the new-born League of Nations as the arbiter of peace. The cry of horror that the murders had aroused was nothing to the cry of horror that was raised when Mussolini decided that Italy should deal with this matter by herself and the terms of the ultimatum became known.

The Greek Government questioned its responsibility for the massacre, refused the capital punishment clause and offered other reparations, declaring that if these terms were unacceptable it was prepared to submit the affair to Geneva. Italy's answer on the expiration of the twenty-four hours was the bombardment of Corfu.

On August 31 an Italian squadron appeared off the island. The intention to occupy Corfu was announced and as the Greek flag was not lowered in surrender the battleships opened fire. Some of the shots hit the

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fort in which, unknown to the Italians, there was a large concentration of Near-East refugees from Turkish territory. Accounts of the casualties among these unfortunate wretches vary, but the most authoritative record puts the numbers at 20 killed, including 16 children, and 80 wounded. Italian marines thereafter formally "occupied" the island.

Greece immediately appealed to the League of Nations. World distrust of Mussolini's political action was excited and angered by the news of the casualties among the refugees.

Liberals of other countries who had watched the Fascist experiment in Italy with grave misgivings found in this Corfu incident the justification of all their fears. It was Liberalism which confronted Italy at Geneva. The Greek protest was accepted by Lord Robert Cecil and Geneva's attitude was seconded by Lord Curzon. The question of the Italian Mission brutally murdered while carrying out the mandate of the Conference of Ambassadors was by this time almost completely lost sight of. It was Italy not Greece that was on trial. While willing that the incident should be examined by the Conference of Ambassadors whose orders the mission had been carrying out, Mussolini instructed Salandra to tell Geneva that if it decided to intervene then Italy would forthwith leave the League.

This threat put a brake on the gathering impetus of League action against Italy, but it had quite another effect on the world's Press. With the bombardment of Corfu and the defiance of the League as starting-points, newspapers the world over opened an alarmist campaign in which every side and phase of Fascism was severely criticised. Encour-

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aged by this apparent rise of anti-Italian or anti-Fascist feeling, Belgrade joined Athens in lodging protests at Geneva. Yugoslavia opened the Fiume question and pointed to the dangers of a repetition of the Italian bombardment on the Dalmatian towns of the Adriatic.

The Conference of the Ambassadors stood outside the Geneva storm and repeated the Italian terms to Greece. Athens at length consented to carry out Italy's demands. Immediately after their execution, Corfu was evacuated—and the League of Nations' *furore* died down. Having duly received the 50 million lire indemnity, the Italian Government handed it back for distribution among the Armenian and other refugees of Asia Minor. Attention now swung round to the Italian-Yugoslav position and many people were convinced that a new war was imminent.

The population of Fiume, badly governed, without finances or trade, was almost in a state of starvation. The *corpus separatum* was reduced to skin and bone. Complete economic emaciation was staved off by the appointment of a Governor with funds to revive at least the passive life of the ill-starred community. From being the be-all and the end-all of Italian foreign policy, Fiume had become a thorn in Italy's flank. On account of the essential part it had played in the post-war assertion of Italian patriotism and in the development of the Fascist idea, and on account of the part that d'Annunzio had played in its bloody acquisition for Italy, the slogan of "Italianity" had to be kept up, even when the place had sunk to a moribund and superfluous port. Fiume had been one of the most spectacular ladders up which the Fascists had climbed to power. It would not do to kick it down

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now, even for Fiume's own good. Blackshirt parades still waved flags in its streets and by its empty docks. At the end of 1923 Mussolini opened new negotiations with Yugoslavia for the final settlement of Fiume's future.

CHAPTER XX

ACTIONS AND COUNTER-ACTIONS

Unrest Inside the Party and Without. Mussolini's Round-up. " Illegality " Accusations. Italian Masons. Freemasonry declared " incompatible " with Fascism. Popular's Trade Unions ousted. Demands to Disband Fascist Militia. "Normalisation" Fiume settled. General Election. Opposition Disintegration. Fascist Victory. Opposition Increases. Amendola and Matteotti.

THE flood-gates of criticism which the Corfu and the Fiume questions had opened at Geneva and elsewhere abroad gave an appearance of anti-Fascist solidarity among Liberals and Democrats the world over. The same elements in Italy found encouragement in this to show more openly their opposition to the Fascist regime.

Those of the right, including the old leaders, Salandra, Orlando and Giolitti, remained as flanking supporters of the Mussolini reformation ; but many from the Centre—influenced by the arguments against Fascism, or anticipating its collapse, or alone through loyalty to Liberal principles—began a drift to the Left, where they joined the forces of the Popular and Socialist parties which were openly opposed to Mussolini. Unruly groups and individuals among the Fascists—time-servers, bullies and opportunists—who had worked their way into posts of Government administrative and Party control in Rome and in the provinces, also helped to undermine the first popularity of the Fascist movement.

Mussolini was only too aware of these undesirable

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followers, and efforts were made to purge the party. In this general unrest the Communists once more lifted their heads. They were no longer able to have any mass influence on the people, but they had old scores to pay off—and they paid them off with ambushes and murders. Mussolini could evidently not yet afford to demobilise the fighting spirit of his *squadristi* or Militia, because the subversive forces were all still well armed.

In a speech to the Senate on June 8, 1923, Mussolini reported that during March and April of that year a round-up of " the so-called subversive elements " had been carried out together with the seizure of their munitions. He announced that in that period they had sequestered 29,257 army pattern rifles ; 1048 revolvers and automatics ; 7288 daggers and 249 varied arms; 1,110,000 rifle cartridges; 82,000 revolver cartridges ; 1086 bombs, petards and infernal machines ; 29 cases of dynamite ; 2,655 shot-guns, 2444 sporting-type short-guns; and 1089 knives with dagger handles.

The inevitable armed Blackshirt reaction to armed aggression built up a situation in which Italians were either Fascists or anti-Fascists. The question of the " illegality " of the raids carried out by the *squadristi* under the aegis of the Government raised constitutional issues which inflamed the Liberal theorists, but did not move Mussolini from his double task of suppressing disorders and trying to keep his own followers from contributing to these disorders. He judged from the history of Italy and from his knowledge of the present situation that any concessions to the old demagogic principles of democratic rule must lead to a fresh influx of the extremist Left

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with repetition of the old disasters of strikes and social troubles.

In his task of clarifying the attachment of his own Blackshirts and of many who were not actually of the Party, Mussolini in 1923 and in 1924 openly declared war against the Freemasons. On February 12, 1923, the Grand Fascist Council decided " that in view of recent political events and the attitude and decisions of Freemasonry, which justify the belief that Freemasonry follows a programme and adopts methods in contrast with those inspiring all the activity of Fascism, the Grand Fascist Council invites all Fascists who are Masons to choose between one or the other and to belong either to the National Fascist Party or to Freemasonry, since there is only one discipline—that of Fascism, and only one obedience—that of absolute loyal and daily obedience to the head and the leader of Fascism."

International Freemason reaction hastened the conclusion of Mussolini's measures. In August 1924 the Fascist Council resolved that it was " incompatible for any Fascist to belong to any sect or secret society, and especially to Freemasonry, whether of the Giustiniani Palace or of Piazza del Gesu." An internal schism had divided Italian Masons into two groups popularly known by the name of the buildings they occupied in the Giustiniani Palace and the Piazza del Gesu. The Giustiniani Masons had been attacking latter-day Fascism while the Piazza del Gesu Masons had been striving to display loyalty. Both claimed to have contributed to the March on Rome and Masonry had old ties with Italian nationalism dating to Risorgimento times ; but Mussolini considered that Masonry, as a secret international body, had not only

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given evidence of influences, tendencies and actions inimical to Fascist absolutism, but that its hour had struck as a vehicle of patriotic service. It was a move, however, that won him favour in the eyes of the Vatican. To say that it was done for that purpose is to ignore Mussolini's old and known hostility to the Masons, already rampant, as we have seen, in his pre-war Socialist days.

If his anti-Masonic measures won the approval of the Vatican at this juncture, his Syndicalist trade union progress got him the increasing enmity of the Clericals as far as these were represented by Don Sturzo and the Popular Party. The so-called "Christian" Trade Unions were the apple of Don Sturzo's eye and his strongest weapon of power among the masses. The gradual penetration of the Fascist Unions, backed up by laws and physical persuasion, rapidly ousted Church influence—and again added to those working against the new regime.

These events at home and abroad were exaggerated in Press polemics, Fascist and otherwise. The air was foul with the mud and flying garbage of newspaper diatribes. The grossest insults, the vilest accusations, scandal-mongering and incentives to violence filled column after column of a Press only controlled, on every side, by fear of raids and thrashings.

Through all this Mussolini ploughed his way with a steady programme of Fascist reforms. Confident in the knowledge that he carried the country with him, and impatient with the drag which his effort at party co-operation was imposing on his progress, he decided to put the whole issue to the nation. In the Spring of 1924 he accordingly dissolved the Chamber and ordered a general election.

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The decks were cleared for his appeal to the ballot box, so that the campaign was fought out on the question of "normalisation."* The Opposition and anti-Fascist forces wanted the Blackshirt Militia abolished and the old parliamentary system restored in its entirety. Mussolini on the other hand intended to demonstrate that Fascism, with the Blackshirt Militia as the integral expression of its character and the guarantee of its strength, had a normalisation of its own to give to Italy—the normalisation of unhindered business government.

The question of Fiume which had for so many years confused and complicated Italian affairs, home and foreign, had at length been settled and so did not add to the difficulties of the election. The Fiume affair was arranged at the beginning of 1924 by Italy handing back Porto Baros and the Delta to Yugoslavia. In return for Italian recognition of full Yugoslav sovereign rights over these sectors and Sussak, Yugoslavia recognised full Italian sovereign rights over Fiume. And thus the work of d'Annunzio was completed. In recognition of this the poet was created Prince of Monte Nevoso, the mountain which marks the limits of Italy's frontier at that part. On March 16, 1924, Fiume, in presence of the King of Italy, celebrated its annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. And that was that for better or for worse. The Convention for Fiume formed part of the Treaty of Friendship signed at Rome on January 27, 1924, by Mussolini and Ninchich.

Polling day for the general election in Italy was fixed for April 6 and the electoral campaign was developed with such bitterness and strife, with such fights and casualties, that it sometimes looked as if Mussolini

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was beginning his Revolution all over again. The exigencies of the contest revived the combative spirit of the *squadristi* and additions were made to their ranks which added more to the strength than to the discipline and credit of the Militia.

It is instructive to note that even in 1924 the fatal blight of political divisionism still persisted among the democratic elements of Italy. Apart from the Fascists, no fewer than twenty-three parties or groups came forward with lists. The names and programmes of these parties revealed that the old regional interests of which I have written in the chapters dealing with pre-war parliamentarianism sprang up again as soon as the Communist menace had died down—parties which were the affirmation of parochialism and of suicidal political hair-splitting; groups which were the negation of unity and, in their multiplicity, the self-willed negation of the very democracy they professed to worship. In fact several of the parties had so little politico-philosophical basis at all that they were named after their provincial leaders.

It is enough to read the titles of these parties to understand how democracy collapsed before the cohorts of the Fascists under one directing mind. The list of parties for the 1924 suffrage included the following: the Pellegrino Labour Group; the South Italian Liberals; the Unitarian Socialists; the Second National List; the Popular Party; the Liberal Flankers; the Social Democratic Party; the South Italian Constitutional Opposition Party; the Graziano List; the Republican Party; the Italian Highland Constitutional Opposition; the Native German and Slav List (*Allogeni*); the Independent Democrats; the Dissident Fascist Group; the Peasants⁵

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Party ; the de Bellis List; the Sardinian Party of Action ; the Liberal (Giolittian) Party ; the Communist Party ; the Flamingo List; the Independent Liberal Party; the Italian Socialist (Maximalist) Party ; and the National Fascist Party.

The poll of April 6 was exceptionally heavy for Italy—sixty-three per cent of the total electors ; and it was a clamorous victory for Mussolini and the Fascists. Out of the total 7,151,334 votes recorded the Fascists scored 4,294,815—surpassing by millions their two nearest rivals, the Populars and the Unitarian Socialists, the former getting 646,022 votes and the latter 419,946 votes. It will be noted that the official Nationalist Party, whose rise in 1911 and progress thereafter has been traced in these pages, does not appear, save as a " rump," in the 1924 election lists. As an act of consolidation that historic Party, long before the 1924 elections, formally merged itself in the Fascist Party. The committees of the two parties had officially co-operated ever since November 30, 1922 : the parties were fused on February 26, 1923.

When the new Chamber met in June it had at least on the right and back benches an unusually youthful appearance, because the Fascist Government had reduced the age minimum from thirty to twenty-five and many of the new Deputies were just within the limit. In a division of Fascists and anti-Fascists—for that was what in effect the Chamber resolved itself into—the Chamber for most issues could be divided into 380 Fascists and 155 anti-Fascists—the Fascist Party's actual 355 Deputies getting the support of the Dissident Fascist and National rumps, the provisional support of the Giolitti Liberal and Constitutional Democratic groups. The Opposition at this stage was made

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up of all the other numerous sectors of Left opinion in three *blocs* led by the Populists, the Socialists and Communists, and the Democratic Socialists. Most of the old leaders like Salandra and Giolitti and Orlando were returned, but Mussolini formed what was practically a Fascist Nationalist Cabinet, taking over himself, as extra portfolios, Foreign Affairs and that of Air Commissary.

It was at once apparent when the Chamber first assembled after the elections that trouble was brewing. Despite the sweeping Fascist victory, which really represented general public conviction, the Opposition mobilised themselves into a keen and sleepless critical force—more so than even before the elections, when their opponents were fewer in the Chamber and were without the mandate of the suffrage.

The first thing attacked was the validity of the elections. The Fascists were openly accused of violating the liberty and secrecy of the voting booth and of intimidating the electorate. Mussolini in a long speech, delivered after the debate on the Speech in reply to the Crown, admitted and deplored certain acts of Fascist aggression and said that the perpetrators would be punished. On the other hand he said that the Fascist casualties during the elections were 18 killed and 147 wounded. He told the House " to get it well into their heads " that he did not intend to disband the Militia, but that nevertheless he meant to transform it into a more regular arm of the State.

He welcomed the fact of an Opposition " as educative and formative." He declared that it was not the Opposition but its manner of opposing that irritated him ! He told them, however, that he was going to go right ahead with his programme despite the Opposi-

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tion's accusations of flouting liberty, of acting illegally and of refusing their definition of "normalisation." "We feel that we represent the Italian people," he concluded, "and we declare that we have the right to fight on and to demolish the sterile monuments of your ideology; we have the right and the duty to scatter the ashes of your hatreds and also of our own, in order to cure the august body of the nation with a potent lymph."

Mussolini's speech, while affirming his personal determination to carry through his projects at all costs, was a challenge to the Opposition which was answered with a disturbing sequence of minor incidents, irritating and disquieting for the whole country. The two most persistent, outspoken and influential leaders of the Opposition groups—that is, the anti-Fascist *bloc*—were Giovanni Amendola and Giacomo Matteotti. Amendola had been a member of the Cabinets of Nitti and Facta. He was the political writer of the principal Liberal newspaper // *Mondo* and was the leader of the Constitutional Opposition. Matteotti was Political Secretary of the Unitarian Socialists. He was a wealthy man, cultured and held in affection by all who knew him.

While Amendola in his speeches attacked Fascist principles and methods, Matteotti attacked Fascist administration and administrators. Despite the turmoil of the period, Mussolini's speech, above referred to, had made a good effect on public opinion. The country was with him, and the prospects of a return to normality were good, when the news of the "suppression" of Matteotti fell like a bolt from the blue.

The murder of Matteotti is virtually a barred subject in Fascist Italy, not because of the disagreeable

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facts inherent in the crime itself, but on account of the political speculation which has been attached to it. The affair plays a very important part in the history of the Fascist movement. It led to a series of events which provoked the dissolution of any further attempt at collaboration and hastened the applications of Mussolini's political ideas on a basis of absolutism.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MATTEOTTI SET-BACK

The Kidnapping and Murder of Matteotti. Public Horror. Fascist Action. Arrest of Suspects. Mussolini's " Solemn Oath." Opposition Opportunism. Retirement to Aventine. The " moral question." Mussolini Outlines Reform. Farinacci. Effect Abroad. Murder of Casalini. Country begins to rally back. Aventine Suicide. The Budget Balanced.

ON the afternoon of June 10, 1924, the Unitarian Socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti left his house by the Tiber side—and did not return. His wife reported his absence to the police on the following day, and witnesses came forward to say that they had seen him assaulted at his doorstep and, struggling, thrust into a motor car which then drove off at high speed northwards out of the city. The news of the kidnapping spread like wildfire, causing a ferment of emotion everywhere. The general conviction was that he had been assassinated, and the Opposition conviction was that he had been assassinated by Fascists. On June 12 Mussolini announced that he had himself given orders to the police to intensify their search for the missing Deputy and added that they were already on the tracks of suspects. " Nothing would be neglected to throw light on the affair, to arrest the guilty and deliver them to justice." Within twenty-four hours the bloodstained car was traced and the three men who rode in it with Matteotti were arrested. A group of their associates who belonged to the *Arditi* Fascists of Milan was also arrested. Mandates of arrest were issued against three prominent Fascists who

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were suspected of being behind the crime : Cesare Rossi, Head of the Cabinet Press Bureau at the Home Office ; Marinelli, Secretary-General of the Fascist Party, and Filipelli a Fascist editor. Of these three, Rossi ultimately escaped to France, to be captured by the Fascists much later.

A feeling of horror swept over the country which was shared in by all respectable Fascists and by none more than Mussolini, who saw all his plans threatened with ruin at one blow. In the Chamber Fascist after Fascist rose to denounce the deed. " We can hardly say whether our indignation or our humiliation is the greater," was one phrase spoken which reflected the party feeling. " Only some enemy of mine who lay awake at night plotting something devilish against me could have thought out this crime," cried Mussolini when giving his solemn oath in the name of his Government and Party that justice would be done regardless of consequences.

The crime as a crime rapidly fell into second place. Its political implications soon completely dominated the already confused situation. The Premier's immediate efforts to bring the actual criminals to justice, together with a speeding-up of party reform, only partially assured a public whose faith in Fascism had been rudely shaken. Mindful of what the new regime had done for the social recovery of Italy, the people nevertheless could not reconcile the " right " with the " might " of Fascism. Italy yearned for the return to normality which had been promised them by Mussolini.

The more violent elements among the Opposition parties—unlike the people—were not troubled with the niceties of private conscience and public good except as

a wholesale anti-Fascist and anti-crime weapon. They seized the strong arguments to hand. Along with the Socialists and Communists they made widespread propaganda of Matteotti's death, taunting the Fascists and inciting the public against them. Indeed the middle Parties danced to the Socialist piping and lent almost the whole weight of their Press to an endeavour to destroy the existing regime.

As a protest the Opposition parties left the Chamber. Likening their action to that of the plebs in the internal struggles of early Rome they declared that, metaphorically, they had withdrawn to the Aventine. They created what they called " the moral question " and indicated in a confusion of manifestos the terms upon which they would return to the Chamber and parliamentary rule. Their principal demands were the abolishment of the Fascist Militia; Mussolini's abandonment of full powers; the dismissal of the Government; the dissolution of the Chamber; and new elections.

The Communists, with more astute political wisdom, did not desert the Chamber. They recognised that their best pitch for the political battle into which the Matteotti crime had degenerated was either the barricades or Parliament, certainly not a remote Aventine. The old leaders, Giolitti and Salandra, also saw the Constitutional Opposition's mistake, so they too stayed in the Chamber, but no longer as definitely flank supporters of the Fascists—although in a readjustment which Mussolini had made in his Cabinet to restore confidence, he replaced Fascists by members of the Liberal groups. The Under-Secretary of Home Affairs was dismissed and Mussolini himself handed over his Home Affairs portfolio to the ex-Nationalist Federzoni. The March on Rome Quadrumvirate De

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Bono, who was now Chief of Police, was also moved to another post.

Even the ex-Servicemen (800,000 strong and well organised in their various associations), while always in sympathy with Fascist ideals, wrestled with doubt and offered conditional allegiance. The Labour trade-union members now within the Fascist trade-union organisations grew boldly restive. With the country excited up to this condition the Opposition redoubled its attacks, provoking fierce replies and fiercer incidents. The Press preached revenge.

In the Senate—a body supposedly non-party in character but mostly composed of men of the old school of Democratic, Liberal thought—Mussolini outlined his programme of reform and defied the Opposition. He reminded the Senators that his party was a revolutionary one, and added : " Insurrections, like all great social movements, bring together the good and the bad, ascetics and rogues, idealists and profiteers, those who are violent from motives of fanaticism and those who are violent from motives of lucre. Selection, difficult enough in normal times, is much more difficult in exceptional times ; and it sometimes happens that the need of revision is accelerated by the alarm-bell of some unexpected crime." His work of selection, he explained, had been more than ever difficult with the enormous heap of problems and work which had confronted him since the March on Rome.

Analysing the behaviour of the various parties of the Opposition Mussolini told the Senate :

The Communists have tried to profit by the unfortunate episode to incite the masses to a general strike and to restore the dictatorship of the workers and the peasants. But there

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has been no strike, because the masses have repelled the Communist suggestions. The rhythm of labour, except for a few hours in limited localities, has not been disturbed.

The Republicans have once more demanded the reconstruction of the Constitution,—an absurd demand, which has no political or historical justification half a century after the National Plebiscite.

The Constitutional Democratic Opposition tend to avoid the Aventine *bloc* because they do not think it opportune to take on extremist responsibilities.

The Maximalist Socialists, the Unitarian Socialists, the Populars and the other lesser elements advance absurd pretensions which aim at a species of *coup d'Etat* with the intention of annulling the suffrage of April 6.

Mussolini then re-affirmed his own attitude :

The goal of my general policy of government remains unchanged : to achieve, at whatsoever cost, political normality and national pacification ; to carry out, with assiduous daily vigilance, the process of purification of the Party ; and to dispel energetically the last residues of any non-legal behaviour.

This speech had good effect. Out of 252 Senators, 225 passed a vote of confidence in Mussolini, 21 voting against and 6 abstaining. The result on the country was steadying. The discovery of the body of Matteotti dead in a ditch about twelve miles north of Rome re-kindled the fuel, but as far as the Government was concerned it only meant the hastening of the preliminaries for the trial of suspects held in arrest—a task, however, which was hindered by an action against De Bono, as will be duly described.

The aim of the Opposition was to fasten responsibility for the Matteotti crime on to the Fascist Government. It insisted that there existed in the Home Office a species of *Cheka*. They blamed General De

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Bono, alleging that as Chief of Police he was cognisant of the kidnapping plan and made it easy for the criminals.

During that summer of 1924 the anti-Fascist campaign in the provincial areas raged with special bitterness and bloodshed, with enormous mass manifestations organised by the Fascists in Bologna, Florence, Turin and Venice. Out of this tempest there blew the figure of Farinacci. He was a "first-hour" Fascist of Cremona, well known to his Party and Province. He now became a national figure whose extremely energetic, hot-spirited and uncompromising character, coupled with personal integrity, made him the leader of the Blackshirt counter-offensive. Just as Mussolini was the symbol of the spiritual intransigence of Fascism, so was Farinacci the symbol of its physical intransigence. The Fascists had marched on Rome, and Farinacci saw to it that they would march on any place or against any person who opposed them now.

In the Opposition newspapers and in the democratic Press of foreign countries, Mussolini and the Fascists were depicted as tyrannous ogres who should be wiped out—wild extravagances of expression which gradually disgusted the Italian masses, who began to realise that the whole attack was all a sinister political game detrimental to Italy. Feelings were then shocked into reaction by another murder. This time it was a Fascist Deputy, Casalini. He was slaughtered by a Communist in a crowded public tramway in the centre of Rome.

In the immediate Government orders to the Fascists demanding restraint and forbidding acts of revenge, and in the practically complete obedience to these orders—in face of a provocation that moved even the

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non-partisan elements throughout Italy—popular confidence in Fascism began to be reborn. The gulf between the Fascists and the flanking Liberals became almost bridged. The ex-Servicemen looked again towards their old friends and champions. Mussolini touring the country north and south was everywhere met with the acclamation of a people whose enthusiasm for Fascism had apparently been restored. The movement was once again the symbol of national cohesion and progress. The *Duce* was again hailed, as before, the inspired leader of Italy.

The more the people rallied to Mussolini the more desperate the Opposition became in its effort to prolong interest in the Matteotti case. It was their only weapon left, because their political Aventine campaign failed for the same reason that all campaigns demanding cohesion among Italian political parties of the old school had failed ever since 1870—they could not agree.

Not even the drastic decision to withdraw to the Aventine could induce the various parties concerned to take common action. Instead they split themselves up into still smaller groups. They created new parties and camouflaged the old ones under new names so as to tempt desertions from Fascism. That was about all they achieved. In short they went on to the Aventine and proceeded to commit political suicide.

When they realised their tactical mistake, when they saw that the country was not following them *en masse*, and when they witnessed the Fascist recovery, the Aventine parties, some in groups and others individually, tried to re-enter the Chamber. It was then that they met Farinacci in Rome. Broken as a moral entity they were easily dispersed—and their dispersion

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meant the *debacle* of the Opposition as such. Henceforth they were looked on as anti-Fascist, and treated accordingly. The bludgeon and the castor-oil bottle which had terrorised the Communists and Socialists became the means of reducing to impotence the last leaders of the Democratic parties in Italy.

In the midst of all this trouble, which had looked like wrecking Fascist stabilisation, a very remarkable piece of news was published. It was announced that the National Budget had not only been balanced, but that there was a surplus. At the time of the March on Rome the Budget deficit was 15,760 million lire. In one year of reform that deficit was reduced to 3,028 million lire; by 1923-1924 the deficit had shrunk to 419 million lire. The 1924-1925 balance showed a surplus of 417 million lire. This apparent miracle was performed by Finance Minister De Stefani, one of the most remarkable men in Mussolini's movement. De Stefani had been a Professor of Economics at the Technical Institute of Vicenza, a modest retiring expert with ideas of his own—a man quite unknown outside his immediate circle. Mussolini had faith in his theories, and De Stefani more than justified that trust. His triumph in this matter of balancing the Budget, by restoring a sense of confidence, contributed in no small measure towards recovering the shaken prestige of the revolution.

In June 1924 the Opposition and anti-Fascists had taken the initiative. When the year closed they had lost it.

CHAPTER XXII

MUSSOLINI RETAKES THE INITIATIVE

Mussolini claims Responsibility. Attacks Aventine. Fascism becomes Absolute. Corporate State outlined. Capital and Labour both warned. Constitutional Reform Commission. The Fascist "Way of Life." "The Goal is Empire."

ON New Year's Day, 1925, Mussolini retook the initiative and moved rapidly to a political counter-attack against the Opposition anti-Fascists. The assault was unexpected, strong and frontal.

The Premier had without warning convened his Cabinet. The Opposition believed that this was a prelude to the resignation of the Ministry and the fall of Mussolini ; but it was not. It was a meeting to decide the opening of an offensive calculated to rout the Opposition, and to fix the zero hour of attack. For weeks the Fascists had threatened a "second wave" to the March on Rome for the completion of their revolutionary power. It was no "second" wave of marching columns, however, that advanced to reconquest by physical force. It was with a fighting Chamber speech by Mussolini that Fascism at one stroke recovered all lost ground.

One of the most influential of the anti-Fascist newspapers had published a telling leader asserting that Mussolini and his Cabinet ought to be arraigned and punished for anti-Constitutionalism. That stung Mussolini into action. On January 3 he launched his famous speech before a re-assembled Chamber—from

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which, however, the Aventine groups were absent. He first replied to the newspaper leader with a taunting challenge. " Article 47 of the Statute says : ^c The Chamber of Deputies has the right to bring a suit of accusation against the Ministers of the King and to bring them before the High Court of Justice.' I formally demand if there is anyone, in this Chamber or out of it, who wishes to apply that Article 47 ? "

After denying the existence of a *Cheka* he condemned the parties which had left the Chamber for the Aventine. He argued that it was not he but the Aventinists who were unconstitutional. " The Aventine secession is above all anti-constitutional and revolutionary." The anti-Fascist Press of the Aventine parties had " disgraced Italy for three months," he said, " with a campaign in which the most fantastic, the most terrifying and the most gruesome lies had been spread daily in all their newspapers." Recapitulating the measures he had taken and was continuing to take for a return to normality and to stamp out illegal actions he added that there were " today hundreds and hundreds of Fascists in prison."

Then in slow, deliberate tones he said : " I hereby declare in face of this Assembly and in face of all the Italian people that I and I alone assume the political, moral and historical responsibility for everything that has befallen. If more or less mutilated phrases are enough to hang a man—then out with the gibbet and up with the rope ! If Fascism has only been castor-oil and clubs and not, instead, a superb passion of the best Italian youth—the fault is mine. If Fascism has been an association of criminals, if all the violence has been the outcome of a certain historical, political and moral atmosphere—again the responsibility is

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mine, because that historical, political and moral atmosphere is one which I have created with a propaganda lasting from the intervention in the Great War until today."

He then accused the Aventine of nurturing Republican aims so as to hit Fascism from that angle, and he tabulated a list of Fascists killed and assailed in recent months in conflicts with anti-Fascists of the Aventine parties whose activities were shown to have encouraged a re-awakening of the Reds with consequent incidents of bloodshed and incendiarism in Mestre, Valombra, Venice and Padua. " You see from this that the situation of the Aventine has had profound repercussions in all the country. And now the time has come to cry, ' Enough ! ' When two irreducible elements are in conflict the only solution lies in force. There has never been another solution in history, and there never will be. The Government is sufficiently strong to break the sedition of the Aventine fully and definitely."

In peroration Mussolini said : " Italy, *O Signori*, wishes peace, tranquillity and a working calm. These things we will give, with love if it be possible ; with force if it be necessary. You may rest assured that within 48 hours from the utterance of this speech, the situation will be clarified all over. And all know that this is not said for personal caprice, or for governmental wantonness or for an ignoble passion, but for boundless and all-possessing love of Italy."

In the midst of a Fascist ovation which marked the conclusion of the speech an Opposition motion criticising the Government's conduct was read and then withdrawn, and the House rose *sine die* without the expected debate on Mussolini's statement being

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allowed to open. Immediately afterwards Mussolini summoned the Ministers of the Interior and Communications, the General in Command of the *Carabinieri* and the Director-General of the Police to his office at Palazzo Chigi and gave orders that all sabotage and violence by Fascists or anti-Fascists was to be severely repressed. Cavalry and infantry troops guarded the Opposition newspapers.

The position had resolved itself into this—Mussolini had appeased his extremists without giving way to them ; he avoided disquieting the flanking parties ; he had put the onus on the Opposition to disprove seditionism ; he regained his own full initiative and intimated his liberty of action ; and he mobilised the forces to check violence in all quarters. In short, he succeeded in pulling the chestnuts out of the fire.

But these were merely the immediate aspects of his speech. Its real importance was that it marked the speedier application of Mussolini's revolutionary ideas of government. He was no longer going to attempt or pretend to work in collaboration with any of the other parties. He was no longer going to introduce his Fascist principles through a gradual modification of the superstructure of the existing State : instead he began to prepare new foundations.

This meant no difference in Mussolini's plan nor in the Fascist programme. It only meant a different line of approach to the same plan and programme—the construction of a new State—and on January 23, 1925, the Fascist Grand Council declared that the general basis of this new State was to be found in Fascist Trade Union Syndicalism. " The Council reconfirms that syndicalist action is an integral part of the Fascist movement and idea." A resolution passed by the

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Council emphasized " the ever-increasing importance of the worker, freed from those universal Utopias which are regularly contradicted by events."

The Council's resolution then postulated that class co-operation and not class warfare was the goal of the Syndicates—" their specific task is the defence of labour, but without denying the task of capital, subordinated in its turn to the exigencies of production and of the nation." It added that " the Italian nation, being poor in raw materials and ready capital, but rich in man-power, must of necessity organise itself as one unit to confront the struggle dominated by State hegemonies. It therefore finds in Fascist Syndical discipline, which with new feelings co-ordinates the intellectual and manual masses of labour, the essential foundation of its expansion."

Warning both capital and labour of the consequences of nurturing any " culpable incomprehension " of the national scope of the Syndicates, the resolution concluded : " In order to make sure of the disciplined development of the National Syndical movement, the Grand Council—rejecting the criterion of demo-Liberal agnosticism—recognises that Syndical action on an unitarian national basis must indispensably find harmonious response in the institutes and functions of the State. It therefore considers the solution of the problem of the inclusion of the organised economic forces in the life of the State to be of fundamental importance in the preparation of the new legislation of the Fascist State."

During the spring other decisions were taken for reforms calculated to remould the State and Constitution ; and for the pursuance of this purpose a Commission of Eighteen—known to the critics as "the

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Solomons"—was constituted. As this phase of applied Fascism got more and more under way, Mussolini enlarged his appeal for the inclusion of all Italian life and thought within the orbit of Fascism. Into the practical he wove the mystic : to the material he added the ethical. His watchword became " All the power to all Fascism," and he summarized his movement by saying : " Fascism is today a Party, a Militia, a Corporation. That is not enough. It must become something more. It must become a way of life. There ought to be Italians of Fascism, just as there have been characters who were unmistakably the Italians of the Renaissance and the Italians of Latinity. It is only by creating a way of life—that is, a manner of living—that we can make our mark on the page of history and not merely on the page of current news. In developing this theme he said :

What then is this way of life ? Courage first of all. Intrepidity, love of risk, repugnance of bloated self-satisfaction and lazy peace. To be always ready. To dare in the individual life as in the collective life. To abolish everything sedentary. Pride in every hour of the day to feel oneself Italian. Pride in the discipline of work. Respect for authority.

Through a work of selection we will create new generations ; and each new generation will have a definite task. It is through such methodic selection that Empires are created.

This is a proud dream, but I see it bit by bit becoming a reality. We do not refute the past. We consider that Liberalism has signified something in the history of Italy.

The goal is this : Empire.

This declaration was the culmination of a general Fascist propaganda of similar ideas carried out during the early months of 1925.

MUSSOLINI RETAKES THE INITIATIVE

The twenty-eight months encompassed by January 1925 (when the above-quoted Chamber speech and the Council resolution were made) and April 1927 (when the Labour Charter was published, the first Fascist levy made and the Fascist State declared "born" by the Council) mark a very important phase in the history of Fascism. Having already conquered, Fascism during this period dug itself in.

To tell the story of this period—January 1925 to April 1927—and to avoid the categories of events overlapping each other I will divide its leading interests in the following chapters into three parallel chronologies : (1) Opposition, anti-Fascist efforts ; Fascist measures of attack and defence, (2) Foreign, colonial and world policy, (3) Juridical growth of the new kind of State.

CHAPTER XXIII

WAR WITH THE ANTI-FASCISTS (1925-1927)

Beginning of 'Furusciti.' Suppressive Legislation. Freemasonry Out-lawed. The Zaniboni Plot. The "Matteotti Trial." Negligible sentences. Effect abroad. The Gibson attempt on Mussolini. The Lucetti Attempt. The Zamboni Attempt. Special Defence of State Tribunal Inaugurated. Death Sentence Re-introduced. 'Confinio' revived. The Chamber. Giolitti's last phase. Street Scenes.

THE Opposition, anti-Fascist efforts and the Fascist measures of attack and defence from January 3, 1925, onwards took on characteristics which were marked by desperation on the anti-Fascist side and by doctrinal changes on the part of the Fascist counter-measures. The Aventine effort ended in collapse, with the eventual exile of its leading exponents, who became *furusciti* with campaigns developed from Paris, Brussels and America ; while the Fascists, translating into legislation their doctrine of the supremacy of the Rights of the State over the old demo-Liberal belief of the Rights of Man, fortified their combativeness with laws which automatically made traitors of all opponents, with ample provision for dealing with them in that unfavourable light.

Liberalism no less than Communism was considered subversive—and it was of course infinitely more difficult to stamp out because it had an ideology behind it whose expression was nothing less than Twentieth Century world civilization, with mighty exponents in the great nations of Great Britain, the United States and France. Not the least strenuous and ambitious

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part of the Fascist programme of today is new Italy's effort to show the universal collapse of demo-Liberalism and the consequent justification of an universal Fascism—but that is getting ahead of my narrative.

The Aventine groups became in 1925 completely disintegrated and their leaders easy victims of Black-shirt pursuit. Farinacci was nominated Party Secretary—the most powerful and influential position that one can hold under Mussolini as far as the regime and the populace are concerned. This appointment was sufficient indication of the intransigent attitude which the Fascists meant to adopt—and Farinacci justified all expectations. In his piazza harangues he outdid all Chamber efforts in virulous violence. He kept the Blackshirt Militia continuously active in applying blows and castor-oil. He became the terror of the anti-Fascists. He held Italy under the *manganello*, while Mussolini got on with the job of reforming the State. Although originally a railway clerk, Farinacci was, and is, a man of keen active mind capable of much wider employment than the work of a clerk demands. With exemplary rapidity he qualified for the Italian Bar, adding a vigorously conducted legal practice to the frays of the street and piazzas. His relentless handling of the political situation was an essential contribution to the re-establishment of Fascist authority in Italy after the dark days of the Matteotti set-back.

The complications of the Matteotti case, augmented by the accusation of complicity brought against the Quadrumvirate and ex-Chief of Police, General De Bono, at the instance of a Liberal newspaper editor in March 1925, were slightly lessened by the decision of the Senatorial Court which absolved De Bono of the charge in June of the same year.

