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FASCISM AT WORK

by

WILLIAM ELWIN

With an Introduction by

FRANCESCO NITTI

Formerly Prime Minister of Italy

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INTRODUCTION

IT is a sad commentary on the present state of civilization in Europe that this book cannot be published in the author's own country, in his own language, or under his own name. I wish therefore to say that he is personally known to me as a man of competent scholarship and excellent academic qualifications, who prepared himself for the task of writing this book not only by very thorough study of printed sources but also by repeated visits to Italy. Intimately familiar with its history, its cultural traditions and national psychology, he lived there in close contact with people of all classes, teachers and students, merchants and working men, Fascist officials high and low. He was able to bring to light new facts (sometimes from official documents not intended for the public) and to test theories with a thoroughness which gives his book peculiar authority and makes it, I think, the most comprehensive and best documented study of the subject. I would call attention especially to his masterly analysis of the corporative system which exposes once and for all the falsity of the claims made on its behalf. That the author's verdict, here as elsewhere, should be wholly unfavourable, is due not to any prejudice with which he started his investigations, but solely to the facts themselves. The disparity between the legends of Fascist propaganda and the actual state of affairs in Italy

to-day is so great that it is almost incredible; yet here is the evidence, mostly provided all unwittingly by Fascists themselves.

Valuable as it is from the purely historical point of view, I am not sure that the book has not still greater importance as a warning to democratic countries of what Fascism means as a factor in world politics and what is in store for those who fall under Fascist tyranny. The ambiguity which critics easily recognize in the foreign policy of National Socialism and which is the natural outcome of the contrast between its half-avowed guiding principles and the power at its disposal, is not peculiar to Germany but is characteristic of all Fascist States, and the pages in which Dr. 'Elwin' traces the origins and workings of Italy's policy towards her neighbours are worthy of the closest study by all friends of peace.

Mussolini has dared to call his a 'workers' government'. It is in truth a government which has reduced the factory-worker, and still more the peasant, to a condition bordering on serfdom. Fascism came to power largely by the pretence (thoroughly demolished in the pages that follow) of saving the country from Bolshevist terror; then it rescued the trade-unionists from Marxism; and now the Italian working class is the lowest paid and the worst treated in Europe. The poor and the friends of the poor cannot have any illusion that Fascism is for them; its appeal is in fact always to the more short-sighted of the middle class, who do not realize that anti-socialism is not in itself a policy and can easily cloak a ruthless determination to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a few unscrupulous leaders and their bullies. It

is tempting to imagine that, given a strong centralized government and a firm hand on the trade-unions, an economic paradise will result. That the Fascist regime has wholly failed to justify this vision is the only conclusion to be drawn from the very full account given here, supported as it is by facts and figures from official sources which are not likely to err on the side of pessimism.

Under a democratic system of government, if wrong leaders or methods are chosen, the mistake can be rectified. Under Fascism, there are no mistakes; all is perfection, for does not every newspaper, every teacher, every cinema, tell you so? Those who tolerate such a regime learn to regret it—but too late. Fascism is not something at which we can just shrug our shoulders, murmuring that perhaps it suits some people. For what is at stake, not only for Italians but for the whole world, is something of the utmost importance: it is the Dignity of Man. Fascism and its German offspring are not legitimate experiments in political science, they are a repudiation of the values which constitute western civilization, a denial of personality and a substitution for it of a barbaric symbolism behind which lurk some of the lowest passions of mankind.

I have no doubt that once the free countries, particularly Great Britain and the United States of America, understand the true nature of Fascism, they will arrest its progress both within and without. This book will contribute greatly to such an understanding.

FRANCESCO NITTI

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I HOW FASCISM CAME

AFTER fifteen hundred years of political disruption Italy succeeded in achieving unity in 1871. Nationalism and Liberalism, the political counterpart to the Industrial Revolution, forced the petty rival States of the Apennine Peninsula to form one political and economic whole.

Union brought with it a profound metamorphosis of the Italian mind. Age-old provincial traditions of speech, thought and manners were submerged beneath a steadily developing national culture. A determined attack was made upon illiteracy, and this laid the foundations for a broader and more popular development of the arts and sciences.

Italy underwent a positive economic revolution in the last quarter of the 19th century, an essentially feudal structure giving way to thorough industrialization. In the North and Centre more especially there began an intensity of production which won the admiration of the world. Private enterprise was filled with invincible optimism and the belief in prosperity characteristic of every early capitalist era ; moreover, the imposing organization of mutual loan societies, of people's and peasants' banks, strengthened the material position of workers and small farmers.

Italian politics were not in any settled form in the decades before the war. The system of political cliques, an inheritance from the period of petty

absolute States, had survived to hinder the rise of large political parties with sharply outlined doctrines. Parties indeed existed, but it was men not parties who gave continuity to the Government. Giolitti, who retained the key position in the State for decades, though his political methods were by no means always above reproach, is sufficient proof of the fact that in spite of its 'liberal' regime Italy was still far removed from real democracy.

Socialism, making headway in Italy in the eighties, had stamped out Anarchism, a one-time powerful force which might well have brought it into discredit and seriously damaged its growth. Although an attempt was made in the nineties to suppress the movement and to make trade-unionism illegal, it was impossible to put a brake upon Socialist ideas. In the manufacturing towns of Turin, Milan and Genoa the rise of an industrial working class called into life vast organizations, a living force which no police regulations could long restrain, while now and again a section of middle class opinion would array itself on the side of the poor. It was largely due to the pioneer work of this section and the political pressure they brought to bear that the general franchise was obtained in 1912. Through this the numbers of voters rose from three and a half to eight millions, peasants and artisans thus obtaining increased influence in public life.

Before the war Italian nationalism was the occupation of a group of snobbish writers rather than of serious thinkers. Every effort was made to adapt the German imperialist Treitschke, or French prototypes such as Maurras and Barrès, to Italian conditions; yet the liberal tradition of the *Risorgi-*

mento was sufficiently strong to repel these nationalist onslaughts. Moreover, in this period of economic development Italy had by no means finished exploring her own possibilities. She was thus not yet mature for nationalism and imperialism, for which the historic conditions arise when surplus capital and over-developed industry have to fight for underdeveloped markets. The decisive figure in Italian nationalism was, consistently enough, neither a Bismarck nor a Cecil Rhodes, but a literary artist combining in his one person overwrought eroticism and political buffoonery—Gabriele d'Annunzio.

§ ITALY IN THE GREAT WAR

At the outbreak of war Italy's attitude was at first inconclusive. Her declaration of neutrality on August 2, 1914, was intended to gain time, to enable her to throw in her lot with the highest bidder. The overwhelming majority of the Italian people were against entering the war. The Italian Socialist Party was the only one in the world powerful enough to resist the disease of chauvinist Nationalism; tirelessly it struggled to maintain international solidarity at a time when the rest of the world was in the throes of unfettered patriotic passions. While German Socialism had utterly collapsed in this first great test of faith, exchanging the 'Internationale' for Hohenzollern anthems, the Italian Socialists never faltered.

There was an exception—some extreme left-wing Socialists under Mussolini, the young revolutionary syndicalist. At the outbreak of hostilities Mussolini had been editor of the *Avanti!* for some

time; he had at first thrown his influence upon the side of unconditional neutrality. In October (the precise moment is not known) came a volte face, and the first number of his new paper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, appeared on November 15, 1914.

'If the Prussian reaction triumphs in Europe to-morrow', he now wrote, 'and the destruction of Belgium and intended annihilation of France cause the level of European civilization to sink, those who have not attempted to hinder the catastrophe will be traitors and apostates.' [1]

Mussolini attempted to explain his support of Italian intervention on the side of the Allies as the direct outcome of his conscience as a Socialist. He was less ready to mention the sums of money he received from the agents of the French Government in order to launch and maintain the *Popolo d'Italia*. It is interesting to note that Marcel Cachin, the then Socialist and now Communist French deputy, played a leading part in these negotiations. The amount of the sums received by Mussolini, as always in official bribery, cannot be ascertained exactly, for those concerned will not speak; the fact remains, however, that he cashed 'patriotic cheques' from the French Government. Incidentally he admits to this in his autobiography, while in May, 1919, he did not dare to challenge in

[1] Quoted in *Le origini e lo sviluppo del Fascismo*, Rome, 1928, p. 6. This is an official publication of the Fascist Party; it contains the most important speeches and articles of Mussolini from the beginning of his activities on the *Popolo d'Italia* till the March on Rome in October, 1922, and the most important decisions of the Central Fascist Committee during the same period.

the Courts an accusation to this effect on the part of the Milan weekly *Italia del Popolo*.[1]

From the very beginning the Nationalists were for Italy's unconditional entry into the war. In the early days they alone of political parties spoke in favour of intervening for the Central Powers. It was only later that they discovered a deep affection for their threatened Latin sister. For them it was not a question of being 'friend or foe to war', but of a heaven-sent opportunity to wipe the 'Liberal pest' off the face of the globe—and with it advancing Socialism.

Far other were the motives behind Mussolini's new ultra-nationalism as proclaimed in his paper. On May 1, 1915, he wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia*: 'Workers, celebrate the first of May as the outbreak of the war of liberation'. The Great War as forerunner and promoter of Socialist revolution—that was the catchword with which he hoped to manœuvre Italian workers into the war. Not unnaturally this difference in the motive for intervention grew less and less distinct; or rather, Mussolini was soon using the language and ideas of the Nationalists, and was rapidly shedding his Socialism if not his demagogic instincts. The Nationalists remained—Nationalists.

On May 24, 1915, Italy declared war on the Central Powers. The Allies had won in the struggle for Italian cannons and men. The money at their disposal for bribery was greater, and their propaganda more efficient than that of the Central Powers. Moreover, their promises in the event of victory

[1] Gaetano Salvemini, *Mussolini Diplomate*, Paris, 1932, p. 19.

were more generous. These were laid down in black and white in a secret treaty signed in London on April 26, 1915, whereby Italy was to be granted a considerable extension of territory in Europe, Asia and Africa. These generous promises were never kept.

Italy was fortunate in having the weakest of all the great Powers opposed to her—the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Yet such was her military inferiority that she was severely defeated at Caporetto in 1917. It was only the imminent danger of an Austrian invasion of Northern Italy that drove the Italians, aided by their allies, to make heroic efforts, hold their front line, and finally defeat Austria, now bleeding at every pore. Victory was bought at the price of half a million dead and one and a half million maimed and wounded, but Italy could now breathe freely along her northern frontier.

§ POST-WAR DEVELOPMENTS

Great as were the political changes due to the Great War, the social transformations were far more profound. The four and a half years of murder shook Europe to its foundations, sparing neither victor nor vanquished. Indeed, the victor States were soon faced with social and economic misery on a scale hitherto unknown. This exploded in strikes, mutinies, and a terrifying increase in crime.