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The attacks against Freemasonry intensified, and further measures were taken to purge the Party of all Masonic members and to curtail the rights of assembly of the Masonic bodies. As a result of the general punitive measures against all antagonists there began a general exodus of anti-Fascists to other countries, where they were welcomed by a very mixed set of people whose only link in common was hatred and fear of Mussolini, his Fascists and Fascism.

From Liberal idealists to international Anarchists, every sector of the anti-Fascist world was represented in the *fuorusciti*. The addition of fugitive ex-Fascists like Cesare Rossi and dissident Fascists who had left the Fascist ranks over the "moral" and "normalisation" questions, provided the *fuorusciti* with still more material for the campaign which they began to open abroad. But there again the old story was repeated. The extremist Left elements among them quickly dominated all action. There was no unity of moderate thought to check them and there was of course no Government control to prevent the degeneracy of subversive thought into criminal action. Accordingly there began a series of assaults on Italian Government officials abroad. In America and in Europe consuls, consular officers, diplomats, and the officials of the Fascist groups established abroad became the targets of knife, bullet and bomb—violence abroad in answer to violence at home.

What was left of the Opposition at home had sunk to such low water that their only hope lay in a ghoulish expectation that a gastric attack from which Mussolini suffered during 1925 might prove fatal.

In November 1925 the Zaniboni plot for the assassination of Mussolini was discovered. Along with

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General Capello—commander of the Second Army during the war—and others, who were said to belong to Freemason groups, a plan was made whereby Zaniboni—Unitarian Socialist and an ex-army officer with a distinguished war record and one of the finest shots in the Italian Army—masquerading in Militia uniform took a room in an hotel with a window commanding the balcony of the Palazzo Chigi from which Mussolini was in the habit of acknowledging the cheers of the crowd. Behind the shutters he rigged up a rifle with telescopic sights. He was discovered and arrested about half an hour before Mussolini was due to appear to greet a November 4 Armistice Day parade. Fascist reaction was extreme and all Opposition newspapers were burned and their offices despoiled.

During November and December 1925, a series of repressive laws were passed against the Press, against secret societies, against the continued employment of non-Fascist civil servants and against the *fuorusciti*—who were "denationalised" and their estates confiscated. These measures led to a further exodus of the adversaries of Fascism from the shores of Italy.

By the beginning of 1926 it could be said that the Opposition was not only physically but also officially suppressed by legislation, together with its Press. What may be called the *piazza* or street-fighting aspect of this suppression of the anti-Fascists ended about this time with the almost complete elimination of their forces. As evidence that this bludgeon-work had been concluded, Farinacci was replaced by Augusto Turati as Party Secretary. Turati was a man of organising rather than rough-and-tumble ability, and

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his selection marked the character of the next phase of Fascism in its progress towards the full establishment of its doctrines as an integral expression of the State.

During March 1926 the trial of those accused of the assassination of Matteotti was at long last held. The case was heard in the courtroom of the out-of-the-way township of Chieti beyond the Abruzzi mountains. Of the considerable number of prisoners originally held for trial, several—including Marinelli, the ex-Secretary-General for the Party—had already been absolved from charges of complicity by the preliminary court of examination, and liberated. Others held on secondary charges were automatically liberated through amnesty measures. Five prisoners remained to face the tribunal at Chieti. With the principal prisoner Dumini, a Milan Fascist defended by Farinacci, the charge against them all was reduced from murder to manslaughter. Two were found not guilty. Dumini and two others were found guilty and condemned to twelve years' imprisonment each—but in consequence of various reductions these long periods of imprisonment resolved themselves into a matter of only a few months. But March 1926 was not June 1924 and neither the trial nor its results was able to make any outward stir in the Italian public, and this for three reasons : (1) the Opposition had overdone its propaganda on the case, (2) the Fascists had thoroughly cowed potential critics from any expression of adverse opinion, and (3) the public, apparently content to note the social order which the Fascist regime was so rapidly restoring, had become indifferent to the affair. Abroad, however, it fed the flames of fury among the *fuorusciti* and their foreign friends. A

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further series of consular assassinations and assaults broke out.

In April 1926 Mussolini again narrowly escaped being shot. This time it was a demented Irishwoman, Miss Violet Gibson, who made the attempt. She fired at him as he left a public meeting, the bullet cutting and lacerating his nostrils. Mussolini's comment was : " Bullets pass : I remain ! " but he also made a more far-reaching quotation : " If I advance, follow me. If I retreat, slay me. If I am killed, avenge me." On September 11, an Anarchist Lucetti threw a bomb at Mussolini's car. It struck the windows, but the driver accelerated and the grenade exploded without injuring the Duce. Eight onlookers were injured. On October 31 a young Anarchist, Zamboni, fired at Mussolini during Fascist celebrations at Bologna. The bullet was deflected by a decoration star which Mussolini happened to be wearing. Zamboni was lynched where he stood. Over forty dagger-stabs were afterwards counted on his mangled remains.

These things made it so obvious that the enemies of the regime were now relying on crime for the furtherance of their aims that the Fascist Government, with difficulty restraining the Blackshirt squads from acts of immediate revenge such as that committed on Zamboni, formulated a new series of enactments for the protection of the regime. What specially angered the Government was the conviction that certain countries, notably France, in giving shelter to the anti-Fascists or at least in not curbing their activities were intentionally acting to the hurt of Fascist Italy. Fascist Press propaganda fostered this notion.

Addressing an enormous crowd of citizens who had assembled outside the Palazzo Chigi just after his

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escape from the bomb of Lucetti, Mussolini exclaimed : " This is the third time that you, O Romans and Blackshirts, have called me to this balcony on the occasions of criminal attempts and I accept your formidable ovation as the symbol of the fullness of your faith and your devotion. First of all I beg you, when this manifestation is over, that there be no disturbance of public order. But all the same it is time to cry ' Enough ! ' After close meditation I have come to the conviction that it is necessary to apply new measures of defence, not for me—because I like to live in danger—but for the nation. The Italian nation, which works strenuously as is its duty and its privilege, its hope and its glory, cannot and must not be periodically disturbed by a band of criminals. Just as we have abolished the system of general, sympathetic and permanent strikes, so do we intend to put a brake on the series of attempts—even to the application of capital punishment. Thus it will become always less convenient to imperil the existence of the regime and the tranquillity of the Italian people."

The growing feeling that the French authorities were too lax in allowing the development of anti-Fascist activities on their soil and that they therefore shared an indirect responsibility in these crimes was voiced by Mussolini in the same speech when he said, " The culpable and unheard-of tolerance given beyond our frontiers must stop if the friendship of the Italian people is desired—friendship which might be fatally compromised by episodes of this kind."

By November 1926 these measures of protection were decreed. Chief among them was the formation of a " Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State." This was a Fascist court constituted to deal on court-

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martial lines with prisoners accused of political activities hostile to the regime. Originally constituted for five years, its spell of operations were prolonged in December 1931. This court has the faculty of giving life sentences and capital punishment. The death sentence was at this time re-introduced into Italy also for murder in civil crimes. In the cases of political crimes the death penalty is also applicable against those who are convicted of having made or plotted an attempt against the person of the King, the Crown Prince, the *Capo del Governo* and the Pope. The old Italian system of *confino* was also re-introduced. This is a system for putting suspects and undesirable characters out of circulation. Social pests like drug traffickers, extortionate moneylenders, gamblers, unqualified mid wives, etc., are segregated on various islands, or suspects are placed under continuous police supervision and forbidden to leave a specified village or zone. The maximum period is three years, and those condemned to this form of privation receive their sentences not from a court but from the police. In political cases the local Fascist authorities have of course the greatest say, and the segregation spot chosen for anti-Fascists was the island of Lipari, where they were sent and given ten lire a day and the liberty to work for more if they could.

Other defence measures included the closure of the headquarters of all Socialist and Communist quarters and the declaration that these parties were illegal. Provision was made whereby any attempt to reconstruct them became a crime, with enormous penalties; similar steps were taken against all secret societies. The Press became totally Fascist and the Cabinet was reconstituted so that it became wholly Blackshirt.

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From this series of anti-Fascist and Fascist actions it must not be concluded that parliamentary life had been altogether extinguished. With the evaporation of the Aventine Opposition and the elimination of the Communists, debates certainly lost all character as debates together with their erstwhile turbulence and bitterness. The Chamber became a mere routine clearing-house for the passage of bills and the declamation of reports, with occasional flares of interest when Mussolini spoke ; or when Del Croix, the leader of the ex-Servicemen, blind, and maimed in both hands, rose like a symbol of sacrifice and suffering to thrill the House with his always poignant oratory ; or when Giolitti, the sole token of other days, sent in an occasional arrow, well aimed but from a broken bow. So sedate were the sittings that it was difficult to realise the passions of the exiled anti-Fascists or the revolutionary legislature that was being steadily built up for the complete doctrinal transformation of the Italian State.

There was always a hum of talk and a noticeable movement in this penultimate phase of the Fascist Chamber—the last phase coming with the 1929 elections, as we shall see in due course. Deputies, or at least a goodly number of them, wandered about as if they were in their own drawing-room, some strolling to join the groups that were always collected round the doorways, others leaning in conversation over the desks of colleagues or officials. Servitors flitting here and there with notes and dossiers among the seated amphitheatre of Deputies; liveried footmen with small trays of coffee and water moving sedately to the thirsty; the flutter of white folios on the tiered semi-circles of desks—emphasized from the bird's-eye view

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of the Press Gallery—contributed to a general feeling which would seem to our Northern ideas to indicate a spirit of restlessness and murmur.

And then there would be, still is, an immediate sense of eager attention when Mussolini rose to speak. No matter what the occasion, slight or important, every murmur ceased and every movement was stilled—deferential silence that was always arresting. Mussolini then, as now, being a skilled orator with a great actor's "sense of audience" and an instinct for "timing," lets the silence last for a moment, holding expectancy before he speaks—and then his tones are quiet, almost conversational, but with a play of modulation that in its elocutional perfection forces his points as if they had been thundered.

He makes rhetorical use of dates in an extraordinary way, rattling them off at a high speed and then pausing while their commemorative significance to the argument in hand sinks in. No gestures save, when he begins speaking, or during pauses, an unconscious fingering of his tie: his only mannerism a slow up-lifting of his massive jaw accompanied by a sudden wide-opening of his eyes—this mannerism, however, being perhaps more characteristic of Mussolini listening than Mussolini talking.

During the 1925-1927 epoch under review in this section, there was only one other man who secured a like silence for his statements; only one other man with a like conversational style—masking a deadly play of argument—Giolitti. Mussolini as a rule would rise almost abruptly to speak and the stillness therefore fell suddenly. Giolitti would slowly unbend his gaunt, sinewy length, and with his arms outstretched so that his hands gripped the far edge of his desk he would

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pull himself leisurely to his feet. The signs were noted, the murmurs, with some expostulations, would increase, to fade gradually into absolute silence, which would be scarcely reached when the biting accents, precise and resonant, of the then over eighty-year-old parliamentary warrior would be directed at rather than to the Government Bench.

The disintegrated Opposition, scattered to the winds, represented, as we have seen, a multiplicity of political creeds, many of them as bitterly opposed to Giolittian Liberalism as to Mussolinian Fascism ; but somehow in the general mind Giolitti was the token of the entire Constitutional Opposition in that he symbolized the whole former political order which the new regime had thrust aside. His great and prolonged dictatorship had stamped the fact of his personality deep into the minds of the Italian people. His name ran like a binding cord through the web of forty years of tempestuous parliamentarianism.

It was the very parliamentarianism that the Fascists were out to kill. Why then did they give such impressive attention to the symbol of their enemy ? There were several reasons. Giolitti was too shrewd to provoke fruitless outbursts. He let general invective fly over his head ; never made long speeches. He sat through each assembly as motionless as a hawk—and as watchful—reserving his interjections for rare and telling occasions, paying little or no attention to his neighbours. He was not gloomily hostile but alert and wary. Accordingly, his tactics and his personality combined to make him a distinctly dramatic figure in the Chamber. And the reaction to this was keen attention on the very few occasions when he did break silence. Salandra, Orlando, Nitti, Sforza, Facta,

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Turati, Sturzo—all these names, which had once dominated Italian political life, counted only as names of the dead—several of them indeed the already neglected dead. Of that company Giolitti alone survived as a parliamentary figure—and even he was a wraith fading with his own fast-vanishing generation.

The Fascists were not afraid of him, but he was a ghost at their feast. Ghosts command awe if not deference, and this, coupled with the Italians' inherent respect for the dignity of age, helped to secure for Giolitti the tribute of a silent hearing only equalled by that accorded to the Duce himself. He represented the last link with the parliaments of other days and other ways.

From this Chamber atmosphere you would pass into the streets of Rome and there, in the year 1925 at least, you would as likely as not meet a bunch of Fascists—with clubs in their hands that would make Irishmen's shillelaghs look like toothpicks, and more pistols in their belts than you would see in a wild west film—bearing down on some newspaper kiosk. There you would see them seizing and making a street bonfire of some Opposition publication—the unfortunate vendor wisely keeping his thoughts to himself in a side street. Or you would see a mob with banners pouring by, singing *Giovinezza* and knocking the hats off the heads of those who were not bareheaded before the Black-shirt emblems. Then you might see tens of thousands of people pouring into Piazza Colonna for a mere glimpse of Mussolini to give him an ovation. And then again you might see, later, the same *squadristi* that you had seen surging like lion-tamers among the citizens, kneeling, immobile and in dedicatory homage

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before the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior and the *Ara Patria*.

1925 was a strange world in Rome—a world with all emotions and passions at snapping-point: 1927 was calmer and more sedate, with cudgels forbidden and revolvers not *quite* so omnipresent.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE COMITY OF NATIONS (1925-1927)

Misrepresentation Abroad. The Real Bases. Nine Points. The Alpine Gate. No 'Anschluss' Trade. Arbitration Treaties. Sea Routes. Vis-d-vis Yugoslavia. The Albanian Buffer. Policy with Succession States. Difficulties with Belgrade. Grievances with France : Tangier, Tunis, Libya, 'Fuorusciti'? Rising Place in World Affairs : Debts-Reparations, Disarmament, Treaty Revision, Tariffs, Five-Power Collaboration.

THE dispersion in foreign countries of the Italian adversaries of Fascism contributed not only, as we have seen, to sporadic acts of criminal violence by desperate emissaries entering Italy to fulfill assassination plans, but it also contributed towards the spreading of a false and exaggerated picture of Italian foreign policy.

It must be remembered that the *fuorusciti* included every range of anti-Fascist hostility—ex-Ambassadors, ex-Ministers, intellectuals, turn-coat Fascists, Freemasons, Clericals, Democrat-Liberals and Socialists as well as Communists, Republicans and Anarchists. It must also be remembered that there were members in each of all these categories who had friends and relatives of their own beliefs who were living a silenced and often menaced life on the peninsula, if not among the prisoners condemned by the Defence of the State Tribunal or among the *confinati* on the islands.

This common repression created a certain bond of sympathy among these hitherto irreconcilable political elements, and it was with the greatest difficulty that

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the former constitutional elements among them could refrain from nurturing a gruesome interest in the malign plots of the more ferocious subversive groups. There was no political unity or co-operation among them, but their anti-Fascist propaganda developed abroad such a uniform picture of Mussolini and Fascism that the murderous plots, which had their *denouements* mostly in the prison cells of Italy, were made to appear as if justified in the eyes of the world.

The Masons in France, the Liberals in England, the Socialists in France, Belgium, Britain and the two Americas opened their newspapers and their lecture halls to the diffusion of a purely destructive criticism of Fascist home affairs and alarmist reports on its foreign policy. Practically no newspaper stopped to analyse the merits or demerits of Fascism as a political and governmental system or to enquire into the doctrine behind it. Mussolini was depicted as a dictator whose actions were arbitrary, impulsive, opportunist, changeable and freakish : in short that his home policy was tyrannous and his foreign policy bellicose.

It is true that Mussolini dealt with every problem which impinged on his progress, home or foreign, with direct realism ; and his outspoken speeches during this period contained phrases of disquieting directness. The concentrated emphasis of the foreign Press on these characteristics succeeded for some time in creating the idea of a Mussolini ready to spring at everybody's and anybody's throat. He was held up as a bogey. He was successively alleged to be preparing hostile plans against Russia, Germany, Turkey, France, Greece, Austria, Yugoslavia and Albania, and

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to be developing expansionist plots in North Africa, in the Near and Middle East, in the Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic and in the Balkans.

The fomentation of this alarmist campaign against Fascist Italy began also to affect many newspapers of the so-called popular press of no particular hostility to Italy, and for this reason : Mussolini and whatever he did or said had become a " front-page story." He made good " copy " and the *role* which he was expected to play for the readers of such newspapers was that of the Big Bad Man of Europe who could be relied on to give sensational jolts to the Continental apple-cart.

And then came the speculators. These soon noted that the value of the lira fluctuated in accordance with alarmist reports about Mussolini and Italian affairs. Italy, morally and financially, was accordingly at the mercy of a hostile foreign Press until she took measures to protect herself and reveal matters in a truer light to the world in general.

Punitive laws were passed against anti-patriotic speculators on the Italian Stock Exchange and steps were taken to check traffic in the lira abroad. All other calumnies against the regime, as far as foreign affairs were concerned, were gradually contradicted and lived down by the slow but continuous infiltration of the true facts in the columns of many of the same newspapers which had so readily accepted and published earlier allegations. Newspapers of the great Liberal tradition in Britain, however, continued to censure Mussolini as the wilful wrecker of a Liberal idealism which, as we have seen, never had expression in post-war Italy. The Labour Press condemned him on all things, home and foreign, because he had done

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one thing—announced his unbelief in class warfare and therefore in non-Fascist trade unionism.

The real facts as revealed by the treaties, official declarations and diplomatic documents published during the 1925-1927 period show that Mussolini pursued a foreign policy with the following main foundation stones : (1) inviolability of the existing Alpine frontier lines, (2) prevention of the reunion of Germany and Austria, and the creation of an *Anschluss*, (3) belief in commercial agreements and the reduction of tariff walls as the real means of arriving at a united Europe, (4) faith in arbitration treaties for the elimination of international friction, (5) preservation of the sea routes from the Black Sea ports and the Eastern Mediterranean, (6) the delimitation of the Italo-Yugoslav dispute, (7) the creation of Albania as an independent, friendly and buffer State, (8) the development of an Italian sphere of influence among the Successor States to the Habsburg Empire and, (9) insistence on France's fulfilment of the 1915 Secret Treaty of London in spirit and letter.

Addressing the Senate on May 25, 1925, Mussolini said : " We consider the Brenner frontier irrevocable and I hereby declare that the Italian Government will defend it at whatsoever cost." On the question of the *Anschluss* he said in course of the same speech : " It is not admissible. Italy will never tolerate such a blatant violation of the Treaties. The annexation of Austria to Germany would increase the territorial and demographic strength of Germany, and that would present us with the paradoxical situation that the sole nation which would so increase its strength, making itself the strongest *bloc* in Central Europe, would be no other than Germany. It would be a frustration of

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the Italian victory." And again in February 1926 : " From 1866 to 1915 the Italian nation suffered the old and absurd Trentino frontier which, like a knife in the hands of an enemy, drove its blade as far south as the banks of the Po. That frontier was one of the most bitter things in our national drama, interrupted in 1866, but reopened and happily concluded in 1918 with the victory of our arms. The Brenner is inviolable. That word is definitive." As a contributory measure against *Anschluss* tendencies he intensified the policy of giving financial aid for the establishment of an economically independent Austria.

Having declared international trade to be the " web of peace," he concluded in the two-year period under review no less than twenty-three trade and tariff accords. And by the beginning of 1925 there was in vigour between Italy and Switzerland a Treaty of Conciliation and Arbitration (signed December 1924) which became a model for a ramification of similar pacts with the very countries which the enemies of Fascism were declaring to be the " next victims " of " unprovoked aggression."

The preservation of the communications from the Black Sea and security in the Eastern Mediterranean were developed through early recognition of Soviet Russia and the conclusion of commercial treaties. Mussolini in 1925, sure of the extinction of Communism and of Bolshevik influence in Italy, pronounced his conviction that the Soviet regime would transform itself into one employing a financial system no different from that of other States and expressed his belief that economic friendship with Russia offered great potential advantages for Italy, and no danger.

He then contributed to bring an assurance of peace

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in the Eastern Mediterranean by encouraging and finally securing a network of reciprocal non-aggression and arbitration pacts between Russia, Turkey, Greece and Italy. This was his answer to those who accused him of expansionist plans in the Levant. The Italian Government entered upon the fortification of the Dodecanese island of Leros in the Aegean Sea and the organisation of Rhodes as a military station—the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne having given Italy full possession of the Dodecanese group. A pact of friendship, a treaty of commerce and twenty-eight secondary agreements were concluded in 1925 with Yugoslavia.

The Conference of Ambassadors in 1921 had recognised Italy as "the natural guardian" of Albania, whereupon Rome began to consolidate her position—Italy's aim being the maintenance of Albania as a friendly buffer state. In 1925 Italy granted a preliminary loan of fifty million lire to Albania—a sum augmented by more millions in later years under conditions which practically amounted to a gift. The creation of a National Bank of Albania with more than half its capital supplied by the National Bank of Italy gave Italy control over Albanian currency—financial dealings which have proved singularly unfruitful for Italy. With the Pact of Tirana, signed in 1926, Albania (or rather the Albanian Government regime then in power) virtually placed itself under the protection of Italy. This was followed in November 1927 by a Treaty of Defensive Military Alliance—documents which carefully specify not only the full recognition of Albanian independence and sovereignty but guarantee the maintenance of these conditions. The policy of Italy in Albania *vis-a-vis* the Balkans can in many ways be likened

in principle to British policy in Afghanistan *vis-a-vis* Russia.

The development of an Italian sphere of influence among the Successor States of the former Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire represents a reaction to the whole history of Italy. We have seen in the earlier chapters of this work how, in point of historical fact, the Habsburg Empire was the residue of a system descended from the Holy Roman Empire, which had held the Italian people in fee for centuries on end. We have seen the shackles torn asunder link by link on the successive battlefields of the Risorgimento. We have seen the last fetter snapped with the conclusion of the Great War. In the official archives of the Italian War Office, the war of 1915-1918 is entered along with those of 1848-1870 under the common heading of " Campaigns of Italian Independence."

With the collapse of the Central Powers in 1918, with the consequent disappearance of the Habsburg monarchy, and with the Peace Treaty dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—the secular enemy of Italian freedom was laid low and all " Italian soil " was at long last " redeemed." To have left it at that would have meant a static policy which would have put Italy at the mercy of whatever future events might befall the newly created States which had succeeded to the place of the fallen Empire.

Two post-war courses were open to Italy : (1) a policy aiming to keep the ex-enemy people in subjugation, to prevent militarism, and to control any renewal of Austrian penetration : a policy in short similar to that then adopted by France towards Germany, or (2) a policy of assistance which would help to make possible the economic and social recon-

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struction of the new States, while at the same time ensuring the security of the Adriatic seaboard which contains, at Cattaro, the key-position to the naval mastery of Italy : a policy based on reciprocal interests and mutual trust under the aegis of a friendly Italy, with special influence in what would be, roughly, an Adriatic and Danubian sphere of economic influence. The second of these two policies was adopted by Italy and developed by Mussolini. Austria and Hungary quickly reacted favourably, and the Danubian nations of Roumania and Bulgaria may be said to have followed suit. But when it came to Yugoslavia, Italy found another kettle of fish. Despite the twenty-eight accords of 1925, Belgrade had identified itself with the ring of Allies with which France had sought to strengthen herself against Germany and Soviet Russia—the Allies of the Little Entente, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav sector of this Entente, as a glance at Map No. 1 will show better than words, not only cuts right across Italy's sphere of interest as above described, but it includes that Adriatic seaboard so vital to Italy's sense of safety.

The internal policy of the old Habsburg regime was to hold together the heterogeneous collection of races composing the Empire by playing off one against the other and by fomenting among the Adriatic peoples a racial hatred of Italians, a sentiment returned on the Italian side by disdain for the "barbarians." These feelings would have faded out—as indeed they have presumably done in most other sections of the old Empire—had not the conflict of Italian and French policy clashed in Yugoslavia. And so it came **about that** the post-war arming of the Little Entente in

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general and Yugoslavia in particular, at the hands of France, was looked on no longer by Italy as meaning a French bulwark against Germany and Russia, but also as a threatening encirclement of Italy.

The Italian people were therefore faced with the prospect of seeing the age-long Habsburg incubus, from which they had finally delivered themselves, replaced by the presence of a France-backed Yugoslavia. The bitterness of the disillusionment was not rendered less by the fact that this new and unexpected threat was centred at the very Adriatic spot from which Italy was most vulnerable, the very spot which had been denied her at the Paris Peace Conference despite the provisions of the Secret Treaty of London, and the very region round which Italian national aspirations had for generations been concentrated. It was moreover still more bitter for Italians to reflect that the agents of this new peril on old terrain were her ex-Allies in the war of deliverance—France and Serbia.

Mussolini's first effort to counteract this Franco-Yugoslav move was, as we have seen, the pursuance of commercial and friendship pacts with Yugoslavia. The commercial pacts have remained active and fruitful for both parties. The mutual importance of Italo-Yugoslav trade was and is indeed perhaps the greatest guarantee of peace between these countries ; but the friendship pacts proved dead letters. Events swamped their spirit—and that takes us to the complications of Italo-French relations as they stood during 1925-1927 and as they have stood in great part right up to the present.

First of all, Italy held France responsible for all Italian difficulties experienced on the Adriatic and in

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the Balkans, as above described. Rome could not understand why her great ex-Ally should push forward the rise of Yugoslavia in terms of money and munitions, nor could she understand France's hostility to Italy's Albanian policy. Why, Rome asked, should there be any Franco-Italian problem on what are Italy's Eastern frontier zones—zones where there were no reasonable French interests, historical, geographical or economic ?

Italy therefore concluded that France was manoeuvring to encircle Italy in Italy's own natural sphere in order to choke the development of Italy's political affairs. This conviction, be it right or wrong, created a sentiment of antagonism between Rome and Paris—a sentiment which did not ameliorate the other open questions between these nations.

In order to arouse in the reader's mind some idea of the feelings which dominated Italian opinion at this time I shall describe the Italo-French position as from the Italian point of view. The " other open questions " were Tangier, Tunis, Libya and the *fuorusciti*. Italy objected to France's alleged desire to bar Italy's " reasonable and logical aspirations " at Tangier as a participator on equal footing with Britain, France and Spain in the international zone—Italy basing her claims on her position as a Mediterranean Power and as a signatory State to the Act of Algebras.

In Tunis the question was more acute. It will be remembered that it was France's *coup* in 1881 at the expense of Italy which created a cleavage between the Italian and the French peoples and determined Italy's adherence to Germany as a member of the Triple Alliance. In 1896 a species of Convention was arranged to secure, under the French regime, the

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maintenance of the " Italianity " of Italians, their institutions and their children ; but soon these rights were whittled away by various decrees.

Then came the Great War ; and Italy fought not on the side of Germany, as we have seen, but of France. During the war the French showed what Italy considered a more just attachment to the spirit of the 1896 Convention, giving facilities for the mobilisation and embarkation of Italians to join the Allied forces; but no sooner was war practically finished than France, on September 9, 1918, denounced the Convention. The pain given to Italian susceptibilities by this step, immediately after the conclusion of the common victory, may be imagined. A French decree of 1919 made the acquisition of real property practically prohibitive to Italians, and another in 1921, protested against by both Italy and Britain, imperilled the birth-right of 130,000 resident Italians in Tunis.

Italians strongly resented these blows. The new Rome of Mussolini refused to accept these conditions as final. The Fascist Government desired France to grant a Convention which would guarantee, (a) that Italians would remain Italians ; (b) that their children be educated in Italian schools and preserve their Italian identity ; (c) that work and business be not disturbed by circumstances attendant on the menace of having to change nationality ; and (d) that France should not apply, in territory over which she did not enjoy sovereign authority, French laws to the detriment of the Tunisian Italians who had a position in Tunis and had developed that position before the coming of the French.

Italy is vitally interested in the colonisation of Libya, a work which was in progress before adjacent

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French colonisation. After the war she was excluded from the acquisition of new colonies even as a mandated Power, as we have seen, and at various times she had asked that the question of the southern frontiers of Libya be cleared up.

Italy cannot recognise the demarcation of this frontier as it existed before the departure of Turkey—a demarcation which cut away a great part of the country's natural hinterland. When Italy was in the war she was concerned to solve, at least in part, the problem of the Libyan hinterland, and to this end obtained, through Article XIII of the Treaty of London, the stipulation that the various problems of Italy's colonies would be examined and resolved the moment peace was declared.

While the British Government has been able to reach an accord with Italy concerning the eastern Libyan frontier facing Jarabub—important not only for itself but as a Senussi centre ; while frontier adjustments have been carried out with Britain for regulating the confines of Italian Somaliland ; while Britain has ceded Jubaland, which allows the development of the irrigation supplies of Somaliland ; while the British Foreign Office has been able to stipulate, or renew, accords of reciprocal goodwill and economy under certain conditions in Abyssinia and by the Red Sea—while Britain has done these things in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty, France, on the other hand, confined herself to what was felt to be a meagre application of Article XIII—the abandonment of one strip of arid desert joining Ghadames and Ghat.

On the question of the *fuorusciti* the Fascist Government believed that there must be a certain collusion between the exiled anti-Fascists and the dominating

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French political parties, with Freemasonry and all its influence in the French political world. They put no faith in France's answer that the Liberal-Democratic legislation of the Republic did not allow any action to be taken by the French Government against the conduct of political refugees. Italy had also another grievance against France in connection with French laws passed to tempt and coerce Italian workmen in France—of whom there were many thousands—to forego their Italian citizenship. The cumulative effect of all these problems and complaints against France served to embitter relations ; but despite the material aspects of each separate problem Mussolini always maintained that agreement could be reached and even an *Entente* concluded, not by tinkering with this or that question, but by creating a new atmosphere of trust and friendliness.

All that Italy really wanted was to have France sympathetic and not antagonistic to Italy's general aims. Once this sympathy was established, the problems would easily resolve themselves. On this theory Mussolini developed his policy with France, and negotiations for an *Entente* were begun in 1925. These various problems with France (be it again noted) I have intentionally given from the Italian viewpoint. It is only by this means that eventual Fascist reactions to the *Entente* negotiations can be seen in their true light.

Between 1925 and 1927 Italy also laid the foundations of Tripolitania as a real active colony. Work for the reclamation of the sandy wastes and the commercial exploitation of North Africa was begun in earnest, together with military measures for the complete subjugation of the hinterland rebel tribes, and the actual

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instead of the nominal display of the Italian tricolour on the distant southern boundaries of the Fezzan and Kufra.

Being on a fair way towards liquidating her past and having acquired a free hand to assert herself as a Great Power, the Italy of Mussolini then began to take an ever more important place in the comity of nations—a respected voice in what I shall call "World Affairs" as distinct from narrower Foreign Affairs. One of the first problems tackled was that of War Debts. In November 1925 Finance Minister Volpi was sent by Mussolini to the United States to seek more favourable Debt payment conditions and to negotiate some Morgan municipal loans. Agreement was reached for a War Debt payment of 2,042 million dollars of principal and 365 million dollars of interest payable in sixty-two years. The settlement included an annual payment of five million dollars for five years with a subsequent jump to an annual payment of twelve million. This was considered so satisfactory that a novel form of thanksgiving to Volpi and to the Governments of the United States and Italy was inaugurated by the workmen of Genoa, with the approval of Mussolini. A "Dollar Debt List" was opened to the public all over Italy and the first year's quota of five million dollars due to America under the Volpi settlement was fully subscribed even before Volpi got back to Italy. The announcement of the success of this practical response was made when Volpi appeared in the Chamber on December 5, 1925, to make his formal report on the Washington visit.

At the same sitting Mussolini capped this triumph by springing to his feet, holding aloft a bulky package of documents. "Here are deeds," he cried. "I have

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the honour to present for ratification, the Accord with Washington, the International Locarno Peace Pact, a Treaty of Arbitration and Commerce with Albania, and a General Bill for the ratification of all outstanding but procrastinated Laws. Finally I present a Royal Decree for the acquisition of Italian citizenship by the inhabitants of the Aegean Islands. With the ratification of these we free ourselves completely from the inheritance of the late Governments."

It was all very dramatically done and the Deputies, including the Liberal leaders Giolitti and Salandra, crowded up to the Ministerial benches to congratulate the Prime Minister.

With the immediate burden of War Debt to the United States lessened and with the residue of the late parliament cleared away, Mussolini's principles for the settlement of world problems gradually moved into the orbit of international attention. These principles included : (1) the interdependence of reparations and war debts, but as an ideal the cancellation of both—an ideal believed profitable not merely for Italy but for the whole world, including America ; (2) the necessity of disarmament. Mussolini's formula for this, as far as Italy was concerned, was " Willingness to reduce armaments to whatsoever low strength so long as that strength be not exceeded by any other Continental Power." This formula, translated as a plea for naval parity with France, proved another bone of contention between Paris and Rome. Mussolini also expressed his belief in qualitative rather than quantitative disarmament ; (3) Revision of the Peace Treaties ; (4) The entry of Germany into the League of Nations and the application of the Treaty clauses which restored the parity of German rights ; (5) Reduction

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of tariff walls ; and (6) the encouragement of collaboration between the United States, Britain, Italy, France and Germany for the adjustment of world affairs in view of the rising economic and financial crisis.

Italy's adherence to the Locarno Pact of 1925 and the Thoiry Agreement of 1926 as a guarantor of France against German aggression, with rights and duties equivalent to those of Britain, gave Italy a new and invaluable importance.

Such was Italy's position in foreign affairs by 1927—five years after the March on Rome, and six years before the signing of the Four-Power Pact.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FASCIST STATE TAKES FORM (1925-1927)

Juridical Construction of New State. Fundamental Laws. The Basic Groups. Defence of the Lira, Blackshirt Social Work. Emigration Reform. Corporative Idea. Labour Charter Published. Fascist 1927 Figures. Secret Negotiations with the Vatican.

IN course of the previous two chapters covering the years 1925-1927 we have seen the recurring excursions and alarms of anti-Fascist strife and we have seen the emergence of Italian foreign policy from phases of static aspirations to dynamic assertions. But the basically important things in the history of the Fascist Revolution over this period have not yet been touched, namely, the juridical construction of the Fascist State.

All these other matters were merely a record of the multifarious happenings which encircled and traversed the gradual but steady building-up of the Fascist system of Government and of the Fascist conception of the State. Less spectacular than tales of "attempts" and "treaties," this inner constructive aspect of the Revolution State is apt to be lost sight of. As a matter of fact it is this all-important side of contemporary Italian history which made me select 1925-1927 as a survey span. It was in January 1925, you will remember, that Mussolini cleared away all pretence at co-operation with any of the other parties and foretold the initiation of speedier work for the establishment of a Fascist Corporate State: it was in April 1927 that the "Labour Charter" was published—and with it the new Corporate principles came into being. That

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is why 1927 is a significant and " milestone " date in the history of the movement.

Within the span of these two years there emerged in rapid succession what may be called the fundamental laws of the Fascist regime. In spirit and in practice the way had already been prepared for the introduction of these measures. For convenience' sake they may be divided into ten blocks, but it is important to note that these blocks are all dovetailed into each other, forming one foundation.

Through all legislature from 1925 onwards there is present a recurring re-invocation of the " moral " ideals of Fascism, attributes which are often expressed in mystic terms—a sort of patriotic religion with the name of the *Duce* as the saviour of Italy. This abstract but never absent aspect of Blackshirt development runs like a binding cement round every dovetail joint of the whole Fascist fabric.

The ten blocks of laws, passed at high speed and without Chamber debate or other opposition, were as follows :

(1) Laws which strengthened and accelerated the executive power of Mussolini as *Capo del Governo*. (Attributions and prerogatives of the *Capo del Governo*^ *Primo Ministro, Segretario di Stato* ; December 24, 1925. Faculties of the Executive Power in issuing juridical regulations ; January 31, 1926.)

(2) Laws which centralised authority and guaranteed control of the Fascist Government in the provinces. (Regularisation of the activities of State, Provincial and Commune clubs, societies and institutes, and their personnel ; and of State, Provincial and Commune institutions under the tutelage of the State ; December 26, 1925. Regularisation of the services of

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State functionaries ; December 24, 1925. The creation of the office of *Podesta* and the institution of municipal Consuls ; February 4, 1926. Extension of the *Podesta* office to every Commune in the realm ; September 2, 1926. Extension of the attributes of the Civic and Provincial Prefects ; April 3, 1926. Provision for the institution of an Inspector Service in the Communes and Provinces.)

(3) Laws supposed to fortify the regime against political or moral "defeatism." (The Press Laws ; December 31, 1925.)

(4) Laws to safeguard national economic and financial interests. (A whole string of measures, stopping inflation, checking the danger of a gold-run on the Bank of Italy, 1925 ; creating provincial "Councils and Offices of Economy" ; inaugurating a National Institute for Exports ; defending the lira, 1926 ; and arranging agrarian credits in the kingdom, 1927.)

Mussolini's strong stand in support of the lira was made public at a speech delivered in the little provincial town of Pesaro on August 18, 1926. When all the currencies in the world were beginning to waver and when many were taking refuge in inflation, there was general surprise and misgiving when the Italian Government thus boldly identified itself with a non-inflationist policy. Time has shewn that Mussolini's decision was right: Italy has so far weathered the storm with her gold standard intact. Following the Pesaro announcement the pound sterling was fixed at 92-46 lire and the dollar at 19 lire as par values.