Of all the Allies, Italy had most to suffer. Fifty years of political unity were insufficient; she had not yet attained the homogeneity which would have enabled her to take prompt measures and overcome local difficulties and upheavals. Socially Italy was still less well fitted to solve in peace these profound

disturbances in her national life. Even before the war permanent over-population had given rise to a latent pressure which emigration alone could not wholly relieve. Increased instability thus threw a mass of desperadoes and shady characters into the arena of public affairs.

Considerable political changes took place. The Pope removed his veto upon Catholic political parties, and the Catholic People's Party (*Partito popolare italiano*) was founded in 1919. It was ably led by Don Sturzo, a Sicilian priest (now living in exile), and soon developed into one of the most important political factors in the land, obtaining no less than one hundred seats the first time its candidates stood for Parliament.

The shadow of Russia's example, and the growth of Socialism in Italy itself, determined the Church to create an organization for the 'little man', i.e. small traders, minor officials and the like, a party that would fight for certain measures of social reform while leaving untouched the foundations of capitalist and clerical hierarchy. Over and over again we find Socialist features in the policy of this Catholic Party. In certain provinces, such as Cremona, the members of the Catholic People's Party were more revolutionary in the event than the Socialists themselves. Miglioli, the leader of the peasants in Cremona, soon won fame for his radicalism; his suggestions for solving the problem of landed property are hardly distinguishable from pure Communism. Yet in spite of these isolated deserters from traditional mentality the party as a whole was too intimately connected with the Church to have more than one objective: in reality, it

introduced the Italian counter-revolution later to be completed by Fascism. The Church, with two thousand years' history behind it, was the first of the forces of society opposed to Socialism to realize the danger of an organized labour movement; she saw it might radically undermine her hitherto powerful position and she acted accordingly.

The same period brought to Socialism an enormous numerical increase in strength, chiefly due to the rapid industrialization for purely military ends during the war and the general disappointment at the subsequent increase in misery. The Socialist Party, which had fifty thousand members before the war, now reached two hundred thousand. Trade union membership increased from half a million to over two millions. Instead of fifty odd Socialist Members of Parliament there were now over one hundred and fifty. Municipality after municipality fell to the Socialists; in 1920 more than a quarter were under Socialist administration.

The inner consolidation of the party could not keep pace with this imposing outward development, which indeed harmed more than it helped; it was one of the factors finally responsible for the collapse of the party.

Above all Socialism had not that trained leadership so essential for the political guidance and education of millions of people. The hundreds and thousands of new adherents were won over by ephemeral passion rather than by any clear understanding of the situation. Unless their faith could be strengthened by conscious conviction these masses would right-about-turn at the first opportunity and follow whichever leader might take their fancy.

Thus a common aim had to be instilled into the politically amorphous masses, but the men whose task this was had not yet learned to cope with themselves. Their aim was not clear to them nor was the path that led to its fulfilment. If post-war Italy had possessed a Socialist leader of the rank of Mussolini, who knows what the face of Europe might be now? Granted that economic factors are of vital importance to history, the fall of Italian Socialism was hastened, if not actually caused, by its poverty of leadership.

Moreover, Moscow played an important part. Before the war Italian Socialism had assumed a constitutional character, but after the war it began flirting with revolution afresh. Failing to recognize the difference between Russian and Italian history, people began to raise the cry 'Evviva Lenin!' and wished to employ methods for which the land was quite unsuited. Young hot-heads were now successful rivals to the moderate veterans of Italian Socialism. Their wild battle cries undermined all steady development in their own camp, while producing exaggerated fears among their opponents. This led to counter-measures which would otherwise never have occurred.

In 1921 the left-wing Socialists finally withdrew from the party and formed an independent Communist Party which took its orders from Moscow. The rump of the Socialist Party ought now to have declared itself either for constitutionalism or for revolution on the Bolshevist pattern, but it could not make up its mind. Enthusiastic resolutions were passed at congresses in favour of the dictatorship of the working classes and of violent seizure

of power. In practice, however, the party shied at action of any kind. The unfortunate occupation of the factories in 1921–22 proved the necessity for men of knowledge and experience and exposed the uselessness of revolutionary phrases. Yet even then the party lacked the courage and ability to follow up one definite plan. The Socialist leaders were not sufficiently convincing, they were not sincere enough in their professions of democracy. Revolutions cannot be tricked out in sublime phrases; they must be fought for, and the Socialist leaders were honest officials but no fighters.

Worst of all was the party's lack of decision as to the use of violence; they condemned its use against themselves, yet approved it—at least in theory—against Capitalism. Such vacillating between revolution and democratic development did immeasurable harm. Especially in Italy which, like Spain, is a land of bomb throwing and political assassination, Socialism should have been rigorous in its attitude towards violence as a political method. No praise is high enough for the comparatively swift victory of Italian Socialism over Anarchism, yet the failure to draw a clear line between itself and Revolutionary Syndicalism was to prove fatal to its very existence.

§ THE BEGINNINGS OF FASCISM

With historic irony the very men who had once guided the struggle against Capitalism, had fought to erect a free, classless society, now instigated the movement which led to the destruction of democratic and labour organizations. It was perhaps an act of retribution ordained by fate. Mussolini and his

Revolutionary Syndicalists had for years proclaimed the doctrine of the French thinker Sorel—involving the use of violence—yet official Socialism never ceased to tolerate them. Fate now selected the very group arrayed under Mussolini's banner to do violence upon their own one-time friends.

In 1914 Mussolini's little group of interventionists had been expelled from the Socialist Party. On March 23, 1919, they formed themselves into the *Fascio di Combattimento* in Milan. One can hardly speak of their having a programme; it was a self-contradictory hotch-potch of ultra-revolutionary and nationalist phrases.[1]

They were animated by hatred of the official Socialist leaders for their neutrality propaganda during the war. Thus the Fascio soon found themselves not far removed from the Nationalists, and the more people flocked to the ranks of Socialism because of the ills of war, the more Mussolini stressed, by his readiness for warfare, the gap between him and his former comrades. On July 25, 1919, he advertised his betrayal of his Marxian past by a statement in the *Popolo d'Italia*: 'Neutrality and intervention are two "categories" superior to those which traditionally separated individuals from one another till yesterday'.

In spite of his right-about-face towards Nationalism, Mussolini still claimed to be the champion of the working classes. He denounced the official leaders as lukewarm and reactionary and felt called

[1] Gioacchino Volpe, the official historian of Fascism, in his book, *Lo sviluppo storico del Fascismo*, Palermo, 1928, p. 9, describes it as 'demagogic, nebulous, political futurism'.

upon to free the working classes from the bonds of their false prophets.

In his efforts to capture the workers Mussolini saw to it that his programme was sufficiently radical. The dissolution of the monarchy and of the senate, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property, the control of industries and factories by the workers, minimum wages: these and many other catchwords, remembered from his past, were now the labels with which he reckoned on gaining the support of those whom he had alienated by his war propaganda.

In July, 1919, there were hunger revolts in Italy. The inflation of the lira had brought with it an enormous rise in prices without any immediate equivalent increase in wages. As elsewhere in Europe the upshot was a series of despairing outbreaks on the part of the starving masses. Shops were stormed and plundered, shop-keepers forced by the threat of violence to sell their food-stuffs at lower prices. The rapid increase in unemployment led many to help themselves; hunger proved stronger than respect for the law. Interesting to note that whereas the Socialist *Avanti!* strove to calm these riots the Fascist *Popolo d'Italia* spread the slogan, 'String the starvers of the people to the lamp posts!' This is worthy of mention, for after the Fascists came into power they could not do enough to praise their part in preserving law and order, contrasting their behaviour with that of the 'Bolshevist agitators'.

Gabriele d'Annunzio's adventure in Fiume was a decisive stage in the making of Fascism. In September, 1919, he and a group of volunteers seized Fiume by means of a coup d'état. With his

infallible instinct for the psychological moment Mussolini declared wholeheartedly for d'Annunzio. He did not run much risk, for even if events turned out badly he was in the security of Milan, while if all went well he could easily make political capital out of the affair.

The harbour of Fiume won for Italy by this coup d'état was of little importance; far more serious was the fact that a political adventurer could set himself above the Government without fear of molestation or punishment. The general staff of the Italian army refused to serve against the irresponsible elements who had infringed international law; the Government was thus helpless, and a year elapsed before a threat to shell him out dislodged d'Annunzio successfully.

This incident influenced Italy's foreign policy less than it did the trend of events within the country itself. As early as March 18, 1919, Mussolini had announced in the *Popolo d'Italia* that he was ' unprejudiced ' as to the means he employed, also that he was ready to make use of ' so-called illegal ' methods. Events in Fiume brought home to him the helplessness of civil authority unless supported by the military—he saw that illegal measures of a revolutionary character depend for success upon the attitude of the armed forces.

November, 1919, saw the first parliamentary elections after the close of the War. These brought the Socialists immense gains: over one million eight hundred and eighty thousand votes as opposed to three and a half million for the other parties, Liberal, Catholic, etc. They returned one hundred and fifty-six members to Parliament. The new

Catholic People's Party also exceeded all expectations with their hundred seats.

The Fascists entered the electoral contest with popular and radical catchwords. They demanded the confiscation of capital, the sequestration of war profits, high death duties, and the expropriation of Church estates. More important than these demagogic slogans was Mussolini's advice to the Fascists: wherever their own party was too small to influence the result they were to join some bigger electoral bloc, which, however, was always to be nationalist and interventionist. Thus it was clear that behind the screen of ultra-Socialist phrases Mussolini was even then determined to beat up followers for the Nationalists. In his hatred of the Socialists who had turned him out with contumely he would not have hesitated even at that early date to unite openly with the right-wing Conservatives. But the man who had formerly proclaimed assassination a risk inherent in the monarch's profession, who had stood upon the extreme left-wing of Socialism, was too unreliable for them.

The elections proved disappointing for Mussolini. Against the one hundred and eighty thousand votes for his Socialist rival, Turati, in Milan he could obtain only four thousand votes for himself—this out of a total poll of three hundred and fifty thousand. This was by no means incomprehensible. The working classes felt an instinctive mistrust for the grandiose promises of Mussolini, the traitor, while the middle classes still held his effervescing revolutionary phrases for true coin. In the end the only votes he obtained were those of his faithful friends and their followers, ardent adherents of futurism,

who mistook politics for literature, and young adventurers uncertain of what they wanted, who were swept away by Mussolini's rhetoric.

Special editions of the Socialist *Avanti !* brought out the somewhat premature announcement: 'Revolutionary Italy has been born'. In the intoxication of victory they went so far as to organize a funeral procession and fling a coffin purporting to contain Mussolini's body into the river.

Mussolini, however, had not the slightest intention of disappearing from the political arena. One fact had indeed been brought home to him: he saw he would never attain power by means of a revolution from the Left. He had thought he understood the working classes, but they did not believe in him; they had remained faithful to their leaders. Mussolini's intimate friend, Cesare Rossi (who later assisted Matteotti's murderers) wrote in the *Popolo d'Italia* of January 22, 1920: 'Hard facts compel us to realize that the workers and the Socialist Party form one integral unity; hence the uselessness of further adjurations and illusions'.

These words indicate clearly enough the Fascist change of front. Whereas Mussolini had hitherto advertised himself as the saviour of the working classes, accusing Socialism itself of being reactionary and conservative (i.e. attacking it from the extreme Left), he now courted them no more. The elections had instilled a fear of approaching Socialism into the middle classes. 'Fasci' now sprang up everywhere and were flooded by business and landowning elements, who knew very well that an organization with a Radical and Socialist façade like that of Fascism was just the right one to cover the armed

resistance of property to organized Labour conscious of its mission and of its strength.

Just as the National Socialists in Germany, subsidized by the millions of the Rhineland heavy industries, spoke of shattering the 'slavery of interest' before seizing power, so Mussolini turned his *Popolo d'Italia* into a battlefield of revolutionary phrases the better to keep his financial backers out of the picture. In April, 1920, he declared himself the only Socialist Italy had had in the preceding five years; nevertheless he had received considerable sums of money from industrial and agrarian circles. This is not a malicious invention of anti-Fascists. It has been admitted by the Fascists themselves. Gioacchino Volpe, to-day a highly respected Fascist intellectual, the general secretary of the *Accademia d'Italia*, writes as follows in his official history, *Lo sviluppo storico del Fascismo* (Palermo, 1928, p. 11), which was published by the *Instituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura*. He is describing the course of events after the elections of November, 1919:

'Members of the bourgeoisie with well-defined economic interests turned to the Fascist groups and gave them a certain moral aspect as well as assisting them . . . with arms and money.'

The *Popolo d'Italia* had lived on subsidies from the day of its foundation. But for the skill of one of Mussolini's trusted officials who obtained financial support from industrialists and great estate owners in Northern Italy, it could never have survived the first post-war years. Industrialists know full well that an attack upon Labour would be far more efficient if masked beneath socialistic catchwords

than if organized openly from the Right. Thus they were not concerned at Mussolini's occasional rhetoric. The affection of the well-to-do for the *Popolo d'Italia* survived even after the assumption of control by the Fascist Party ; the paper was then transformed into a publishing house, whose shares were taken up by industrialists and bankers, and later, at a hint from above, resigned by way of a present to Mussolini and his brother Arnaldo.

It is perhaps unjust to accuse Mussolini of selling himself for money. The view that he sold his convictions to the highest bidder would show but a poor grasp of the magic influence of money. The key to his change of front is far more likely to be found in the slowly working psychological influence of unbroken, regular contact with his financial supporters. At the outset his radical convictions were expressed with verve ; at the next stage doubts were beginning to prey upon his mind and an immense *b u t* was tacked on to his arguments. Later we find ' understanding ' also for the needs of his opponents, till finally there was no return ; he was placed before the alternatives of completing his journey or disappearing entirely from the political stage.

§ THE OCCUPATION OF THE FACTORIES

Economic difficulties increased the volume and intensity of the social conflict. During the war the working classes had been in a strong position. They had taken their opportunity and improved the conditions under which they worked. Afterwards they resisted attempts to force down their standard of living. It is true, of course, that

employers themselves suffered severely in the strain of adapting industry once more to the normal course of peace-time production after the high profits of the war with its State subsidies. Nevertheless the brunt of the strain fell on the workers and the lower middle classes, neither of whom had reserves on which to fall back.

Italian parliamentary rule had always frittered away its strength by forming infinitely small groups all struggling for seats in the Cabinet. With no hope of itself prevailing, each group sought only to reduce the rest to impotence. This old ailment now made it impossible for agreement on social questions to be reached by peaceable methods. The workers, fighting for their very existence, had no option but to employ their last resource, and a series of strikes shattered the economic structure of Italy. The first strikes were purely economic, but they soon took on a political hue and the general impression was that matters were coming to a head. The Catholic People's Party purported to represent the interests of workers and small farmers; had it cast its weight, both political and spiritual, in favour of the workers in these months of social tension, a peaceful solution would probably have been reached; the workers would have been spared the privations of a strike, while employers would not have suffered the disturbance of the entire apparatus of production. But this party, in spirit if not in form, was too closely affiliated to the Vatican; it could not and dared not assist in the overthrow of the existing order. Hence the isolation which caused it to veer about between the parties. It had no real point of contact with Socialism, yet in view of

its origins it stood of necessity apart from the other parties.

In September, 1920, the tension attained its zenith. In a wages conflict in Northern Italy industrialists threatened the workers with a lockout and the labour leaders gave the order for the factories to be occupied. No violence was employed; the workers merely remained in the factories throughout the night. They carried out their orders with the greatest enthusiasm and there were no excesses. The Red militia guarded and protected the factories while councils were set up to carry on business and attend to technical and commercial questions.

The Prime Minister, Giolitti, was a surer judge of the strength of Italian Socialism and the opportunities open to it than the Socialists themselves; he scrupulously avoided ending the conflict by the use of the military, and in the event his judgment proved to be correct. Discouraged by the passive resistance of the capitalists, more especially the banks, and of most of the technicians, appreciating also the impossibility of running factories with the reserves of capital at their disposal, the labour leaders withdrew, though not until a round table conference had been held in Turin. Both trade union and industrial organizations were represented at it, and Giolitti wrung from the industrialists certain concessions as to the control of work by the workers themselves.

This was not even a Pyrrhic victory; it was the beginning of the end. Let us review the situation. For years Socialists had spoken of nothing but revolution. The masses, the miseries of warfare fresh in their minds, bowed down still further by

the crushing aftermath of war, were obsessed by one idea—that nothing but the complete destruction of the 'Bourgeois State' could provide an escape from poverty and misery. They were even prepared to pay for the decisive day with their blood. The example of Soviet Russia, in spite of all the horrors reported of it, was ever-present before them and 'Evviva Lenin!' resounded from one end of the peninsula to the other.

Now the great day had come which had been looked forward to by Socialists with anxiety mixed with readiness for sacrifice—the means of production in the hands of the producers! The Utopia of decades had become reality. More than that. When the time came for old conditions, old ideas of ownership and production to give way to the new, they had not expected Capitalism to abdicate without fierce resistance. Nothing of the sort had happened. Shaken out of its groove, demoralized by the consequences of the war, in the throes of continuous disintegration, Society had not dared to offer resistance. The industrialists, overwhelmed with terror, already saw themselves before the great blades which would settle up accounts. Paralysed by this expectation, it did not so much as occur to them to oppose the new order with violence, for even police and military, the last resource of panic-stricken governments, sympathized with the people.

The workers had kept most admirable discipline. Factories, workshops and offices were in their hands. They were but waiting for a last signal to complete the work they had begun—the conquest of the entire State, which lay to all appearances defenceless at their feet. The factories were already decked

with red flags; the revolution of the working classes was knocking at the door. That was clear to all, rich or poor, Socialist or non-Socialist.

It was the Socialist leaders who hesitated. They feared the capitalist countries around, for upon these Italy was absolutely dependent, possessing neither the means of human sustenance, bread, nor the means of industrial sustenance, coal. They felt the country was not yet ripe for social revolution, since hostility from abroad would soon bring about the collapse of every Socialist experiment.

The occupation of the factories was no conscious revolutionary effort; it was a matter of tactics, a question of wages and of forcing the owners to give way. But the people, for whom tactics were of less importance, were misled by the revolutionary hysteria of post-war years. They expected their dream to be realized in the immediate future. With bated breath they waited for the signal to complete the changes and transformations they had already begun. Instinctively they felt that nothing would dare oppose them.

During those stormy days Italy's fate hung upon a word from the Socialist leaders. In Rome the Government was counting the days till it should be relieved of office. But disputes now broke out within the Socialist Party itself. Not one among the leaders had the courage and strength to take upon himself the burden of decision, to cast the die for further advance—or retreat. They did what is always done when each tries to share responsibility or put it upon others. They summoned a Congress. The revolutionary wing wished to complete the revolution already under way, for revolution it

was in spite of the fact that there had been no bloodshed; they wanted to finish the conquest of the State. The moderates, on the other hand, limited themselves to the trade union aspect of the contest; they had no wish to aim a final blow at the rotted State now at their mercy, and in the end the moderates prevailed with 591,241 votes to 409,569. The Congress passed a resolution to enable the Prime Minister to settle the dispute between trades unions and employers.

The revolutionary action of the workers had collapsed of its own weakness before ever it met with the slightest resistance from its enemies.[1] It is of importance to establish this point, for the Fascists are good propagandists. They figure even to-day in the eyes of the world at large and in Anglo-Saxon countries more especially as the party that saved Italy from a Bolshevik upheaval. In reality the Fascists were far too weak and disorganized at that time to have weighed down the political scales; moreover, Mussolini himself was the first to speak at factories occupied by the workers, and he greeted with enthusiasm the employers' concessions in questions of such importance as the control of factories through the workers themselves.

The occupation of the factories had disillusioned the masses considerably, and in the autumn of 1920 the return of a deputation of trade union leaders

[1] The *Corriere della Sera*, the organ of the liberal-minded upper classes, wrote on September 29, 1920: 'There was no revolution, not because anyone attempted to prevent it, but because the Confederazione Generale di Lavoro did not want one' (Quoted in Gaetano Salvemini's *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, New York, 1927, p. 31).

from Soviet Russia was the final blow. Their reports of the Russian inferno killed the last sparks of that enthusiasm for Lenin which had taken possession of a great part of the Italian people.

In the decisive year 1920 the defenders of economic autocracy appeared to grasp the situation better than the workers. Whereas the latter paused half way in spite of the lack of opposition, the former showed a determination to break, once and for all, if necessary even at the expense of stepping over the corpse of democracy, the working classes' active will to self-assertion. They had learnt to fear the strength of the workers'; at the same time they had seen how clumsily this colossus employed its strength, and they were too angry and afraid to live on in peace beside their deadly foe—Socialism —at whose mercy they had but recently been. Impossible to achieve much by parliamentary methods in view of the steadily increasing Socialist vote; that the 'die-hards' understood right well. Other methods had therefore to be employed.