On December 1927, by a Decree Law, Italy returned to the gold standard by repealing the inconvertible paper currency regime and by providing for the gold convertibility of Bank of Italy notes. All

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liabilities and paper currency had to be covered by the gold reserves of the Bank. This was a step towards the fulfilment of the promise made by Mussolini at that famous "defence of the lira" speech at Pesaro, above noted, when he said : "I will never inflict on this wonderful people of Italy, which has been working for four years like a hero and suffering like a saint, the moral shame of the economic collapse of the lira."

(5) Laws co-ordinating public works. (A long list in which questions of labour, employment, the Syndicates, credit and communications are involved, 1925-1927)

(6) Measures for the consolidation of the armed defensive forces of the State. (Initiation of regulations for the reorganisation of the General Staff, 1925 ; and moves for the creation of a centralised Defence Ministry, 1927.)

(7) Laws to promote public health : social, and women and child welfare. Progressive taxation of bachelors ; December 19, 1925. Maternity and infant protection and assistance ; December 10, 1925. Creation of National " *Balilla* " for the physical and moral education of youth, June 2, 1927 ; Anti-disease measures. Sanitary dispositions and intensive augmentations of provisions against malaria, tuberculosis and cancer, 1927. Regulation to encourage and facilitate co-operation between the Fascist Government and the Fascist Party for the institution of summer camps, sports and recreations.

These seven directions of development meant a change in the character, but not in the spirit of the Blackshirt squads. With their enemies driven off the field the Fascist centres were no longer gathering

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points for defensive or punitive action. They became places of social influence round which Government and Party sought to concentrate the activities and ambitions of the new generations, always keeping in the foreground, however, the combative spirit of the early days.

For this reorganisation Farinacci, as already noted, was succeeded in March 1926 by Augusto Turati as Party Secretary, and in June of that year Turati received the authorisation of the Grand Council to revise the Party membership list, to prepare it no longer for civil strife but for the practical construction of the State by means of placing Black-shirts in key-positions within the Syndicates, developing the interests of the workers, encouraging the participation of University and other youth in the Fascist movement, and preparing for the future physique of the race through sports.

(8) Laws for the increase of Italy's position and prestige abroad and in her colonies. (Diplomatic-Consular reorganisation, June 2, 1927.)

The most significant and striking provision for the prestige of Italy was the abolishment in 1927 of the special passport under which Italian emigrants formerly travelled. The policy of the old regime, as expressed in 1900, was to facilitate the departure of emigrants from Italian shores irrespective of who or what they were and without Government concern as to what became of them. Making a virtue of necessity (in face of America's post-war "quota" reservations), Mussolini in 1922 pronounced that emigration was an evil; and in 1925 he organised control over the emigration centres.

The designation "emigrants" had already been

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changed to "Italians abroad," and the "General Commissariat" had been altered to "The General Office for Italians abroad," when there sprung up in the United States during 1925 a "Fascist League" which soon had a membership of 12,000. The League's propaganda, however, was too directly in favour of Italian nationalism as against the obligations of its members as American citizens. The League was therefore disbanded in 1930, its place being taken by specially developed Fascist centres whose activities were developed on the basis of eight rules which had been drawn up by Mussolini in 1924 for the conduct of Italians in other lands. It reads :

1. Fascists abroad must observe the laws of the country which harbours them. They ought to set a daily example in this, even, if necessary, to the native citizens of the country.
2. Do not take part in the internal politics of the country in which you are guests.
3. Do not raise discord among your compatriots, but try rather to reach harmony in the shade of the Lictor.
4. Give an example of probity, public and private.
5. Respect the representatives of Italy abroad, and obey their guidance and instructions.
6. Defend Italianity, past and present.
7. Help to organise assistance for Italians who find themselves in need.
8. Even as I exact and see to it that Italians are disciplined at home, see you to it that you are disciplined abroad.

This 1930 reversion to the 1924 rules for the conduct of Italians settled abroad is outside the 1925-1927 span of events now under review, but the circumstances responsible for the change arose through Memorial Day incidents in 1926 in the State of New York—

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As the original revolutionaries become veterans, fresh generations are growing up in the new atmosphere created.

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incidents of public order in connection with the " Fascist League " which had raised the question in the United States : " whether an American citizen has the right to belong to a political organisation of a foreign, although friendly, country, even if that country be the citizen's birthplace ? "

In 1927 Mussolini said : " Fascist Italy wishes to send out beyond its confines only the competent classes, not as a remedy for misery but for the necessity of expansion and for Italian prestige in the world. But our rise should not constitute a supply of life to make good the demographic poverty of other nations. And we must beware of the fact that many countries favour anti-Fascism only in order to create for our emigrants conditions favourable to their becoming denationalised."

In pre-Fascist days there were three types of Italian passports. One kind for the usual travelling and business classes ; another for the workmen going to a specific undertaking ; and a third kind, which was just a " bill of exit," for the unfortunate, prospectless and very large emigrant class. Fascist legislation changed this system, removing the stigma of social differences.

" I have given orders," said Mussolini, " for the abolition of the passport for emigrants with its inference of incompetence and as a token of the luckless labourer. Instead there will be a single type of passport for all citizens of Italy indiscriminately. Every honest Italian, true to the regime, has the right to hold up his head proudly in his own country and abroad, whatever may be his social position."

(9) Along with these laws were also passed new organic measures for the administration of the North

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African colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. (June 26, 1927.)

(10) Laws for the advancement of the principle of the Corporative State. These laws, being in a continuous state of evolution, are better traced not only through the Statute Book but also through the resolutions of the Fascist Grand Council, whose more descriptively worded decisions are invariably translated into law.

On October 6, 1925, the Council decided on the juridical recognition of the Fascist Syndicates, the institution of a Labour Court for the settlement of trade disputes and the prohibition of strikes and lock-outs.

On March 30, 1926, it demanded the creation of a Ministry of Corporations as a legislative corollary to the more deliberative and specialised National Council of Corporations. In July the new Ministry came into being, Mussolini himself first taking over the new portfolio in addition to his other posts.

In his inaugural address Mussolini said : " The Ministry of Corporations is not a bureaucratic organ and it in no way intends to substitute the Syndical organisations in their necessarily autonomous action of arranging, selecting and bettering their adherents. The Ministry of Corporations is the organ through which, at centre and periphery, the corporative idea is integrated, holding the balance between the interests and the resources of the economic field. This is alone possible on State terrain, because only the State transcends the contrasting interests of individuals and of groups, co-ordinating them to superior ends, with results more quickly gained by the fact that all the economic organisations—recognised, guaranteed and

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safeguarded in the Corporative State—live in the common orbit of Fascism."

On April 30, 1927, the Labour Charter was published. It is not my intention in this chronicle to analyse Fascist doctrine as such or to concentrate attention on the measures which give it practical expression : that all in due course. What I am here concerned with and what concerns me to the conclusion of Part I. of this book is the record of the struggle of Fascism, its successful survival and its points of contact with the life of the Italian people, with just sufficient indication of the character of the measures being passed to give a very general idea of their purpose.

The Party itself during 1925-1927 developed its ramifications to embrace all phases of Italian life and to enlist the rising generations. At the time of the publication of the Labour Charter in 1927 there were 811,896 men Fascists ; 50,161 women ; and of youth units: 280,903 *Avanguardisti*; 405,954 *Balilla* ; 14,215 *Giovani Italiane* ; 80,034 *Piccole Italiane* and 12,560 University Fascist Students. Of Fascists in Public Services there were : 251,000 Civil Service clerks ; 79,000 teachers ; 90,000 Railway employees ; 77,000 State Industry employees ; and 41,000 Post Office Fascists, making a total of 2,193,823—to which have to be added the tens of thousands marshalled in the various Syndical federations and in many cultural, welfare, recreation and sports institutions organised by the regime.

With these figures in mind, and in the knowledge that the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen were in favour of the movement, Mussolini speaking for the Government in presenting the publication of the

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Labour Charter to the Chamber said : " We have created the unitarian Fascist State. Remember that from the times of the Roman Empire onwards there was no longer a unitarian State. And we hereby solemnly re-affirm our doctrine concerning the State. We re-affirm no less energetically my formula of 'everything within the State, nothing against the State, and nothing outside of the State.' "

I have referred to the "moral cement" with which Mussolini sought to bind the fabric of the nation. In this respect he did not fail to develop, with extreme care and precaution, the betterment of relations with the Holy See. The 1925-1927 period was marked with secret negotiations with the Church. With the Democratic-Liberal parties driven out of political life and their opinion stifled, and with Freemasonry made a crime, the position was now ripe for a serious attempt to solve the Roman Question.

Mussolini's belief in religion as a spiritual necessity for the completion of the life of the State has already been revealed. In the Roman Catholic faith he saw two great things for the advancement and completion of his Fascist ideal. He recognised that, despite all the conflicts of the Risorgimento and despite generations of friction between Church and State, Italy was and must always be a Catholic country. It was therefore logical and proper that, given the need of religion for the completion of the State, Catholicism should be the State religion, official, recognised and fully honoured.

He also saw that with the Church as the spiritual ally of the Italian people, his dream of Rome as the focal point of world-thought would be strengthened. His reinvocation of a Greater, Imperial Rome would

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rise up and enshield the Chair of St. Peter, Cathedral of the First Apostle. He felt the spiritual negation of a state of affairs in which a Catholic people, inheritors of Imperial Rome, had a mere *modus vivendi* with a Holy See whose Head was the successor to the Imperial title of Pontifex Maximus.

He wanted to solve a problem that had baffled the best brains in Italy for sixty years and he wanted the notion of a Universal Church to connote *gens Romana* in world-thought.

But he did not intend the absolutist ideas of the growing Fascist State to make any surrender to the absolutism of the Catholic Church. He maintained the cleavage between the things that are of Caesar and those that are of God ; and he did not intend to abandon the Liberal formula of Cavour " a free Church in a free State " with its corollary of " liberty of the individual conscience."

Negotiations with the Church for the squaring of these various circles were begun in 1925. By 1926 agreement on principle had been secretly reached in which the representatives of the Holy See and the Italian Government admitted (1) that a change of relations was essential, (2) that the Law of Guarantees should be abolished, (3) that, through a territorial arrangement, the apparent and effective independence of the Holy See should be assured and, (4) that a political accord and Concordat should be drawn up as a basis for new Italo-Ecclesiastical legislation.

With occasional polemical outbursts on both sides, work to this end now proceeded ; but these outbursts had only a theoretical value,—because the negotiations were kept so strictly secret that their very existence was debated.

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In the meantime Mussolini showed his goodwill by a number of unilateral acts such as the gift of the invaluable Chigi archives to the Vatican Library; the restitution of several convents, including the specially sacred Convent of Assisi; the re-establishment of religious teaching in schools ; the restoration of the crucifix in schools, colleges, Government offices, the law courts, Parliament and in the Colosseum ; the official civic recognition of the major Church festivals ; and the appointment of chaplains to the Blackshirt Militia and its junior Fascist Youth organisations.

CHAPTER XXVI

BOMBS AND AN OLIVE BRANCH (1927-1933)

Attempt on the King. Terrorist Attacks on Italian Officials Abroad. Attempt on Crown Prince. Schirru. Sbardallotto. Bovone. Special Tribunal Busy. "Liberty and Justice." Amnesty. Lipari Demobilised.

THE next moves in the final establishment of Fascism as a form of Government, after the publication of the Labour Charter in 1927, were the passing of the Electoral Reform Bill in May 1928; the solution of the "Roman Question," in February 1929; the General Election of March 1929 ; and the opening of the first " Corporative " Parliament in April of the same year. The Chamber as then reorganised no longer consisted of Deputies representing Parties and Constituencies, but of Deputies representing Fascism and specific interests of the people—the Chamber as a whole representing the total interests of the nation. With the Syndicates, the Federations (Syndicate groups), and the Ministry of Corporations in being, with the Grand Council exercising its will over Parliament and with the Fascist Blackshirt Militia, as we have seen, gradually transformed into a means of maintaining the continuity of Fascism's original combativeness, while at the same time exercising a new function of transfusing that spirit of combativeness into the rising generations, the absolute dominion of Mussolini's Fascism in Italy was completed. All struggle was ended and what followed was but the perfecting of the Fascist machine as experience, experiment and circumstances dictated.

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April 1929 is therefore a date which puts a period to the chronology of the rise and establishment of the Fascist State ; but from 1929 on to the completion, in 1932, of ten years of Fascist tenure of power from the March on Rome there are activities which concern the history of the general movement and regime. In this final phase I shall once more follow the method of separating the strands and following each to its end, leaving the patient reader to recollect that all the sets of events are contemporaneous ; and I shall put a still further burden on the reader by asking him to note in his mind that 1929 is the real completion date of Mussolini's transformation of the Italian State—the narration of events after that being merely a gathering up of loose ends so as to have the field clear for a totalised survey in the third part of the book. The strands which I propose to unravel in turn are as before : anti-Fascist attacks and Fascist defence; foreign, colonial and world development; internal constructive work, relations with the Church, and perfecting of the Corporative State.

As the years went on, with Mussolini, despite all anti-Fascist prophecies, sitting more and more firmly in power, the anti-Fascists from abroad were forced more and more to criminal violence as their sole means of opposition.

In April 1927 an attempt was made on the life of the King of Italy. The timing of the infernal machine was slightly faulty, so that the King had passed the spot of the bomb's location about five minutes before it went off, killing fourteen and wounding forty of the general public. A round-up and punishment of all suspected Communists followed this incident. Then began a long series of murderous attempts against

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Italian officials stationed in other lands. Italian consular officials and the consular buildings became the favourite targets of bomb outrages. During the next four years twenty-seven attempts were made in various parts of the world. These tried the patience of the Italian Government and people to their limit. The assaults were looked on in Italy as conclusive evidence to what unscrupulous straits the enemies of the regime had been reduced. And the *fuorusciti* of the old democratic parties, who developed anti-Fascist propaganda abroad, were, on account of that propaganda, held morally responsible for the criminal inflammation of the frankly murderous elements.

At Nancy in August 1927, a bomb was exploded at the Italian consulate, but without damage or victims. At the Buenos Aires consulate in May 1928, ten people were killed and forty wounded by a bomb outrage. Most of the victims were emigrants. At Liege in August 1928, and at Tunis in December 1928 the consulates were bombed. At Luxemburg in April 30, 1929, the Italian Legation councillor was shot dead. At Nice in September 1929 a bomb was thrown at an ex-Servicemen's excursion, killing two and wounding twelve. In Paris on September 1929 the Italian consul was shot dead. At Brussels in October 1929 an attempt was made on the life of the Crown Prince during his betrothal visit to the Belgian capital. The fact that former leaders of the Italian Liberal and Socialist groups gave evidence at the Brussels trial in September 1930 in extenuation of the would-be assassin's offence caused feeling to run higher than ever in Italy against the *fuorusciti*, their foreign patrons, and all their works.

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This was followed by a conflict with Communists at Faenza in Italy when about a dozen lives were lost on both sides. The foreign toll began again. At Cordova in January 1930, the consulate was bombed, but undamaged. During the same month a plot for the assassination of the Crown Prince during the approaching wedding festivities in Rome was discovered in Paris. At Zurich in June 1931 a consulate official was shot at and gravely wounded. At Cannes in February 1931 another was shot at, but miraculously escaped. In May the Anarchist Schirru was captured in Rome and found guilty of a plot against Mussolini and executed. At Lugano in June 1931 a gun attempt was made on the consul. At Paris in July 1931, an Italian Fascist Workmen's Club was bombed and four wounded. At Grenoble in August 1931, bomb attempt against an Italian Social Club. At Pittsburg in August 1931, consulate damaged by dynamiters. At Digne in October 1931, consul shot at and wounded. Consulate at Chambéry, in November 1931, bombed and damaged ; at same place on same day a bomb was thrown at a Fascist gathering, wounding a vice-consul and a consular agent. At Scranton, U.S.A., in November 1931, a bomb was thrown at the vice-consul's house, wrecking the house, and wounding the vice-consul. At Philadelphia on November 1931 a bomb was thrown at the consulate. At New York during December 1931 parcels containing infernal machines were sent out addressed to Fascist officials. Three postal workers were killed before the plot was discovered. Another set of similar parcels addressed to various Italian consuls was then seized and the bombs exploded by experts.

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At Lugano in January 1932 a bomb was found in the consulate and in the same month at Paris the Italian consul-general was shot at and wounded. In June 1932 an Anarchist Sbardallotto was caught in Rome armed to assassinate Mussolini, and at the same time a man called Bovone, the author of a series of minor terrorist explosions in Italy and believed to have plotted against Mussolini, was also caught. Both were found guilty by the Special Defence of the State tribunal, and executed. These cases were followed by further bombings against consulates and the personnel of Blackshirt institutions. One of the most notorious cases was the dynamiting of the house in Philadelphia of the chairman of the Sons of Italy Society, when the wife of the chairman was killed and twelve people injured, including four children. In February 1933 the United States Federal Police discovered evidence of an anti-Fascist terrorist gang with ramifications over several States.

If the above list included attempts, murders and woundings in connection with junior Fascist officials and Italian subjects in other lands known to be Fascist sympathisers, the catalogue of crime would be trebled. The general world-unrest of this period from 1927 onwards was also considered to contribute towards fostering the mentality that chose such homicidal political methods. This feeling is reflected in an article then written by Mussolini in the *Popolo a" Italia* in which he spoke of " the ferocity and stupidity of certain recurring crimes " as symptomatic of a " white racial society imperilled by decadence."

Giolitti died on July 17, 1928, at the age of eighty-six, and although he died faithful to his old parliamentary ideals, he is said to have denounced, shortly before

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his passing, the whole behaviour of the *fuoruscitu*. In his latter days he seldom took his place in the Chamber; but aged and erect he represented an epoch which only ended with his death.

Over the same period as that covered by the above-enumerated list of violent anti-Fascist acts abroad the Special Tribunal was busy in Italy trying Communists and anti-Fascist sympathisers who were periodically rounded up. It was like a vicious circle. Over 1000 prisoners were sentenced, many receiving punishments of over ten years' imprisonment. Cesare Rossi, ex-Secretary of the Fascist Party, whom we saw fleeing Italy in the chapter on Matteotti, was decoyed on to Italian soil at Lake Garda in September 1929, captured, found guilty of co-operating with the Paris *fuorusciti* and sentenced to thirty years.

A group of *these fuorusciti*, who had at one time belonged to the relatively moderate parties of the Italian Opposition groups, formed themselves in 1928 into a " National Alliance of Liberty " for the purpose of centralising anti-Fascist propaganda : but by 1930 this Alliance had developed an extremist wing known as " Liberty and Justice " which dominated all activities. " Liberty and Justice " added belief in violence to its immediate creed ; and the members of this secret society were for this reason believed by the Fascists to be co-operating with the Communists and Anarchists as executive allies in their crime movement. Allegation of this was produced at the trial of the Anarchist Sbardallotto, causing a Press outburst in Italy which held all the elements of the scattered Opposition as incriminated.

This Liberty and Justice association developed clandestine propaganda in Italy during 1929-1930.

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The Fascist Government at the same time organised a secret volunteer service known as the O.V.R.A. (this mysterious tide being supposed to mean *Opera Vigilanzd Reati Antinazionali*). It first became known to the public after the arrest in November 1930 of two young intellectuals who were identified with the Liberty and Justice activities, and each sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

One of the prime movers of this secret anti-Fascist society turned out to be a youth in the employment of the Italian Government as a Fascist propaganda lecturer in the United States. In October 1931 this youth hired a plane in France and flew over Rome dropping "National Alliance" anti-Fascist leaflets, and thereafter disappeared from public ken. I cite these matters to illustrate the long-distance campaign which the enemies of Fascism were now waging.

No such sporadic acts of subversive crime or Liberal penetration could ever by this time have hoped to overturn the strongly fortified Fascist Government. The regeneration of the Italian nation was moreover becoming more patent with every month, and the regime more acclaimed by the great majority of the Italian people.

It was Mussolini's dream to have every Italian a convinced Fascist. He longed to be able to have no more Special Defence Tribunals, no more *confino*, no more denunciations of anti-Fascist Italians abroad. As evidence of his will in this matter he sought to crown the celebrations held in honour of the Tenth Anniversary, the "*Decennale*" of the March on Rome with a general amnesty. At Milan on October 25, 1932, he made a speech in which he spoke of a pending "gesture of forgiveness to the outcast and deluded."

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It was to be " an act of mercy in favour of political adversaries who had deceived themselves or had been deceived concerning the strength and durability of the Fascist regime." Nine days later an amnesty decree was published.

At that date there were 1056 people announced as serving sentences for anti-Fascist crimes. Of this total 423 were liberated in terms of the amnesty : 204 had their sentence reduced by three years ; and 12 by five years—the total liberated being 639. At the same date those confined on the islands were 983 plus 103 in transit. Of this total of 1086, 595 were released. In the spring of 1933 the island of Lipari, the principal location of political *confinati*, was closed as a detention centre and its staff demobilised.

The 1932 amnesty was followed in a few weeks by another decree annulling the penalties inflicted on a group of 17 *fuorusciti* who, in accordance with the Law of January 31, 1926, had been outlawed with loss of Italian citizenship and forfeiture of all property in Italy.

The names on the list invite thought, for they show how the whirligig of time and circumstance could divide erstwhile comrades on those political battle-fields which we have traversed in course of this chronicle. The two major episodes in Mussolini's career which split friendships and changed close colleagues into bitter enemies were his abandonment of the Socialist Party when that Party pronounced against intervention in the Great War, and the reactions hostile to the Fascist regime after the Matteotti affair. People prominently identified with these two episodes figure among the condoned *fuorusciti*. For instance, it contained the names of Emilio Bazzi, former Pro-

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Page 247. Delete name and reference to Gaetano Salvemini. Although Italian citizenship restored, he had never been a Fascist, nor a friend of Mussolini's.

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fessor at Ravenna University, a Republican and friend of the Mussolinis in the old Forlì days ; Angelo Tonelli, Socialist and former friend, who became one of the leading anti-Fascist organisers in Switzerland ; Vincenzo Vacirca, Socialist deputy, another erst-while friend who had become editor of an anti-Fascist newspaper in New York.

Then there was Francesco Scozzese, a Socialist comrade of Mussolini in the old pre-war days when they both worked on the *Avanti* newspaper. Mussolini's penultimate and fiercest duel was fought with Scozzese. At Leghorn they fought fifteen bouts on end with sabres, Scozzese finally fainting from loss of blood. They became reconciled personally, but remained unrelenting political adversaries.

Of those on the list whose enmity arose indirectly out of the Matteotti matter through the "moral question," there was Giuseppe Donati, ex-Fascist Deputy and former collaborator with Mussolini on the *Popolo (Italia)* ; Massimo Rocca, ex-Fascist deputy and one-time member of the Fascist Directory ; Gaetano Salvemini, founder of the first *Fascio* (Blackshirt centre) in Florence. Other cases which involved more violent changes away from loyalty were those of Cesare Rossi, ex-Secretary of the Party, and Arturo Fasciolo, who had been one of Mussolini's confidential stenographers.

Thus closes the story of the conflict of the Fascists and anti-Fascists until the end of the Blackshirt *Decennale*. It reveals that personal vindictiveness has no place in Mussolini's make-up.

CHAPTER XXVII

AN INTERNATIONAL POWER (1927-1933)

National and World Affairs. Italy's Attitude in 1928. Naval Talks with France. The Parity Snag. Mr. Henderson's Effort. Mussolini opens World Appeal. "Clean Slate" Plea to America. East Mediterranean Peace. Malta. Position in 1932. Rise of Hitler. Feeling against Yugoslavia. Italy with France or Germany? Four-Power Pact.

THE world economic crisis began to put its imprint on the foreign policies of all nations in the year 1928. Before that date economic and political problems inherent in any post-war period were looked on by each country concerned from almost wholly a national point of view. As the depression grew and settled over the globe it became ever more patent that these conflicting viewpoints were not only augmenting the gathering shadows but were to a large degree their cause. It became patent as the years advanced that the life of all nations as a complex whole as well as the lives of the individual countries were at stake.

Foreign policies accordingly moved, between the years 1928 and 1932, with a speed in ratio to the growing common danger, towards a common or correlated policy, because it was realised that only by collaboration could civilisation, as we know it, be saved. The world had become too small to withstand, when divided, the devastating repercussions of the universal and inflexible laws of economy and finance. But international collaboration meant that common principles and formulas of action had to be found.

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The period now under review is characterised by polemical and diplomatic clashes which marked the search for these necessary common principles and formulas. The conferences of the immediate post-war years were inter-Allied and ex-Allied discussions for the imposition and maintenance of peace based on victory. They were therefore, *vis-a-vis* the beaten nations, unilateral discussions. The laws, snares, pitfalls and tricks of international finance, however, by tangling the interests of all nations into an endless knot, hastened the need of common discussion, else the knot had strangled Europe. Germany, the sole ex-enemy unit which remained a Great Power, gradually assumed—first through the League, then through insistence on the neglected clauses of the Versailles Treaty, which conceded her conditional but none the less equality rights, and finally through the Pact of Four—an ever fuller collaborative place in the comity of nations. The United States, longing to be quit of Europe, was jolted out of such hope by the lariat tugs of this all-encompassing financial crisis. It found itself by 1932 no longer a spectator but a fellow-member—crestfallen but still avuncular—actually corralled with the whole European family.

By the spring of 1933 the world crisis in its localised forms of unemployment and bank failures harassed the American people. The complicated niceties of the situation in their interlocked, transnational aspects were ignored by the American public. Washington moved towards a modified form of dictatorship in an effort to throw the United States clear of entanglements, home and foreign. The closing months of 1933 saw America neither crestfallen nor avuncular, **but** reliant and collaborative.

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At first sight it may seem that the above descriptive cartoon of world affairs from 1929 onwards has little enough to do with the story of Fascist Italy ! But if you will recall what has already been written of Mussolini's foreign policy you will see that the Fascist leader had already, and very long ago, enunciated principles and formulas which were destined to be highly important if not prime influences towards reaching the solution of the great problems as confronted by world collaboration today. The whole period 1929-1933 shows the Italy of Mussolini deliberately moving to a high place in world affairs—an infinitely higher place than it ever held in its national history, a place only comparable, for its influence on world thought, to the distant but now not forgotten past of the Italian people when Italy was last united under the insignia of the ancient instead of modern Roman lictor.

And now that Fascist Italy is on this high consultative level with the greatest Powers of the modern western world, it is one of the byplays of the so-called higher politics to calculate what Italy is likely to do in international co-operative policy. Mussolini has already given all the clues. We have seen how from the very beginning of his foreign responsibilities Mussolini had not looked on peace treaties as " eternal," and how he had voiced the opinion that Germany must be re-established if Europe were to be saved from disaster. We have seen how he had criticised the post-war policy of France. We have seen how he favoured the economic and political independence of Austria and Hungary, and we have seen how he disapproved of France's Little Entente encircling *bloc* of nations. From these factors it was deduced in the

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spring of 1933 that Italy was moving towards a species of *Entente* with Germany as against France.

On the other hand, we have also seen that the prevention of a reunion of the Germano-Austrian nations is a basic principle of his foreign policy, and of how the Nazis, and the Nazi Government, approve of that very union. We have, again, also seen how Fascist Italy is a fellow guarantor with Britain in the Locarno Pact guaranteeing French security against German aggression on the Rhine. These factors in turn seemed to indicate that Italy must lean to France. It was the interplay of searching consideration of all these factors in all their aspects, as we will soon see, which contributed, among other things, to the delay between consideration of the first draft of the Four-Power Pact as submitted by Mussolini to Macdonald on the Ostia road to Rome on March 18, 1933, and the signing of the final text on July 15, 1933.

It may here be noted in connection with the story of the rise and establishment of Fascism that the consistency of the Italian Government's policy was due to the fact of the Blackshirt regime. Mussolini was the creative motive force of that policy, but it was the steadying and controlling result of the Fascist Party flywheel which gave it smooth continuity of action. Between 1927-1933 British foreign policy varied under Conservative, Labour and National Governments. American policy changed with its Presidents. France's foreign policy—while remaining with "security" nailed to the mast—varied the number and quality of the nails with every one of its many changes of Premiers. German policy has swung with the advent of Hitler. No other Government has

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enjoyed such complete internal freedom of action as that of Fascist Italy.

It has not to be imagined, however, that Fascist Italy suddenly washed itself clean of the dross of everyday foreign politics and became a glittering prophet and saviour of a tottering world ! Far from it. The Government's constructive utterances on the international deadlocks of 1927-1933 came mostly as interpellations in debates with Italy's neighbours—debates and references which are marked with the special vehemence of Fascist national self-interest rather than with universal altruism. And to the official expressions of Governmental views there have to be added the semi-official and the non-official but indicative sporadic polemics of the Fascist Press.

During this phase of foreign policy, newspaper comment was characterised—over carefully timed periods—by sabre rattling on the Brenner, ultra-nationalism in Dalmatia, roars at Yugoslavia, intervention in the affairs of Malta, and attacks on France. On the other hand, the continuation of the policy of trade and conciliation treaties with all countries, including those on occasion trounced by the Press, was not interrupted. But the great international constructive element becomes more and more dominating and urgent as 1933 is approached. Let us take these foreign and international affairs in their order.

In June 1928 the Italian Government, in answer to criticisms that it was following a foreign and imperialistic policy by favour of Britain, asserted the complete independence of Italy in these matters, Foreign Minister Grandi in the Senate declaring : " Italy has no need today to ask authorisation of any kind for her

policy," and in stating that "Italy is perfectly autonomous in conducting her foreign affairs" he concluded, "I would add, however, that one of the cardinal points of our policy is friendship with Britain." In this same speech he announced that conversations with France had taken a hopeful turn and that the Tangier question had been solved to the satisfaction of all parties. He recalled the traditional friendship that existed between Italy and Hungary and indicated how the development of that friendship was being directed among other things to special facilitations for Hungarian traffic to the port of Fiume. From this he passed to Yugoslavia and entered a troubled area. He recalled that the Italo-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship signed away back in 1924 and integrated in the 1925 Treaty of Nettuno had never been ratified by Belgrade. He denounced "anti-Italian" incidents in Yugoslavia as "bound up with a complete ignorance of real conditions in Fascist Italy."

Turning to the Peace treaties, Grandi, voicing the convictions of Mussolini and the Fascist Government, said : "Peace treaties are sacred in that they are the conclusion of great and bloody efforts and mark the end of great sacrifices and great griefs ; but Peace treaties are not the outcome of divine justice but of human intelligence under influences—especially at the finish of a gigantic war—of a very exceptional order. Could anyone dare affirm that the Peace treaties from Versailles onwards are perfect works ? They are the work of human hands, I say, and therefore not perfect ; but, I add, always capable of being improved. There are in the Peace treaties great facts concluded which correspond to the supreme reasoning of justice—great facts which remain as such, and

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which no one of us thinks of revoking or of even discussing. But there are territorial, colonial, financial and social clauses in the treaties which could be discussed, reviewed and bettered with the aim of prolonging the duration of the treaties themselves, and therefore of assuring a longer period of peace.⁵⁵ He prophesied that in the matter of treaty re-adjustment Europe would be confronted with a "most interesting and delicate point in its history any time between the years 1935 and 1940."⁵⁵

From this the Foreign Minister again reiterated Mussolini's claim concerning the interdependence of war debts and reparations, and fixed Italy's position on the armaments questions on the following five points. (1) The interdependence of all kinds of armaments. (2) The proportion of armaments should not be based on the *status quo*. (3) The limits of Italian armaments cannot have an absolute character, but must be relative to the total armaments of the other States, that is, parity with the most-armed European-Continental nation. (4) The Italian Government declares itself *a priori* ready to accept as the limits of its own armaments whatsoever figure, even the very lowest, so long as it is not surpassed by any other European-Continental Power. And (5) the methods employed to obtain the limitations ought to be characterised with the greatest simplicity and should not imply the necessity of external control.

It is of considerable interest and importance to note how Mussolini keeps hammering away with the enunciation of his points until they emerge from the more or less abstract realm of *ex-par te* statements and become driven home in the practical international field, the process sometimes taking years. We have seen how

his ideas—the *pensiero*—in internal affairs became translated into effective action. It is now the turn of foreign affairs to experience this materialisation from *pensiero* into *azione*.

In the spring of 1928 the Austrian Chancellor and a group of pan-Germanists opened a strong criticism of Fascist Italy's handling of the Austrian-born minority in the Alto Adige. Mussolini did not allow this to pass. On March 3 he denied the Austrian accusations, catalogued the benefits conferred on the new Alpine regions by Italy and once more emphasised the inviolability of the Brenner. "This is the last time I shall speak on this theme," said Mussolini. "Next time I shall let acts do the speaking." He insisted that the Austrian manifestations were unjustified and provocative, and declared that the Fascist Government had adopted in the Province of Bolzano the same policy as in the ninety-two other Provinces of the realm, and that Bolzano shared with them the same rights and duties." "It is time to say that all further Brenner manifestations are useless and hurtful. As far as lies in our power we wish to be friends of the German world, but on condition that our own security is not even vaguely placed in question. Today we make it known to the Tyrolese, to the Austrians and to the world that all Italy, with her dead and her living, stands at the Brenner."

It is typical of Mussolini's conduct of foreign relations that when need be he clarifies any given situation as far as Italy's attitude is concerned with almost brutal frankness. After the shock of such declaration had died down, then, with both parties knowing where each stands, he re-establishes friendship and paves the way for a collaborative amelioration of

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reciprocal interests. This was the case with the Tyrolean agitation. By July the Italo-Austrian trouble had blown over, and today—after further minor breezes—the two countries are co-operating for the assurance of an independent Austria which in its turn is one of Italy's best guarantees for the security of the Brenner.

During 1928 a triangle of treaties of friendship which guaranteed peace in the Eastern Mediterranean was engineered by Mussolini among the countries whose interests had hitherto been considered irreconcilable—Italy, Greece and Turkey. During the autumn of 1928 the Italo-Greece treaty was concluded, followed by a similar treaty with Turkey at the end of the year. The subsequent treaty of friendship between Turkey and Greece completed a compact bond of mutual agreements of great importance for peace in Eastern Europe and for the preservation of Italy's commercial interests and traditional policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. This reassuring triangle of agreements marks one of Mussolini's greatest diplomatic successes.

One matter ruffled Italian foreign affairs in 1928. It took the form of a Press campaign against the policy of Lord Strickland in Malta. The Italians accused him of setting out to destroy "Malta's spiritual patrimony—its religion and the Italian language," some of the papers heaping vulgar abuse on all British schemes on the island directed towards the establishment of schools, the development of the Anglican Church and the adjustment of language anomalies. The Government Press argued that the island's proximity to Italy gave her a special right and interest in safeguarding the culture of the Maltese,

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whom they claimed to have ties of blood and language with themselves.

But the real interest of the Government was on bigger international issues than the Malta squabble : 1929 and the beginning of 1930 saw Fascist Italy taking an important part at The Hague Conference on the Dawes Plan, with its political ramifications touching the problems of reparations and war debts, France, the Ruhr, and the Locarno guarantees—issues which brought Fascist Italy on an equal footing ever closer into the deliberation of the Great Powers. Italy's helpful attitude to Austria during The Hague decisions on Austria's reparation debts was followed by a formal visit of thanks made by the Austrian chancellor to Rome.

In the same year Italy was invited with France to complete the 1929 Washington Naval Accord already subscribed to by the United States and Great Britain. Italy then produced the formula of "equality of rights and equality of duties"—and plunged once more into negotiations with France for the solution of the naval and disarmament question in particular and the settlement of the "totalarity" of Italo-French questions in general. In all these naval and kindred discussions Mussolini maintained that the real solution of what was then recognised as part of the whole world economic crisis lay in the creation of a feeling of mutual trust among nations.

The disarmament question dominated 1930, and the inconclusive discussions and their reactions roused Mussolini to declare in a "Message to the Fascist Party" on October 27, 1930; "Fascist Italy arms because everyone arms. It will disarm if everyone disarms. . . . Let it be clear that we arm for defence

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and not for attack. Fascist Italy will never take the initiative in war. Our actual policy of treaty revision is directed towards avoiding war. Revision is not only a thing of prevailing Italian interest; it is of European, of world interest. This possibility of revision is contained in the Pact of the League of Nations itself. Who therefore violates the Pact of the League? Those at Geneva who have created and wish to perpetuate two categories of States: the armed and the unarmed." Mussolini at this time indicated that it was "only towards the East that growing Italy could make pacific expansion"—a sentiment which explained Italy's vital interest in the Danubian States. So that when these States were moving towards alliances and treaties in the play of Great Powers other than Italian, all people concerned were reminded by Mussolini: "We are hard on enemies; but with friends we march to the end."

The main cause of friction was still caused by the rubbing of the conflicting policies and interests of Italy and France. In February 1931 Mr. Henderson as Foreign Minister of the British Labour Government, accompanied by the Labour First Lord of the Admiralty and some Foreign Office experts made a special visit to Paris and Rome in order to try and resolve at least the Franco-Italian naval differences—differences which circled round the Italian parity claims, for that of course was what Mussolini's formula of "willingness to disarm at whatever figure so long as not exceeded by any other Continental Power" resolved itself into.

The main object of the British mission was to obtain the adherence of France and Italy to the Three-Power Naval Pact signed in 1930 at London by Britain, the United States and Japan—an agreement complemen-

tary to the Washington Treaty. The Rome talks ended on February 27 with a dramatic sitting in the British Embassy with Mussolini present, when agreement was reached with the *Duce* and a midnight telephone call from the Embassy to the Qiiiai d'Orsay secured the adhesion also of the French Government. But this apparently happy conclusion of a major Franco-Italian quarrel was doomed to be negated. Disillusionment, which we have seen in course of this history to enter like a spectre at all crucial phases of Italo-French relations, once more chilled Italian hopes.

The Rome agreement was announed in the French and Italian Chambers and a reunion was fixed in London to elaborate the final text. By the end of the first London session the Italian and the British Governments were taken aback to learn that France put a substantially different interpretation on the basis of the agreement reached in Rome. The Italian Government spoke of its " surprise, delusion and justified sense of bitterness." While still hopeful, the Italian Government took occasion however to reaffirm its belief that " a Germany politically tranquil and economically healed " was an element " not only useful but indeed indispensable for the peace and stability of Europe."

Seeing the danger of this international drift while the world crisis was closing still tighter its grip on the *moral* of all peoples, Mussolini during the winter of 1931-1932 opened what may be called a world campaign. In speeches, by radio broadcast, and in Press articles he warned civilisation of the chaos which threatened it, and appealed to all responsible nations to confront realities in co-operation and common sense. At an enormous open-air meeting in Naples on

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October 25, 1931, Mussolini pointed to the problems of reparations and war debts, armament inequalities, certain clauses of the Peace treaties, and a crippled capitalist system as the obstacles to world equilibrium ; and he showed that the revision of these things would, in the name of justice, be the aim of the Fascist Party in the future. He defined the world crisis as not merely economic but as above all spiritual and moral. And then in the form of three rhetorical questions he announced his policy " with which real peace would be served."

" How can we say," he asked, " that there is legal equality, when on one hand there are nations armed to the teeth and on the other there are nations condemned to remain helpless ?

" How can one speak of European reconstruction if some of the clauses of some of the Peace treaties—which have pushed the world on to the brink of material disaster and moral desperation—are not modified ?

" How long will it be before mankind realises that something has broken down in the modern economic machine,⁵⁵ and that its creaking axles must be overhauled ?

He announced that the "just answers" to these points would be the basis of the Fascist policy.

In November 1931 Mussolini sent Grandi to Washington with a plea for world collaboration and with a mandate to discuss world problems " with the sky as the limit." New Year 1932 he opened with a broadcast plea for a common confrontation of the crisis, and on January 12, 1932, as a prelude to the Lausanne Reparations Conference, he published in the *Popolo d'Italia* a plea for a radical cancellation of reparations.

This advocacy of a clean-slate policy in Europe was followed the next day by another article appealing to the United States to play her part by making a "gesture worthy of civilisation" by renouncing war debts. But this suggested act of renunciation on America's part was to be dependent on the behaviour of Europe. "There is only one way out of this statistical situation. It must begin with a betterment of feeling among the European States in their reciprocal positions of debtors and creditors. With this reached, and in face of such an act of goodwill by all Europe—which through reciprocal forgiveness showed that it had overcome the distinction between the conqueror and conquered, the United States would certainly not have the courage to insist. America would refuse to appear in the history of humanity as the only, the unique, the persistent and worldly profiteer of the Great War. None of the Americans wish to be likened unto Shylock clamouring for his pound of flesh. There are also material reasons to close this account written in blood. . . . The world has need of the United States, but the United States has more than ever need of Europe and the world. The alarm-bells of reality ring on both shores of the Atlantic."

Mussolini having thus made a bid for world leadership in political thought, his representative at Geneva opened his speech at the first plenary meeting of the Geneva Disarmament Conference on February 10, 1932, with the words: "Our task is to justify justice, not to justify force." By this time Mussolini developed a policy which openly considered disarmament, financial obligations and the economic situation as three sides of the one problem of world depression.

The Fascist Grand Council demanded that responsi-

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bility for the disarmament and general world *impasse* should be fixed—the presumption being that France was the culprit. The irresolution of the international conferences and of Geneva was condemned and the demand for world confidence and an "international civic sense" repeated.

As a means of fortifying Italy against the general economic depression of this period the Ministry of Corporations was dovetailed into Foreign Affairs in a co-ordinated defence against tariff walls and in an active co-operating policy of pushing new commercial treaties, extending from Peru to Russia, with special interest in the autonomy of the Danubian States. Treaties with the Arab States bordering the Red Sea were also concluded for the benefit of Italy's Eritrean colonial interests, supplementary to the Italian 1928 agreement with Abyssinia.

Speaking at this time in the Chamber, Grandi reopened the Mandates question. He deplored Italy's small part in the general distribution that followed the Peace treaties, saying that while Italy invoked international justice for everyone else, the Italian nation could not exclude herself. He concluded: "Italy intends to assure a better tomorrow for her sons." The rest of 1932 continued with Mussolini trying to rouse the world in general and France in particular to a "new mentality." In July, Air Minister Balbo went to Geneva as leader of the Italian Disarmament Conference delegation. His disposition could not tolerate the diplomatic protocol methods of the League or the Conference's effort to reduce the efficacy of aerial armaments. On his return he published in the *Popolo d'Italia* an article denouncing the behaviour of Great Britain, France and the United

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States at the Conference, virtually accusing these countries of political hypocrisy, dishonesty and bad faith.

By October 1932 a new factor to be reckoned with began to loom over Europe—the steady increase of the National-Socialist movement under Hitler in Germany. Heretofore the expressions of Mussolini's policy with regard to Germany had been accepted as more or less academic expositions of political ideals, or possibly as a kind of bogey with which to shake France into thinking more seriously of Italy's possible reactions to France's rebuffs. But with Hitler rousing Germany into a nation clamouring for rectification of her Versailles position the attitude of Mussolini became vested with immediate reality.

It was seen that Mussolini was no opportunist champion of Germany, but that he was the leader of a self-reliant country which approved of Germany's effort to help herself towards the revision which Mussolini had always held to be necessary for European peace. Did it mean that Fascist Italy would join with Fascist Germany and throw down a gauntlet to France and her Little Entente allies of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia ? Mussolini's belief in Peace treaty revision and armament equality rights had been too well and too fully acclaimed by Mussolini himself for France to have any illusions concerning where combined Italo-Germanic action would or could lead.

On October 23, 1932, Mussolini spoke on that point before an open-air crowd of some one hundred and fifty thousand people at Turin. He said : " In this frontier city which has never feared war I hereby declare, so that everyone may hear, that Italy's foreign

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policy is peace—a real peace which cannot be dissociated from justice ; a peace which ought to restore the equilibrium of Europe ; a kind of peace that ought to have its roots in our hearts like hope and faith." There were some who thought, he said, that Italy's disarmament formula was inspired by Machiavellianism. " There is a simple way of testing it," he added,— " try it." As for Germany's demand for juridical parity, he declared that it was fully justified and that with safeguards the sooner it was recognised the better.

Declarations such as these gave no assurance to France, and tension rather tightened instead of slackening. Incidents also began to crop up again between Italy and Yugoslavia in Dalmatia. In one anti-Italian demonstration the mediaeval Venetian stone lion of St. Mark at Trau was defaced. This incident was held to symbolise the sum of all insults. The Dante Alighieri Society once again leapt into fiery resolutions. Counter-demonstrations were staged at the French Embassy and at the Yugoslav Legation in Rome ; and Mussolini took occasion in the Senate to declare that responsibility for the vandalism could be traced not only to those elements in Yugoslavia which guide the policy of the State with " a propaganda of calumny and hatred against Italy " but also " to other elements " — meaning of course France — always France.

Despite these rough edges which hindered the smooth running of Mussolini's ideas for a united transnational effort to resuscitate the world he still persisted in the hope of achieving co-operation.

Meanwhile the rise of Hitler to power in Germany and his eventual establishment there in March 1933

A BID FOR PEACE



Mr. Ramsay MacDonald on arrival at the seadrome of Ostia on March 18, 1933, when Mussolini handed him the first draft of his Four-Power Pact peace project. Alongside Mr. MacDonald is General Balbo, who piloted the seaplane carrying the British Premier. Talking to General Balbo is the author.

weakened somewhat the negotiating powers of France *vis-a-vis* Italy and *per contra* strengthened the hand of Italy. The reader has only to recollect the record of Italy's successive "disillusionments" with France and the record of Italian belief in the necessity of a reconstructed and rehabilitated Germany to understand the position. Franco-Italian-Yugoslav tension had also been heightened by actual gun-running incidents and by reciprocal accusations of armament traffic in favour of the Succession States. Added to this was the moral sympathy of a Fascist Italy which saw a great nation like Germany avowedly copying the Fascist form of Government. Ignoring this opportunity to form an anti-French *bloc* Mussolini devoted himself to pulling France, Germany and Europe from pathways that lead to war. With the tension created in Paris on account of the revival of the Prussian spirit in Germany he saw his oft repeated formula concerning the necessity of treaty revision and juridical equality for Germany change almost overnight from a political belief to a critical issue. He at once began to use his Fascist influence to recall Swastika-excited Germany to a sense of responsibility. In an article contributed to the *Berliner Boer sen-Courier*, of March 5, 1933, he wrote :

Fascist Italy has declared that the time has come to pass from Armistice to Peace. The Armistice has lasted fifteen years and, like all armistices, it confronts us with the dilemma, simple but terrible,—either to re-take up arms or conclude peace. The fact that many men, whose nerves have become unstrung with the crisis, are not horrified at the thought of a new war is evidence of the profound disquietude produced in human hearts by this Armistice which has lasted too long. It is thus that hope becomes

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desperation. But let it be remembered that a state of mind so catastrophic renders those who are at the head of States responsible before God, Humanity and History.

Passing immediately on to a more effective field than Press appeals, he drafted his Four Power Pact, which he handed to Mr. MacDonald after his arrival at the seadrome of Ostia on March 18, 1933. This Pact proposing the co-operation of the Four Great Western Powers of Europe opened a new chapter in the international negotiations for world settlement.

Doubts about readjustment of national interests, fears concerning the revision of treaties and of a Germany re-armed led to a succession of proposals and counter-proposals by the Powers concerned—each proposal meaning some variation in the original text, with consequent new delays. France had to be sure that she was not subscribing to a document which would put her in a position to suffer from a possibly inimicable majority decision and that the interests of her Little Entente Allies would not suffer. Italy had to be certain that the Germans would not be given any chance to prove a cuckoo in the nest. Hitlerite Germany feared to compromise by diplomacy that which it looked like being able to demand by methods more belligerently direct. Britain had to safeguard herself against new commitments.

During this phase of diplomatic exchanges the world Press, kept in the dark, obfuscated public opinion by guessing wildly on the contents and scope of the proposed Pact, speculation ranging from the abolition of the Polish Corridor to restoration of Tanganyika ! On July 15, however, the Four-Power

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Pact, as amended, as signed by Mussolini and the Ambassadors of Great Britain, France and Germany.

The document consists of a Preamble and six articles. The preamble talks of the necessity of consolidating peace and confidence in Europe and recalls the obligations of the League, the Locarno Pact, the Kellogg Peace Pact, and the League Covenant. In Article One the Four Western Powers undertake "effective co-operation" for keeping the peace. Article Two provides for the examination within the framework of the League, of Articles 10, 16 and 19 of the Covenant. Article Three contains an undertaking that the Four Powers will make every effort towards assuring the success of the Disarmament Conference ; and in Article Four they affirm their desire to consult together on economic questions common to Europe. Article Five gives the Pact a ten-year duration, with provisions for renewal ; and Article Six concerns ratification. The import of Articles 10, 16 and 19 of the League Covenant (exhumed from their twelve years' burial in the archives of Geneva and enshrined in the new Pact) is best described in the British Foreign Office Despatch sent by Sir John Simon to the British Ambassador in Rome on June 7, 1933. The reference reads :

" Article 10 emphasises the sanctity of treaties and contains an understanding to preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity of all members of the League. Article 19 refers to the possibility of a fresh examination of treaties which have become inapplicable, and of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world. It is manifest that Articles 10 and 19 alike involve the repudiation of interference by violence and

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provide a code by means of which treaty rights should be observed and respected, while provision is made in appropriate cases for their peaceful adjustment." [Article 16 concerns the coercive measures to be taken by the League of Nations in the event of any member-Nation violating the Covenant.] Sir John Simon's Despatch continues : "I will draw Your Excellency's attention to the fact that alike in respect of Articles 10, 16 and 19, the Agreement (the Four Power Pact), while contemplating quadrilateral examination in respect of methods and procedure, is expressly stated to be without prejudice to decisions which can only be taken by the regular organs of the League of Nations."

From this it can be seen that the Pact in its final form is one of pious aspirations all carefully chained to the already existing machinery of Geneva.

On the same day as that on which the Pact was initialled Mussolini dedicated to it a speech in the Senate, emphasising that it was the spirit much more than its substance that mattered, the difference between the first and final texts being of secondary importance. He announced that not only were the four great Western nations of Europe now in collaboration, but that the Pact provided for " the idea of collaboration with all other States, great and small, European and extra-European ; and in particular with the United States, without whose valid and practical contribution no stable and constructive work for the political pacification and economic restoration of the world is possible." He insisted that the Pact was directed against no one.

Mussolini pointed out that, thanks to the Pact, Italo-French relations had now entered on a new era of settlement and agreement, and that Franco-German relations would be transformed. The Pact, he insisted, was a synthesis of the League of Nations, a

revival of the spirit of Locarno with the real fundamental aim and object of restoring international confidence and goodwill. In conclusion he declared that the spirit of the Pact put an end to the post-war chapter of history and opened another page, and prophesied that its terms " would be greeted with great satisfaction by the multitudes of all nations who, more distant from artifice and nearer to life, feel intuitively the moral import of events which may be called historic."

The Pact—" The Pact of Rome "—was hailed as a supreme triumph for peace and for Mussolini as the fabricator of that peace. It was claimed that he had made Fascist Italy a leader " i n a new world-empire of thought."

The world, however, was not allowed much time to contemplate this claim. The persistently aggressive behaviour of Hitlerite Germany during the summer and autumn of 1933 raised new problems for Europe in general and for Fascist Italy in particular. The Nazi persecution of the *Jews* shocked the world. The Nazi demonstrations and incidents on the frontiers of Denmark, France, Poland and Austria ; and the Nazi incursions into the Saare, Alsace and the Tyrol, alarmed Europe. In June 1933, Mussolini, who enjoyed the goodwill of Germany for reasons already expounded in this book, used his special position to call Germany to its senses. But at the same time he did not credit all the alarmist reports published abroad. In Rome he received the Chief Rabbi of the Italian Jews, and in expressing his sympathy with their fellows in Germany he promised to use what influence he could on their behalf.

The physical assertion of the Nazi *Anschluss* policy against the will of the Vienna Government, with riots

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and bloodshed during August 1933 at the Innsbruck vestibule of the Brenner Pass, brought the danger point very near to Italy. Nevertheless, still persuaded that she could count on her good relations with Germany to check excesses, propaganda and threats, Italy in August 1933 stood outside Allied diplomatic protests. But as the autumn wore on it became apparent that Mussolini, in encouraging a German imitation of Fascist forms, saw arise not real Fascism but a Frankenstein creation. Hitler had tried to do in eleven weeks what had taken Mussolini eleven years. It was shown that National-Socialism was not Fascism.

At one stroke the Nazis appeared to justify France's whole post-war policy, so often condemned by Italy, Britain and others. The disarmament question acquired new values.

In this sudden whirlpool Mussolini never let go his friendship with Germany nor his faith in Germany's eventual return to equilibrium ; but he qualified his attitude with open and avowed adhesion to the Austria of Dollfuss. In the *Heimwehr* he believed he saw a guarantee of Austrian independence, but that Heimwehr guarantee was only valid under a regime empowered above parliament. Italy in September 1933 therefore sympathised with the creation of a Fascist system of rule in Austria.

The enemies of Mussolini and of Fascism were quick, during the latter months of 1933, to confuse the issue by lumping German National-Socialism and Italian Fascism under the one title of Fascism. By means of this fallacy they sought to condemn Italian Fascism by citing German Nazi anti-Jewish atrocities.

Leaving time to rectify this obvious trick on world opinion, Mussolini in September 1933 joined with

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Great Britain and France in fortifying the economic position of Austria and the Danubian States. And in that month he raised Bolzano to the status of a garrison town for the defence of the Brenner.

Behind these immediate moves stood the Four-Power Pact. Mussolini never lost sight of that. As the Fascist Press has surmised, he is waiting for a lull in the swirling emotions of present-day Europe to put that collaborative treaty to the test, and to reassert leadership in the ways of international reason.

On September 2, 1933, Fascist Italy concluded a Pact of Friendship and Non-aggression with Soviet Russia. Mussolini in a Press article explained that this was to dispel the idea that the Four-Power Pact was intended to isolate Russia. He wrote : " The Four-Power Pact eliminates the danger of *blocs* in Western Europe. I am hoping, as far as Italy is concerned, that by this Pact with Russia I have been able to attain the same result in Eastern Europe and Western Asia."

CHAPTER XXVIII

PEACE AND POLEMICS WITH THE CHURCH (1927-1933)

The " Roman Question " ended. The Lateran Treaties and Concordat, Mussolini on Christian Rome. Cavoufs Dream Fulfilled. The Pope comes out. Savoy. Education Quarrel. " Catholic Action " Accused. Polemics and Deadlock. Terms of Settlement.

WITH the way prepared during 1925-1927, the Holy See and the Fascist State in 1928 began a mild and unofficial flirtation. Overtures for a settlement of the Roman Question, which had baffled all Premiers and Popes since 1870, were quietly opened through private channels. Everything was secret. Vague rumours escaped only to be firmly denied. Success depended on keeping the fingers of the public out of the pie. By 1929 Mussolini personally entered into the negotiations ; and on February 7, 1929, Cardinal Secretary of State Gasparri informed the Diplomatic Corps to the Holy See that agreement had been reached and a Concordat drafted. The quarrel between the Curia and the House of Savoy was ended. On February 11, *Capo del Governo* Mussolini for Italy and Cardinal Gasparri for the Holy See signed a Political Treaty, a Financial Convention and a Concordat.

The Political Treaty established the absolute sovereignty of the Pope over that defined area now known as the State of the Vatican City, which of course includes the Basilica of St. Peter's. Extra-territoriality was also guaranteed to other ecclesiastical buildings and palaces in Rome and at Castel Gandolfo. The

First Article of the Statute (which we last met with on page 12) declaring the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion the religion of the State, was repeated. Other religions, instead of being "tolerated" now became "admitted." The Church recognised the Kingdom of Italy and the House of Savoy. It also acknowledged Rome as the Capital of Italy. This reciprocal recognition of absolute and complete sovereignty was based on the formal abrogation of the Law of Guarantees and the equally formal declaration that the "Roman Question" was definitely and irrevocably solved.

The Financial Convention liquidated Italy's debt to the Holy See, a debt which represented the self-imposed indemnity arising out of the events of 1870. The sum amounted to 750,000,000 lire in cash and one billion lire worth of Italian Government Stock.

The Concordat provides facilitations for amicable co-operation in the discussion and settlement of all relations between the Italian and the Ecclesiastical authorities. It lays down guiding principles for eventual legislation concerning marriage and education. It is in a sense the vehicle for arbitration on whatsoever points may arise at issue between the signatories.

It will be noticed that in writing of the Political Treaty and the Financial Convention I have used the past tense and I have used the present for the Concordat. The relative nature of the documents may be gauged by that fact. The Treaty and Convention have passed into history ; the Concordat is a document still quick with possibilities—although the Church has asserted that the lives of the three documents hang together. This assertion was brought out during the storm which rose around the whole settlement shortly

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after its solemn conclusion at the Lateran Palace on the historic February day of 1929.

The first gale to thrash the smooth waters of the Roman settlement came with Mussolini's first speech on the conciliation. He spoke for three hours to the Chamber. His speech was an exhaustive survey of the history of the Church and Christianity and of their combined relations to the history of Rome. But Mussolini's narrative was of the earth earthy. With ruthless frankness he expounded his point of view. And his point of view was Government's point of view. Among other things he said : " Italy has a singular privilege of which we are proud,—that of being the sole European nation which is the seat of a universal religion. That religion was born in Palestine, but it became Catholic in Rome. If it had been confined to Palestine it would very probably have remained one of those many sects which flourished in that ardent atmosphere—and very probably it would have burned itself out, leaving no trace."

From this he continued : " Christianity found favourable surroundings in Rome. It found it above all in the lassitude of the ruling classes and consular families which in the time of Augustus had become tired, gross and sterile, and it found it in the seething anthill of Levantine humanity which distressed the social subsoil of Rome—people for whom the Sermon on the Mount opened horizons of revolt and revindication. Among the precursors of Christianity were Virgil and Caesar."

This argument of course is neither new nor novel, but it was not expected that it would be the topic chosen for polemical expansion on that particular occasion and moment. Rome was sacred, Mussolini went

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on, not only because it was the capital of the Empire and the cradle of Catholicism, but " because it was the resting-place of the unknown Soldier," and because " on the Campidoglio there is an altar which commemorates the fallen of our Fascist Revolution." That brought him to his great point : " The Fascist State fully revindicates its ethical character : it is Catholic, but it is Fascist. It is above all exclusively, essentially Fascist. Catholicism integrates it. That we openly declare. But let no one think, under specious philosophy or metaphysics, of changing the cards now laid on the table."

Mussolini recalled the story of Cavour and the olive branch, and in token of fulfilment of Cavour's dream of the end of Risorgimento strife with peace between State and Church, and in accordance with Mussolini's Chamber speech, an olive branch worked in bronze, as noted at the end of Chapter II., was placed on Cavour's grave at Santena in Piedmont. A Roman oak was planted by the tomb.

Mussolini's speech, followed by another one in the Senate, was the prelude to an exchange of utterances by Pius XI. and Mussolini. Neither side minced matters. Conflicting principles on the education of youth were already blatantly irreconcilable. It was feared that the Lateran Treaty and Concordat would not be ratified. However, the storm passed and the agreements were duly completed in June 1929.

A visible popular proof that the Roman Question was ended was given by the Pope on July 25, 1929. On that day the " Bronze Doors " of the Vatican, which had remained half-closed since 1870, were thrown wide open by the Swiss Guards ; and Pope Pius XL, surrounded by the full and picturesque

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glories of the Pontifical Court, passed in processional form out of the Vatican, making a circuit of St. Peter's Square, blessing the assembled multitude in the open air of Rome, and then returning within. The liberty of the Pontiffs was thus symbolised. The theory of imprisonment in the Vatican passed into history.

On the part of the House of Savoy, King Victor Emmanuel and Queen Elena, accompanied by Foreign Minister Grandi, paid a State visit to the Pope on December 5, 1929. Quirinal and Vatican met and were reconciled.

But there were still storms ahead. Early in 1930 the inevitable conflict over education broke out afresh. It centred round the activities of the "Catholic Action," an institution which developed lines of contact with the youth of Italy through various organisations : The Catholic Young Men's Society, the Catholic Young Women's Society, the Catholic Educational Board, the Public Morals Federation, the University Students' Federation. It also organised an economic and social association for the adult working classes. In connection with these the Catholic Action had Catholic Boy Scouts and clubs. Mussolini had already countered the Scout movement with his Blackshirt *Avanguardisti* and *Balilla* boys' units.

Mussolini had and has his own ideas on the upbringing of children. To him and to Fascism the State comes before the Church in these matters ; and as for the family, it is the State and not the Church which must primarily influence its spirit. The Pope intervened against Mussolini's plans with a weighty Encyclical, and on the Fascist side the official publishing house of the Party issued two volumes : *Render unto Caesar* and *The Fascist State ; Church and School*,
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which pursued still further the attack against the authority of the Church. The Holy Office rose in wrath and placed both books on the Index.

For the Church, education was the key to control. For the Fascists, it was the key to existence.

The discussion between the two irreconcilable absolutist conceptions of education continued until the summer months of 1931, when it then flared up into a serious dispute. In May of that year the Fascist trade union paper, *Il Lavoro Fascista*, published "revelations" alleging that the Catholic Action was clandestinely developing a programme hostile to the Fascist State. In short, that it was reorganising the old pre-Fascist Catholic trade unions, with the idea of resuscitating the Popular Party in readiness to assume the reins of Government. Although the counter-revolutionary allegations were not taken seriously, there was sufficient in the story to cause violent Fascist reaction.

The Government closed several of the Catholic clubs under the aegis of the Catholic Action in Rome, and the Prefects were instructed to close Catholic clubs in the Provinces. Blackshirt demonstrations were held and several acts of aggression against church property were committed. By this time the accusations against the Catholic Action included the old one of undue interference in the education of Italian youth. The Pope demanded that the Italian Government should make a formal "deploration" for the excesses reported, and that it should give assurances "of future good behaviour," and that it should re-open the clubs—all as preliminaries to discussing the scope of the Catholic Action aims and activities.

The Fascist Government rejected these terms and in

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turn demanded the exercise of the arbitration clause of the Concordat for a re-discussion of the definition of clause 43 of the same instrument—the clause which defines the scope of the Catholic Action.

On these issues a deadlock ensued ; and after a hot summer of protests, proclamations, propaganda and general pother, secret negotiations were begun for the resolution of this post-Concordat quarrel. By September 1931 terms were agreed upon which amounted to this : (1) the Catholic Action was not to mix itself up with politics, and it was to adopt the Italian flag; (2) the Catholic Action was not to organise any association of a trade union (syndical) nature, but would co-operate with the existing Fascist Syndicates ; (3) no person was to be appointed to director's office in the Catholic Action who belonged to a Party adverse to Fascism ; and (4) the youths' clubs of the Catholic Action were to change their name and character. They were to confine themselves to works of religious and not of physical or general education.

Both sides openly declared themselves contented and discussions as to who had " won " were discouraged.

Since 1931 the relations between Church and State have continued on the best of terms, special evidence of mutual goodwill on the spiritual side and reciprocal help on the material side being provided by the co-operation exercised for the success of the Extraordinary Holy Year proclaimed on April 1, 1933, in commemoration of the Nineteenth Centenary of the Redemption.

During 1932, Fascist and Church authorities worked together without friction for the advancement of the Catholic religion in Italy—the Government at the

same time safeguarding the exercise and interests of the other faiths. On September 7, 1933, seven thousand *Avanguardisti* and *Balilla* Fascists, from Italy and from abroad, attended Pontifical Mass in St. Peter's and were thereafter assembled in the Vatican to receive the Benediction of Pius XI.

The Lateran Concordat really amounts to a deal in futures. Its present-day cohesion, despite all the occasional excursions and alarms which we have seen, depends on the personalities of its two architects, Benito Mussolini and Achille Ratti, Pius XI.

To Mussolini's mind, according to my reading of his utterances on the Christian religion in general and Roman Catholicism in particular, Christ is not a token of the redemption of mankind so much as a symbol of the destiny of Rome : *Roma Genetrix* ; a *Lux Mundi* of the Forums. The *Pontifex Maximus* is not the inheritor but the trustee of his imperial title, the predestined perpetuator of the universal idea of Rome—Latin Rome.

" Christ, by being born, proves to us that the authority of the Roman Empire was just. Christ, by dying, confirmed the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire over all mankind." " The Roman Empire was helped by miracles, and was therefore willed by God." " The Romans, in bringing the world into subjection, aimed at the good of the State, and therefore at the ends of Right." These words were written by Dante. They are quoted from his "*Monorchia*" which argues the authority of the Empire as against that of the Church, and postulates that the Roman people assumed the dignity of Empire by divine destiny and right. Here

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are sentiments which might have been written by Mussolini today.

To Pius XI Fascism is not a doctrine but a guarantee of order against Bolshevism, a God-sent instrument which stemmed Communist atheism, which checked agnosticism in the schools and drove out Masonic disbelief in the authority of the Popes.

It would be difficult to find a parallel in history where two heads of States so profoundly disagreed with each other's essential credos and nevertheless managed to frame a Concordat based on different beliefs derived from these credos.

A future *Duce* who, as a practising Catholic, bows to the headship of his Church, or a future Pope who has no prepossessions about Bolshevism, will alter the course of influences and relations.

In this respect the future favours the Vatican, not necessarily to the diminution of Mussolini's idea of a universal Latin Rome, but certainly in matters touching education, family life and the exercise of the non-Catholic cults.

CHAPTER XXIX

COMPLETION OF THE NEW ORDER— AND BEYOND

Prestige. Fascists in other lands. Facing World Crisis. Financial Situation. Industrial Measures. Fascist Grand Council Statute. Election System. Fascist Plebiscite. First Blackshirt Parliament. Classic Reinvocations. Virgil, Dante and Caesar reinvoked. Development of the "Universal Idea." Tenth Anniversary Classicism. Augustan Peace. First Universal Appeal Committee formed for World Action.

ON the internal constructive side of the rapidly consolidating State, the period from 1927 onwards was identified with a remarkable series of laws concerning public health, land reclamation, agricultural development, Party reforms and Corporate State experiments. Measures to safeguard Italian finances and commerce against the assaults of world depression then moving to its apex were also taken. These matters were accompanied by a significant intensification of archaeological clearances, especially in Rome ; by the celebration on an international scale of the anniversaries of the statesmen, poets and prophets of the Imperial era, and by the encouragement of international conferences in the Italian capital, dealing with everything and anything—a sequence of events which pointed to the conscious development of the idea of Rome as once more a mover in world thought. This in turn merged into propaganda for the " universality " of Fascism. All things in every department of life, intellectual, practical or theoretical, which enhanced the prestige of Rome received un-

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failingly full measure of encouragement and publicity from the Government.

Italians abroad, even if they had changed their citizenship, were made to feel that they were part and parcel of the Fascist regime in its work of racial renaissance. In supplement to what has been noted in Chapter XXV concerning emigration, it has to be noted that latter-day Fascism continues to develop the position of overseas Italians on a higher social and cultural level. The early organisation of the Foreign *Fasci* was promoted in 1928 to a Department of State under the orders of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and in 1932 a *Direzione Generale degli Italiani all' Estero*, was constituted to look after the growing complexity of Fascist interests among Italians abroad—commercial, cultural, educational, charitable and sporting. At the beginning of 1933 there were 680 Fascist centres abroad in collaboration with the Italian diplomatic and consular services. In 1932, 300,000 children of Italian parents attended Italian schools organised by these centres. Throughout the world there are forty-two "Houses of Italy" open to Italians with the express purpose of linking them to the fatherland; and ninety-two chairs and lectureships in Italian language and literature have been founded abroad to re-awaken foreigners to the culture which Italy may offer.

The steps already taken by the Fascist Government for the recovery of its internal financial and economic position now proved a sure foundation for special fortifications erected to protect Italy from the rising attacks of the world economic crisis, whose impingements were first felt with special force in 1930. These, what may be called pre-crisis measures, can be sum-

marised as a gradual reduction of taxation, the balancing of the State Budget, a revaluation of currency, amortisation of the National Debt, plans for the settlement of the floating debt and the world debts, together with groups of commercial laws affecting internal production. Thanks to these measures the State Budget balance, which (*vide* page 190) secured its first surplus of 417.2 million lire in 1925, rose to a surplus of 555.1 million lire in 1928-1929. Then the curve came downwards, the following year showing a drop to 170.3 million lire surplus, and a deficit of 504 million lire for 1930-1931. Since this the annual Budget has continued to move downwards on the deficit side of the line. The 1932-1933 deficit approximated 4,000 million lire. The 1933-1934 deficit is estimated at 3,088 million. The Report of the Budget Committee of the Chamber on the 1933-1934 Finance Bill stated : " In several sectors of our economy the downward trend has been checked and we note a tendency to improve, while the behaviour of the lira on the world markets confirms the adequacy of our reserves of all kinds. We conclude our task with the positive conviction that, as far as Italy is concerned, the bottom of the depression has been touched and has now been passed."

The gravity of the depression with its reactions on national finance was confronted by Finance Minister Jung in his Budget Speech delivered in May 1933. He advanced the following figures : the receipts for the current financial year, he said, would fall short of estimates by 773 million lire, of which 565 million were due to reduced receipts from the Customs⁵ duty on wheat, a loss to the revenue but a gain to the balance of payments ; expenses would exceed estimates by

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1,820 million lire, of which 833 million were accounted for by interest on the debt, 650 million by the railway deficit, 278 million by the assistance to agriculture and industry demanded by crisis conditions, and 100 million by supplementary budget appropriations.

In presenting this data and in announcing the Budget deficit, Signor Jung went on to say :

I fully realise what it will cost to wipe out this deficit, I bear in mind the demands it will entail, and they cause me no undue anxiety because : (1) the settlement of arrears is duly provided for—the increase of 1,350 million lire in this item appearing in the accounts for 1931-32 being due only to the fact that credits of 1,250 million lire for public works in relief of unemployment and of over 100 million for the Genoa-Serravalle autostrade, were entered just at the close of that financial year ; (2) the floating debt, which on 30th April stood at 8,389 million lire, no longer consists of those Treasury bills which afford so sound a means of meeting temporary needs but so dangerous a one when used to meet longer dated liabilities. We made the experiment once, we paid the price, we shall never make it again. The sources to which recourse is now made entail no such danger ; (3) the Treasury cash balance with the Bank of Italy stood at 1,811 million lire on 20th May, 1933 ; (4) above all the budget of international payments balances with a favourable margin, as is shown by the fact that notwithstanding the insolvency of many foreign purchasers of Italian exports and the obstacles hindering the transfer of values, the Central Bank's reserves have remained constant throughout the current financial year.

The Minister then pointed out that the Government had cut down the expenditure on defence services by 578 million lire. In stating that the future could be faced with confidence he said that the key to Italy's financial policies was to be found " in the nation's un-

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bounded confidence in its Government,—a confidence which will not be used to monopolise savings but to safeguard and direct them towards those forms of investment which best serve national interests."

In condemning all speculative activities, banking and otherwise, he asserted that the country's new savings, if wisely used, were adequate to meet both the needs of the national budget and other needs consequent on the settlement and readjustment of sectors of economic activity in which the Government intervened, not to support given industries or banks, but to protect national interests at stake, the assistance being given exclusively, he noted, out of new savings and never out of the currency.

On monetary policies the Minister reported that, with a gold cover to the note circulation standing at 50.76 per cent., and at 49.04 per cent, to all sight liabilities, the technical bases for ensuring a sound currency were provided. "The will of the *Duce* that the currency must be and must remain sound was being carried out to the letter."

Talking of Mussolini's determination to maintain a sound currency—(the policy first voiced in the Pesaro speech of 1926 noted on page 229)—the Finance Minister said :

I had the honour of stating this to the President of the United States when he enquired of me into Italy's attitude on two of the questions the United States deem of pre-eminent importance for the World Economic Conference—monetary stabilisation and the return of all currencies to a common standard which the United States cannot conceive of as other than gold. I replied that Italy had no need to stabilise, as she had already stabilised on 21st December 1927, and had maintained, and intended to maintain, that

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stabilisation unaltered ; and that Italy had no need to return to a gold parity because in 1927 she had placed her currency on a gold basis. I added that whatever other countries might do, Italy would not deviate from the policies laid down by the *Duce*, and that instead of considering recourse to empirical and ultimately ineffectual means for adjusting internal to world prices, she would continue to make use of an instrument thoroughly tested out during the past ten years, namely, her Syndical and Corporative organisation.

This citation reflects the attitude actually maintained by Italy during the 1933 World Economic Conference in London.

Confirming the results secured by Fascist policies in maintaining price parities, Minister Jung gave the House some index numbers comparing the variations in prices of agricultural products in Italy with those given by the Statistical Abstract of the United States for the same products in America. On the basis 100 = 1913, the index number for wheat, expressed in pre-war lire, stood in 1932 at 104 in Italy, against 54 to 56 in the United States, for maize at 106 against 50 to 49, for potatoes at 122 against 80, for hogs at 76 against 48.8, figures which show, he said, that in Italy timely steps had been taken to avoid undue disparities between agricultural and other prices.

The trade balance deficit was reduced to less than 1,500 million lire on a total turnover of 21,000 million for 1931, and 150,000 million for 1932. From the beginning of the world crisis until May 31, 1933, the internal National Debt increased from 86,446 million to 96,811 million lire. Despite that situation public confidence in the stability and strength of the Government not only remained firm, but increased to heights

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which may be called unprecedented in the history of Italian internal finances. The evidence of this feeling was particularly prominent during the Government's investment policy of 1932, when 4000 million lire issue of Treasury Bonds were over-subscribed by millions of lire a few hours after they were available to the public. Eighty per cent of these millions subscribed came from the small investor. The same condition was noticeable in Government-backed development schemes—the project for the electrification of Italian railways, which was put on the market in July 1933, being likewise over-subscribed at once by the small investor, who no longer looked to speculation on the foreign market.

Measures were taken for the purpose of supporting the industrial situation and of preparing Italy to compete on the world's markets as soon as depression lifted. The principal step was the creation in January 1933 of a State-backed institution "to give more practical and vigorous help towards the technical, economic, and financial reorganisation of industrial concerns hard hit but not overthrown by the crisis, so that these concerns may be in better efficiency at the moment of the economic revival." This new organisation was called the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction.

The method to be followed by this Reconstruction Institute was to bring indirect State aid to essential and contributory-essential industries, and to "demobilise" non-paying concerns so that, through liquidation, money and energy could be freed for productive channels. For these purposes the Reconstruction Institute was planned to operate in two sections: Industrial Financing, and Industrial Demobilisation. The

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Financing Section was operated by a committee nominated by the Finance Minister and by the Minister of Corporations. The capital granted to this section was not very much—100 million lire. This sum was subscribed by designated savings banks and national insurance institutions. Not only was financial help given to industries in need, but State guarantees were also given in cases where the maintenance of the industry was of exceptional public interest. This latter point was a safeguard, for instance, against increasing unemployment.