§ FASCISM PROGRESSES

From the very beginning the Fascisti had employed open violence in attacking Socialism. They were therefore the right medium to carry through the right-wing plan. The 1919 elections had brought bourgeois elements into the Fascist Party, but the process of turning it into an instrument of militant Capitalism was not complete till fear of revolution, after the occupation of the factories, had terrified industrialists to the very marrow. The danger was past, but these men still went in terror of the bogey

of Bolshevism and they were determined to take advantage of the anti-Bolshevist mood of the country.

Giolitti, supported by the Socialists and the Popular Party, passed laws which laid a heavy burden upon capitalists and especially the *nouveaux riches*; these drew down upon him the full force of their hatred. The conversion of bearer into registered shares, the confiscation of war profits, and high death duties proclaimed a new spirit which plutocracy had to suppress, if need be by the use of force. Industrialists and *rentiers* had been compelled to pay high taxes in the two previous years, partly to lessen the burden of the huge war debt, partly to balance the budget and stabilize the lira. These also aroused the greatest indignation among them. If they had had their way they would have shifted the burden on to the shoulders of the people by indirect taxation of the most important consumers' goods. This was resisted, as one might expect, by both the Socialists and the People's Party, so the industrialists determined to rescue their war profits by the violent destruction of both 'Red' and 'White' organizations. The Fascist groups which had meanwhile formed a party towards the end of 1920 were from now onwards subsidized more and more heavily in every possible way, for were they not to fight for the salvation of national honour and existence and rescue it from 'Asiatic Bolshevism'? [1]

Still more important than the entrance of this industrial element was the influx of agrarians into

[1] Guglielmo Ferrero, the well-known Italian historian, writes in his book, *Da Fiume a Roma*, Milan, 1923, p. 66: 'Till then the Fascisti had lived obscure and helpless, but now the war profiteers began to smile upon them, even to support them'.

the ' Fasci '. For hundreds of years peasants, both tenants and labourers, had been practically in bondage to the great landowners; neither State nor Church had dared to interfere. Not unnaturally these great landowners were anything but pleased at the growth of Red and White labour organizations on the land. The countryside was imbued with a belief in the God-ordained division of Society and the absolute authority of landowners, who now spared neither pains nor money to support the Fascist bands in destroying the autonomous organizations of agricultural labourers and leasehold farmers.

Shopkeepers, too, were inclined to support a movement which would free them for ever at one blow of the dead weight of ' Red ' competition. The Socialist co-operative stores were excellently managed and were run very cheaply, and their competition was thus badly felt. Nor had the looting of the stores and the compulsory prices by any means been forgotten.

Lastly both Socialists and Communists indulged in ill-advised activities which also swelled the ranks of the Fascists. Officers and soldiers who had won distinctions were insulted in public and attacked with violence by irresponsible elements. The Great War was now over, but the more extreme Socialists and Communists appeared to think it a suitable theme for propaganda to all eternity. Men who had after all but done their duty were subjected to barbaric abuse, their uniforms literally torn from their backs in public. This went so far that the Government even advised officers not to wear uniform on railway journeys in the interests of their own personal safety. Returned soldiers, formerly

of Liberal or even Socialist leanings, were not unnaturally embittered by these uncalled-for insults and attacks. They were simply biding their time, waiting to mete out fit retribution for this cowardly expression of pacifism on the part of hysterical zealots. The Fascists, who never failed to glorify Italy's part in the war, always intervening in any effort to disparage returned soldiers, naturally gained recruits by the score.

This influx of retired and active soldiers gave a very different complexion to the Fascist organization. Hitherto small groups or individuals had indulged in indiscriminate violence, but with the advent of officers assaults upon the 'subversive elements' were systematically organized. The Fascist storm-troopers, the *squadristi*, were drilled on military lines and given a thorough training in the use of weapons, the Army placing at their disposal an ample supply of revolvers, rifles, machine guns, bombs and ammunition. Most important of the Fascists' military patrons was no less a personage than the late Duke of Aosta, the cousin of the King of Italy.

The Fascist zeal for combat was whetted yet more by the newly developed activities of Communists and Anarchists. The unsuccessful occupation of the factories had led to internal strife, the upshot being that the Communists seceded from the Socialist Party. This step had two-fold consequences: it reduced the defensive and offensive strength of the Labour movement as a whole to a minimum, while the Communists, freed of the restraining influence of the older leaders, set out on a career of murder and terrorism—a positive

invitation to severe reprisals on the part of their opponents. But whereas Communists and Anarchists could only display sporadic violence—for they lacked that collaboration with police and army essential to any more widely developed activities—the Fascists equipped 'punitive expeditions' which went all the way. Towns and villages under Socialist administration were surprised by heavily armed Fascists led by army officers, all receiving free passes on the railway or free transit in lorries, while the police for their part merely looked on. Prominent anti-Fascists were injured or murdered, Labour and co-operative societies, working men's libraries and Socialist clubs were plundered and set on fire. If Socialists offered resistance they were brought to trial and condemned, whereas Fascists could count on being left unmolested by the guardians of law and order whose commands came from above.[1]

Yet the Italy that stood for democracy and peaceful progress was still unbroken. Giolitti ordered elections for April, 1921, in the hope that Socialism would show a decline in strength. To the exasperation of the extreme Right, however, the Fascist terrorists had not shaken the bulk of the electorate. The Socialists obtained almost the same enormous number of votes as in 1919, though owing to a changed electoral system they could only return one hundred and twenty-three members—apart from fifteen Communists—as opposed to their former number of one hundred and fifty-six. The

[1] Gioacchino Volpe, official historian of Fascism, whom I mentioned above, admits in his book, *Lo sviluppo storico del Fascismo*, p. 17, that 'Fascism did not lack a certain indulgence and support from above'.

Fascists, on the other hand, in spite of armed attacks upon their adversary's candidates and canvassers, were only able to muster thirty-five deputies.

There was still time for Socialists, Catholic People's Party and anti-Fascist Liberals to form a coalition against armed reaction from the Right. This coalition could have rescued the democratic State from the revolutionary financiers and the Army, but it was wrecked by petty strife between the three truly democratic groups in Parliament. Giolitti, the old intriguer, was forced to retire, it is true, but under his successor Bonomi the Fascists continued to carry on civil war at their own sweet will.

On August 3, 1921, Bonomi managed to patch up a peace covenant between Socialist and Fascist Members of Parliament, and Mussolini was, it seems, sufficiently impressed by the moderate Socialists' immense electoral success and the increasingly vigorous campaign of the Liberal Press against the growth of Fascist brutality, to consider an alliance with the Socialists and the Catholic People's Party. Since adherence to principle has never been his strong point, it is not difficult to grasp how his lust for power made him gravitate towards those with whom the future still seemed to lie. And had he not himself just admitted in the *Popolo d'Italia* that 'to claim that Italy is still in danger of Bolshevism is to take petty fears for reality. Bolshevism has been overcome.'

But this change of front came too late; Mussolini was already prisoner to his financiers and military supporters. Above all, the provincial landed interests had not the slightest intention of making

peace with the 'Reds'. The battle had to be fought to a finish, if necessary without Mussolini —because of his past they suspected him of being capable of more than temporary agreement with the Socialists. Mussolini saw himself isolated; in an impulse to stand by his word he handed in his resignation, hoping, of course, that the bulk of the Fascists would throw in their lot with him after this decisive step. But the Fascist movement had already passed the stage of lacking a definite aim and experimenting with revolutionary phrases. It had already found its distinctive function of crushing Labour organizations and democratic institutions. Industrialists and agrarians were determined to achieve their aims come what may, while the military, who held the effective (i.e. trained) forces of Fascism in their hands, now required Mussolini only to fascinate and hypnotize the masses. Even without him, however, they were quite prepared to do away with the parliamentary system and set up a military dictatorship.

Mussolini saw clearly his tragic position in view of this balance of power within his own party, and his craving for rule urged him on to the last step to complete the betrayal of the workers' movement. There was no return. At the Congress of the Fascist Party in Rome in November, 1921, there was a grand reconciliation scene with the spokesmen of the agrarians and industrialists. To them he humbly gave way on all points. 'Dead and buried' was the covenant he had but yesterday been prepared to support body and soul.

Murder and arson now began once more to dominate political life in Italy. The Fascists are

known to have many more murders on their conscience than either Communists or Anarchists; exact figures are unobtainable, as the statistics available are invariably compiled by members of opposed parties, who are hardly likely to be unbiassed. At all events the Fascist murders in the period 1921–22 are well up in the hundreds, probably exceeding a thousand, whereas the Communists have some two to three hundred murders at their door. To my mind, however, it is absolutely wrong to consider as an argument on one side or the other the number of successful murders carried out by Fascists or Communists in this stormy period. Apart from Nazi Germany and Latin America, where machine guns habitually decide parliamentary elections and discussions, Italy has the lowest standard of political morals of any civilized country. The Italian historian, Gaetano Salvemini, formerly at the University of Florence, now eating the bread of exile, is sincere enough, in spite of his anti-Fascist convictions, to admit that ' in Italy, unhappily, human life is held less sacred than it should be in a civilized country '.[1]

Now that the peace treaty with the Socialists was a scrap of paper the military and agrarian wire-pullers of Fascism did not let matters rest at individual cases of murder, plunder and arson. The elections of 1921 had proved finally that Socialism could not be wiped out along parliamentary lines. Military circles were afraid that the parliamentarians would even now awake from their torpor and, casting aside party tactics, would, in view of

[1] Gaetano Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, New York, 1927, p. 26.

the emergency, summon the strength of democracy to form a bloc in defence of the Constitution. They therefore clamoured for speedy action.

Local corps were mobilized under military leadership so as to be well prepared for the knock-out blow. The first great test of strength was the Fascist 'conquest' of Ravenna. In September, 1921, on the six hundredth anniversary of Dante's death, three thousand armed Fascists poured into Ravenna, in many cases threatened prominent anti-Fascists, ruthlessly employing their weapons, plundered and destroyed private buildings and flung themselves with particular fury upon Socialist and Catholic Democrat organizations. Although the General in command of the Province of Bologna had been forewarned of this armed incursion, he preferred taking part in the Dante festival to safeguarding Ravenna.

In February, 1922, dissensions among the Liberals and the Popular Party caused the overthrow of Bonomi's Government. Facta, one of Giolitti's reliable followers, was installed in his place. Facta is a classic example of that ruling stratum in the Italian middle classes which first bred up the Fascist bands and then could not get rid of them. '*I nourish confidence*' was the ever-recurring pronouncement of Facta; this was the alpha and omega of his art of government to which he owes his fame. Instead of boldly opposing the Fascist bands he negotiated with them as with a foreign Power worthy of respect, finally conceding them a free hand throughout the entire kingdom with the one exception of Rome, which had to be protected from the Terror owing to the presence of foreign diplomats and journalists.