The second section, for liquidating industries unprofitable to themselves or to the community, was granted an annual subvention for twenty years of 85,000,000 lire, provided by the Public Works Credit Consortium.

Italian observers noted with satisfaction that this new advance of State intervention at moments of crisis was based on a financial system which avoided inflation, open or covert.

Throughout all the buffets of the crisis, even with the dollar and sterling performing fantastic evolutions, the Italian lira on October 1, 1933, remained fixed and unshaken, and the gold standard unbroken.

The internal monies available were from 1928 mainly devoted to public works. In order not to burden this narrative with a mere chronological catalogue of accomplishments and dates in the varied fields of activity above indicated, I have reserved a description of public works for the section dealing with Fascism in Being, which shows the position as at the present time.

In order to give sequence to the story of the gradual development of the Corporate State from the theorems

tical to the practical stage, we must not here omit to record the revolutionary reform carried out in the Italian parliamentary system. The first stage towards this change was the completion of a " New Statute of the National Fascist Party " in October 1929. This Statute defined the Party as " A Civil Militia at the service of the nation with the object of realising the greatness of the Italian people." It further stated " Fascism is not merely a grouping together of Italians round a set programme realised and to be realised, but it is above all a confession of faith. Unhindered by dogmatic formalities and rigid schemes, Fascism feels that authority lies in the possibility of its own continual renovation." The Statute provides for the creation of " a hierarchy " as a definite part of the Fascist Constitution. The Statute defines its hierarchic principle as one " without which no people can have the discipline of strength and education, getting inspiration from the top, where there is a complete vision of all the attributes which contribute to the interests of general order." The Statute then lays down the " watchwords " of the Party as once more " Faith, Courage, Industry "—to which in this case was added " Honesty."

The Fascist Grand Council thus became automatically a body representing the " hierarchy of government." It was assumed into the fabric of the State as a supreme deliberative body. It enjoyed an exercise of influence over Parliament which resolved Parliament into being the executant of the Fascist Council's deliberations. This Statute was revised in November 1932 and the size of the Council was reduced, but its character and functions remained and remain unimpaired.

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With Party organisation revised and overhauled, with peace concluded with the Church, and with the popularity of the Fascist Party recovered, the Government prepared for new elections. For this purpose a revolutionary change was carried out. The old territorial constituencies were wholly eliminated and all Italy was considered as one constituency. Candidates no longer represented interests identified with the life of specific districts, but instead represented some aspect of national interest irrespective of locality. They were no longer nominated by party election committees throughout the provinces. The following election machinery, which still operates the Fascist suffrage system, was put into motion instead. The nomination of candidates was placed in the hands of the national trade-union Confederations of the Corporative organisations. These Confederations represented—and represent—the total productive elements of Italy. These Confederations nominate 800 candidates. To that list is added a number of representatives of public welfare and other institutions, all of a national character, such as the Dante Alighieri Society. This list of candidates is submitted to the Grand Fascist Council. The Grand Fascist Council draws up the Government list from these names, reducing the 800 to 400. This list of 400 is presented to the electors to be accepted or rejected as one block. If rejected, then the Grand Fascist Council supplies another list of 400 names and so on until the electorate finally chooses its group of 400. There are no other rival candidates, either singly or in blocks, allowed in the Fascist field.

Having decided to go to the polls, the Fascist electoral campaign, from Syracuse to the Brenner, reached

its climax during March 1929. The essentially revolutionary character of the campaign was patent to the people by the absence of any opposition activities and the consequent complete absence of that hustings' oratory which under previous regimes had lent such fire to election campaigns—a fire which, however, had proved a consuming one for the old parliamentary system.

As for the Fascist list, Mussolini pointed out to the people that it was not men but ideas that were being elected. One sign of the new conditions following the conclusion of the Concordat with the Vatican was the participation of the Church in the electoral campaign. Not only did Church dignitaries appear on Fascist platforms, but in the parishes the clergy organised the Catholic vote as a solid one for Fascism.

March 24, 1929, was polling day and the public was much interested to discover what method the Fascists had devised for recording votes. Each elector, after identification at his polling station, was handed two forms externally identical when folded. Inside, one was marked with the tricolour and the formula, " Do you approve of the deputies designated by the Grand Fascist Council ? " with underneath the printed word " Yes." The other form was provided with the same question, but printed with the word " No." The electors passed one by one into an enclosed booth where they made their selection, folding and gumming the form chosen. Leaving the rejected one in an urn in the booth, the electors emerged and handed the sealed form to an official, who placed it in an urn on a polling-booth table.

The results, published on March 31, 1929, exceeded even Fascist expectations. The electors on the roll

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were 9,673,049. Of these 8,663,412 voted—8,519,559 favourably for the Fascist list. There were 135,761 contrary votes and 8092 spoiled papers. While there is no doubt of the completeness of the Fascist organisation to ensure the success of the elections in their favour, it was obvious that the country was with Mussolini, and that it had expressed its confidence in his regime with a vote which can only be likened to a national plebiscite.

On April 20, the Twenty-Eighth Italian Legislature since the foundation of the Kingdom, and the first under the new Fascist system, was opened in solemn state by King Victor Emmanuel. As the Fascist State grew in stature so did Mussolini's energies increase. In the spring of 1929 he held the following Ministerial portfolios : Foreign, War, Colonial, Navy, Air, Public Works, and Interior. These of course were in addition to his labours as Prime Minister and *Duce* of the Fascist Party. All this, however, did not mean that he took on superhuman burdens, but that he assumed personal responsibility, while exercising surveillance over the activities of the respective Ministries. The above was his record number of portfolios. On September 12, 1929, he relinquished all the Departmental Ministries save that of the Interior. Since then he has reassumed Foreign Affairs and is also Minister of Corporations. The opening of the new parliament on April 20, 1929, marks the completion of the preliminary machinery of the Fascist State and the total control of the Fascist Party over the entire functioning of Italian parliamentary and national life. It therefore marks the completion of this chronicle as far as accession to power and completion of the means for exercising power are concerned.

When these aims had been reached, however, Fascism was not content to rest upon mere parliamentary victories. Contemporaneously with the perfecting of power, the Fascists had been concentrating on Classic remembrance, turning their eyes to the distant past as a source of inspiration for the future. There began to rise over the Fascist horizon the idea of a practical renaissance of Imperial Rome.

The bi-millenary of Virgil in 1927 was a notable starting-point for concentration on this Roman line of thought. At Mantua, by the Virgilian grove, the ex-Service Volunteers of the Great War voted a " Profession of Faith in the Universality of Fascist Rome." This reads :

(1) We believe in the universal mission of Rome for the salvation and greatness of human civilisation.

(2) We believe in the fatality and in the pre-fixed return of the Roman Empire exalted by Virgil, prophesied by Dante.

(3) We believe in the sublime law of sacrifice and heroism affirmed in the legendary birth of Rome and repeated throughout all time—the law which Virgil exalts in the fateful mission of Aeneas.

(4) We believe in Roman virtue—the supreme virtue of our kind—which is order, discipline, harmony in work, in justice and in social peace.

(5) We believe in the *Duce* of Fascism—who has restored to us our Roman peace in justice, discipline and work, and has reawakened the soul of our race to the eternal ideals—as the realiser of the immense Destiny of Rome where the two sovereign powers, civil and religious, must exist for the welfare of the world in universal action.

(6) For this faith we are ready to fight again, suffer again, and to die if need be, and we invite all Italians to follow us.

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This classical spirit with its universal appeal was encouraged by a series of international congresses in Rome of which the most important and illuminating was the Vol ta Congress held in November 1932, when the importance and the influence of Rome as a binding factor in European unity was emphasised in a long series of discourses by ex-statesmen of all nations.

We have seen in earlier chapters how Fascist Italy grew to be a World Power in the comity of nations with increasing influence in the practical affairs of international politics, but in this phase of exalting the classical-universal spirit of the new Italy, Mussolini was making his definite start towards assuming leadership in world thought on the political philosophy of government—a philosophy which for "universal" purposes became more and more associated with the eagles and institutions of Imperial Rome. Passages from speeches by Mussolini indicate the train and direction of his thought. On October 23, 1932, at Turin, speaking at a great open-air meeting, he said : " Today with full tranquillity of conscience I say unto you that the Twentieth Century will be the Century of Fascism, it will be the Century of Italian potency ; it will be the Century during which Italy will return for the third time to be the director of human civilisation, because outside of our principles there is no salvation for individuals, and far less for nations." This utterance is typical of many others.

This reinvocation of the classical ideal and the identification of that ideal with Fascism as a universal panacea rose to its fullest heights in October 1932 during the celebration for the completion of the first ten years of the Fascist regime—the *Decennale*. **The**

" greatness of Rome," not only in spiritual but in a material sense, was then brought out by the completion of the Imperial Way which reawakened the fragments of the Forum to the current life of the City. The *Decennale* celebrations were opened in the Augusteo Hall in Rome—the Tomb of Augustus. They were closed at Ravenna, by the Tomb of Dante. As recalled in the opening chapter of this history, the occasion was marked by the declamation of those three great Cantos which sing of the beauty, the agony and the destiny of Italy and Rome. Contemporaneously a replica of the classic statue of Julius Caesar was erected at Rimini at the spot where tradition says that the first Dictator addressed his Legions after crossing the Rubicon for his March on Rome. Every newspaper in Italy received instructions that these celebrations, with illustrated and descriptive articles on their significance to the Italian race, were to be the principal and leading feature on every " front page " of the entire Press of the peninsula.

Whatever we may think of it, the profound effect of such propaganda cannot be overestimated. Mussolini enlists NorthcliffFean methods for direct, Fascist ends.

In course of this history we have seen Blackshirt conceptions of Rome emerge as

- (i) The capital of Italy.
- (2) The protector of the Church.
- (3) The Imperial capital of Europe, and
- (4) The source of world thought.

Archaeology has not been the least important of the means employed to further these ideas. Archaeological programmes of work with a psychological side to

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them were prepared in May 1933 for the bi-millenary of the Emperor Augustus. This celebration has been fixed for 1937-1938. The greatest feature of the programme is to be the recovery of the Ara Pacis of Augustus. This intention can be accepted as indicating the political ideals of Mussolini. The Altar of the Augustan Peace was the expression of the greatness and completeness of the dominion of Roman thought and action over the civilised world. The recovery of these scattered fragments and their re-erection in Rome is calculated to remind the modern world of Rome's aspiration to recover, in the abstract realm of Fascist politico-philosophical thought, her ancient role.

The latest example of propaganda for the universality of Rome was the institution in July 1933 of a "Central Council of a Committee of Action for the Universality of Rome." The chairman of this council at its first meeting in the Campidoglio was the Governor of Rome and the meeting was held under Government patronage. According to a resolution passed at this meeting, the Council of Action proposed that it would "revive the spirit of ancient Rome and utilise that spirit as a common denominator of equality for all the countries which Rome considered, also in the time of the Empire, to be free and independent although within the orbit and organisation of Roman civilisation." This resolution continued: "Quite apart from all political contingencies it would seem that the time has arrived to lay down the basis of a fruitful and continuous accord among all those who, without altering the traditions and characteristics and necessities of their respective nations, are disposed to recognise in the ancient and present universality of

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Rome the means of these spiritual alliances which could give to the world, still in agony and discord, its political restoration and its civil and social strength."

The character of this resolution reveals the next step in the progress of Fascism—a step calculated to lift it from World Power to World Influence. But as that lies with the future, my chronicle here ends.

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHY AND SPIRIT OF FASCISM

"We are not bound by any statute of preceding Parliaments, but by the law of Nature only, which is the only law truly and properly to all mankind fundamental."
Milton.

CHAPTER I

DOCTRINE

The Abstract Idea. System of Thought. Mussolini's Exposition of Fundamentals. His 13 Points : Philosophic, Spiritualistic, Positive, Ethical, Religious, Historical, Anti-Individualist, Corporative, Democracy, the State, Dynamic, Role of the State, Discipline.

HAVING followed the growth of Fascism through all the weathers of political conflict let us now pass into the undisturbed and rarefied atmosphere of abstract thought. We have seen how " thought and action " have gone hand in hand from the very beginnings of the Fascist conception, even if on occasion thought has had to mark time while action pushed forward alone to clear the way of encumbrances for the eventual further advance of political ideas. In the march of events the reader must have already noted the steady emergence of the truism that Fascism " besides being a system of Government is also a system of thought."

At the same time the reader may have observed that, while a system of thought, Fascism has been harnessed to no pre-stated doctrine. In his earliest Anarchist days and in his later Socialist days we have seen Mussolini discarding the doctrines of these political systems in his eager search after thought—" a revolutionary questing for a creed." And through the clash of these first conflicts, through the cataclysm of the war, through the depths and shallows and cross-currents of the post-war decade we have seen that new

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creed pass from liquefied and malleable beginnings into a tempered axe-blade rigid in the lictor's rods.

Mussolini had been so occupied with the task of direct action, so near to the heat of the forge, that it was only in 1932 that he paused to reduce his political formulas into doctrinal form—a doctrine whose every tenet has its reference point and proof in the utterances and actions of Mussolini during the past thirty years.

It was as a contribution to the great work now being steadily pushed to conclusion, the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, that Mussolini officially expounded the doctrine of Fascism.

As it is my intention to devote the following pages to an examination of the spirit, idea and ideals of Fascism as a politico-philosophy and social cult it is necessary to pay close attention to its declared doctrine. But it would be foolish and presumptuous to attempt any personal exposition when the author, inspirer and fabricator of the Fascist doctrine has himself made an authoritative and final analysis. Let us therefore go direct to the fount. Through the kindness of Signor Mussolini and with the permission of the *Enciclopedia* authorities, I am able to reproduce here the thirteen paragraphs which encompass the fundamental novelties of Fascism as described by its founder and leader :

FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS

Philosophic Conception.

1. Like every concrete political conception, Fascism is thought and action. It is action with an inherent doctrine which, arising out of a given system of historic forces, is inserted in it and works on it from within. It has therefore a

form co-related to the contingencies of time and place ; but it has at the same time an ideal content which elevates it into a formula of truth in the higher region of the history of thought.

There is no way of exercising a spiritual influence on the things of the world by means of a human will-power commanding the wills of others, without first having a clear conception of the particular and transient reality on which the will-power must act, and without also having a clear conception of the universal and permanent reality in which the particular and transient reality has its life and being. To know men we must have a knowledge of man ; and to have a knowledge of man we must know the reality of things and their laws.

There can be no conception of a State which is not fundamentally a conception of Life. It is a philosophy or intuition, a system of ideas which evolves itself into a system of logical construction, or which concentrates itself in a vision or in a faith, but which is always, at least virtually, an organic conception of the world.

Spiritualised Conception.

2. Fascism would therefore not be understood in many of its manifestations (as, for example, in its organisations of the Party, its system of education, its discipline) were it not considered in the light of its general view of life. A spiritualised view.

To Fascism the world is not this material world which appears on the surface, in which man is an individual separated from all other men, standing by himself and subject to a natural law which instinctively impels him to lead a life of momentary and egoistic pleasure. In Fascism man is an individual who is the nation and the country. He is this by a moral law which embraces and binds together individuals and generations in an established tradition and mission, a moral law which suppresses the instinct to lead a life confined to a brief cycle of pleasure in order, instead, to replace it within the orbit of duty in a superior conception

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of life, free from the limits of time and space ; a life in which the individual by self-abnegation and by the sacrifice of his particular interests, even by death, realises the entirely spiritual existence in which his value as a man consists.

Positive Conception of Life as a Struggle.

3. It is therefore a spiritualised conception, itself also a result of the general reaction of the Century against the languid and materialistic positivism of the Eighteenth Century. Anti-positivist, but positive : neither sceptical nor agnostic, neither pessimistic nor passively optimistic, as are in general the doctrines (all of them negative) which place the centre of life outside of man, who by his free will can and should create his own world for himself.

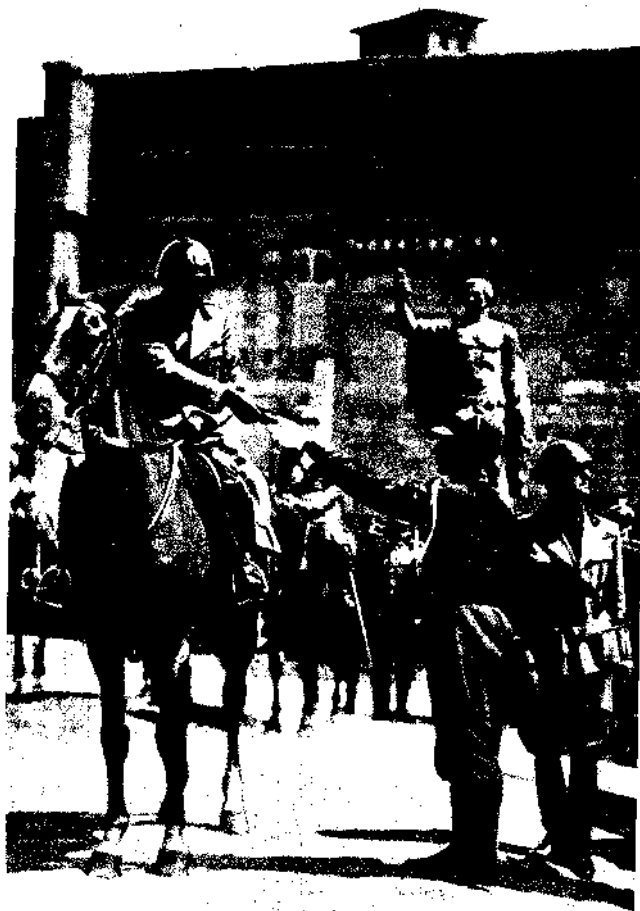
Fascism wants a man to be active and to be absorbed in action with all his energies : it wants him to have a manly consciousness of the difficulties that exist and to be ready to face them. It conceives life as a struggle, thinking that it is the duty of man to conquer that life which is really worthy of him : creating in the first place within himself the (physical, moral, intellectual) instrument with which to build it.

As for the individual, so for the nation, so for mankind. Hence the high value of culture in all its forms (art, religion, science) and the supreme importance of education. Hence also the essential value of labour, with which man conquers nature and creates the human world (economic, political, moral, intellectual).

Ethical Conception.

4. This positive conception of life is evidently an ethical conception. And it comprises the whole reality as well as the human activity which domineers it. No action is to be removed from the moral sense ; nothing is to be in the world that is divested of the importance which belongs to it in respect of moral aims. Life, therefore, as the Fascist conceives it, is serious, austere, religious; entirely balanced in

IN THE SHADES OF THE CAESARS



generation "THE CEREMONY IS SET IN THE SYMBOLICAL SURROUNDINGS of the new
excavated imperial ewly

a world sustained by the moral and responsible forces of the spirit. The Fascist disdains the " easy " life.

Religious Conception.

5. Fascism is a religious conception in which man is considered to be in the powerful grip of a superior law, with an objective Will which transcends the particular individual and elevates him into a fully conscious member of a spiritual society. Anyone who has stopped short at the mere consideration of opportunism in the religious policy of the Fascist regime, has failed to understand that Fascism, besides being a system of government, is also a system of thought.

Historical and Realist Conception.

6. Fascism is an historic conception in which man could not be what he is without being a factor in the spiritual process to which he contributes, either in the family sphere or in the social sphere, in the nation or in history in general to which all nations contribute. Hence is derived the great importance of tradition in the records, language, customs and rules of human society. Man without a part in history is nothing.

For this reason Fascism is opposed to all the abstractions of an individualistic character based upon materialism typical of the Eighteenth Century ; and it is opposed to all the Jacobin innovations and Utopias. It does not believe in the possibility of " happiness " on earth as conceived by the literature of the economists of the Seventeenth Century ; it therefore spurns all the teleological conceptions of final causes through which, at a given period of history, a final systematisation of the human race would take place. Such theories only mean placing oneself outside real history and life, which is a continual ebb and flow and process of realisations.

Politically speaking, Fascism aims at being a realistic doctrine ; in its practice it aspires to solve only the problems which present themselves of their own accord in the process

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of history, and which of themselves find or suggest their own solution. To have the effect of action among men, it is necessary to enter into the process of reality and to master the forces actually at work.

The Individual and Liberty.

7. Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception is for the State ; it is for the individual only in so far as he coincides with the State, universal consciousness and will of man in his historic existence. It is opposed to the classic Liberalism which arose out of the need of reaction against absolutism, and which had accomplished its mission in history when the State itself had become transformed in the popular will and consciousness.

Liberalism denied the State in the interests of the particular individual ; Fascism reaffirms the State as the only true expression of the individual.

And if liberty is to be the attribute of the real man, and not of the scarecrow invented by individualistic Liberalism, then Fascism is for liberty. It is for the only kind of liberty that is serious—the liberty of the State and of the individual in the State. Because, for the Fascist, all is comprised in the State and nothing spiritual or human exists—much less has any value—outside the State. In this respect Fascism is a totalising concept, and the Fascist State—the unification and synthesis of every value—interprets, develops and potentiates the whole life of the people.

Conception of a Corporative State.

8. No individuals nor groups (political parties, associations, labour unions, classes) outside the State. For this reason Fascism is opposed to Socialism, which clings rigidly to class war in the historic evolution and ignores the unity of the State which moulds the classes into a single, moral and economic reality. In the same way Fascism is opposed to the unions of the labouring classes. But within the orbit of the State with ordinative functions, the real needs, which gave rise to the Socialist movement and to the forming of

labour unions, are emphatically recognised by Fascism and are given their full expression in the Corporative System, which conciliates every interest in the unity of the State.

Democracy.

9. Individuals form classes according to categories of interests. They are associated according to differentiated economical activities which have a common interest ; but first and foremost they form the State. The State is not merely either the numbers or the sum of individuals forming the majority of a people. Fascism for this reason is opposed to the democracy which identifies peoples with the greatest number of individuals and reduces them to a majority level. But if people are conceived, as they should be, qualitatively and not quantitatively, then Fascism is democracy in its purest form. The qualitative conception is the most coherent and truest form and is therefore the most moral, because it sees a people realised in the consciousness and will of the few or even of one only ; an ideal which moves to its realisation in the consciousness and will of all. By " all " is meant all who derive their justification as a nation, ethnically speaking, from their nature and history, and who follow the same line of spiritual formation and development as one single will and consciousness—not as a race nor as a geographically determined region, but as a progeny that is rather the outcome of a history which perpetuates itself; a multitude unified by an idea embodied in the will to have power and to exist, conscious of itself and of its personality.

Conception of the State.

10. This higher personality is truly the nation, inasmuch as it is the State. The nation does not beget the State, according to the decrepit nationalistic concept which was used as a basis for the publicists of the national States in the Nineteenth Century. On the contrary, the nation is created by the State, which gives the people, conscious of their own moral unity, the will, and thereby an effective existence.

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The right of a nation to its independence is derived not from a literary and ideal consciousness of its own existence, much less from a *de facto* situation more or less inert and unconscious, but from an active consciousness, from an active political will disposed to demonstrate in its right ; that is to say, a kind of State already in its pride (*in fieri*). The State, in fact, as a universal ethical will, is the creator of right.

Dynamic Reality.

11. The nation as a State is an ethical reality which exists and lives in measure as it develops. A standstill is its death. Therefore the State is not only the authority which governs and which gives the forms of law and the worth of the spiritual life to the individual wills, but it is also the power which gives effect to its will in foreign matters, causing it to be recognised and respected by demonstrating through facts the universality of all the manifestations necessary for its development. Hence it is organisation as well as expansion, and it may be thereby considered, at least virtually, equal to the very nature of the human will, which in its evolution recognises no barriers, and which realises itself by proving its infinity.

The Role of the State.

12. The Fascist State, the highest and the most powerful form of personality, is a force, but a spiritual one. It re-assumes all the forms of the moral and intellectual life of man. It cannot, therefore, be limited to a simple function of order and of safeguarding, as was contended by Liberalism. It is not a simple mechanism which limits the sphere of the presumed individual liberties. It is an internal form and rule, a discipline of the entire person : it penetrates the will as well as the intelligence. Its principle, a central inspiration of the living human personality in the civil community, descends into the depths and settles in the heart of the man of action as well as of the thinker, of the artist as well as of the scientist; the soul of our soul.

Discipline and Authority.

13. Fascism, in short, is not only a lawgiver and the founder of institutions, but an educator and a promoter of the spiritual life. It aims to rebuild not the forms of human life, but its content, the man, the character, the faith. And for this end it exacts discipline and an authority which descends into and dominates the interior of the spirit without opposition. Its emblem, therefore, is the lictorian *fasces*, symbol of unity, of force and of justice.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ETHICS

Mussolini's Further Exposition. Growth of Doctrine. Peace and Mature Battle of Life. Socialism Answered. Democracy. Liberalism in History. The Twentieth-Century State. Religion and the State. The Roman Tradition. Universality Claimed.

As a supplement to his description of the philosophical doctrine of Fascism, Mussolini has added a further contribution to the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in which he develops the political and social doctrines of his regime. In this there can be clearly followed the elements of Fascism which bring it into contrast with all other political conceptions. Writing of the beginnings of the Fascist idea Mussolini says : " The years which preceded the March on Rome were years in which the necessity of action did not permit complete doctrinal investigations or elaborations. The battle was raging in the towns and villages. There were discussions, but what was more important and sacred—was to die. Men knew how to die. The doctrine—all complete and formed, with divisions into chapters, paragraphs and accompanying elucubrations—might be missing ; but there was something more decided to replace it ; there was faith." To know how to die means also that one knows how to live. And to live is to be able to fight.

"As far as the general future and development of humanity is concerned and apart from any mere consideration of current politics, Fascism above all does not believe either in the possibility or utility of uni-

versal peace. It therefore rejects the pacifism which masks surrender and cowardice. War alone brings all human energies to their highest tension and imprints a seal of nobility on the peoples who have the virtue to face it. All other tests are but substitutes which never make a man face himself in the alternative of life or death. A doctrine which has its starting-point at the prejudicial postulate of peace is therefore extraneous to Fascism.

" In the same way all international creations (which, as history demonstrates, can be blown to the winds when sentimental, ideal and practical elements storm the heart of a people) are also extraneous to the spirit of Fascism—even if such international creations are accepted for whatever usefulness they may have in any determined political situation.

" Fascism also transports this anti-pacifist spirit into the life of individuals. The proud *squadrista* motto ' *me ne fr ego* ' (anglice : ' I don't give a damn ') scrawled on the bandages of the wounded is an act of philosophy not only stoic. It is a summary of a doctrine not only political : it is an education in strife and an acceptance of the risks which it carries : it is a new style of Italian life. It is thus that the Fascist loves and accepts life, ignores and disdains suicide ; understands life as a duty, a lifting up, a conquest ; something to be filled up and sustained on a high plane ; a thing that has to be lived through for its own sake, but above all for the sake of others near and far, present and future."

Mussolini then explains that the " demographic " policy of the regime is the consequence of these premises. " The Fascist also loves his neighbour, but ' neighbour ' is not for him a vague and undefinable

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word ; love for his neighbour does not prevent necessary educational severities. Fascism rejects professions of universal affection and, though living in the community of civilised peoples, it watches them and looks at them diffidently. It follows them in their state of mind and in the transformation of their interests, but it does not allow itself to be deceived by fallacious and mutable appearances."

This new notion of life as a spiritual battle brings Mussolini to consideration of the place of Fascism in the social system. He confronts Socialism and condemns it, arguing that it is the exponent of a mistaken conception of human happiness, namely, self-sufficient materialism.

" It is the Fascist conception of life," he writes, " which leads Fascism to be the emphatic negation of the doctrine which constituted the basis of the so-called scientific Socialism or Marxism : the doctrine of historic materialism, according to which the story of human civilisation is to be explained only by the conflict of interests between the various social groups and with the change of the means and instruments of production.

" That the economic vicissitudes—discovery of prime or raw materials, new methods of labour, scientific inventions—have their particular importance, is denied by none, but that they suffice to explain human history, excluding other factors from it, is absurd : Fascism still believes and will always believe in sanctity and in heroism, that is to say, in acts in which no economic motive—immediate or remote—operates.

" Fascism having denied historic materialism, by which men are only puppets in history, appearing and disappearing on the surface of the tides, while in the

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depths the real directive forces act and labour, it also denies the immutable and irreparable class warfare, which is the natural filiation of such an economic conception of history ; and it denies above all that class warfare is the preponderating agent of social transformation.

" Being defeated on these two capital points of its doctrine, nothing remains of Socialism save the sentimental aspiration—as old as humanity—to achieve a community of social life in which the sufferings and hardships of the humblest classes are alleviated. But here Fascism repudiates the concept of an economic ' happiness ' which is to be—at a given moment in the evolution of economy—socialistically and almost automatically realised by assuring to all the maximum of well-being.

" Fascism denies the possibilities of the materialistic concept of ' happiness '—it leaves that to the economists of the first half of the Seventeenth Century ; that is, it denies the equation ' well-being happiness,' which reduces man to the state of the animals, mindful of only one thing—that of being fed and fattened; reduced, in fact, to a pure and simple vegetative existence."

Mussolini faces realities concerning kings and republics, democracy and the equality of man :

" After disposing of Socialism, Fascism opens a breach in the whole complex of the democratic ideologies, and repudiates them in their theoretic premises as well as in their practical application or instrumentation. Fascism denies that numbers, by the mere fact of being numbers, can direct human society ; it denies that these numbers can govern by means of periodical consultations ; it affirms also the fertilising, beneficent and unassailable inequality of men, who cannot be

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levelled through an extrinsic and mechanical process such as universal suffrage.

" Regimes can be called democratic which, from time to time, give the people the illusion of being sovereign, whereas the real and effective sovereignty exists in other, and very often secret and irresponsible forces.

" Democracy is a regime without a king, but very often with many kings, far more exclusive, tyrannical and ruinous than a single king, even if he be a tyrant.

" This explains why Fascism which, for contingent reasons, had assumed a republican tendency before 1922, renounced it previous to the March on Rome, with the conviction that the political constitution of a State is not nowadays a supreme question ; and that, if the examples of past and present monarchies and past and present republics are studied, the result is that neither monarchies nor republics are to be judged under the assumption of eternity, but that they merely represent forms in which the extrinsic political evolution takes shape as well as the history, the tradition and the psychology of a given country.

" Consequently Fascism glides over the antithesis between monarchy and republic, on which democraticism wasted time, blaming the former for all social shortcomings, and exalting the latter as a regime of perfection. Yet it has been seen that there are republics which may be profoundly absolutist and reactionary, and monarchies which welcome the most venturesome social and political experiments."

Liberal doctrines are then considered and dismissed, their lasting good influences denied :

" As regards the Liberal doctrines, the attitude of Fascism is one of absolute opposition both in the

political and in the economical field. There is no need to exaggerate the importance of Liberalism in the last century—simply for the sake of present-day polemics—and to transform one of the numerous doctrines unfolded in that last century into a religion of humanity for all times, present and future. Liberalism did not flourish for more than a period of fifteen years. It was born in 1830 from the reaction against the Holy Alliance, which attempted to set Europe back to the period which preceded '89, and had its years of splendour in 1848, when also Pius IX. was a Liberal. Its decadence began immediately afterwards. If 1848 was a year of light and poesy, 1849 was a year of weakness and tragedy. The Roman Republic was killed by another Republic, the French Republic. In the same year Marx issued his famous manifesto of Communism. In 1851 Napoleon III. made his anti-Liberal *coup d'Etat* and reigned over France until 1870. He was overthrown by a popular movement, following one of the greatest defeats registered in history. The victor was Bismarck, who always ignored the religion of liberty and its prophets. It is symptomatic that a people of high civilisation like the Germans completely ignored the religion of liberty throughout the whole Nineteenth Century—with but one parenthesis represented by that which was called 'the ridiculous parliament of Frankfurt,' which lasted one season. Germany realised its national unity outside of Liberalism, against Liberalism—a doctrine which seemed alien to the German spirit, a spirit essentially monarchical, since Liberalism is the historic and logical anti-chamber of anarchy.

" The three wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870 conducted by 'Liberals' like Moltke and Bismarck mark the three stages of German unity. As for Italian unity,

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Liberalism played a very inferior part in the make-up of Mazzini and Garibaldi, who were not Liberals. Without the intervention of the anti-Liberal Napoleon we would not have had Lombardy, and without the help of the anti-Liberal Bismarck at Sadowa and Sedan it is very likely that we would not have got Venice in 1866 or that we would have entered Rome in 1870.

" During the period of 1870-1915 the preachers of the new Credo themselves denounced the twilight of their religion : it was beaten in the breach by decadence in literature. It was beaten in the open by activism in practice. Activism : that is to say, nationalism, futurism, Fascism.

" The ' Liberal Century,' after having accumulated an infinity of Gordian knots, sought to cut them in the hecatomb of the World War. Never did any religion impose such a terrible sacrifice. Have the gods of Liberalism slaked their blood-thirst ?

" Liberalism is now on the point of closing the doors of its deserted temples because the nations feel that its agnosticism in the economic field and its indifference in political and moral matters causes, as it has already caused, the sure ruin of States. That is why all the political experiences of the contemporary world are anti-Liberal, and it is supremely silly to seek to classify them as things outside of history—as if history was a hunting-ground reserved to Liberalism and its professors ; as if Liberalism were the last and incomparable word of civilisation."

The omnipotent character of the State is argued :

" The capital point of Fascist doctrine is the conception of the State, its essence, the work to be accomplished, its final aims. In the conception of Fascism, the State is an absolute before which individuals and

groups are relative. Individuals and groups are 'conceivable' inasmuch as they are in the State. The Liberal State does not direct the movement and the material and spiritual evolution of collectivity, but limits itself to recording the results ; the Fascist State has its conscious conviction, a will of its own, and for this reason it is called an 'ethical' State.

" From 1929 onwards to the present day, the universal, political and economical evolution has still further strengthened these doctrinal positions. The giant who rules is the State. The one who can resolve the dramatic contradictions of capital is the State. What is called the crisis cannot be resolved except by the State and in the State."

Mussolini does not allow his assertions to go unsupported. His thesis on the Fascist State is fortified by a further criticism of the Liberal State, and the increased strength of the individual in the Fascist State is expounded.

" If Liberalism signifies the individual—then Fascism signifies the State. But the Fascist State is unique in its kind and is an original creation. It is not reactionary but revolutionary, inasmuch as it anticipates the solution of certain universal problems such as those which are treated elsewhere (1) in the political sphere, by the subdivisions of parties, in the preponderance of parliamentarism and in the irresponsibility of assemblies ; (2) in the economic sphere, by the functions of trade unions which are becoming constantly more numerous and powerful, whether in the labour or industrial fields, in their conflicts and combinations ; and (3) in the moral sphere by the necessity of order, discipline, obedience to those who are the moral dictators of the country.

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" Fascism wants the State to be strong, organic and at the same time supported on a wide popular basis.

" As part of its task the Fascist State has penetrated the economic field : through the corporative, social and educational institutions which it has created. The presence of the State is felt in the remotest ramifications of the country. And in the State also, all the political, economic and spiritual forces of the nation circulate, mustered in their respective organisations.

" A State which stands on the support of millions of individuals who recognise it, who believe in it, who are ready to serve it, is not the tyrannical State of the medieval lord. It has nothing in common with the absolutist States before or after '89.

" The individual in the Fascist State is not annulled but rather multiplied, just as in a regiment a soldier is not diminished, but multiplied by the number of his comrades.

" The Fascist State organises the nation, but leaves a sufficient margin afterwards to the individual ; it has limited the useless or harmful liberties and has preserved the essential ones.

" The one to judge in this respect is not the individual, but the State."

Of the essential place of religion in the State Mussolini writes :

" The Fascist State is not indifferent to the presence of the fact of religion in general nor to the presence of that particular established religion, which is Italian Catholicism. The State has no theology, but it has morality. In the Fascist State, religion is considered as one of the most profound manifestations of the spirit; it is therefore not only respected, but de-

fended and protected. The Fascist State does not create its own ' God ' as Robespierre wanted to do at a certain moment in the last frenzies of the Convention; nor does it vainly endeavour to cancel the idea of God from the mind as Bolshevism tries to do. Fascism respects the God of the ascetics, of the saints, and of the heroes. It also respects God as he is conceived and prayed to in the ingenuous and primitive heart of the people."

In conclusion he points to the real import of the Roman Empire as an inspiration and example to Italy in the expansion of thought, and acclaims the Fascist faith as the conquering political force of the Twentieth Century.

" The Fascist State is a will expressing power and empire. The Roman tradition here becomes an idea of force. In the Fascist doctrine, empire is not only a territorial or a military or a commercial expression : it is a moral and a spiritual one. An empire can be thought of, for instance, as a nation which directly or indirectly guides other nations—without the need of conquering a single mile of territory. For Fascism, the tendency to empire, that is to say the expansion of nations, is a manifestation of vitality ; its contrary (the stay-at-home attitude) is a sign of decadence. Peoples who rise, or who suddenly flourish again, are imperialistic ; peoples who die are peoples who abdicate. Fascism is a doctrine which most adequately represents the tendencies, the state of mind of a people like the Italian people, which is rising again after many centuries of abandonment and of foreign servitude.

" But empire requires discipline, the co-ordination of efforts, duty and sacrifice. This explains many phases of the practical action of the regime. It explains the

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aims of many of the forces of the State and the necessary severity against those who would oppose themselves to this spontaneous and irresistible movement of the Italy of the Twentieth Century by trying to appeal to the discredited ideologies of the Nineteenth Century, which have been repudiated wherever great experiments of political and social transformation have been daringly undertaken.

" Never more than at the present moment have the nations felt such a thirst for an authority, for a direction, for order. If every century has its peculiar doctrine, there are a thousand indications that Fascism is that of the present century. That it is a doctrine of life is shown by the fact that it has created a faith ; that the faith has taken possession of mind is demonstrated by the fact that Fascism has had its fallen and its martyrs.

" Fascism has now attained in the world an universality over all doctrines. Being realised, it represents an epoch in the history of the human mind."

CHAPTER III

DOCTRINE INTO CULT

Revolution Idea Kept Alive. Symbolism, Altars and Rites. "Presente." History Exalted. Military Spirit and Religious Formulas. The Decalogue. The Oath. The Prayer. Ara Patria. "The Book and the Rifle" "Fascist Culture" National Conscience.

How are these abstract doctrines, these pragmatic ideas, these new statements of governmental ideals, these new forces of life, these revolutionary outlooks—how are they transfused into the brains and blood of the Italian people? A nation can accept the results of a regime and acclaim that regime so long as the results are beneficial in a material sense. But such an acceptance of the material improvements bestowed on Italy by Fascist rule would be the very negation of Fascism. We have seen that the antithesis of Fascism is the easy contented life. How does Mussolini ensure that the forty million people of Italy don't only accept the body-politic and not the spirit?

It is done by keeping alive the spirit of the Revolution. The year 1922, the year of the March on Rome, is not looked on—is not allowed to be looked on—merely as the date of a revolutionary *putsch* which marked the beginning of a new form of Government by a new set of men. Instead, the people are told that the Revolution is in continuous progress, that it is a thing alive today and tomorrow, impelled ever onward by the same forces which culminated in the Fascist accession to power. The motto, "Fight, fight, fight," which

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characterised the *squadristi* days in the struggle against their opponents, is still emblazoned on the propaganda scrolls of today—the fight now being for the further penetration of Fascist principles against all and any opposition "whomsoever, wheresoever and whensoever." The crusade for the universality of Fascism is one of personal and national example.

We have seen how Mussolini has elevated his political philosophy to a faith. It has accordingly become what may be likened to a religion with all the symbolism, emblems, tokens, martyrs' rolls, commemorative festivals, creeds and decalogues associated with a cult. By the recognition, the honouring and the exercise of these, the fact of the Fascist revolutionary political faith is kept alive and active.

Special significance and ceremonies mark the annual occurrence of Italian festivals. The 21st of April, the festival of the Birth of Rome, has been given a double significance by being selected as Italy's Labour Day. The idea of the continued growth of a Roman Italy is emphasised in "coping-stone" ceremonies for public works completed during the year. October 28, anniversary of the March on Rome, and November 4, anniversary of Victory Day (equivalent to our Armistice Day), are celebrated with full parade throughout the land.

The symbol of the lictor and the gesture of the Fascist salute of course identifies modern Italy with things of Imperial Rome, and the bannerets of the Fascists are not looked on as mere flags to wave, but as sacred tokens of their faith. The names of local Fascists who have fallen are inscribed on many of them and others are decorated with the war honours of the vanished comrades. The Fascists are taught

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that the salutes given to the flag are tributes to the memory of those who have fought and died for the ideals that the living now continue fighting to fulfil. The Blackshirts have a passion for anniversaries, so that no contribution of history, National or Party, is allowed to fade into forgetfulness or indifference.

On the classic summit of the Capitoline hill, on the site where the triple deities, Jupiter, Jove and Minerva once received the worship of the Romans, an altar to the victims of the Fascist Revolution has been erected. Pilgrimages are made to it, and its base is always hidden with a succession of laurel wreaths sent from all parts of the country. The altar as a form of monument is prominent in the Fascist movement. When the lira was stabilised on a gold standard, the paper money representing inflation was not merely burned in bank furnaces. It was symbolically consumed on an altar fire before the National Monument in Rome.

Orations made at the altars are usually marked with all the rhetoric of mysticism. The newspapers frequently report incidents of Fascists young or old, who, on their deathbeds, cry out to be dressed and buried in their black shirt. At funerals of Fascists it is also the established rite for the senior Blackshirt present to call out the name of the dead comrade, whereupon the assembled mourners answer with a shouted " Present." A similar rite is performed at all large special assemblies of Fascists, especially on Great War or Revolution anniversaries. The names of their heroes are shouted and the multitude answers with " Present."

At the Fascist Revolution " Tenth Year " Exhibition a great circular hall in memory of the fallen was

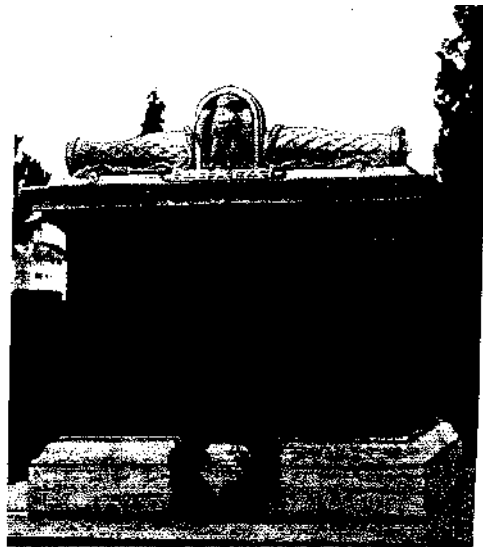
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designed with its walls covered with the illuminated word "*Presented*" and below this sign of continuity in sacrifice were ranged the flags of the early *Fasci di Combattimento*. In the centre of the hall stood an illuminated cross. Everything else was dim and hushed, save for the faint sound of a radio arrangement which transmitted, like a faint echo, the choral singing of the Fascist hymn, *Giovinczza*. Each of the hundreds of thousands who were organised from all parts of Italy to visit the exhibition were ushered into this room of sacrificial memories on conclusion of their inspection of the Revolution relics.

This kind of symbolism is carried into every phase of Italian public life. All institution buildings are characterised by a display of salient and apposite mottoes quoted from the pungent utterances of Mussolini. The spiritual aspects of Fascism as described in the doctrine are woven into the texts of every school-book and university handbook. The emblem of the fasces and lictor meets the eye at every turn, and that insignia, together with the cross, and portraits of the King and Mussolini, are displayed in every classroom, hall of justice and government office throughout the realm.

These influences permeate the whole organisation of the country as built up by the Fascist regime. That organisation will be outlined in due course, but it has to be remembered that the idea of Fascism as a cult is always kept present. The war and Italian history is exalted. The combative element of body and spirit is insisted on. And Mussolini is upheld as the saviour and creator of Italy, his name extolled as the supreme artificer of the nation's destiny. The absolutism of Fascism and the absolutism attributed to Mussolini by

" PRESENT "



Capitoline Hill by a Christian Chapel at the Party Headquarters and by a Roman Altar of the Christian Altar is a cast of the head of the late Michele Bianchi, Triumvirate of the March on Rome. The Capitoline Altar is dedicated to those who have fallen in the Fascist cause.

the Fascists is indicated in the position given to the State in accordance with the doctrine, and the repetition in all schoolbooks and manuals for young Fascists of the phrase, "Mussolini is always right."

The first ideas of the symbolism introduced by the poet d'Annunzio for the inspiration of his Arditi during the Fiume episode, are now surpassed and consolidated in the framework of the Fascist national system.

Guidebooks to the galleries of mediaeval art and to the forums have been rewritten for the rising generations so that these Italian works of art and Roman memories are no longer just material for objective study. These glorious memorials are instead described as belonging to the new Italy, blood of its blood—an inheritance, a justification and a starting-point for new endeavour. The companion of Dante is invoked from the shades: Virgil is the prophet of new Caesars.

By making all these things politically, socially and nationally sacred—attributes of a "faith," Fascism has automatically ostracised a sense of humour from its manifestations, for no man can be witty at the expense of his faith. And being absolute in its conception of the State and the place of the individual in the State, leg-pulling must be political blasphemy and any opposition to Fascist principles means political heresy—the unforgivable sin.

Against some of the Blackshirt ceremonies and incidental customs—like the altar orations and the requests of the dying as above described—the Catholic Church has on occasion made local protest. Each watches the other with jealous eye across the debatable ground where their demarcation of the things of God and Caesar overlap.

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The doctrinal religion of Fascism is developed on military formulas, so that the ideas of discipline, obedience, service, sacrifice, co-operation and a fighting spirit may be more potently and immediately encouraged. The Fascist Militia have a " Decalogue " which reads :

" Know that the Fascist and specially the Militiamen ought not to believe in perpetual peace.

" Punishment is always deserved.

" You serve your country even when you stand guard over a tin of petrol.

" A comrade ought to be as a brother (1) because he lives with you, and (2) because he thinks like you.

" Your rifle and cartridge pouch, etc., have been entrusted to you, not to be spoiled with laziness, but to be preserved for war.

" Never say ' Anyhow the Government pays,' because it is you yourself who pays ; and the Government is that which you wanted, the one for which you have put on your uniform.

" Discipline is the sun of the armies—without which soldiers have but confusion and defeat.

" Mussolini is always right !

" A volunteer has no excuse when he disobeys.

" One thing ought to be clear above all : the life of the *Ducer*

The Militiaman's oath is : " I swear to carry out the orders of the *Duce* without discussion, to serve the cause of the Fascist Revolution with all my strength and if necessary with my blood." And then there is the Militiaman's prayer which reads : " O God, who lightest all flames and strengthenest all hearts, renew each day my passion for Italy. Make me always more worthy of our Dead, in order that

they themselves more strong may answer ' Present' to the living. Nourish my book (thought) with Thy wisdom and my rifle (action) with Thy will. Make my vision more sharp and my feet more steadfast on the sacred passes of my country : on its highways, by its coasts, in its forests and on its fourth shore (North Africa) which once was Rome's. Make me worthy when the future soldier marches beside me in the ranks, so that I hear his faithful heartbeats. Make me worthy when the insignia and flags are carried so that everyone may recognise in them the Fatherland : the Fatherland which we will make more great by each faithfully adding his little to the work. O Lord ! Make the cross the ensign which precedes the banner of my legion. And save Italy in the *Duce*, always and in the hour of dying in harness. Amen."

The decalogue, the oath and the prayer perhaps belong more to the chapter describing the Militia, but they are instead inserted here as symptomatic of how the tenets of the abstract doctrine are transferred to the levels of practical affairs by the guardians of the Revolution. Republished frequently in the newspapers and magazines, disseminated in schoolbooks, and inscribed on walls, these sentiments or sentiments like them—all expressed in slogan form—are always being impressed in the public mind.

Another element of spiritual force assiduously developed is the new and special importance given to the National Monument in the ceremonies of the people. No visitor to Rome can have escaped noting the enormous and ornate marble pile which rises high over the roofs of Rome at the southern end of the Corso in the Piazza Venezia. The erection as a whole was put up by the past regimes as a grandiose mem-

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orial of Italy's Risorgimento unity. Below a colossal statute of the *Dea Roma* on the pedestal of this enormous monument Italy's Unknown Soldier is buried. With its Risorgimento associations ; with its gilded statue of the first King of United Italy ; with its figure of Roma, destiny in hand ; with the Unknown Soldier's tomb ; with a Roman altar marked with the emblem of the Fascist axe ; with its commanding position, facing north, screening the Capitol; with its great broad flight of steps, made for ceremonial parades, this National Monument set in the heart of Rome, has become a national shrine, the Altar of the Country. Not a day passes without some homage to what is symbolised.

And in the Party headquarters there is a Votive Chapel where the Fascists pray and hold vigil like the knights of other days.

In the Universities the young Fascists are taught to revere the double emblem of the Book and the Rifle, symbolising the *Pensiero* and *Azione* of Mazzini and Mussolini.

Courses of " Fascist Culture " are also given in various educational institutions, but it is with the above-mentioned rites, rituals, symbols and ceremonies that the " moral " and " ethical " significance of Mussolini's doctrines are impinged on a nation whose love of parades and the picturesque makes the lessons conveyed all the more impressionable.

The great aim is the creation and sustenance of a national conscience.

FASCISM IN BEING

" If there is anything certain in human affairs, it is that valuable acquisitions are only to be retained by the continuation of the same energies which gained them. In the inevitable changes of human affairs, new inconveniences and dangers continually grow up which must be countered by new resources and contrivances. Whatever qualities, therefore, in a government tend to encourage activity, energy, courage, originality, are requisites of Permanence as well as of Progress."

John Stuart Mill.

" The best kind of wisdom is that which does not surrender after victory."

Mussolini.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE governmental machine erected by the Fascist State does not only concern the mechanism for running a new form of government. It also provides for the continuity of the Revolution itself and, as well, it formulates the means for the self-protection of the Revolution, State and Government. And yet, despite these things, it is claimed that all is done within the orbit of the Constitution—the changes in the letter of the Constitution being but the reinforcement and rejuvenation of its spirit. The machine is, in short, just such an original and energetic confrontation of these inevitable changes of human affairs which John Stuart Mill envisaged in the quotation, cited on the previous page, as the requisite of permanence and progress.

Mussolini, as we have seen from his exposition of Fascist doctrine, has done much more than make mere statutory adjustments in legislative form. Through legislation he has impressed his system " of government and of life " into every department of the nation's activities, physical and mental : and he has done this in such a way that each department is at some point correlated to another. For this reason it is quite impossible to isolate groups of laws under strict categorical headings.

Nevertheless, to facilitate a survey of the legislative machine of the Fascist State, I have in the following pages grouped the component parts under headings

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such as Constitutional Changes, Protective Laws, Continuity Laws, the Corporative State, Social Welfare, etc. In reality, however, it would be difficult to say whether, for instance, the Fascist Volunteer Militia should come under the Constitutional, Protective, Continuity, Social Welfare (physical education) group or the Army. The Corporative State likewise flows into Public Welfare, Public Works, National and International Economy.

This amazing criss-cross of correlated interests is by no means the least interesting of the many features of the Fascist State ; but it is one which presses heavily on any who would embark upon such a task as this book represents. " Unitarian State " is easy to say, but intricate to describe. I would therefore ask the reader to remember that all the items touching government or law in the following chapters are interconnected, directly or indirectly, with one another ; and that through them all there also runs the spiritual strain described in the chapter " Doctrine into Cuit."

Having followed the growth of Fascism step by step there is bound to be a certain amount of repetition in these following chapters describing the State organisation of Fascism as it stands today. In order to make sectional completeness this is unavoidable.

CHAPTER I

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Special Powers to Prime Minister. Alone Responsible to the King. Laws by Royal Decree. The Fascist Party. Its Organs. National Council. Directory. Strength. The Grand Council Constitution. Deliberative Functions. Its Powers : Election Lists, Succession to the Throne, Prerogatives of Crown, Government and Foreign Affairs, Succession to Capo del Governo. Modality of Royal Selection of Capo del Governo. Recomposition of Chamber. Election Methods. Senate. Academy.

THE evolution of the Italian Constitution from its embryo form as the Statute of 1848 received from 1924 onwards several revolutionary adjustments at the hands of the Fascists. These adjustments were carried out in the name of restoring the classic Roman tradition of a strong and authoritative State. The first innovation was the concession of absolute and independent seniority to the Prime Minister over all the other members of the Cabinet. The Cabinet Ministers are no longer responsible directly to the King, but to the Prime Minister in his capacity as *Capo del Governo*. The *Capo del Governo* is alone responsible to the King not only for his own governmental acts but for those of his ministers. The *Capo del Governo* directs and co-ordinates the various ministers and ministries. In this manner the final executive power is unified and identified in one man who is alone answerable to the Sovereign. A Fascist Premier is something considerably more than *primus inter pares*. Among unusual prerogatives is one whereby all bills and questions **for debate** must be approved by the *Capo del Governo*,

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a system which effectively prevents the Government from ever being surprised by a snatch-vote or by an unexpected criticism.

The second important new function is one conceded to the Cabinet : that of having the power and authority to make laws by Royal Decree, without necessarily having any confirmation in the Chamber until after the Decree has become law. This is of course a common enough emergency system in other countries, but in Italy it is normal and not abnormal. The conditions of modern life, especially in economic and international affairs, demand a speedy, secret and immediately effective method of creating laws. The field in which this power is exercised has in Italy stipulated limits, but the proviso that urgency is necessary is sufficient to justify the extension of that field to practically any limits.

The Fascist Party, although not in a strictly juridical sense identified with the Constitution, is linked to it through the offices of the *Duce* and of the Party Secretary. The Party Secretary exercises not a power but an influence in Italy second only to that of the *Capo del Governo*. The Party develops its activities under the supreme leadership of // *Duce*, who must also be *Capo del Governo*. The Party Secretary is nominated by Royal Decree on the recommendation of the *Capo del Governo*. He has a place in the Cabinet. He is a member by right of the Supreme Commission of State Defence.

The Party does not only connect itself upwards into the hierarchy of the State but it links itself on to provincial administrations and through them right down to the people. The real task of the Party in fact is, while asserting its place in the high councils of

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the nation, to keep in touch with the masses. The Party organs are the Grand Council, the Directory, the National Council and the Disciplinary Court.

The Grand Council is the vital centre of both Party and State. It is the synthesis of the Revolution : the extension into national administrative life of the constituent elements which organised the early battles against the Reds, the committee which was responsible for the March on Rome, the council which fought the democratic-liberal opposition. The president of the Grand Council is the *Capo del Governo, Duce del Fascismo*. It is a deliberative body which co-ordinates the whole life of the regime. It has no executive functions ; but what resolutions it passes today become Government and Party policy and law tomorrow.

The Directory is a committee which does for the Party what the Cabinet does for the Chamber : it puts Grand Council resolutions affecting the Party into immediate execution, just as the Cabinet puts Grand Council resolutions affecting Government into effective practice.

The National Council is composed of the Secretaries of the Provincial Federations of Fascists. The Federal Secretaries are nominated by the *Capo del Governo* on the recommendation of the Party Secretary. The local provincial and territorial Secretaries depend from the Federal Secretaries. There are also provincial Directories concerned with Party administration. These secretaries and directories control the individual *Fasci* centres ; and the members of these *Fasci* meet in formal assembly at least once a year to learn the programme which the Party intends to carry out. The members are presumed to be the pick of the people—the most self-disciplined, hard-working and loyal. On

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getting their membership card they swear to obey the orders of the *Duct* without discussion, to defend the cause of the Revolution with all their might, even to death if necessary. The Disciplinary Court is concerned with internal action touching the discipline of the Party and its members. Its findings are sometimes published.

The strength of the Fascist Party membership at the beginning of the eleventh year of Fascism was as follows : Men, 1,007,231 ; Women, 145,210 ; Young Fascists, 39,314 ; Young Fighting Fascists, 608,669 ; University Fascists, 57,996 ; School Association Fascists, 108,127 ; Civil Servant Fascists, 191,269 ; Public Works Fascists, 68,854 \ Railwaymen Fascists, 122,096 ; and Post Office Fascists, 69,357. These represent people who actually hold the party ticket. Large membership is not encouraged. Indeed more attention is given to weeding out the ranks rather than adding to them. The above figures represent the current general level maintained in the Party. There are of course tens of thousands of others who are affiliated one way or another to the Party, without being actual members.

Now let us return to a description of the Grand Fascist Council.

There are three categories of members on the Grand Council : (1) The Quadrumvirate of the March on Rome and a small group of persons who serve for a limited time in virtue of offices which they hold in the regime. (2) Members who are appointed automatically when they take up* certain other offices. This category includes the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Chamber, those who hold political portfolios, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fascist

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Militia, the heads of the principal Syndical organisations and the Party Secretary, who is also the Secretary of the Grand Council. All these people cease to be members as soon as they lose the offices above described. The third category consists of nominees selected by the *Capo del Governo*. They are usually technical experts or specialists, and their appointment is for three years, renewable.

The first two categories are elected by Royal Decree on the recommendation of the *Capo del Governo*.

The meetings of the Council are absolutely secret. Beyond the laconic summaries given to the Press through the Party Order Sheet, I have never known, in over eleven years' experience, of a single leakage of the Council's all-important deliberations.

As I have said, the Council's functions are deliberative. It decides on the final list of 400 parliamentary candidates to be submitted to the electorate at election time as one national constituency ; it approves the statutes and policy of the Party ; it has power to deliberate on the question of Succession to the Throne and the prerogatives of the Crown ; it decides the composition and duties of itself, the Chamber and the Senate ; it can frame decree laws, trade union and Corporation laws ; it can decide on foreign affairs and on the relations between the Church and State ; and it is the body which prepares the list of names from which the successor to the *Capo del Governo*, *Duce del Fascismo*, is nominated, in the event of the death, removal or retirement of the *Capo del Governo* holding office. For instance, the Council has already chosen three names as possible successors to Mussolini. These names are kept completely secret in the bosom of the Council and in the secret archives of

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the Party. When required, the envelope containing the names will be handed to the King, who will make his selection of one. In this manner succession is provided for under the word of the King and therefore within the Constitution, as the King in selecting his Chief Minister is exercising his Sovereign rights.

Another drastic modification of public rights affecting the Constitution concerns the composition of the Chamber. As already indicated, 400 members are elected as for one national constituency. The system of nominations has completely transformed the character of the Chamber. The deputies, as already known to the reader, no longer represent constituencies, but specific national interests. In this respect the Chamber has in theory the character of a conference of diversified experts. The trade Corporations and a selection of a few other State public welfare and cultural institutions submit a total list of 800 candidates to the Council. The minimum age for candidates is twenty-five years. The Council select 400 of these and present the 400 names as one list to an electorate of manhood suffrage. Electors are twenty-one years old or eighteen if married. The electorate vote yes or no for that list as a whole. If by the faintest possible chance the list is rejected at the poll, then another list of another 400 is submitted and so on, until a list is elected. The elected period is five years. The last elections, it will be remembered, were in March 1929. How the Corporate trade union hierarchical units have relieved the Chamber of much of its deliberative functions will be referred to when writing of the Corporative State.

The framework of the Senate has been left little altered by the Fascists. It remains an Upper Chamber

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of experienced legislators and men who have distinguished themselves in public office. Election to the Senate used to be a method of public recognition for services of a national character not necessarily political; but there were many Senators whose terms of usefulness to the country were dead-ended by their promotion to senatorial rank. That aspect of the Senate has been eliminated by the creation of the Royal Italian Academy. This institution, modelled on the Academy of France, has qualities which encourage the continued application of the arts and sciences, not only by the establishment of scholarships organised by the Academy for public competition, but it has definite research branches which link it into the Corporative and economic branches of the State, and through that to the Constitution.

CHAPTER II

WHERE STATE AND LABOUR MEET

Novel Features. Labour Charter. Labour Courts. Employment and Welfare. Collective Contracts. Strikes and Lock-outs Illegal. Sanctions. Syndical Categories. Regional Categories. Their Purpose. The Corporations. Their Purpose. State and Labour Co-operation. National Council.

THE Fascist State is also known as a "unitarian," "totalised" or "Corporate State." The words explain themselves : all activities, in their complexity of parts or in their national sum, are developed within the orbit of the State. In short—team-work on a national scale. As the wealth and well-being of a modern State lie in its productive capacity, the largest problems affecting the State concern the two indispensable elements of production : Capital and Labour, Master and Man. It has been the endeavour of Fascist Italy to correlate these elements and at the same time to reconcile the continuous results of that correlation to the interests of the State.

In order to achieve these ends a number of original and revolutionary features have been put in operation by the Fascist Government—the total features forming a new mechanism of national government, production, distribution, social welfare and political education, known in its harmonised entirety as the Corporate State.

It is to be noted that the task is by no means yet completed. Much is yet in the experimental "try—failure—try again" phase ; but enough experience has

already been gathered to convince the Fascist Government that it is well on the way towards producing an effective system of national collaboration destined to open a new epoch of social-political thought and application not alone in Italy but in other countries of the civilised world.

The outstanding novelties of the Fascist system may be generalised as follows :

(1) A basic charter of rights for all employee workers (the Labour Charter).

(2) The enrolment or affiliation of every worker in Italy—be he a manual or skilled labourer, an artisan, an employer, a professional man, an intellectual worker, an artist, whatsoever he be—in a Syndicate appropriate to whatever of the above such categories he may belong.

Enrolment is not compulsory. The real inducement is that of personal interest ; and non-membership, while depriving the individual of collective labour advantages as well as benefits of a social welfare nature, does not free him from the obligation of contributing towards his category Syndicate, because his Syndicate represents him and acts for him whether he is a member or not.

(3) The legal recognition of these Syndicates by the State—thus bringing them within the orbit of the State for the protection of the status of the Syndicates and for the exercise of a supreme unifying influence and control.

Early experiments showed that the task of examining and granting the applications of the innumerable Syndicates for legal recognition involved delays, so the actual legal recognition is conceded to the category Associations which are the next higher groupments of

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the local category Syndicates. Recognition of the larger units automatically gives extension of privileges and obligations to the lesser. While, technically, the Syndicates are not thus recognised, I have nevertheless continued to refer in this general paragraph to Syndicates, and not to the Associations, so as to emphasise the full range of the organisation. Associations which are not recognised by the Government may exist.

(4) The faculty of the employee worker's Syndicates to make collective contracts for beneficial labour conditions applicable to all within their category.

(5) Provision (through the Corporations) for a continuous consultative and deliberative co-operation between employer and employee.

(6) The prohibition of strikes and lock-outs, with penal sanctions.

(7) The creation of independent but technical boards for the equitable resolution of individual grievances.

(8) The creation of a Labour Court for the settlement of collective grievances.

(9) Machinery by means of which the Syndicates or their representatives can be ranged territorially from local to Provincial and National units, always within their categories, and with the Syndicates of employers and employees ascending in parallel extensions.

(10) Corporative machinery which provides for the co-operation of employers and employees, together with technical experts and Government representatives at ascending territorial levels from local to Provincial and National.

(11) A National Council of Corporations in touch with the economic and social conditions of the whole country which co-ordinates the relations and regulations of the category units of employers and employees.

(12) A Ministry of Corporations, with a knowledge of the economic and political direction and necessities of the Government, which exercises a higher control and intervention when and where need be in the totalised interests of the country at large.

(13) A Minister of Corporations who brings the whole organisation of production and social welfare into the supreme deliberations of the Cabinet, the Fascist Council and the State.

(14) The category units of workers and professional men in National Confederations which provide the majority quota of parliamentary candidates from which the Grand Fascist Council selects its list for submission to the suffrage of the Italian electorate.

Having surveyed the principal characteristics of the Fascist Corporate in a general ascending scale from the workman to Minister, from Charter to Cabinet, and from local Syndicates to Parliament, let us now go over the same ground again in more detail and with a fuller nomenclature.

For convenience' sake I use the words employer and employee ; but neither of these words, nor master and man, nor labourer, have any place in the Fascist Labour vocabulary. Instead, the employee or workman or labourer is called a " worker " and the employer or master is called " a giver of work . "

The Labour Charter does not deal with specific instances but with general principles. It expresses, axiomatically, the purpose, rights and obligations of workmen in the Fascist State. Its thirty clauses are as follows :

1. The Italian Nation is an organism endowed with a purpose, a life, and means of action transcending those of the individuals, or groups of individuals composing it. It is a

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moral, political and economic unit which finds its integral realisation in the Fascist State.

2. Work in all its various forms—intellectual, technical or manual—is a social duty. On these grounds, and on these grounds alone, it is brought under the supervision of the State.

From the national standpoint the mass of production represents a single unit ; it has one and a single object—namely, the well-being of those engaged in production and the development of national power.

3. There is complete freedom of professional or syndical organisation. But Syndicate-Associations legally recognised and subject to State control alone have the right of legal representation of the whole category for which they are constituted ; they have the right to protect their interests in their relations with the State or other professional associations ; to stipulate Collective Labour Contracts binding on all members of the particular category ; to impose dues and to exercise on their account public functions delegated to them.

4. The concrete expression of the solidarity existing between the various factors of production is represented by the Collective Labour Contract, which conciliates the opposing interests of employers of labour and of workers, subordinating them to the higher interests of production.

5. The Labour Court is the organ by means of which the State intervenes in order to settle labour disputes, whether arising from the observance of contracts or other existing rules or from the formulation of new labour conditions.

6. Legally recognised professional associations ensure legal equality between employers and workers, keep a strict control over production and labour, and promote the improvement of both.

The Syndicate-Associations constitute the unitary organisation of the forces of production and integrally represent their interests.

LABOUR'S MAGNA CHARTA



A propaganda reproduction of the opening Articles of the Fascist Labour Charter which defines the rights, obligations and privileges of the workers on a basis of class co-operation.

In virtue of this integral representation, and in view of the fact that the interests of production are the interests of the nation, the law recognises them as State organs.

7. The Corporate State considers that in the sphere of production private enterprise is the most effective and useful instrument in the interests of the nation.

In view of the fact that the private organisation of production is a function of national concern, the organiser of the enterprise is responsible to the State for the direction given to production. Collaboration between the forces of production gives rise to reciprocal rights and duties. The worker, whether technician, employer, or employee, is an active collaborator in the economic enterprise, the responsibility for the direction of which rests with the employer.

8. Professional Associations of Employers are required to promote by all possible means a continued increase in the quantity of production and a reduction of costs. The representative organs of persons exercising a liberal profession or art and associations of civil servants must encourage arts, science and letters, with a view to improving production and to the achievement of the moral objects of the Syndical system.

9. State intervention in economic production arises only when private initiative is lacking or is inadequate or when political interests of the State are involved. This intervention may take the form of control, assistance or direct management.

10. Judicial action cannot be invoked in collective labour controversies unless the Syndicate-Association organ has first attempted conciliation.

Professional Associations have the right in individual disputes concerning the interpretation and application of collective labour contracts to employ their good offices for the purpose of conciliation.

Jurisdiction over such disputes is placed in the ordinary Courts, assisted by assessors appointed by the professional Associations concerned.

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COLLECTIVE LABOUR CONTRACTS

11. Professional Associations are required to regulate by means of Collective Contracts the labour relations existing between the categories of employers of labour and of workers represented by them.

Collective Labour Contracts are concluded between the first grade Associations under the direction and control of the central organisations except in the event of the exercise of the power of substitution by the higher grade Association in the cases specified in the law and statutes.

All Collective Labour Contracts must, under pain of nullity, contain precise rules on such matters as disciplinary relations, period of approval, the amount and payment of remuneration and hours of work.

12. The action of the Syndicate, the conciliatory efforts of the Syndicate organs and the decisions of the Labour Courts shall guarantee that wages shall correspond to the normal demands of life, to the possibilities of production and the output of labour.

Wages shall be determined without reference to any general rules by agreement between the parties to the collective contracts.

13. The consequences of crises in production and of monetary phenomena should be shared equally between all the different factors of production.

The data furnished by public administrations, by the Central Statistical Office and by the legally recognised professional Associations with respect to conditions of production and of work, the situation on the money market and the variations in the standard of life of workers shall, after having been co-ordinated and elaborated by the Ministry of Corporations, supply the standard for reconciling the interests of the various categories and of the various classes among each other and with the higher interests of production.

14. When contracts concern piece-work, and the payments due thereunder are made at intervals of more than fifteen days, adequate weekly or fortnightly sums on account are due.

Night work, with the exception of ordinary regular night shifts, must be paid at a higher rate than day work.

In such cases where the work is paid at piece-rate, the rate must be such that a diligent workman, of a normal working capacity, will be able to earn a minimum amount over and above the basic wage.

15. The worker has the right to a weekly day of rest, which shall fall on Sunday.

Collective Contracts shall apply this principle while taking account of legal conditions in force, of the technical necessities of the enterprise and, within the limits of these necessities, shall see that civil and religious holidays are observed according to local traditions. The working time-table must be scrupulously and zealously observed by the worker.

16. Workers in enterprises of continuous activity shall, after the expiry of a year of uninterrupted service, have the right to an annual period of rest with pay.

17. In enterprises of continuous activity the worker has the right, in the event of a cessation of labour relations on account of discharge without any fault on his part, to an indemnity proportional to his years of service. Similar indemnity is also due to his family or representatives in the event of the death of a worker.

18. In enterprises of continuous activity the transfer of the enterprise into other hands shall not put an end to the Labour Contract, and the workers employed shall have the same rights with regard to the new employer. Similarly, illness on the part of the worker, provided it does not exceed a certain period, shall not put an end to the Labour Contract. Call to military service or to service in the National Militia shall not be grounds of discharge.

19. Breaches of discipline or the performance of acts which disturb the normal working of the enterprise on the part of the workers shall be punished, according to the gravity of the offence, by fine, suspension from work, or in certain cases of gravity by immediate discharge without indemnity.

The cases when the employer can impose fines, suspension

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from work or immediate discharge without payment of indemnity shall be specified.

20. A worker on taking up a new post must go through a period of approval : both parties have a right to the cancellation of the contract merely by payment of the wage or salary in respect of the time during which the worker was actually employed.

21. The privileges and control of Collective Labour Contracts extend also to home workers. Special rules shall be issued by the State in order to ensure the control and hygiene of home work.

22. The State alone can ascertain and control the phenomenon of employment and unemployment of workers, which is a complex index of the conditions of production and work.

EMPLOYMENT BUREAUS

23. Labour Employment Bureaus founded on a mutual basis are subjected to the control of the Corporative organs. Employers have the obligation to employ workers whose names are on the register of the said bureaus and have the right of choice among the names of those who are members of the Party and the Fascist Syndicates according to their seniority on the register.

24. The professional Associations of workers are required to exercise a process of selection among the workers with the object of achieving continuous improvement in their technical capacity and moral education.

25. The Corporative organs shall ensure the observance of the laws on the prevention of accidents and the discipline of work on the part of individuals belonging to the Federated Associations.

WELFARE, EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

26. Providence is a further expression of the principle of collaboration, and the employer and the worker should both bear a proportional share of its burden. The State, through the medium of Corporative and Professional Associations,

shall see to the co-ordination and unity, as far as possible, of the system and Institutes of Providence.

27. The Fascist State undertakes :

- (1) the perfecting of accident insurance ;
- (2) the improvement and extension of maternity assistance ;
- (3) insurance against industrial diseases and tuberculosis as a step towards insurance against all forms of sickness ;
- (4) the perfecting of insurance against involuntary unemployment;
- (5) the adoption of special forms of endowment insurance for young workers.

28. The workers' Associations are required to act as guardians of those they represent in administrative and judicial suits arising out of accident and social insurance.

The Collective Labour Contracts shall establish, when this is technically possible, Mutual Sickness Funds, with contributions furnished by employers and workers, to be administered by representatives of both bodies, under the supervision of the Corporative organs.

29. The assistance of the individuals it represents, whether members or non-members, is a privilege and a duty of the professional Associations. The Associations must exercise directly by their own organs the functions of assistance and may not delegate them to other bodies or institutes except for purposes of a general nature transcending the interests of single categories of producers.

30. The education and instruction, especially the professional instruction, of the individuals they represent is one of the principal duties of the professional Associations. These Associations are required to work side by side with the National Welfare Institution (*Dopolavoro*) and other educational institutions.

The Charter, as we have seen, provides for the Collective Labour Contracts. These are completed in

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agreement between employers and employees in the various categories of work, and they bring down to detail all the questions of hours, wages, holidays, indemnities, etc., envisaged in the Charter. The enactment relating to the Collective Labour Contracts also provides for the constitution of the Labour Courts to deal with collective labour disputes. The text points out that an attempt at conciliation must be made before judgment is passed. The sixteen Appeal Courts of Italy can function as Labour Courts, and in each of these courts a body of experts in the problems of production and labour is set up. Under certain circumstances the judgment of the Labour Court may be opposed by recourse to the Court of Cassation. Only legally recognised Associations may raise actions or be represented in the Labour Courts and the judgments passed are valid for all in the category of work and district interested.

Thanks to these Contracts every workman knows exactly where he stands. For instance, if a man is wrongfully dismissed, he reports to his Syndicate : the Syndicate, if it cannot get redress direct, simply opens a lawsuit on the basis of the Collective Contract, and without delay, almost automatically, the plaintiff gets judgment for his indemnity with costs.

STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS

The same enactment shows the legal position and sanctions with regard to strikes and lock-outs. The Articles dealing with these things read :

Strikes and lock-outs are illegal.

Employers who without sufficient justification and for the sole object of obtaining from their employees a modification of the existing Labour Contracts suspend work in their estab-

lishments, enterprises or offices, are punished by a fine ranging from ten thousand to one hundred thousand lire.

Employees and workmen who to the number of three or more, after previous accord, leave off working, or do their work in a manner calculated to disturb its continuity and regularity, in order to obtain from their employers different contracts, are punished by a fine of one hundred to one thousand lire. The procedure shall be governed by articles 298 and following of the Code of Penal Procedure.

When the authors of the misdemeanour described in the preceding paragraphs are numerous, the leaders, promoters and organisers are punished by imprisonment for a period of not less than one year and of not more than two years, in addition to the fines laid down in the said paragraphs.

Persons employed by the State or by other public bodies or by enterprises engaged in a public service or a service of public necessity who to the number of three or more, after previous accord, leave off working or do their work in a manner calculated to disturb its continuity or regularity, are punished by imprisonment in a special division (*reclusione*) for a period ranging from six months to two years ; in addition they shall be prohibited from holding any public office for a period of six months. The procedure shall be governed by articles 298 and following of the Code of Penal Procedure.

The leaders, promoters and organisers shall be punished by imprisonment in a special division (*reclusione*) for a period ranging from six months to two years ; in addition they shall be prohibited from holding any public office for a period of not less than three years.

Persons engaged in public services or services of public necessity who leave off working in establishments, enterprises or offices without sufficient justification are punished by imprisonment in a special division for a period ranging from six months to one year and by a fine ranging from five thousand to one hundred thousand lire ; in addition they shall be temporarily forbidden from holding any public office.