At the beginning of June, 1922, ten thousand Fascists concentrated in Bologna to compel the prefect to resign. It is clear that, had the police and military seriously wanted to disperse these bands, the mustering of a few cannon would have been more than enough, but as at Ravenna, General Sani, who was in command of the troops stationed in Bologna, openly sympathized with the Fascists, and was nowhere to be found.

The Fascists now felt masters of the situation. Early in October they turned their attention to the newly acquired district of South Tyrol, as the prefect there was too mild to their mind in italianizing the population. Led by a few deputies and officers they first broke into the stronghold of Germanism in this province—Bolzano—and occupied the German schools. Then they went on to Trento, where they took the prefecture by storm and forced the prefect Credaro to lay down his office.

These two last Fascist moves were of far more importance than the mere decision as to whether Prefect X or Prefect Y should remain in office. They were the tocsins which heralded the burial of the parliamentary State.

§ THE MARCH ON ROME

By the autumn of 1922 Italy seemed well on the way to stabilization. Frantic sacrifices were bringing about the balancing of the budget, and industry, too, was recovering at last from the transitional pangs of post-war years. There was an upward trend in trade and industry. The more moderate section of the working classes steadily gained in strength and thus the social tension was also lessened,

this in its turn increasing the economic efficiency of the country.

In the realm of politics alone Italy had not yet found peace. The extreme Right added to the chaos more and more so as to appear later as the saviour of law and order. In September and October, 1922, Mussolini was still prepared to form a coalition with the parties of the Left, provided his own followers were assured of sufficient influence in government and administration. For the second time, however, he had to give way to his capitalist and military backers. For the second time, too, those political groups which were anxious to maintain democracy at all costs, and which could have controlled the political situation and prevented civil war, failed to combine. The Socialist Party still stood aside, the majority still unwilling in this, the hour of greatest danger, to unite with the democratic elements of the middle classes even for definitely outlined aims and for a limited period. This shilly-shallying among the Socialists and honest democrats hastened their downfall. If we wait much longer, thought the Fascist general staff, it might be too late, for sooner or later common sense might prevail over petty questions of prestige among the parties of the Left. So in October, 1922, they sprang the final blow.

In the night of October 27–28 public buildings and important railway junctions were occupied in northern Italy, and next morning some ten thousand Fascists armed with revolvers and clubs arrived in Rome. General de Bono, an army officer on active service, was one of the *Quadrumviri* who led the Fascist bands. The troops stationed in Rome

would doubtless have been more than a match for these badly armed hosts. The general impression was that the judicious planting of a few machine guns and heavy artillery would have laid the ghost of Fascism for ever within a couple of hours. Faced with open rebellion, Facta pulled himself together at last and proposed to the King that he should sign a decree proclaiming martial law. Some officers might have deserted to the rebels, but the majority would still have kept their oath of loyalty to the King had he himself but risked his Crown to safeguard the Constitution.

But the King hesitated; the pressure brought to bear upon him by members of his family was too strong for him. The weakling uttered a sigh of relief at the mere report that Facta had opened negotiations with the Fascists. There was one hope left, that all might pass off without either bloodshed or loss of the Crown, for meanwhile he had received information from the Nationalists which made it advisable to give way in the interests of his throne; his cousin, the Duke of Aosta, was already lying in wait in the Fascist headquarters in Perugia. Hearing that Facta's decree of martial law had not been signed by the King, the Fascists grew bolder and poured in ever-swelling multitudes into Rome, till finally, by October 31, between one hundred and two hundred thousand had gathered there. The frightened King wanted his peace; on October 29, 1922, he commanded the rebel Mussolini, whom he could and ought to have treated as a criminal, to form a new Government. The victory was won.

Why was the opposition to Fascism so feeble? The weakness of the Socialist Party has already been

explained, but it is harder to understand the collapse of Liberalism. True, the term ' Liberal ' denotes nothing more than support of a constitutional regime and economic individualism against domination by the Church, feudalism or absolute monarchy ; and for many ' Liberals ' the Constitution was a convenient façade for political intrigue and ' spoils ', to be discarded when it ceased to serve their interests. It was certainly not the failure of democracy but the growing success of the truly democratic parties which drove these gentry into the arms of the Fascists. But the genuine Liberal middle class was perhaps stronger in Italy than in most Continental countries, a distrust of authority being one of the legacies of centuries of misrule by petty sovereigns and foreign overlords. This section, however, had been greatly disillusioned by the experiences of the post-war years ; they longed for peace and quiet, and were ready to welcome anybody who would put an end to the prevailing anarchy. They did not realize that violence and repression would not be satisfied with destroying Socialist agitation but would soon seek other victims. Finally, many sincere democrats had been profoundly shocked by the revolutionary speeches and monster processions of the Socialists, and they believed that the danger of economic and intellectual Bolshevism was real.

Behind the campaign of the Fascist demagogues to rescue the country from Russian barbarism, the economic interests of ' big business ' and the landowners were concealed with consummate skill. Once Fascism had triumphed, the matter was made plain. *L'Organizzazione Industriale*, the official organ of the Italian Union of Industrialists, wrote

on November 1, 1922, that is, three days after the office of Prime Minister had been bestowed upon Mussolini:

'The new regime is formed. Industrialists look to it with great hopes. Industrialists will support the programme of this regime with all their strength, for in it, for the first time after long years, a protection of the rights of property, the general obligation to work, a full valuation of the energy of the individual and of national sentiment are proclaimed energetically. It recognizes the importance and the great influence of a class which, if numerically insignificant, is devoted to its high task of preparing the economic re-birth of Italy.'

The legend of a Bolshevist danger is still current, and the Fascists owe a good share of their reputation abroad to their fame as the restorers of law and order and the saviours of Italy from Communism. The truth is that the civil war which culminated in the March on Rome was not defensive but offensive, its object being to further the interests of an insignificant minority of the nation. Professor Luigi Amoroso, writing in February, 1922, in the *Giornale degli Economisti*, summed the matter up with unusual frankness: '*The Fasci di Combattimento* brought the civil war. But the civil war was necessary to re-establish the balance of power.'

We have dwelt at some length on the economic motives behind the March on Rome because in Italy to-day it is forbidden to speak of such things. Fascist propaganda and education intend that the Revolution be entered in the annals of history as the spontaneous uprising of idealistic youth.

II FASCISM IN POWER

WHEN Mussolini received the King's command to form a new Government there were only thirty-five Fascist deputies in the Italian Parliament; and since, after all, a Cabinet Minister must possess qualifications other than a mere record number of successful 'punitive expeditions' and murderous assaults, Mussolini saw himself forced to take ten non-Fascists, as against four Fascists, into his new Cabinet. With the one exception of the Socialists all parties were ready to enter upon parliamentary collaboration with the leader of notorious gun-men and political assassins—hardly a glorious chapter in the tale of Italian democracy. Even the members of the Catholic People's Party, who had in their own persons suffered from the breaches of the peace of the Fascist *bravi*, showed the most amazing lack of principle, proffering brotherly coalition to the author of these atrocities, the militant atheist Mussolini. On the strength of this wide support Mussolini demanded from the Chamber unlimited power for one year, and received it, since none but the Socialists dared to vote against him.

In his first parliamentary speech Mussolini had announced that he could have had the Chamber occupied by Fascists and transformed into a bivouac; he was now to discover that the men who, thanks to him, were a laughing-stock in the eyes of the whole

of Italy, were perhaps not quite unworthy of this treatment. The deputies sat like frightened slaves and one and all—whether Catholic, Democratic, Liberal or Conservative—were ready to lick the boot that had just kicked them. To avoid all appearance of being bound in the least by the trust or mistrust of these gentlemen, whose parliamentary honour seemed none too sensitive, Mussolini issued a declaration in March, 1923, in which he announced that he wished to govern with the consent of the maximum number of citizens, but that, until such time as this consent had grown sufficiently, he must be compelled to retain the reins of power in his own hands.

'If consent should fail, there is still force.' The fact that this maxim, the essential feature of Mussolini's system of government, could even then be pronounced and used as a threat, proves how little democracy weighed with the greater part of the middle classes.

Mussolini's first task was to reorganize the armed forces of the State. He disbanded the 'Royal Guards', a special body of police which had been created to assist the normal police force to keep order within the country. The peace strength of the Army, which since the King's treason Mussolini justly regarded as his very own domain, was brought up from 175,000 to 275,000. Mussolini knew full well, however, that a large proportion of officers and men would not wish to be involved in illegal activities, that they would not allow themselves to be misused for organized wholesale crime directed against anti-Fascists. In January, 1923, he therefore founded the Fascist militia (*Milizia Volon-*

taria per la Sicurezza Nazionale) to whom he entrusted this noble task. This creation of Mussolini's was the final step in the process of militarization through which his party had been passing ever since reactionary army officers had joined its ranks. Although for particularly delicate tasks, like killing off prominent anti-Fascists, individual terrorists were at Mussolini's disposal, their society, the 'Black Hand', being intimately connected both with him and with his closest collaborators, the irregular bands who attended to the more harmless atrocities—such as arson and pillage—were mostly done away with. Mussolini decided upon this measure which, incidentally, was never fully completed owing to the resistance of the professional Fascist bandits, simply because he had no desire for more or less irresponsible individuals to carry out terrorist activities according to their personal fancy; he preferred an organized militia which would have to justify its actions to headquarters. A few professional gangsters with an impressive record of criminal experience in the service of Fascism were of course retained for more difficult cases; such demanded secrecy, and a semi-public institution like the militia was hardly suited for coping with them.

The Fascists soon lost the good-will with which all the non-Socialist parties had welcomed them when Mussolini first took up the reins of office. The reason for this good-will was that even the most moderate Liberals had preferred a legal if dictatorial regime from the Right to a condition of things akin to civil war, even though this condition had been brought about by the Fascists themselves. The

general opinion had been that peace would reign supreme in Italy after Mussolini's advent to power. Contrary to all expectations, things went from bad to worse. Now that its leaders sat in office the Fascist gangs pounced upon the country like wild beasts freed of their chains. Especially in Northern Italy, where the Socialists and Liberals had been able to hold their ground in spite of persecution, scenes of the utmost brutality were enacted. To avenge the death of one Fascist twenty-two workmen were murdered in Turin on a single day in December, 1922. These men were slaughtered with unparalleled cruelty either before the eyes of their wives and children or in the open after having been ' taken for a ride '. The police dared not raise a hand. The leader of this band of murderers publicly proclaimed his delight at having given a good lesson to Turin, yet he was neither arrested nor punished ; on the contrary, he was promoted. De Vecchi, the then Under-Secretary of State for Pensions, sent a congratulatory telegram to the *fascio* of Turin after the slaughter. This same De Vecchi is now Italian ambassador to the Vatican. Even for Italy, a land accustomed to political murder, this horrible deed stood out for its till then unheard-of brutality.