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If the action contemplated in the present Article results in danger to human life, the punishment of imprisonment shall be in a special division (*reclusione*) for a period not less than one year. If such action results in the death of one or more persons, the punishment of imprisonment shall be in a special division (*reclusione*) for a period of not less than three years.

Persons employed by the State or by other public bodies, or persons engaged by enterprises engaged in public service or a service of public necessity, and their staffs, who on the occasion of strikes or lock-outs fail to do all in their power to bring about the regular continuation and resumption of a public service or of a service of public necessity shall be punished by imprisonment for a period ranging from one to six months.

When the suspension of work on the part of employers or the abandonment or irregular performance of work on the part of workmen are for the purpose of putting constraint on the will or of influencing the decision of an organ or body of the State, of the Provinces or of the Communes, or of a public official the leaders, promoters and organisers shall be punished by imprisonment in a special division (*reclusione*) for a period ranging from three to seven years ; in addition they shall be prohibited for life from holding any public office. For other persons the period of special imprisonment shall be from one to three years and such persons shall be temporarily prohibited from holding any public office.

Without prejudice to the application of the ordinary rules of law on civil responsibility for non-fulfilment of a contract and on the execution of the sentences, employers and workers who refuse to carry out the decisions of the Labour Courts shall be punished by simple imprisonment for a period ranging from one month to one year in addition to a fine of one hundred to five thousand lire.

The leaders of legally recognised unions who refuse to carry out the decisions of the Labour Court shall be punished by simple imprisonment for a period ranging from six months to two years and a fine of two thousand to ten thousand lire, in addition to deposition from their official position.

REGIONAL CATEGORIES

The local Syndicates of Workers and their successive extensions in their categories become District Associations, Provincial Federations and National Confederations. There are seven National Confederations and they represent in their seven categories, the employees' interests in (1) industry, (2) agriculture, (3) commerce, (4) banking, (5) territorial communications, (6) air transport and (7) intellectual workers. The employers' category units end in seven similar National Confederations—although the intellectual Confederation is a more liquid unit, in which the demarcation line of employer and employed is often not easy to define.

Across the category units of the employers and employees there cut the units of the Corporations. The Corporations are composed of seven sections corresponding to the seven Confederations of Employers and the Confederations of Employees. The object of the Corporations is to co-ordinate and harmonise the productive possibilities of the nation, to secure the fullest co-operation between all classes, to settle disputes which affect national welfare and to promote the social, educational and physical well-being of the worker. As in the Syndical units so in the Corporations—employer and employee are on equal representative footing throughout.

If we imagine the regional category units as perpendicular double-lines (employers and employees) rising from local Syndicate level and ending at National Confederation heights, then we must picture the Corporation units as horizontal lines traversing the category perpendiculars at every stage from local Syndical to

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National Confederations. It will be noted that the horizontal lines therefore make contact not only with employers and employees in each category, but that they also form a unifying band between all the categories. By these contacts it is therefore possible for the Corporations to co-operate on questions of interest to employers and employees in any given category at any given territorial stage ; and it is also possible for the Corporations to make complete national-wide contacts as between employer and employee at any given territorial stage—in other words, keep in touch with totalised district, provincial and national production.

The life force of the Syndical units is derived from the Labour Charter : syndical life therefore begins with the masses in their local category units and ascends finally to the National Confederations. The vital essence of the Corporations is derived from the Cabinet and the *Capo del Governo*: the Corporative life therefore begins with the State and finally passes by these horizontal arteries into the masses.

Deriving its policy from the Government and State through the Minister and Ministry of Corporations, the next Corporation organ is the National Council of Corporations, divided into sub-sections corresponding to the Confederation categories. An idea of the wide slice of Italian national life represented on this Council and its sub-sections may be got from a glance at its composition. It includes the Secretary of the Fascist party, the Ministers of Corporations, of Home Affairs, and of Agriculture, representatives of the Syndical Confederations of both employers and employees ; and at the general meetings of the Council there are delegates from the technical departments of all the Ministries, representatives of Health and

Recreation, ex-Servicemen, War Wounded, institutions, and so on. This Council is in character deliberative, judicial and advisory and it issues rules and regulations for the co-ordination of all the Syndical units' collective activities. Provincial Corporative Councils carry the work to the Federation level. As a matter of fact it is at the Provincial Councils that the real work of economic and social collaboration between employers and employees is done, and disputes settled.

It can be said that this Fascist endeavour to construct a corporative syndicalist State represents one of the most complex social-economic experiments ever attempted on a national scale. It is exceeded in immensity but not in intricacy by the Soviet experiment, because the Italians have taken on the burden of reconciling all classes and interests in one smooth-running national machine. The work is as yet far from done. Of the seven category Corporations there is only one which is actually complete, but the Provincial Corporative Councils, sub-sections of the Corporations and an executive Central Committee of Corporations fulfill the *liaison* collaborative functions of the not yet completed category Corporations with the National Confederations. Any employer who tries to over-ride the rights of an employee, or any workers who attempt to put class before country will rapidly discover that the Corporate State is not just a thing of paper. The most potent evidence of the practical, working efficiency of the system is contained in the fact that it enabled Italy, a relatively poor country, to weather the world crisis, and to place her on an exceptionally high level as a producing country, ready for the recovery of world trade.

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Mussolini's best known collaborators in building up the Corporate State were Giuseppe Bottai, a young Roman Fascist who organised the Ministry until Mussolini took over the portfolio himself in 1932 ; Edward Rossoni, a revolutionary Syndicalist who at one time was a labour agitator in America and who followed Mussolini at the war intervention campaign, becoming one of Mussolini's first Fascists ; and Bruno Biagi, who has special social insurance theories.

To any reader who wishes to make, in English, a complete and exhaustive examination of the Fascist trade-union system in all its complication of detail I recommend " The Italian Corporative State" by Dr. Fausto Pitigliani, published by P. S. King & Son, London. My chapter describes in essential outline the foundation and framework of the system, and shows it as part of the historical and political picture of Fascist Italy : Dr. Pitigliani's book deals with the subject technically on a detached Syndical-Economic basis.

CHAPTER III

BACK TO THE LAND

*Public Works. Coping Stones instead of Foundation Stones. Ten Tears' Work. Rural Policy. Mussolini on " Back to the Land." Bonifica Integrate. Its aims and extent. Littoria. "Battle of the Grain." *933 Victory. " Battle of Agriculture." Moving to new Conquests.*

WHEN first drafting out the scheme and arrangement of these chapters I airily jotted down " Public Works—2000 words." That was an absent-minded piece of optimism ! A bare catalogue of the public works carried out during the past eleven years would more than exhaust the total of words which I have allowed myself; a detailed and descriptive summary would fill a volume, with chapters on ports and harbours ; hydraulics and electric power; speedways and highways ; railroads and stations ; housing and hospitals ; land reclamation ; irrigation and canals ; archaeology and town planning ; schools and stadiums ; Colonial development; earthquake redemption ; ex-soldiers and unemployed ; distribution of labour ; afforestation ; the " battle of the grain " ; finance : and State grants and consortiums.

The regime has accomplished so much under all these headings that it can be said to have changed the face of Italy. And yet it is not so much the things done as the fact that they *have* been done which identifies this colossal work with the history of Fascism. Many of the schemes completed by the Fascist Government had been proposed, planned and in many cases

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partly carried out by former democratic-Liberal Governments. But this difference is to be noticed : the pre-Fascist schemes were hindered in their execution by the rise and fall of Governments because, as we have seen in the earlier chapters of this book, there was still regional rivalry and also a general range of rivalry between industry and agriculture, North and South. These rivalries found their best means of competitive action through the political machine. As a result the desks of Italian engineers and the archives of the Office of Public Works were filled with sound schemes, approved by one Government but kiboshed by another. In consequence Italy was strewn with partially completed improvements ; there was no balance of progress as between North and South ; and the country suffered.

The first indication that the epoch of " unfinished beginnings " was over and done with was an order by Mussolini abolishing " foundation-stone " ceremonies. In substitution he introduced a " coping-stone " ritual. This rite is performed all over Italy on each April 21—the day on which is commemorated Italian Labour Day, the Birth of Rome and the Fascist Levy. The association of the ideas of all three commemorations is introduced into the coping-stone rite, thus symbolically linking the accomplishment of the present in a continuity of thought with the past and with the future. It also provides a yearly date towards which every work, either in whole or in defined stages, is pressed to completion, thus creating a national rhythm of endeavour and accomplishment.

In his speech on the 1933-4 Budget estimates, the Minister of Public Works gave some figures on what had been done during the first ten years of

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Fascist rule. He said that during that period over 18,000,000,000 lire had been devoted to such works. At the end of 1922 the electric plants of all Italy had a total horsepower of 1,250,000. There was now (October 23, 1932) 5,500,000 horsepower; and the annual output of electricity had risen from 3,652,200,000 kilowatt-hours to 9,665,000,000. The length of high-tension lines had passed from 16,000 to 25,500 kilometres, and the number of water-power reservoirs risen from 54 with a capacity of 142,000,000 cubic metres, to 184 with a capacity of 1,544,000,000 cubic metres. Special concentration on hydro-electric and thermo-electric plants, artificial lakes and power distribution is subventioned to about 100,000,000 lire per annum. In return—Italy having no coal in her soil—the great expense of coal importation is being steadily reduced.

Eleven thousand kilometres of roadway, the Minister announced, had been reconditioned and fifty per cent of the roads of all Italy had been systematised. Six thousand kilometres of new roads had been constructed, including 436 kilometres of *autostrade* motor speedways. Five hundred and seventeen kilometres of new railroad had been laid down and 566 kilometres were under construction. 1,617,000,000 lire had been spent on the complete modernisation of 82 ports and on preserving beaches and harbours in 15 Provinces. Two hundred public buildings had been erected, exclusive of those destroyed by earthquakes—in which latter regard 94 public buildings, 3131 working-class houses with lodgings for 17,000 people had been put up. Eleven thousand new schools had been built in 2764 Communes in every part of the land, but specially in the ill-supplied South. In housing, 6000 tenement *palazzi*

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had been erected, containing 50,000 flats with a total of 193,000 living rooms. 2193 Communes with a total population of over ten million had been provided with water by the engineering of new aqueducts at a cost of more than 1,000,000,000 lire. Innumerable minor works for the improvement of communal hygiene had been carried out.

The plans developed as from October 1932 are said to assure 25 million working days ; and the 1933-4 estimates earmark 1,350,000 lire for the continuation of public works all over Italy. The official total of unemployed in Italy at the beginning of October, 1933, was 800,740.

The above data does not include extensive works carried out in Tripolitania and elsewhere in the Italian colonies. Ten years ago it was dangerous to go unescorted beyond the suburbs of Tripoli on to the encroaching desert dunes. Today there are roads as straight as Roman swords radiating into the desert zones where land reclamation is developed in peace and security no matter how distant from the shelter of Tripoli.

Despite the varied regional and category developments indicated by the above general survey of work accomplished, Mussolini, in conformity with his doctrinal principles, considers public works as one great undertaking. And that great undertaking he directs according to one great internal policy. And that great internal policy in turn is based on his conviction that the strength of a nation rests on agriculture. He is leading Italy "back to the land." This does not, however, mean only leading the nation back to agriculture. It means developing a strong rural State, inhabited by a healthy and contented rural

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An idyllic vision of agricultural Italy, present day and traditional.

populace, producing enough grain for the nation's needs.

Mussolini's speeches are full of references to the ruralisation of Italy :

" To increase the fruitfulness of Italian soil as much as possible, to elevate the condition of the millions and millions of countryfolk who work with such sacred tenacity,—there you have one of the fundamental aims of the Fascist regime."

" The wealth of Italy, the stability of the nation and its future are intimately bound up with the future of Italian agriculture."

" The real fount, the real origin, of all human activity is the earth."

" Only a great agricultural Italy will allow the development of a great industrial Italy."

" Industrial concentration in cities leads to the sterility of the population. Monstrous cities with their geometrical development end up by making a desert all around them ; and in the desert life dies."

" The country people—the glorious infantry of the War and of the Revolution—will also be the victors in the Battle of the Land, which is the battle for the richness of Italy."

" The struggle is one for real liberty,—the liberation of the nation from foreign economic servitude."

" I say unto you, O peasants and men of the land, you are specially near to my spirit."

" This old land of Italy can give bread to her sons today and tomorrow, when once man knows how to harmonise these elements,—the sun, water, work and science. The hydraulic, agrarian and sanitary transformation of a region is a long job which demands the most generous force and labour of the Government."

One could go on quoting such phrases for pages on end.

The principal vehicle for this ruralisation policy is the *Bonifica Integrale*—Integral Land Reclamation. It

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is called integral because it differs from earlier land reclamation schemes in that it encompasses the settlement of colonies on the reclaimed land, with the elevation of new townships and parishes, the marketing as well as the cultivation of the crops, the integration of the new communities into the social and economic life of the province and the nation, the amelioration of unemployment, the development of " internal emigration " of workers from zone to zone, the settlement of ex-Servicemen on land grants, the intensive increase of grain production up to national self-sufficiency and the co-ordination of all public works towards these various ends, plus the inclusion of the Corporative mechanism and all the social, recreational, demographic, religious and general welfare institutions and ideas of Fascism. So you can understand how I feel about trying to compress an adequate picture of this into the compass of a chapter !

The *Bonijica Integrale* operates among the rocky hills of the new Alpine provinces, among the waterless stretches of south-central Italy, among the once wastelands of Sardinia, among the dank acreage of the Pontine and other marshes—everywhere.

It was only in July 1928 that the laws for the *Bonijica Integrale* were formulated and it was not until July 1929 that they were put in operation. In September 1929 a *Bonijica Integrale* Under-Secretary portfolio was created in the Ministry of Agriculture with *liaisons* with the Ministries of Public Works and, later, of Corporations. The work now in hand ranges over an area which totals over seven-and-a-half million acres. To public funds are added private consortiums with State guarantees. The most conspicuous success is that of the Pontine Marshes whose reclamation has

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baffled engineers from the times of Imperial Rome. The first victory in the war against nature in this zone was signalled by the institution of the town of Littoria, which is a reasonably flourishing township of ex-Servicemen and their families drawn from all parts of Italy. Laid out as a Roman *quadrata*, it proudly stands as a new town, the centre and capital of a new Commune, amid a network of roads and irrigation canals, overlooking cultivated fields in a region which less than seven years ago was a pestiferous, malarial swamp, haunted by fever-stricken wraiths of neglected humanity. A new town and Commune, Sabaudia, is now under course of construction and on September 1933 the Government appointed a special Commissary in charge of preparing the eventual total recovery of this notorious Agro Pontino.

Accompanying the *Bonifica Integrale* is, as I have said, the work of raising enough grain for Italy's internal needs. This " Battle of the Grain " had its zero hour in June 1925. Italy's requirements amount to about 75 million quintals of grain. Of this total Italy produced 44 million in 1922, importing the balance. In 1925, when the " Battle " started, it imported 65\ million. The 1932 crop marked a victorious conclusion with 75,151,000 quintals. This general increase of production has been accompanied by a general all-round agricultural increase. In May 1933 it was announced that the " Battle of the Grain " was to be transformed into " The Integral Battle of Agriculture." Fascist Italy has accordingly moved to the assault of the second line of trenches in its great war for the ruralisation of Italy.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-PROTECTION

Rome of the Militia. A Check on Secret Societies. Provincial Control. Fuorusciti. Defence of the State Tribunal, New Penal Code, Press Laws Curbing Opposition. Liberty of the Press. Mussolini's Views—Fascist Journalism. Its Opportunities.

IN the vast bulk of Fascist legislation there are a number of juridical measures and State provisions which can be considered as one group with a character clearly defined as protective. These laws guarantee the free development of the Fascist Revolution against all efforts which might be made, inside or outside the State, to frustrate either the material or spiritual ends of the regime. These measures are as follows :

- (1) Laws constituting the Blackshirt Militia, whose formal title is the Volunteer Militia for National Security, and generally known by their initials M.V.S.N.
- (2) The Law against secret societies.
- (3) Laws for the organisation and control of Government servants.
- (4) Laws against the *fuorusciti* (political exiles).
- (5) Laws constituting the Special Defence of the State Tribunal and the new Penal Code.
- (6) Public safety laws.
- (7) Press laws.

NATIONAL MILITIA. The National Militia, according to the decree of August 4, 1924, forms part of the

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armed forces of the State. Its members swear fidelity to the *Duce* and to the King. The *Duce* of *Fascismo* is the *Duce* of the Militia. All ranks are inscribed members of the Party. This force has very varied duties.

It has political duties which may be defined as work in co-operation with the political and general departments of the police, and special detachments for frontier duties.

It has "military educative duties." This consists of training and instructing the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*, and the University Student Fascists—the three units from which with the passage of time the ranks of the National Militia are recruited. No direct recruits are now taken for service in the National Militia without having passed through some of the above channels. The Militia also gives pre-military instruction to its members. This means that thousands of young men are already trained in the elements of soldiering before they are called on to serve their period of training with the regular army in course of the conscription levies.

It has direct military duties. These consist of Blackshirt infantry battalions and cycle corps, territorial anti-aircraft defence and permanent Blackshirt Legions who operate in the colonial areas of Tripolitania. The infantry battalions include "shock troop units" which are distributed among the divisions of the Italian regular army.

It has detachments for "special duty." For this special work there are distinct branches devoted to the Forest services which includes preservation of woodlands and gamekeepers' duties; Railway Militia for the maintenance of communications, and of order on board trains; Dockyard Militia, Post Office Militia

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and Highway Militia, the last of which performs duties similar to those of the motor-traffic police in other countries. In keeping with the classical spirit of the Revolution, the old Roman nomenclature of legions, cohorts and centurions is used. The whole body or any section of it can be mobilised : to maintain public order ; for reviews or parades ; for instructive purposes at the manoeuvres, games and exercises of the *Balilla* and *Avanguardisti*; in cases of public calamity to lend aid ; and in the event of calamities following volcanic eruptions, to organise the hygienic and general succour to the population in the stricken zone.

The " Golden Book " of the Militia bears ample testimony of the prompt and willing assistance which it has given on many occasions in coming with well-organised efficiency to the help of the people. Not only has this spirit of giving organised help been awakened, but the readiness to make individual sacrifice in coming to the assistance of others is shown in the frequent accounts of acts involving the saving of life by Militiamen and *Avanguardisti* and *Balilla*,

The Militia, in short, guarantees the operation of all public services. This is now a peaceful continuation of the work which, as we have seen in the earlier sections of this volume, was performed against heavy odds when the country was in the grip of subversive elements.

SECRET SOCIETIES. The law against secret societies regulates the activities of all associations and institutes in such a way that their constitutions, statutes, rules and regulations, list of membership, committees, and all other information about their organisation, aims and activities, must be communicated to the police authorities. As the existence of any political non-

Fascist active institution is prohibited, this law ensures complete Government control over assembled associations. The failure of any institution to register its particulars as above noted puts itself automatically outside the law. All institutions depending from the State, provincial or local services must and can only be developed under the tutelage of the authorities. Any possible infiltration of masonic or other notions is by these means immediately recognised and rigorously repressed.

GENERAL CONTROL. The administrative machine is such that complete control is exercised over the remotest areas of the peninsula. With powers which emanate from the central State authority the pivot man in the Provinces is the Prefect. There is no elective provincial council. All affairs are in the hands of officials appointed by the Government, by the Party, or by the Prefect. In fact the Prefect is a *vice-Capo del Governo*, and is appointed by Royal Decree through the Home Office. He is responsible directly to Mussolini, and his influence on the political and military life of his provincial area is profound. When Mussolini wishes to impress any warning or to give any special praise, or wishes to have special knowledge of the spirit existing in any Province of the kingdom, it is through the Prefects that he makes his contacts. The average population of a Province numbers about 500,000 souls.

Below the Province comes the Commune, which may be either a rural area or a city or a town—a town Commune of over 10,000 inhabitants and equipped with all public services being designated *Città*. The whole system of a locally elected council and mayor (*Sindaco*) has been substituted by the office of *Podestà*—a mediæval term of local dictatorship. In his person the

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Podesta combines the powers of the earlier *Sindaco* and council put together. The *Podestd*, is nominated by Royal Decree through the provincial Prefect or through the Home Office according to the importance of his charge. In large cities the *Podestd*, may be assisted by a *Consulta* which is appointed by the Central Government. In the case of Naples and a few other great centres there are variations to the actual tide given to the *Consulta* of a community, but the system of centralised control from Rome is the same. The city of Rome, as the capital of Italy, is under a *Governatorato* whose office is national.

I have included this administrative network of the regime under the general heading of Self-Protection, but in this instance it is not alone for the protection of the State or for the control of the people that the administration is so organised. It is also in order that the spirit of the Revolution, as maintained by its central authorities, should have a channel for spreading its intentions, wishes and dictates.

FUORUSCITI. According to the *Fuorusciti* Law of 31st January, 1926, any citizen who commits, or aids and abets the commission of deeds abroad directed towards disturbing public order in the kingdom of Italy loses his citizenship. By the same law a citizen abroad also forfeits his citizenship if he works to the damage of Italian interests or besmirches the good name and prestige of Italy, even if his behaviour does not constitute an actual crime. The procedure for declaring anyone a *fuoruscito* is carried out by a commission composed of magistrates specially convened by the Home Office in concert with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To the loss of citizenship sequestration and confiscation of property can be added. This

FOUR WESTERN POWERS AGREE TO COLLABORATE



Sir Ronald Graham for Britain ; Mussolini for Italy ; Von Hassel for Germany and De Jouvenel for France signing the Four-Power Pact at the Palazzo Venezia on July 16, 1933.

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is done in such manner as not to damage the present or heritable interests of innocent members of the family who may be still in Italy or abroad.

DEFENCE OF THE STATE TRIBUNAL. The Defence of the State Tribunal is a species of court-martial. General Officers of the Army, Navy, Air Force and National Militia can be called on to form part of the Court, which in general is composed of five judges selected from the Consuls (colonels) of the Militia. This tribunal exercises the power of giving the death penalty, and sentences up to thirty years' imprisonment. The death sentence is pronounced for :

(1) Attempts against the life, the integrity and the personal liberty of the King, the Regent, the Queen, the Crown Prince and the *Capo del Governo*.

(2) Attempts against the independence and unity of the Fatherland.

(3) The violation of secrets concerning the security of the State.

(4) Attempts against internal peace (armed revolt, civil war, sabotage and looting).

On its ordinary civil and criminal side the whole Penal Code of Italy has been reformed in keeping with the Fascist doctrine of the supremacy of the State over the individual. The death sentence has also been reintroduced for common crimes of a murderous nature.

The reform was developed by Signor Rocco and is based on the principles of the late Professor Enrico Ferri, one of the original exponents of the positive school of criminology. The personality of the prisoner is considered along with his crime, together with the psychic and moral atmosphere surrounding the crime. It allows the judge a wider scope in applying punish-

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ment; and that punishment is regulated on a reformatory basis according to the individual. Solitary confinement has been abolished. In prison educative labour has been introduced by which the prisoner pays partly for his own maintenance. His pay is regulated by the Syndicates in order to avoid competition with free labour. The wages of the prisoner are divided into three parts—one-third goes to the State, one-third to the victim of his crime and one-third to the prisoner on his release. The jury system has been modified into a jury of experts.

The following seven principles are embodied in the new Penal Code, which, after seven years of labour, constitutes one of the greatest reforms ever made in the Italian juridical school:

To overcome in the practical field the differences between the classical and the anthropological schools of criminology.

To strengthen punishments for graver crimes where the pre-Fascist code was considered inadequate.

To safeguard the State more efficiently at home, abroad, and internationally ; to punish crimes against the Fatherland in accordance with Fascist social conceptions.

To safeguard the family and public morals.

To safeguard the integrity and future of the race.

To protect religious sentiments, especially those of the Catholic cult.

To effect public economy by a simplification of local procedure.

PRESS LAWS. The Press in Fascist Italy is circumscribed by legislative provisions calculated to "reconduct it within its just limits of liberty, and to guarantee the State against possible aggression through it, to restore journalism to its national educative functions and to make it responsible in a penal, financial and political sense for its own actions." The exercise

of governmental control over the Press is carried out in four ways :

First: The Prefects have the power of preventive sequestration of newspapers, reviews, etc., which they may consider damaging or dangerous for public order or public morality. The general kind of material which leads to the sequestration of newspapers and the possible punishment of those responsible for their publication is officially defined as follows :

" False or tendentious news which hinders the diplomatic action of the Government in its foreign relations, or damages national credit at home or abroad ; or causes unjustified alarm in the population ; or arouses disturbances of public order in whatsoever manner. Articles, comments, notes, headlines, illustrations and sketches which excite the commission of crime ; or cause hatred or disobedience of the laws or of the orders of the authorities ; or cause disturbance to the discipline of those attached to a public service ; or favour the interests of foreign States, or foreign public or private aims to the damage of Italian interests ; or which vilify the Fatherland, the King, the Royal Family, the Pontiff, or the religion and institutions of the State and of friendly Powers."

Copies of the newspapers are seen by the Prefect previous to or as soon as issued from the presses and their withdrawal from sale before widespread distribution mitigates the offence in minor cases. After a certain number of sequestrations the journal is liable to be closed altogether.

Second : Measures for fixing the political, material and financial responsibility of the newspapers on to the actual editor of the paper and not on to a " man of straw."

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Third : Reinforcement of newspaper guarantees concerning financial stability and sense of responsibility.

And fourth : The creation of a professional status and spirit among journalists by means of a Professional Roll. Only those inscribed in this roll are allowed to exercise the profession of journalism.

Those who are on the roll enjoy protection and privileges affecting conditions of work, pensions and rights unequalled by any other body of journalists the world over.

It will be noticed that these measures, looked at as a means of protecting the regime, place a formidable penal barrier against any violent insurrectional attempt to overthrow the Government. The heavy sentences which the Fascist courts can, and do, inflict are—in accordance with the principles of the reformed Code—not mechanically regulated as given punishments to fit given crimes ; but vary in accordance with (1) the political circumstances surrounding the case, (2) the intentions, character or opportunities of the accused person, (3) the effect, actual or potential, which the commission of the crime has or might have on the smooth running of the Party machine in its task of guaranteeing the undisturbed political, moral and productive life of Italy.

The Party, regime and State form an inseparable trinity which is held sacred. All its measures are accepted as beneficent, axiomatically. Those who oppose the measures therefore place themselves outside the pale of pure reason, presumably.

Opposition may not necessarily be insurrectional. It may be merely critical in a theoretically destructive

sense. The danger of such a thing is checked before development. The laws to prevent "secret societies," as will be seen from the wording of the Act quoted above, really prevent the formation of any unregistered club or institution with an undeclared membership and programme. This successfully truncates any collective criticism outside the bosom of the Party councils, while the Prefecture system, backed by the special police, by the National Militia and by the secret O V R A informers, make a network of observation and control well equipped speedily to discover individual murmurers or covert opponents.

As for the Press—it performs a function totally different to that which it exercises in other countries, with the exception of National-Socialist Germany and, to a certain extent, Turkey and Russia. The Soviet Press does on occasion publish self-devastating criticism and facts on internal administrative affairs and officials—the Central Government using such information, plus public feeling aroused, as a point of departure for enquiry and action. In Italy the Press is a systematised vehicle of Government propaganda. Journalism in Italy is not a profession : it is, we are told, a "mission." Every journalist is presumed to do his work with a consuming "*passione*" which displaces all ordinary newspaper conceptions of "news values."

In answer to the accusation that Fascism has smothered the "freedom of the Press," Mussolini has replied by asserting that "the Italian Press is the freest in the whole world." In support of this he says, "Newspapers elsewhere are under the order of plutocratic groups, of parties and of individuals ; newspapers elsewhere are reduced to the wretched job of

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marketing exciting news, the continued reading of which ends by causing a kind of drug saturation on the public, with symptoms of debility and imbecility; newspapers elsewhere are grouped in the hands of a very few individuals who look on a newspaper as nothing but an industry, like the steel or leather industry."

Having thus dismissed the foreign Press, Mussolini in his declaration turned again to Italian journalism, which he declared to be free " because it serves only one cause and one regime ; because, within the ambit of the laws of the regime, it can exercise and exercises functions of control, criticism and propulsion."

Mussolini then likened the Fascist Press to an orchestra : "I consider Italian Fascist journalism as an orchestra. The 'keynote' is common. And this keynote is not given by the Government through its Press offices. It is sounded by Fascist journalism itself. But given the keynote, there is a diversity of instruments. Every newspaper ought to become a definite instrument, individualised and recognisable in the great orchestra."

Crime features, Italian scandals (Fascist or otherwise) " human interest " stories, suicides and gossip, except in rare cases, have a very minor place in the Italian Press, when given at all.

On the other hand competition has been crippled and it is seldom that a paper goes out of its routine way to indulge in any enterprise to make its pages more readable. Save for feuilleton articles and parish news, every paper is the same. No risks are taken with the "keynote." The newspapers of modern Italy resolve themselves into a daily propaganda organ for the praise of Fascism and all its doings; for the exaltation of Italian achievement, individual or national;

for eulogies on Mussolini; for carefully timed and regulated bursts of more or less violent criticism against outsiders who may fall foul of Fascist views ; for denunciations of foreign newspapers when they say hostile things and copious quotations from foreign newspapers, however obscure, when they say pleasing things. Every paper appears to be a free pool into which its neighbours can dip, as the same news item may be followed unchanged as it is " lifted " from one paper to another. Descriptions of Party ceremonies with full lists of the names of " those present " fill the principal pages. And with an unfailing regularity, which reveals either a most remarkable universal conscience or else the unsleeping surveillance of the Government Press Bureaus, the same selection of Fascist news has each day the same place of honour on the front page of every newspaper, with the result that one paper resembles another like different editions of a hymnal.

All this shows that it is necessary to recognise that the Italian Press must be considered in relation to its own special criteria. It is an organ of the State, dedicated to the regime. To be appreciated at its intentional value it has to be looked at in the light of the " doctrines " already elucidated. It will then be realised that the Press in Italy has theories of patriotic service which, in the hands of imaginative men with a knowledge of the world and its ways, could transcend journalism. The Fascist Press has unplumbed opportunities of world leadership. At the present time it is dedicating itself to the blatant pumping of a sense of national pride into " the man in the street."

CHAPTER V

THE FIGHTING FORCES

Unity of Command. Military and Political Co-ordination, Organisation of the Country for War, Civil Mobilisation. Army Reform. Role of the Blackshirt Militia, Navy Reform. Mobility and Speed. Rise of the Air Force, Civil Aviation. Aviation Records. The Agents of Reconstruction. Balbo's Work and Theories. Mew-found Prestige.

THE fighting strength of the Italian nation has been revolutionised by Mussolini. He has seen to it that the conditions against which Italy had to contend during the last war will not be repeated. Apart from a complete reorganisation of the three forces—army, navy and air—his reconstruction has been such that (1) there can no longer be any conflict between political leaders and army leaders, (2) there can be no waste of man-power through skilled artisans serving in the trenches while shirkers escape into "cooshy" jobs, (3) there can be no detachment of service in time of war as between the fighting forces and the rest of the nation. Civilians as well as soldiers will be mobilised, and each individual has his or her allotted place in an united effort, and (4) through an exaltation of patriotic and civil service the *moral* and the physique of the army is no longer imperilled by the bureaucratic mechanism and routine indifference which was hitherto characteristic of conscript troops.

Formerly the Chief of Staff of the army in peace time became the Commander-in-Chief in war time. Mussolini has created an office senior to that of Chief of Staff. This is the office of the Chief of General Staff—

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and the officer holding this position is responsible solely and directly to the *Capo del Governo*. Under the control of the Chief of General Staff are three Chiefs of Staff for the three forces of land, sea and air. This system, while giving to each of these forces autonomy of command, links them together under a supreme command, above whom is only the *Capo del Governo*. In this way the political power of the nation, personified in the *Capo del Governo*, who is cognisant of the international and internal situation of the country, is co-ordinated with the fighting forces, so that all conflicts between political and military policies are avoided.

The Chief of the General Staff, under the direction and in harmony with the *Capo del Governo*, prepares the fighting forces for their work, but always utilising the consultative and technical functions of the Ministry of War and the Army Council. The Minister of War presides over the Army Council, which is otherwise composed of the Chiefs of Staff, or one of them acting for all, and Army Corps or Divisional Commanders, selected each year in rotation. In time of war the Army Council ceases to function and all powers and responsibilities are assumed by the Commander-in-Chief.

But this reform for unifying in harmony the head of the Government and the head of the Army does not complete Mussolini's conception of military co-ordination. His aim has been also to harmonise all the complicated aspects and problems of a nation at war. He has recognised that nowadays it is not alone armies and fleets which fight, but everyone—workmen, women, scientists, artisans, bankers, farmers, railwaymen, in short all classes and all categories. To co-

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ordinate all these activities there has been created a Supreme Mixed Commission of Defence which has deliberative and consultative committees. The deliberative committee under the chairmanship of the *Capo del Governo*, in his capacity of Prime Minister, consists of nine Ministers—Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Finance, War, Colonies, Navy, Air, Communications and National Economy. The Consultative Committee includes representatives of the armed forces and of all the productive forces of the nation, namely, the Army, Navy, and Air Councils and the Committee of National Mobilisation.

This last-named committee is composed of the Chiefs of Staff, the General Manager of the *Banca d'Italia* and high representatives of Railways, Mercantile Marine, and technical, agricultural, economic and cultural associations, which are in turn linked into the Corporative system. The Committee of National Mobilisation is the hierarchy for putting into practice the Law for the Organisation of the Nation for War.

The link with the Corporative system automatically causes contact with the Party elements which are dovetailed into the Syndicates ; and by means of the system the value and potentialities of every man in Italy as a combative unit can be gauged, and no doubt is gauged. It is one of the duties of the Prefect to know these classifications within his Province. Accordingly, when a state of war is declared, the mobilisation of the fighting forces is accompanied by a mobilisation of the civil population in accordance with the 1925 Law on the Organisation of the Nation for War. By this law all citizens, irrespective of position, sex or physique, are obliged to answer the call and give their aid for the " moral and material defence of the nation." The

text of this bill, not presented to the Chamber until 1931, shows that all citizens not liable to military service from the ages of sixteen to seventy, including women, are under the obligation " to contribute to the defence and resistance of the nation with the same spirit and devotion and sacrifice as the fighting men." They should all obey the orders given them by the local authorities and by special Committees of Civil Resistance to be set up in the various provincial centres, and should at the same time abstain from any act which might minimise the country's war effort and reduce expenditure and consumption to the narrowest limits. This civil mobilisation is to follow immediately any order of general mobilisation. Unjustified or disobedient abandonment of work or breach of discipline on the part of the persons so mobilised will be considered as desertion in time of war and dealt with as such. The place and duty of every man and woman is known—be it in the army, in a factory, in clerical, farming, hospital, transport work or in munitions, etc., and Prefects are invested with rights to co-operate with the Army and Government to see that everyone is allocated according to book. State supervision over the Corporations ensures that the full productive possibilities of the country are diverted to the needs of war and that capitalists do not corner material at the expense of the nation nor that employees extort wages incommensurate with the standards of what is received by the soldiers exposed to the perils of combat.

Under Mussolini the Army is given a high and honoured place ; its traditions and glories restored and extolled ; all partisan tendencies are eliminated ; and the Fascist party is its champion. Of the Army Mussolini has said : " The Army is the sure and unbreakable

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guarantee of the destinies of the Fatherland," and " For this, I insist that the Army be faithful to its incorruptible traditions, which have the following main points : rigorous abstention from all political activity, open or hidden ; a high sense of duty and an iron discipline ; cordial relations with the other armed forces of the State ; and, above all, absolute dedication to King and Country."

Under Fascism the duration of military service (technically) is from twenty-one years old, instead of twenty as under the former regimes, until fifty-five, instead of fifty. This allows an extra year for that pre-military training which the Blackshirts have perfected for the building up of the individual *moral*; and it also gives an extra five years (again of course technically) towards the end of a man's physical fitness, which facilitates the disciplinary aspect of the civic mobilisation law above mentioned. The actual time served with the colours is eighteen months, but for reasons of national finance and for other reasons of internal economy and foreign policy only a relatively small proportion of the citizens serve the full eighteen months* period. Many serve only nine, six or three months—the last being practically equivalent to exemption. The annual levy of men who have reached twenty-one years of age therefore varies : the figure is round about **200,000 men.**

The pre-military training, on a volunteer basis, begins with the children's and youths' organisations—the *Balilla*, *Avanguardisti*, etc., which will be duly described—so that the army recruits, or a large percentage of them, answer their call to the colours, not as presumably unwilling conscripts, but as men fully cognisant of the patriotic implication of their enforced

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service. The University Fascist corps do the same sort of work for the officer classes. In short the volunteer spirit is superimposed on a conscript army. The idea of identifying the Fascist Revolution with the resuscitation of the glories of the Regular Army and the elimination of the danger of any breach between the Regular Army and the Revolution forces, is provided for by the employment of Great War veterans as instructors in both units and by the incorporation of Blackshirt Militia. In every Army Infantry Brigade there is a battalion of Fascist Militia as shock troops. In the event of war the Fascist Militia as a whole would be employed as shock troops, alongside the regular troops, as anti-aircraft units and as a force to ensure the smooth running of internal services.

The Italian Regular Army being an army based on universal conscription, it will be seen that the fact of a National Militia cannot add to its potential numbers. It adds instead—or at least such is the profession—to its efficiency and spirit.

The organic aim in the new army is mobility and elasticity. For reasons of cash and terrain, mechanisation in its heavier forms is not encouraged, but speedy means of transport and concentration are developed to the utmost.