The campaign against Socialist and Catholic organizations and newspapers was now taken up with redoubled harshness. The correspondents of the papers were attacked in public, the vendors prevented from selling them by the use of physical violence, the readers pestered with threatening letters, and if all these admonitions proved of no avail words were followed up by deeds.

When once it was clear that the Fascists intended

not merely not to keep things in order but even to soil Italy's name by a fresh stream of blood, a wave of uneasiness spread over the whole country. Mussolini found himself encircled by a new wall of hatred and enmity even among the conservative middle class, which had not yet lost all sense for law and honour in Italy. No amount of coercion and blackmail could prevent public opinion, guided by steadily growing antagonism in the Press, from divorcing itself in unmistakable terms from the Fascist incendiaries and plunderers.

Mussolini now made a last attempt to varnish over his tyranny with a coating of legality. As the Chamber was no longer servile enough he ordered new elections for April, 1924, so as to obtain through them an obedient majority. Whereas he had formerly been an ardent adherent of proportional representation, he now puzzled out a system which would guarantee the Fascist power in advance. The party which gained the largest number of votes—at least one quarter—was to receive two-thirds of the seats, while the remainder were to be divided between the rest. It is a sad reflection on parliamentary tradition in Italy that the Italian middle classes, now beginning to shrink from the devil they themselves had conjured up, did not reject, as it deserved, this mockery.

The electoral campaign opened with the murder of the Socialist candidate Piccinini, who was kidnapped before the eyes of his wife and then treacherously shot. The murderers were traced later, but of course got off scot free in accordance with Fascist tradition. The Opposition parties were given no chance to hold meetings, nor were they allowed to

distribute electioneering pamphlets. Many people were literally forced by club and revolver to vote for Fascism. But in spite of all the Opposition parties polled approximately three million votes, while the united Fascists, 'Liberals' and Nationalists obtained four and a half million.

§ THE MATTEOTTI MURDER

Not even unlimited terrorism had freed Mussolini of the need to face a considerable opposition in Parliament. Clubs and revolvers, the two recognized Fascist arguments, were unable to suppress the truth about the methods employed in this election. In particular Giacomo Matteotti, the courageous Socialist deputy, devotedly risked his life to reveal the national tragedy of Fascist murder, and in the spring of 1924 he published a pamphlet upon it which also appeared abroad. When the elections were over he made further denunciations from the parliamentary platform, exposing the swindling and the atrocities committed by Fascist officials in the election campaign. Matteotti knew that by these accusations he had signed his own death warrant; he said as much in the presence of his friends. But civil courage, a political quality as yet rare in Italy, made him fight to the last for his convictions.

On June 10, 1924, Matteotti was assaulted in Rome in broad daylight by a band of Fascists, carried off in a car, and murdered a few miles outside the city. This crime put all Italy into a fever. It showed up clearly as never before the true character of the Fascist movement. Everywhere voices were raised demanding the reinstatement of Justice, while the anti-Fascist Press made it more than clear

that the instigator of Matteotti's murder was—Mussolini himself.

On June 12, that is, two days after the assassination, Mussolini tried to act the naïve innocent by declaring in the Chamber that the disappearance of deputy Matteotti justified the supposition of a crime. On the following day he continued this comedy of unsuspecting innocence by saying: 'If anyone in this hall has a right to feel saddened and angry it is I. . . . This crime shakes us by the pain it causes; we burst into cries of indignation.'

Mussolini's share in the assassination may not be absolutely demonstrable, yet his guilt, not mere knowledge of the crime, can hardly be questioned. Besides the evidence of his closest collaborators, Cesare Rossi, Finzi and Marinelli, and the assassin Dumini himself, one cannot fail to note that the day after Matteotti's sensational speech in Parliament, on May 31, Mussolini himself had written in the *Popolo d'Italia*: 'Matteotti has made a terribly provocative speech for which he deserves a more concrete reply than the insults of the deputy Giunta'.[1]

Even if it be assumed in Mussolini's favour that he did not personally command the assassination of Matteotti his moral and criminal guilt remain untouched. First, he could not but foresee that, with *his* authority in the party, the threat of a 'concrete answer' to Matteotti would be taken by his lieutenants as a death warrant, a fact clearly exposed in the evidence and memoranda of the defendants and their principals. Secondly, one can hardly

[1] Gaetano Salvemini, *La terreur fasciste*, Paris, 1930, p. 207. For facsimile of this article by Mussolini, see pp. 184–185.

suppose that Marinelli and Rossi, the immediate instigators of the crime, would have made up their minds to such an important step without Mussolini's consent, for Rossi, in his capacity of director of the Fascist Press Bureau, and Marinelli in his as financial manager of the Fascist Party, were received by Mussolini daily. From this circumstance alone it seems impossible that they should have ordered Matteotti's assassination without Mussolini's consent, still less against his will. Mussolini himself realized these obvious implications, for at a meeting of the 'National Council of the Fascist Party' on August 8, 1924, he openly stated:

'If these men [who committed the Matteotti crime] had not been in close touch with the Government, if they had leapt from obscurity into the heart of the party, it would have made but a feeble impression. On the contrary, however, the men whom I had to penalize were fairly close to me, and about this intimacy miserable speculations could have been made.' [1]

Mussolini, with his generous attitude towards criminal responsibility, considered merely the 'miserable speculations' which this intimacy might give rise to, yet whatever cunning and violence he may have employed in attempting to throttle all accusation this single admission of his will brand him in history as Matteotti's murderer.

For six months after the murder it looked as

[1] Marinelli, Finzi and Rossi were not punished as the instigators of murder; they were merely made to resign from office upon Mussolini's orders, for he had to pacify public opinion. Marinelli, however, was reinstated as soon as the preliminary investigations were over and he holds office to this day.

though Fascism were on the verge of breakdown. If the Italian people had shown but a little more courage in those stirring days the Fascist regime would have collapsed like a house of cards in spite of machine guns and heavily armed bandits, for not merely the working classes, but the middle classes too, even to the Conservative Right, had been shaken out of their lethargy by this assassination behind which, as everybody saw, stood none other than Mussolini himself. But they lacked the least shreds of that courage which Pericles called the key to freedom.

The Opposition, taking up action either from the streets, or in Parliament, would have swept aside with contumely the Fascists now in office, but it did not. Throughout the country thousands stood ready to rebel against the Terror, to employ armed force if necessary, but the Socialist leaders wished to avoid civil war at all costs; they still firmly believed that Justice would come into its own unaided. So they called the rebellion off. The middle class Opposition had not learnt their lesson from the King's breach of the Constitution in 1922; they still expected him to take control in person. Even a king of stronger character would have decided that the impulse to change must come from the people and their representatives.

The Opposition could not have acted more unwisely than it did. If it was unwilling to damage the Constitution so shamefully violated by its opponents and make its own future dependent on civil war, it was bound at least to attempt to overthrow the Government by parliamentary means. But it withdrew from Parliament in a body, retiring

to the Aventine hill, where it formed a counter-parliament. Thus it left the Fascists alone and condemned itself to complete inanity. It had lacked the courage to take any decisive step whether in Parliament or in open rebellion, for which Italy was then ready.

For Mussolini this meant the salvation of his system. What he needed, first and foremost, was time. Seeing that the general unrest had led to no decisive action he naturally grew more daring. The Press first received the honour of his attentions. Since Matteotti's murder it had presented him in a very unattractive light. On July 10, 1924, he issued a decree which put all newspapers under prefectorial supervision. Mussolini was determined to avoid throwing further light upon the Matteotti affair; he had promised to do this only under the first pressure of popular indignation, and now the inquiry was dragged out more and more. He had firmly made up his mind not to go through with the proceedings till rebellion was out of the question. Rossi and Marinelli were amnestied to avoid their giving public evidence which might make their principal uneasy, and the proceedings against the assassins themselves were only concluded two years later in a small provincial town. Mussolini, persuaded of his own innocence, yet feared the bright light of publicity. The trial went off like a well-staged play, for judge, jury, convictions, all had been settled beforehand. Three of the murderers were condemned to six years' imprisonment, but, to bring the tragi-comedy to a fitting climax, they were set free two months later. The assassin Dumini was sentenced later to three years' imprison-

ment as he had publicly threatened to make revelations about Mussolini.

In spite of the cowardly vote of confidence in Mussolini passed by the Senate on June 24, 1924, the whole country was seething with excitement. The Press decree could not prevent a considerable increase in the sales of anti-Fascist papers. Not only middle class Radical papers, but even Socialist ones regained and sometimes surpassed their former circulation. But Mussolini took no decisive step till on December 28, 1924, the Rome *Mondo* published the Rossi memorandum with its serious accusations against the Fascist regime. This blow struck home. Mussolini now realized that the Press alone might still force him over the brink of the precipice, and decided upon quick action. He abolished the remaining liberties of the Press, and in his famous speech in Parliament of January 3, 1925, he declared himself willing to assume historic, political and moral responsibility for all Fascist atrocities. More than that, he challenged the Opposition to bring a charge against him under article 47 of the Italian Constitution. 'If', he said emphatically, 'Fascism has consisted of a band of criminals, I am the head of that band and the only one responsible.'

The Opposition had seceded from Parliament after the murder of Matteotti, so it could not reply on the spot. But if it was unwilling to lay a formal charge in spite of the weighty evidence against Mussolini and the memoranda which compromised him so seriously, it might at least have returned to the Chamber, accepted Mussolini's challenge with a claim as dramatic, and demanded the appointment

of a committee of inquiry to lay bare the scandals of Fascist tyranny to the Italian people. Such a move, it is true, would have meant peril of death to each leader of the Opposition; all non-Fascist deputies who had paid the Fascists unwelcome attentions could expect to be struck with sticks and switches at the least, and anyone impeaching the whole regime was inviting murder. It was merely a case of finding one among the hundred and fifty of the Opposition with the courage knowingly to take upon himself the martyrdom of Matteotti. No deputy demanding a committee of inquiry to cast light upon the shadows around Matteotti's assassination and other outstanding Fascist murders would be listened to; that was a foregone conclusion, for if he were listened to his demand would have to be granted—or rejected, and this would have meant moral suicide if not more. It was far more probable that a deputy with accusations so serious as to cast suspicions upon Mussolini himself would be prevented from speaking and later be foully murdered. Yet even taking into consideration the Italians' comparative indifference to political murder, the lack of civic courage in Italy and of a firm democratic tradition, Fascism could hardly have survived a second Matteotti case. After the assassination of Matteotti tens of thousands of Fascists had returned their party membership cards, for it was no longer a question of belonging to this party or that, but of lining up with the honest men or with a gang of murderers. A second Matteotti case, and none but professional bullies and the ringleaders of murder gangs would have stood for the Fascist movement. Both King and people would have grasped the gravity

of the situation and Fascism would have collapsed before a general storm of indignant resistance.

But there was no sign of those moral forces which might have won the day. The working class was divided against itself; it could not resolve the crisis unaided, while the democratic Liberal leaders who dominated a large section of public opinion had first watched the growth of Fascism with a certain good will, and then betrayed their most profound convictions with an astounding lack of principle. Now, when it was a question of rising as one man, of staking life and fortune in the fight for liberty and justice, they contented themselves with a weak, ineffective declaration of protest. It was not so much his own strength as the indecision and lack of pluck of the Socialist and middle class Opposition which enabled Mussolini to survive the critical months after Matteotti's murder.

The temper of Mussolini's speech did not fail of effect in Fascist circles. A new wave of plundering, arson and murder broke out. This terrorism attained its zenith in the last days of September, 1925, when a positive *battue* was staged of Freemasons, Liberals and Socialists. At the instigation of the official Fascist Press there was a series of political murders in Florence, accompanied by other forms of violence. Newspaper buildings were stormed, plundered and set on fire, and shops demolished in broad daylight before the eyes of the authorities.

On November 4, 1925, occurred the unsuccessful attempt upon Mussolini in Rome of the one-time Socialist deputy, Zaniboni. This was doomed to failure, because the police themselves had let it be

prepared by di Quaglia, the *agent provocateur*, not interfering until the very last moment so as to create a halo of martyrdom for Mussolini. This was followed by the attempt of the Irishwoman, Gibson, on April 7, 1926. After these, Fascist reprisals went forward with redoubled vigour. Hundreds of anti-Fascist lawyers, journalists and trade union leaders were attacked and their houses plundered—when the Fascists, with the highest national motives, acted like common thieves. Opposition newspaper offices in Rome, Milan, Genoa, Trieste, etc., were once again raided and wrecked.

The Fascists employed all the methods of civil war against the Popular Party also, who now realized with whom they had joined hands. The destruction of buildings belonging to Catholic organizations and the attacks on Catholic leaders assumed such proportions that bishops and even the Pope raised their voices against 'The Man sent by Providence', as Pius XI later called him.

The brutality of unfettered Fascist fury did not recoil from assaulting the finest heads in Italy. As early as 1923 the house of the former Prime Minister, Nitti, a noted scholar, was attacked and destroyed. In Naples they plundered the house of Benedetto Croce, the most prominent philosopher, indeed, the only Italian thinker of world renown to-day, as well as that of Arturo Labriola, the only theorist of our generation Italy has given to international Socialism. Count Salvadori of the University of Rome was also attacked for daring to publish articles against Fascism in English reviews. Professor Gaetano Salvemini of Florence University, a historian of European reputation, was imprisoned

for the same offence, and only succeeded in escaping from his Fascist inquisitors for ever after an adventurous flight to France.

These Fascist attacks upon the flower of Italy's intelligentsia are profoundly characteristic of the movement; founded on force, it habitually opposes clubs and machine guns to reasonable argument. One remembers, among other more recent instances, the attack upon Toscanini, the famous conductor, in Milan in 1932. In a country with Italy's tradition of culture, in which mental athletics are more popular than prize fighting is in the United States, there is no place for a movement which idolizes brute force and pays no heed to the things of the spirit. Today this fact is slowly dawning upon the Italian middle classes, who betrayed their own faith so as to destroy the Labour movement and (as they thought) guarantee their own predominance for ever.

§ THE 'REFORM' OF PARLIAMENT

Fascism knew from the first that its rule depended on bayonets only and not on the will of the Italian people, and it was now faced with the alternatives of abolishing Parliament altogether or filling the old forms with a sham content, having nothing in common with any imaginable conception of representative government.

If we grant Kelsen's definition of the parliamentary system—the moulding of the decisive political will by a body elected by the people on the principle of majority representation through equal, universal suffrage—there exists in Italy only the sham of a Parliament. To rob democratic institutions of life and turn them into mere tools while

retaining the old labels is the technique common to all dictatorships. It was duly displayed in Italy by the so-called ' constitutional reformers '. Fascism denies the people's right to self-determination, replacing this by the absolute sovereignty of a ruling clique, and the Italian Parliament was transformed accordingly.

Mussolini himself, before the fake elections of 1929, stated in the Chamber his conviction that ' certain categories of persons, for which he had always felt antipathy ' would not enter the Chamber. On March 22, 1929, two days, that is, before the elections, he wrote in the *Foglio d'Ordini* (No. 53), the official organ of the Fascist Party: ' Let no one cherish the illusion that a pile of ballot papers will jeopardize the future development of the regime, which to-morrow will be more totalitarian than it was yesterday '.

The Law of May 17, 1928, completed in the same year by the Law of September 2, robbed Parliament of all functions through which it reflected the will of the people. Its main provisions were as follows :

The entire Kingdom of Italy became a single constituency returning four hundred deputies. The ' elections ' were to consist of three stages :

(1) Suggestions on the part of the legally recognized associations of employers and employees and cultural organizations.

(2) Nomination of candidates by the Grand Council of Fascism.

(3) Approval by the electorate.

The associations of employers and employees have the right to propose in all eight hundred

candidates, the number allotted to each association being fixed by law. Certain non-professional organizations with cultural or educational aims have the right, in accordance with a system laid down by the law, to nominate a further two hundred.

The Grand Council of Fascism now selects at its own discretion four hundred out of these thousand candidates. But it is not bound to the list suggested; it has the power to propose candidates it judges worthy of Parliament even if no corporation has placed their names on its lists. This privilege of the Grand Council wipes out the last semblance of a Parliament expressive of the collective will. It is clear that only Fascists can be proposed by the corporations, since non-Fascist or anti-Fascist organizations are forbidden in Italy; this measure of precaution shows that all recollection of free democratic choice is to be erased from memory.

Neither the people through free elections nor the organizations entitled to make suggestions for the lists, even though under the direct pressure of the Fascist Party's knout, are to have a decisive influence upon the choice of deputies. The final word lies with the unchallengeable personal decision of the dictator, unchallengeable even in the Grand Council itself.

Once the Grand Council has selected its four hundred, the list of candidates is published in the official Gazette and placarded in every town and village. As only one list is admitted, that of the Grand Council, the elections are concluded in the form of plebiscites. With a bald 'Yes' or 'No' the elector has to declare whether he accepts or refuses the list *en bloc*. Only men are enfranchised

and they must be twenty-one years old, contribute to one of the legally recognized associations of employers or employees, pay at least 100 lire in direct taxation per annum, have some title to a State salary or pension, or be members of the clergy. The exclusion of women and the fixing of a minimum of direct taxation show the cultural and social bias of Fascism.

If the list of the Grand Council obtains at least one half of the votes the candidates are considered elected. In the opposite event new elections take place. In this case several lists may be submitted, but that which receives most votes has the right to claim three-quarters of the deputies while the rest of the seats are divided between the remaining lists. We mention this legal provision although under Fascist rule it seems quite impossible for the Grand Council's list to fail of approval in the first instance. Electoral terrorism and persecution are so pervasive that great courage is required to cast a negative vote. In the bigger factories and offices this intimidation has taken the form of handing both ballot papers to the workmen and threatening with dismissal all those who do not return their 'No' papers after the elections, the absence of these being considered proof of voting against the Government.

The elections of March 24, 1929 (the first under the new law), presented the following picture :

Number of persons entitled to vote .	9,682,630
Number of votes cast . . .	8,661,820
Voted 'Yes'	8,517,838
Voted 'No'	135,773
Blank ballot papers . . .	8,209

From the published election results it is clear that the figures were faked to a degree outsiders cannot estimate exactly. The dead and the emigrants zealously cast their votes for Fascism, while in some districts the apparent anti-Fascist vote was ridiculously low.

Elections for the second purely Fascist Chamber of Deputies took place on March 25, 1934. This is to be Italy's last Parliament under Fascism, for its main task is to decide its own abolition and transfer its legislative powers to the National Council of Corporations. 10,041,997 persons voted in favour of the official list, whilst only 15,265 dared oppose their 'No'; the result even outweighs the electoral farce of 1929. 'No pressure' was exercised on the voters, as Mussolini publicly announced through Achille Starace, secretary-general of the Fascist Party; the following extract from the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (March 30, 1934) may illustrate what free elections under Fascist control are like:

'The voters, on entering the polling booths, were given two forms, one in the colours of the Italian tricolour marked "Yes" and the other, which was white, marked "No". They were told to enter a cabin, fold one or the other form, and then come out and put it in the urn. Most of them, however, declined to enter the cabin, dropping the "No" form on the floor and demonstratively putting the "Yes" form into the urn.'

We give below the list presented by the Grand Council of Fascism for the elections of March 24, 1929.[1]

[1] *Foglio d'Ordini* No. 52 of February 28, 1929.

Private Trade, Industry and Commerce

National Federation of Farmers	46
Agricultural Workers' Trade Unions	27
National Federation of Industrialists	31
Industrial Workers' Trade Unions	26
National Federation of Merchants	16
Commercial Employees' Trade Unions	10
National Federation of Transport Employers on water, on land, and in the air	22
Trade Unions of Transport Workers and Seamen	20
National Federation of Banks	10
Bank Employees' Trade Unions	6
National Federation of Professional men and Artists	82
	296

Cultural and Other Organisations

Universities	15
Academies	2
Fine Arts	2
Colonial Institute	1
Civil Servants	8
Elementary Schools	4
Fascist Institutes of Culture	1
Secondary Schools	5
Dopolavoro [1]	1
Olympic Games Committee for Italy	1
Employees in State Industries	1

[1] *Dopolavoro* is a Fascist institution for workmen and employees with social and propagandist aims.

Railway Workers' Union	1
Union of Post and Telegraph Employees	1
National Catholic Centre	4
National War Veterans' Association	40
National Union of War Wounded	14
Joint Stock Companies	1
Touring Club	1
Dante Alighieri [1]	1
	400

A short analysis of this list suggests certain conclusions.

A comparison of the proportionate share of the employers on the one, and the employees on the other hand, in the number of deputies shows that employers' associations have one hundred and twenty-five seats (31·25 per cent.), whereas the corresponding employees' associations have only eighty-nine (22·25 per cent.). In other words, although the membership of employees' associations exceeds that of employers' by millions, and in spite of the numerical equality assured by the Law of May 17, 1928, employees have less parliamentary representation than employers. Note too that the representatives of employees' associations are also under Fascist party discipline and that, furthermore, the representatives of the professional classes and of cultural societies are hand-picked and can be trusted to side with the employers.