The Army, being levied from all parts of Italy, is also used as a vehicle for mixing up men from north and south and for letting men from every province know the Italy of some other province—one of the methods for cancelling the last traces of the complicated inheritance described in the earlier chapters of this book.

The only other armed national unit is the Royal Regiment of Carabinieri, the highest disciplined and finest body of men in the larger forces of Italy. The

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Carabinieri—whose uniform with its three-cornered hat and cut-away blue tunic with red pipings is familiar to every visitor to Italy—have always stood outside Party strife. The duties of this corps may be likened to that of the Federal Police in America, save that it is decentralised and its patrol-men are on duty in every street throughout the kingdom. During the difficult times of 1919 onwards this unit remained sternly neutral as between the conflicting non-Government forces, and today it serves the Fascist regime with all the traditional fidelity which marked its service in other times.

The Navy has received the particular attention of the Fascist Government. The pre-military organisations of the Militia include naval detachments in which the traditions of the sea are exploited for the efficiency of the modern "sea-mindedness" of the rising generations and the "future glories" of the Navy and the nation.

On its material side the Navy has been also reorganised in accordance with new strategical and tactical principles and within the limits of restricted finance. Battleships of the former 22,000 tons type have been cancelled from the building programmes, and old battleships have been scrapped, together with all craft the least out of date. The heaviest unit in the reformed navy is 10,000 tons. Lightness, speed, quick striking power, up-to-date technical equipment and efficiency *of personnel* are the qualities now sought.

The distribution of the Navy has also been wholly reorganised under the Fascist Government. The fleet of Italy now consists of two swift-moving squadrons. The first squadron comprises a division with

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three light armoured cruisers and a flotilla of scouts ; and a second division of three 10,000 tons heavy-armoured cruisers, with a scout flotilla led by vessels capable of touching 34 knots. This group is the nerve centre of the new fleet.

The second squadron consists of a first division of light cruisers, and a second division of cruisers and cruiser scouts—handy formations of 5000-ton vessels capable of well over 30 knots.

The two squadrons are stationed respectively in the Tyrrhenian sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, with headquarters at La Spezia and Taranto. The Adriatic is patrolled by a light cruiser division and a flotilla of destroyers, with another destroyer flotilla held in reserve.

These important changes from the former navy were made in 1932 and they mark a decisive phase in long contemplated reform carried out only after severe manoeuvre tests. The divisions which have now entered the lines are the fruits of the Government's policy of securing the greatest possible efficiency at the least possible cost—quality not numbers counting. This reformation has been accompanied by the introduction of a new school of naval strategy and tactics based on the possibilities of the new formations.

" Ancient Rome on the Sea " was the theme selected by Mussolini for his series of lectures delivered at the foreigners' course at the 1926 session of Perugia University—a series which he concluded with these words : " It can therefore be affirmed that Rome was also powerful on the sea and that that power was the result of long sacrifice, unbreakable tenacity and will. These virtues, which served for our yesterdays, will serve for our tomorrows and for always."

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In the Aviation Arm the change is so vast that it cannot be called a reform but a creation. Long before he came into power Mussolini as editor of the *Popolo d'Italia* insisted on the necessity of creating not only great air fleets for the defence of Italy, for the development of communications and for the political advantages which such aviation strength would bring in its wake, but he also emphasised the desirability of fostering the " air-mindedness " of the rising generations. No sooner was he in power than he set about revolutionising this branch of activity. The story is best told in a few figures. When Fascism took over, the Air Force was a subsidiary arm very much under an Under-Secretary or Commissary. Italy then had 76 efficient machines, 500 men between officers and other ranks. And it had no civil aviation. The Air Force is now the Royal Air Force under an independent and most up-to-date Ministry. It operates as an autonomous arm, save of course for the supreme dispositions of the General Staff commanding the cohesion of all fighting forces. The force has today some 1500 machines, 22,193 flying officers and other ranks. Civil aviation now covers a network of 30,000 kilometres with 74 machines and 88 pilots. The latest available statistics, those for 1932, show that civil machines carried 170,000 passengers and covered a flying distance of 20,500,000 kilometres. Since its foundation in 1926 it has carried in six years about 170,000 passengers in 500,000 kilometres of flying with only eight accidents verified ; and its international connections link it up in regular runs to Gibraltar and Barcelona ; Zurich ; Munich and Berlin ; Vienna ; Sofia ; Athens and Constantinople ; Malta, Tripoli and Tobruk ; Tunis. Latest develop-

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ments tend to intensify the trans-Alpine routes to Germany.

Before 1924 Italy held no international speed, distance or category records. Since 1924 it has held 25 various world records, including the transatlantic mass flight of 12 seaplanes Rome-Brazil in 1930 ; the world speed record of 426.5 miles per hour set up by Warrant Officer Francesco Agello at Desenzano on April 10, 1933, beating by a narrow margin the British record of 407.5 miles per hour achieved by Flight-Lieutenant Stainforth at the 1931 Schneider race, Isle of Wight ; and the mass double transatlantic flight Rome-Chicago-Rome of 1933.

The reconstruction of the reformed Army and Navy was unostentatiously carried out to the orders of Mussolini by men like the late Marshal Diaz, General de Giorgio, Admiral Thaon de Revel and by the present Navy Minister Admiral Sirianni; but Mussolini's will for the creation of a strong Air Force has been developed under the more spectacular auspices of Italo Balbo. Italo Balbo, fighting Blackshirt, military leader of the March on Rome, member of the Revolutionary Quadrumvirate, General in the Fascist Volunteer Militia, General in the Italian Air Force, 33 years old when appointed Air Minister in 1929, is the nearest living being to a Renaissance warrior that I know of in modern Italy. Courteous when he likes, unscrupulous, daring others by himself setting a standard of daring, good-looking in a swaggering way, romantic but practical, loyal but independent, eager but balanced, full of bravado but eager to praise, implacable against his enemies, in love with life but always challenging death, suave but hard, admired but feared, a believer in the sword rather than in

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palaver, jealous of his country and ambitious for its greatness as a fighting nation with an armed peace among its neighbours, too blunt for diplomacy and too impetuous for statesmanship, and bane of politicians and an outspoken critic in council—these are some of the characteristics which go towards the complex of this extraordinary man who is the organiser and leader of Italian aviation.

He took to the air and to all the machinery of flying with the eager zest that would surely have marked his Ferrara mediaeval ancestors had some power revealed to them a fighting plane as substitute for axe and sword in their wars against Venice. His faith in the necessity of an extra strong Air Force has been almost prophetic. To prove his theories Balbo a year or so ago organised air manoeuvres which mimicked a sudden mass air attack on all Italy ; and he showed that the peninsula was indeed vulnerable. Within forty-eight hours he had paralysed all the tactical, strategical, economic and administrative nerve centres of the country. All the anti-air forces and devices available were ranged against the attackers ; but he showed that they were about as much use as a revolver against a swarm of wasps. His demonstration was to prove—incidentally for the benefit of Italian delegates to disarmament conferences—that the only real defence of Italy lies in the air itself—that invading planes had to be met by hordes of fighting planes whose defence was attack. He is vigorously unfavourable towards lighter-than-air craft, and the once vaunted semi-dirigibles which brought Italy both glory and chagrin under the exploits of the great and latterly much maligned General Nobile, have no place whatsoever in the Italian air service, military or civil.

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Of the Air Force personnel General Balbo recently said : " The fervour, the spirit of sacrifice, the high grade of endeavour, and the efficiency of Italian air-men can never be well enough known or magnified. They give themselves to the cause of Fascist wings as if it were a religious vocation."

All three branches of the Italian forces of land, sea and sky, have certainly acquired new-found prestige under Fascism.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHING THE YOUNG IDEA

The Gentile Reform. Versus Cultural Idealism. Italian History Super-emphasized. Religious Teaching. School Control and Extension. Professors' Oath. Balilla. Welfare Work. Summer Camps. Sport. Dopolavoro. Olympic Standards. Workers' Recreation. Record of Progress.

THE education of children was one of the earliest questions confronted by the Fascist regime. A complete reform of the scholastic system has been carried out—a reform which, however, has been developed slowly from within the old administrative and curriculum framework. The principles of education on the other hand have been revolutionised. The name of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile stands pre-eminent in this work. He was an early academic recruit to Fascism, believing that Fascism was the realisation of the Liberal conception—the "actualism" of a democratic doctrine which had become dead-ended in its forms of practice. His spirit was always a little apart from the exuberances of the Party; but he was early nominated Minister of Public Instruction by Mussolini, and during the time he held that office he put the hall-mark of his personality on the Italian educational system.

Under the Fascist Government schools are no longer looked on as public institutions for the benefit of the individual citizens. Instead they represent the means of fulfilling the right and duty of the State to give to the rising generations instruction and education

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answering national ends. The material and positive conception of life has been changed for what is considered an ethical and cultural idealism. Children are prepared to confront life and not just to be able to win certificates for answering questions which test the memory and not the reason or sentiment. They are also, from their earliest days, taught to appreciate the ethical and cultural things of life. And needless to say, they are carefully imbued with a particular sense of the "destiny" of Italy, the part which Fascism plays towards the furtherance of national ideals, and the supreme *role* of Mussolini as the champion of their country.

The first act of reform was the restoration of religious teaching. In general practice it is of course the national religion of Catholicism which is followed, but it is the fact of religious instruction, unspecified, which is the important point in the change. Provision is made for the observances of the very small and scattered non-Catholic minorities.

Obligatory elementary education has been extended to the age of fourteen. The last year of those whose scholastic instruction is to end at that age is organised so that it becomes almost technical schoolwork—practical handling of tools with a great range of choice from art work to engineering or wireless or farming or accountancy. The boys are taught to respect the dignity of manual work. To be a skilled artisan—a man who can solve problems or invent or make things—is looked on in the elementary popular schools as a greater thing than to yearn for a "white collar" job. The girls in their last elementary school year get a very complete training in domestic economy and hygiene. The hours of study are broken with lessons

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in choral singing and with visits to art galleries and, in Rome, to the Forums. The children are taught that the masterpieces of Imperial and Renaissance Italy are their very own heritage and trust.

Another part of the reform touches not the scholars but the schoolmasters. No one but a professed Fascist can hope to continue in his career as an elementary teacher. In the higher educational institutions and in the universities this rule has not been so rigorously insisted on. Several attempts have been made in the past to force the hands of the professorial class by demanding written confessions of political faith or at least their signature to such documents—but, with exceptions, these teachers of higher specialised subjects have been left at their work undisturbed.

In October 1931 the Italian professors were asked to subscribe to an oath which read :

" I swear to be loyal to the King, to his Royal successors, and to the Fascist regime, and to observe loyally the Constitution and other laws of the State : to exercise the position of teacher and to fulfill my academic duties with the idea of forming industrious citizens, upright and devoted to the Fatherland, and to the Fascist regime. I swear I do not belong to and never will belong to associations or Parties whose activities cannot be reconciled with the duties of my office."

There was a minority hesitancy in subscribing to this oath, but practically all ultimately signed.

One notable feature of school life is the inculcation of the military idea. Wars are not merely sets of double dates in a history book. They are paragraphs of glory and emulation, and a classic flavour—a sense

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of historical continuity—is given to Italian victories. Latin has been extended as a compulsory subject to all sections of the secondary schools.

All Provincial administration of schools has been suppressed and a Scholastic Council, centralised under the Ministry of Public Instruction, has been instituted, with special committees for Provincial and grade schools. By this means public education has been taken out of what amounted to detached bureaucratic control. It is political control over educational policy which has now been achieved. During the first decade of the regime the Government built, in 2764 Communes, schools comprising 11,000 schoolrooms capable of serving 620,000 scholars. Most of the new schools are in Southern Italy.

The actual scholastic side of higher education in Fascist Italy merges into a department of activity in which physical instruction is prominent. This physical instruction in turn is based on a military organisation which sets the feet of Italian children from the age of six into drill formations and pushes their minds into familiarity with the training and thoughts of the fighting forces. The principal nation-wide organisation for this work is the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*. The official task of this *Opera* is the "physical and material education of youth."

The name *Balilla* itself is linked with one of the heroic incidents in the history of the Italians⁵ struggle for independence. In 1746, while the Austrians were in possession of Genoa, they called on the citizens to help them drag a cannon on to the main road in order that it be used against those compatriots and allies who would deliver the town from Austrian yoke. While the Austrian soldiers were forcing the citizens

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to this work, a boy called Giovanni Battista Perasso, but known to everyone by the nick-name of Balilla, defied the orders of the Austrian detachment. Like David he slung a stone at the enemy. That stone became the symbol of the revolt which, although suppressed at the time, reawoke to win ultimate independence for Genoa and all Italy.

Although the *Balilla* organisation is dovetailed into the scholastic system, it is nevertheless under the direct vigilance of the *Capo del Governo* and is indirectly under the disciplinary orders of the National Black-shirt Militia. Along with these Balilla boys there is an equivalent institution for girls known as *Piccole Italiane* and the *Giovani Italiane*, who number over one-and-a-half million members.

Along with this physical work there is also State-controlled welfare work which insures that every child, whether he belongs to the *Balilla*, the *Piccole Italiane* or not, is made as physically sound as possible. Open-air schools, open-air recreation, open-air games, open-air seaside and mountain camps are the principal means towards this end. During the height of summer it is safe to say that seventy-five per cent of the city workingclass children have a minimum holiday of three weeks at a summer camp. Each city in Italy has got two camps bearing the city's name—one on the sea and the other in mountain areas of the Alps or Apennines. The very finest health resorts in Italy have these summer centres, and no vested interests are allowed to interfere with the full establishment of the camps. Children are sent to the sea or the mountains according to their medical needs.

These summer camps are also open to the children of Italian workmen in other countries. This has proved

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one of the most invaluable means of propaganda among Italians abroad, and has done much to convince such Italians of the real and intimate benefits arising out of the new regime. During the summer months of 1933, 20,000 children were brought into Italy, given a month's holiday, and returned to their parents abroad. A nominal payment is demanded, as it is the purpose of the regime to avoid the idea that it is charity and not patriotic co-operation which prompts their efforts.

These camps are also the starting-points for athletic training which is thereafter carried on into youth-time and early manhood. The regime is not yet old enough for more than one generation to have grown up from childhood to full manhood, but even so, the athletic training which that generation has received has been sufficient to win for Italy second place at the Olympic Games at Los Angeles. The Italian team there easily outpointed all other European teams, and was only exceeded by the home team of American competitors.

Although the *Balilla* with its subsequent Militia training has done much to improve the physique of the race, it is really through an institution known as the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* that specialised training up to championship form is given to Italian youth. The Olympic Cup for 1932 was assigned to this *Dopolavoro* organisation in token of the world championship standard to which it had raised Italian sport. This *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* is, like all other Fascist institutions, linked into the framework of the complete Fascist organisation ; its most significant connection is with the Workers' Syndicates. *Dopolavoro*—"After Work"—seeks to create recreational interests for the

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working classes, and its success has been one of the most notable things in the history of Fascism.

There is no department of amusement, instruction, art, sport, music or hobbies of whatever nature that has not got its place in the *Dopolavoro*. It has travelling theatres and travelling operas which bring the best work before country audiences in the most remote parts of the peninsula. Everyone is served by the *Dopolavoro* but no one is favoured above his neighbours. Some figures published on the Tenth Anniversary of the Fascist regime and on the seventh anniversary of the foundation of the *Dopolavoro*, showed that this institution had established 1350 people's theatres ; 2208 dramatic societies ; 2365 libraries, many of them travelling libraries ; that it had organised 3324 brass bands and 2139 orchestral societies ; and that its members had given 44,200 theatrical and folk-lore spectacles and 98,744 concerts. The membership of the *Dopolavoro* has risen from 10,000 in 1929 to 1,667,000 in January 1933. That figure continues to soar and by the time this book is in print it will probably have passed the 2,000,000 figure.

The Fascist Party has special committees which keep it in continual touch with these educational and health manifestations of the regime. Instruction and physical training continue throughout the growing years of the rising generations—instruction with " a new manner of living " as its basis ; physical training with military efficiency as its ideal: " The Book and the Rifle."

CHAPTER VII

PERENNIAL STREAM

The Rising Generations. Militia's All-important R6le. Annual Levy. From Boys to Veterans. The Ceremony. Consigning the Rifle. Fourteen Years' Training in Citizenship. Giovinezza kept pristine.

WE have seen the Blackshirt National Militia in course of these pages perform all sorts of tasks; we have seen it, in course of its evolution, survive many vicissitudes. We have seen it as a handful of desperate fighting squads—members of the *Fasci di Combattimento*—confronting the organised multitudes of internationally led Socialists in 1919-1920 ; we have seen it as an irregular yet cohesive force ranged against the Democratic-Liberal regime in 1921-1922 ; we have seen it, in the March on Rome, as the spear-head argument of Fascism in Mussolini's elevation to governmental power in October 1922 ; we have seen it as a formally enrolled National Militia in January 1923 ; we have seen it as the hammer of the Aventine and other Opposition from 1923 on ; we have seen it as a Blackshirt Army formally enrolled in the service of the Crown in October 1924 ; we have seen it reorganised and equipped as a regular unit of the State by 1925 ; we have seen its inner spiritual significance expounded in the doctrinal section of this book and there we have also seen the symbolism with which it contributes to the mystic side of Fascism ; we have seen it again in this last section as an auxiliary element in the education and physical development of youth ; we have

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seen it as a pre-military training ground ; we have seen it as part of the Regular Italian Army ; and we have seen it as the executors and guarantors of public services in the Departments of Police, Frontiers, Anti-Aircraft, Forests, Railways, Ports, Postal, Colonial, Communications, and Highway Traffic Service.

Essential as these historical and practical manifestations are to the progress of the Revolution, what is perhaps its greatest responsibility and function has yet to be described. The Blackshirt National Militia is the artery through which the blood of new generations flows into the Fascist Revolutionary State. The ranks of the Fascists receive this influx once a year on Rome's Birthday and Italian Labour Day, April 21. The ceremony is known as the Fascist Levy.

As well as recounting the history of the National Militia, I have also described the development and work of the *Balilla* and of its senior organisation, the *Avanguardisti*, or advanced guards. They play their all-important part in this annual levy which transfuses the Revolution from one generation to another. In describing the spirit and process of the levy I may be guilty of a little recapitulation, but this is necessary in order to recast the idea in the reader's mind of the Blackshirt Militia in its particular character of Revolution continuity ; and also to emphasise the vast outward difference between the conditions amid which the new generations are rising and those which characterised the early days of the Militia squads—a difference which the Fascists do not wish to be forgotten.

In the well-ordered Rome of today, where everything bustles along peacefully though noisily, one is apt to forget that it is the capital of a country ruled by a

NEW BLOOD



The ceremony of consigning Fascist emblems from the senior to the junior grades of the rising generations of Blackshirts is carried out at the Fascist Levy every April. In this picture an *Avanguardista* is handing over his cordon to an age-limit Balilla, who thus becomes an *Avanguardista*; the age-limit *Avanguardista* in turn receiving the rifle of a retiring Militiaman.

Revolutionary regime, and that it is the headquarters of that Revolution control. Parades of Blackshirts, which less than ten years ago meant a muster for some bloody job of attack or defence, now signify spectacles for which the public demand grand-stand tickets. Is it just that the Blackshirts—the men of the fighting squads and the raid troops—have grown ten years older, and that, in their new smart uniforms, they have become harmless middle-aged men, more or less picturesque anachronisms? It is certainly not so. The men of the real Revolution days, when the Socialists, Communists and Anarchists had to be physically fought, now assemble only on special Fascist Party occasions, and they assemble frankly as "veterans" or, as they are more often called here, "First-Hour Fascists." Nevertheless, they are always working for the Party in a way which is calculated to guarantee "the continuity" of the Revolution.

They do this by acting as instructors, teachers, advisers, office-bearers and lecturers to the M.V.S.N., the present-day National Safety Volunteer Militia. These "first-hour" men are those who fought in the "action squads" or "shock troops" of Mussolini in 1919—the *squadristi*, the *arditi* and the *flamme nere* which as a whole formed the *Fasci di Combattimento* whose history we have already followed. A selection of men from these veterans is devoted to preserving the revolutionary past, the fortification of the present against anything which might threaten the work of the Revolution State, and the ensurance of the revolutionary future.

No one, with extremely rare exceptions, can enlist direct into the ranks of the Volunteer Militia. And therein lies the secret of its continuity along the genera-

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tions. Recruitment is made exclusively through the annual April 21 Fascist Levy; and that levy is made from the *Fasci Giovanili di Combattimento*—the Young Fighting Fascists. These are twenty-year-old youths who have in turn, in the course of years, been levied from the *Avanguardisti* and, while still younger, from the *Balilla*. The veteran Militiamen are already nearly all outside the ranks of the present-day Militia; but, as above noted, they act as instructors, etc., or else have passed into other spheres of Fascist propaganda among the people. The numbers coming annually into the Militia is more or less equivalent to the numbers retiring from all but special service.

The Levy is performed with special ceremony, and Mussolini, whenever possible, takes personal part in the Rome parade. At the last Levy in April 1933 there were 2,688,687 children and youths enrolled among the junior organisations from which the Militia ranks are fed. Infants of six years old are mustered into the almost kindergarten fold of the first-year *Balilla*. *Balilla* who have reached the age of fourteen, and have qualified for promotion, pass into the *Avanguardisti*. Eighteen-year-old *Avanguardisti* who have completed their training, and show the necessary aptitude and character, become members of the *Fasci Giovanili*; and these on becoming twenty years old and on the satisfactory conclusions of their final tests—political, moral, physical, military, and specialised in accordance with the branch of the Militia with which they hope to serve—are enrolled as members of the Fascist Party and as Volunteers of the National Militia.

At every stage of promotion each grade of the ascending senior youths take off the emblems of their formation and consign them individually to the young

newcomer. Each embraces the other, and the Fascist oath is renewed. In the junior formations the principal emblem is the coloured kerchief which is worn loosely knotted over the black shirt. In the intermediate grades it is a knotted cordon. In the senior formation it is the rifle which is handed on.

During the 1933 ceremony over 108,000 eighteen-year-old *Avanguardisti* thus consigned their symbolical kerchiefs of the Roman colours (orange and brown) and moved into the *Fasci Giovanili*, and an almost equal number entered full membership of the Party.

This means that there is a yearly entry of a new young generation into the political, semi-military and civil life of the new Italy—a new generation which has already completed fourteen years of training in civic and military discipline, in initiative, in thought for others, in respect for religion, in a sense of duty, in patriotic and political ideas as propounded by the Fascists and in concentrated Fascist national idealism with special regard to the "destiny" of Italy, the superiority of the Fascist system and unquestioning devotion to the regime and to the Duce.

In this way the spirit of the March on Rome is carried forward in a perennial re-incarnation of its pristine *Giovinetza*.

CHAPTER VIII

PATER PATRIAE

Mussoliniana. More Arbiter than Dictator, Method of Work. Collaborators. Endless Labour. Personal Regime. Publicity. Aloof from Intimacy. Death of Arnaldo. Odyssey of Thought and Action. The New Faith.

WHAT of the man who is the originator of the Revolution, the animator of the regime and the fabricator of New Italy—the man who has led his country Through Fascism to World Power? Readers who have followed me thus far will, by force of the facts assembled within these covers, realise the truth of the words written in my Preface: "Fascism is so much the creation of Mussolini that any history of it must perforce be a history of Mussolini. His name, thoughts, words and deeds therefore run through this history just as they run through the life of modern Italy, so that it is well-nigh impossible to detach the movement from its master-mind."

It is curious to reflect in passing how the Governments and political parties which flourished before the advent of Fascism were associated more strongly in most cases with the names of the Premiers and Party leaders than with the names of the political schools of thought they were supposed to represent—the "Salandra" Government, the "Giolitti" Liberals, the "Graziani List," the "Lombardo Pellegrino" Group, and so on. And yet none of such as these was the creator of any system of Government. On the other hand there has never been in the history of Italy a

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Government and policy so completely identified with one man as in the case of Fascism—and there has never been a Government in which the name of its creator and the title of its governmental system has been so meticulously kept apart. You hear plenty of the *Duce del Fascismo*, but never nowadays of the "Mussolini" Fascists ; you hear in Italy of the "Fascist" or the "Italian" but not of the "Mussolini" Government; and there are *Fascist*^ but no "Mussoliniani."

As early as 1924 Mussolini checked any attempt to confuse himself as the leader of Fascism and Fascism itself. "There are some who would create an anti-thesis between *Fascismo* and *Mussolinismo*. I don't accept this. In reality *Mussolinismo* would be used by certain folk as a kind of viaticum to enable them to fight, first Fascism and then Mussolini. I tell you that the most decided *anti-Mussoliniano* is Mussolini. I beg of you to abuse my name no longer."

Despite the publicity which surrounds Mussolini's public activities there is still a considerable misreading of his governmental methods and personal character in administrative affairs. The most persistent myth is that he is a dictator whose desk is piled up with Ministerial portfolios ; that laws jump ready-made out of his brain and that he sees to their immediate and unalterable application ; that he has, not collaborators, but more or less terrified underlings; and that no one dare mention his name above a whisper without risk of being clapped into gaol !

To my mind the best word to describe Mussolini is not dictator of Italy but final arbiter. In an abstract sense the dictator of Italy is not a person, but is the doctrine of Fascism itself, as a way of living. It is a

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creed which imposes itself on the nation ; and Mussolini is the absolute interpreter of that creed in its translation into law and is the arbiter of its interpretations by others. In the practical field Mussolini is also more an arbiter than a dictator. Schemes are worked out by their exponents and experts. The finished plan or rival plans are submitted to Mussolini. With a genius for quickly grasping the essentials of any problem and with an uncanny flair for sensing the competence or otherwise of exponents and experts, he works out his conclusions and his judgment becomes law.

Mussolini's assumption of several Ministerial portfolios—he has held as many as eight at one time—means that he accepts responsibility while some question of Ministerial policy is under discussion, while some particular question requires special handling or public confidence reinforced, or while an Under-Secretary is being trained and tried out for the full post. The changes wrought from time to time in the junior Ministerial and diplomatic ranks make the Cabinet a training ground where future Ministers, Ambassadors and Consuls learn the Mussolini way not only of thinking about things but of doing things. These changes are usually made with disconcerting suddenness and unexpectedness, the deposed official even learning from his morning newspaper that his "resignation has been accepted,"—a pill usually coated with a few words of appreciation about his work.

This change-over system in Government and Party office has been reduced to a ritual known as "changing the guard," so that no stigma is attached to dismissal.

For the preparation of the enormous number of

Decree Laws which are passed Mussolini lays down the general principles. The Fascist Grand Council defines, in the form of a resolution, the Party policy for the furtherance of these principles. The Chamber, being constituted of experts presumably familiar with the particular national interest which they represent, is easily resolved into committees capable of handling all the topics with which Government has to deal. These committees along with the juridical experts discuss and frame the Bills, which therefore come before the Chamber, as it were, ready-made.

There is perhaps no Prime Minister with such a number of collaborators as Mussolini, because for every given task he calls on the best man available in the country to work with him for its speedy completion. In fact it is possible to follow the evolution of Fascism by noting the kind of men whom Mussolini successively calls to co-operate with him for the furtherance of his national programme. For instance, in the case of finance, we see first the theorist and reformer, de Stefani, in office as Finance Minister. As soon as he had got Italian finance back on the rails with the Budget balanced and the financial engine moving forward with a credit balance, then Mussolini changed the academic de Stefani for the go-ahead man-of-the-world business expert Volpi. When Volpi had fixed up the American debt and had the country's finances careering at full speed, he was replaced by another type, Mosconi. Mosconi, actuarially minded, just kept things going on steadily on the set course until replaced by the banker Jung, who now engineers the nation's finances through the danger zones of international conflicts between the inflationists and the gold standard schools.

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It will be seen from this typical example that Mussolini's "dictatorship" consists of utilising the collaboration of the right men at the right time and for the right period, Cabinet changes no longer meaning crises, but rather an adjustment of governmental rhythm. The same thing may be noted in the Party hierarchy. The Party Secretary at the March on Rome, Michele Bianchi, was a Fascist forerunner fighting for a national ideal but within a Party framework. The succeeding two secretaries after Mussolini came to power were organisers with a particular knowledge of whereabouts lay the opponents of Fascism. The Matteotti set-back was stemmed by putting the intransigent Farinacci in office. The recovery was marked by a programme directed towards raising the physique of the generation, so the sportsman Turati was put in charge. Turati was dismissed the Party for personal reasons, but his work as an organiser had been completed. And now Starace, a hard-working, unassuming man, represents the current policy of bringing Fascism more into the everyday life of everyday people.

Others continue doing collaborative work in specialised fields—men like Marshal Badoglio, Air Marshal Balbo, Dino Grandi, Costanzo Ciano, del Croix, Renato Ricci and many others who are faithful interpreters of Mussolini's will in fields of activity represented in the above names by Colonial and military administration, aeronautical expansion, foreign affairs, communications, ex-servicemen's interests and the *Balilla* movement. In the Ministry of Corporations you see young revolutionary enthusiasts succeeded by men of the hard-bitten Labour school. But behind all that ebb and flow of collaboration there is Mussolini's final word in all things. He does not, how-

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ever, stick blindly to his pronouncements. His decisions are the means and not the end of his leadership.

More than once he has been betrayed in the confidence which he has reposed on his lieutenants. It is not for nothing that in his play *The Hundred Days* his mind dwells on the internal drama of Napoleon and Fouché\

Living in Rome, it is amusing to hear of the different people who in succession are supposed to "influence" Mussolini. It is not people, but events, which influence him. He calls in many consultants and takes note of all reasoned advice, but he has a mighty quick eye for anyone who tries to influence his policy or line of conduct. On this subject Mussolini has said : " There is a fable which describes me as a good dictator but always surrounded by evil counsellors to whose mysterious and malign influence I submit. All that is more than fantastic : it is idiotic. Considerably long experience goes to demonstrate that I am an individual absolutely refractory to outside pressure of any kind. My decisions come to maturity often in the night—in the solitude of my spirit and in the solitude of my rather arid (because practically non-social) personal life. Those who are the 'evil counsellors of the good tyrant' are the five or six people who come each morning to make their daily report, so that I may be informed of all that's happening in Italy. After they have made their reports, which rarely takes more than half an hour, they go away."

In addition to this, Mussolini spoke of his real collaborators, saying : " But I must add that to those who make their reports there are my more direct collaborators in my daily task, collaborators who specially share with me the salt bread of Fascist Governmental

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responsibility. To those I hereby express the full sense of my friendship and gratitude."

Another fable which could be scouted is the persistent belief among a surprising number of English and American visitors to Rome that it is dangerous to mention Mussolini's name in public ! These ridiculous people call him " Mr. Smith," and seem to get a thrill out of their supposed " knowingness."

As the inspirer, driving force and one responsible for the growth of present-day Italy, the work which Mussolini has accomplished since he became Prime Minister in 1922 baffles the imagination. It is doubtful if any man in world history has so much transformed a nation in so short a period of time. Others have made territorial expansion—raising States to Empires—or have revolutionised the administrations of countries ; but Mussolini has done something more profound. He has changed the spirit of a race, individually and collectively. It is not only the Italians in Italy who are different from what they were eleven years ago or so, but also the millions of Italians in the two Americas and in other parts of the globe.

In addition to his labours as *Capo del Governo* and his ministerial work in all home and foreign affairs, he has arduous responsibilities as *Duce del Fascismo*. He takes a keen and knowledgeable interest in every constructive aspect of Italian life, from the motor-cycle trade to high finance. He receives an endless stream of people, from statesmen to labourers, from interviewers to curiosity-mongers who have pulled wires to be able to add Mussolini to the sights of Rome. He writes articles and plays, delivers lectures, opens conferences, inspects public works, receives petitions **and** deputations, attends the Chamber, holds Cabinet

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meetings at ten in the morning and Fascist Council meetings at midnight, and drafts all his resolutions, minutes, reports and plans. At the Fifth Annual Assembly of the regime in 1929 he told his audience that he had granted 60,000 audiences and had interested himself in 1,887,112 matters concerning citizens who had written to him, and "every single citizen who had applied to him, even from the remotest villages, had received a reply."

Mussolini could appropriately be called *Pater Patriae*. He has united the Italian people as one family; and all turn to him, as to the head of the house, with their troubles, knowing that they can be sure of justice in his judgment. These appeals and the enormous programmes of work which he plans and carries out demand, it is obvious, a powerful concentration of unusual will-power.

How does he do it? He answered this question at the same Fifth Assembly meeting: "To reach this pitch I have set my motor to a regime. I have rationalised my daily work. I have reduced all waste of time and energy to a minimum. I have adopted this maxim which I recommend to all Italians—each day's work must be methodically but regularly cleared off in the course of the day. No work held over unfinished. Ordinary work ought to be carried out with an almost mechanical automatic precision."

Mussolini has a mind divided into insulated compartments, so that he can pass from one subject to another with complete freshness of outlook. He sleeps little, but profoundly and at will. There is never a litter of papers on his huge table-desk in his working room, the *Salone del Mappamondo*, at the Palazzo Venezia. Even in his intervals from work he must be

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up and doing things—riding, fencing or driving his car at high speed. On July 29, 1933, he celebrated his fiftieth birthday, but there is no diminution of his energy : the spirit of *giovinezza* remains. He loves to be out and about with a great crowd of officials—sometimes hundreds of them—out of breath to keep abreast of him, and he likes nothing better than to welcome great concourses of Italians and to be welcomed in return as their *Duce*.

Batteries of cameras follow him. Far from objecting, he has an instinct for what should make a good picture, and he doesn't disappoint the photographers in their chances to take advantage of the opportunities created. But the note in these pictures is not Mussolini *per se*, but Mussolini " doing something which means something " in the advancement of his work for the nation.

For relaxation he sometimes has chamber concerts in his house or sees the latest films in the International Institute of Cinematography whose premises adjoin the gardens of his house, or plays the violin. He would like to live even more in direct contact with the people but he has to submit himself to the protective dispositions of the police, who take no risks with their charge.

Mussolini's life is in fact, except for rare moments, one continual round of work. He once said, while speaking on " liberty," that he of all Italians had least liberty ; and on another occasion he said that the only thing he had got out of his job was a fine horse. His dream is to hunt—" There is no sport more electrifying, especially if well mounted on a fast-going animal **that** takes all obstacles and goes like an arrow ! But alas ! I have no time to join the hunt; so I have my

morning gallop and then feel supremely prepared to confront the grave responsibilities of office."

He is inexorably hostile to nepotism. A good front seat at a football match is about the limit of the concessions given to his boys. Family life is kept a thing apart from public life. Since Mussolini took office he has had no holiday longer than three consecutive days, and these brief occasions he always spends with his wife and children, farming on the experimental plots of his small estate in his native Romagna.

With all his world *reclame*, with all the publicity of his office and of his outward life, with all the hordes of people with whom he comes in contact, with all his collaborators and colleagues, it can be said of Mussolini that he is one of the best-known men in the world to-day. But it can also be said that he is the *least* known. And if he is the most popular man in Italy, he is also the most solitary. No one knows the inner Mussolini. He has no intimates : no boon companions. His nature opens in compassion before the generic idea of humanity, but holds strangely aloof from individual humans. His greatest and closest friend was his younger brother Arnaldo. As editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, and as helpful encourager and confidant of the *Duce*, the two brothers held one another in particular affection. In 1930 Arnaldo's son Sandrino died after a long illness. From this blow Arnaldo did not recover, and died in 1931. Of that sad occasion Mussolini writes in his *Vita di Arnaldo*—"By his death I have suffered and will suffer long. Mutilations of the spirit no less than those of the body are irreparable. I feel my grief for the departure of Arnaldo like a secret fire which will always accompany me : a fire which will feed my will and my faith.

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I will carry the burden (of government) also for him, so that his labours, his passion and his grief shall not have been in vain ; so that his memory be honoured ; so that the ideals in which he believed may triumph and endure, even, and above all, beyond my life." The death of his brother left Mussolini in a mental solitude whose consolation is work for the fulfilment of the ideals they discussed and wrought out together.

Great as are his achievements, it is not as a man of action, but as a man of thought that the real Mussolini is to be found. The records of his boyhood show him to have been a rebellious spirit with complacent authority as his particular target. It was the complacent element which roused him then—as it rouses him now—for that was to him a sign of self-sufficiency indicating the presence of a mere negative place-holder, and therefore one who should be deposed. It was through such early conflicts that his mind passed from hostility towards the individual to hostility towards the social system behind the individual. And so by the time Mussolini had become a youth and had reached early manhood, his rebellion was political.

His life mission became a search for a basis of thought which would satisfy his self-questionings on the politico-philosophy of government. He set out on his quest with a medallion portrait of Karl Marx in his pocket when he first went to Switzerland as a youth of eighteen. There, in the company of Russian Nihilists, he devoured the writings of Babeuf, Nietzsche, Blanqui and Sorel. He searched the philosophers, especially Hegel and Schopenhauer. We have followed his political Odyssey from that period. We have seen him with the Anarchists, with the International Socialists, with the Socialists, with the Socialists of the

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Right and of the Left, with the Republicans, with the Sorel Syndicalists—testing their several tenets, accepting some but always disrupting from their main doctrines, always moving on without having ever belonged. We have seen him gather other strands—irredentism, nationalism, co-operative syndicalism, monarchism. We have seen how he welded his gathering convictions with the passion of patriotism, and we have seen the actions and reactions of events upon the battle of his progress.

The Fascist Corporate State as it stands to-day therefore represents the final and concrete answer to the questions which Mussolini first began putting to himself as a youth of eighteen in his restless and rebellious pursuit of a new political order. His own faith now burns in practically every Italian breast—and the result is New Italy.

FINIS.

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