The *Camera Corporativa*, which was to reflect a

[1] *Dante Alighieri* is a society for the promotion of the Italian language and culture in Italy and abroad. It is now being used for Fascist propaganda in foreign countries.

true picture of the social forces of the country, is a pure myth ; the Fascist Chamber of to-day is rather an almshouse for four hundred ambitious Fascist careerists.

Parliament is not only devoid of independence ; it has also been legally robbed of all initiative by the Law of December 24, 1925, under which no subject can be placed on the Order of the Day of either of the two Houses without the consent of the Head of the Government. If further proof be needed of the deputies' inferior position, it lies in the fact that any member ejected from the Fascist Party automatically loses his seat in Parliament.

The Cabinet, like Parliament, has become a marionette in the hands of the Prime Minister ; its position was laid down in the same Law, which defines the rights and powers vested in the Head of the Government. Neither the Prime Minister nor members of the Cabinet are responsible to Parliament. Whereas the Prime Minister, however, is formally responsible to the King (now that the King depends unconditionally upon Mussolini's good will this formal responsibility is but a miserable farce), the other members of the Cabinet are responsible both to the Head of the Government and to the King. Thus Mussolini treats his Cabinet precisely as he pleases. His dismissal of ministers like Grandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Italo Balbo, Air Minister—his two most dangerous rivals—or of Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, or Bottai, Minister of Corporations, and Sirianni, Minister for Naval Affairs, is instructive. To secure unlimited autocracy he now retains in his own hands several portfolios—the most important, of course.

The Prime Minister decides upon each Ministry's sphere of action; he summons the Cabinet, presides over it and in the event of differences of opinion within the Council of Ministers he settles the question without calling for a majority vote. The Cabinet in Fascist Italy has turned from an autonomous determining body into an advisory organ to the dictator.

'He who heads the Government,' writes Alfredo Rocco, 'and holds supreme power, i.e. the general political direction of the State, may be but *one*, not the Council of Ministers which, though an important instrument of consultation, cannot because of its collegiate nature be the effective head of political life.'[1]

In this connection we may cite the Law of January 31, 1926, about the competence of the executive power to issue decrees invested with the force of law. This took from Parliament its proper function of legislation, and dragged it down to the level of a mere automatic 'yes machine'. In theory the Government is merely entitled to issue decrees should Parliament expressly request it to or urgent need arise; in practice, however, it has taken over all legislative power, for Parliament is impotent and members of the Cabinet are in the hands of the dictator. No one would dare to question a law issued by the Prime Minister.

The outward appearance of Parliament has thus been retained so as to delude the masses, but to-day even honest Fascists admit that the parliamentary

[1] In *Lo stato mussoliniano e le realizzazioni del fascismo nella nazione*, Rome, 1930.

system is done for in Italy. Professor Guido Bortolotto, in his remarkable study of the Fascist State, himself admits that this Law relating to the Prime Minister 'means the end of the parliamentary system'.[1]

§ THE GRAND COUNCIL OF FASCISM

This instrument of Fascism, created on January 12, 1923, i.e. immediately after the March on Rome, was declared by the Laws of December 9, 1928, and of December 14, 1929, to be constitutionally the highest organ of the State.

As in all other manifestations of political life in Italy, the dictator has ample room for arbitrary action in this foremost political body. As head of the Government he is, by law, president of the Grand Council. It is his exclusive privilege to call the Council together and to decide upon the Order of the Day. In the original draft of the Bill, which was unanimously accepted in a session of the Grand Council on September 18, 1928, article 9 contained the following provision: 'The Secretary of the Fascist Party is also the Secretary of the Grand Council. In the event of the President's absence or inability he summons the Grand Council and presides over it.'

Although the law was passed unanimously, Mussolini changed his mind for fear of a *coup de main* of his own people, subsequently inserting the important innovation that the Secretary of the Fascist Party *might* at his command take his place

[1] Guido Bortolotto, *Lo stato fascista e la dottrina corporativa*, Bologna, 1930, p. 124.

in case of his absence or inability, but that he need not do so. He thus effectively excluded any possibility of a rival leader for his own lifetime.

The Council is not obliged to have a quorum for its proceedings and resolutions. Since Mussolini is the only one to convene the sessions he could, if he liked, summon nobody but himself, and the Council would still retain its competence.

There are three groups within the Grand Council.

The first is made up of the *Quadrumviri* of the March on Rome. (Since the death of Michele Bianchi there are but three left.) They hold office for life.

The second group comprises those members whose high office endows them with an outstanding position in public life. The President of the Senate, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, the Interior, Education, Agriculture and the Corporations, the President of the Royal Academy of Italy, the Secretary and the Vice-secretary of the Fascist Party, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fascist Militia, the President of the Special Tribunal, and the Presidents of the Confederations of Employers and of the Trade Unions of Employees, all belong to this group.

To the third group belong those who have won public recognition for their services to the nation and to the Fascist revolution; they are appointed by decree of the Head of the Government. They hold office for three years.

All members of the Grand Council are above the law; they cannot be handed over to Justice without the consent of the Council. While in other

parts of the civilized world only elected representatives of the people enjoy this high privilege for the sake of public welfare, and then only within certain limits, in Fascist Italy it is sufficient for Mussolini to nominate anybody a member of the Grand Council and he is automatically outside and above law and justice.

Through enlarging this third group as he may require, the Prime Minister could keep the Grand Council docile even if the improbable danger arose of the first two groups refusing him a majority of votes. But even these are altogether dependent on the dictator, for he alone can propose the members, his choice being afterwards confirmed by royal decree. Furthermore, any membership may be revoked by royal decree at the Prime Minister's proposal. (Article 6 of the Law of December 9, 1928.)

This is in complete accordance with the spirit of all dictatorships, and consequently also with that of Mussolini's. At all costs he must make it impossible for any other man legally to retain a leading position in public life for too long a time. A dictator does not bow down before Justice; he requires marionettes.

In certain questions the Council has the last word, while in others its prerogatives are purely consultative. As we have seen, it has the right to decide upon the lists of deputies; thus it predominates over Parliament.

Of great importance too is the relation of the Grand Council to the Fascist Party. It draws up the party's statutes and defines its political objectives; it further decides the nomination and retirement of

the Secretary, the Vice-secretary and the members of the Directory of the party. The Secretary of the party is, at the same time, Secretary of the Council, and may be called upon to assist at its sessions.

This provision delivers the whole Fascist Party, even legally, into Mussolini's hands, since the Council itself is his willing instrument. Bearing in mind that the Fascist Party enjoys a monopoly in Italy, forcibly guiding political life into its own channels, we begin to understand the vast power wielded by the man who settles the questions of leadership as well as the party's political course. Even without any legal precautions Mussolini's position within the party is inviolable, but, like all dictators, he prefers to invest his tyranny with paragraphs.

The Council also substantially influences the formation of the Government. When a ministerial post falls vacant, the Council, in accordance with the previous suggestions of the Head of the Government, prepares a list of names from which the King is to make his choice. This rule applies also to the premiership. Mussolini thus wishes to choose his successor during his own lifetime so as to secure continuity to his dictatorship, for this, even to himself, seems questionable.

The Grand Council may be consulted by the Prime Minister upon political, economic and social questions of national importance.

On constitutional questions the Council is bound to be consulted. The following are declared by law to come under this heading: the succession to the throne; the rights and privileges of the Crown; the composition and functions of the Grand Council,

the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies ; the rights and prerogatives of the Head of the Government ; the authorization of the Executive to issue decrees having the force of law ; the syndicalist and corporative order ; the relationship of the Italian State to the Holy See ; and such international treaties as involve territorial change in Italy or her colonies.

The Head of the Government alone has the right to consult the Council, and since the Head of the Government is also the moving spirit in the Council this entire law merely means that to make changes in the Constitution, Mussolini must hold council with himself. His resolution is then irrevocable, for it is sanctioned by the highest organ of both State and regime. Parliament has no say in the matter at any stage.

And yet Professor Giovanni Gentile, official theorist and intellectual adornment of Fascism, has the courage, sad to say, to call the Fascist's a ' People's State ', a ' democratic State *par excellence* '.[1]

§ ABOLITION OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The word of the dictator is final, not only in the central government, but also in matters of local administration. It is a logical part of the system that the personal will of the dictator himself or of officials directly dependent upon him should overrule any independent expression of will on the part of the citizens. For psychological reasons it would have been most unwise for Fascism to retain even the most rudimentary form of the democratic structure of

[1] Giovanni Gentile, *Origini e dottrina del fascismo*, Rome, 1929, p. 48.

Italian local government. This would have served to keep alive the memory of the bad old days when every citizen could indulge in free political activity—the most deadly threat to every dictatorship.

Local self-government has not come into being as the result of philosophic principles so much as from practical necessity or convenience. An intimate bond with local particularities and conditions is called for in the field of local administration ; and the official unacquainted with local conditions who has been ordered down by a higher authority is out of place. Yet Fascism, in great as in small, places the welfare of its army of pension-seekers and place-hunters above that of the people. If, as I believe, it is especially true of local problems that the maximum satisfaction of demand is a function of maximum consultation with those concerned,[1] then the reverse is true : a minimum of consultation with and participation in the citizens' problems must also result in a minimum of realization of their needs and interests. But these considerations cause no heart-burning to the Fascist 'reformers' of local government, for whom it is much more important to have the will of the dictator realized even in the smallest village through a strictly disciplined hierarchy of officials than it is to serve the public welfare.

Placed at the head of each province is the prefect. Their number was increased by the royal decree of January 2, 1927, so as to secure the rank, sphere of influence, and income of 'Excellencies' to a host of Fascist careerists. Prefects formerly

[1] Cf. H. J. Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State*, London, 1930, p. 62.

appeared capable of performing their duties without this high title, but the puritan Fascist 'style' demanded that they should be accorded it. To-day the prefect, Pasha-like, runs the province at his own sweet will; he is responsible to the Ministry at Rome, which appoints and recalls him. The Law of April 3, 1926, on the enlargement of powers of prefects, stipulates that prefects represent the entire, undiminished power of the State—justice, the army, the navy and aeronautics, however, being outside their sphere.

In the early years of the dictatorship prefects in the various provinces had to suffer encroachments upon their rights on the part of the swollen-headed lords of the Fascist Party, who looked upon themselves as the real masters of the provinces and of the country at large. Mussolini, in a circular letter to all prefects issued at the beginning of 1927, decreed that, since they were now 'Prefects of the Regime' and as such immediate representatives of the Government, their orders were to be obeyed no matter what the circumstances. This, to a certain extent, adjusted the eternal rivalry between the representative of national authority and the puffed-up Fascist provincial secretary, who very frequently forced his will upon the prefect; yet even to this day this rivalry has not been entirely extinguished, much to the hurt of the mass of the population, which is thus laid open to tyranny from several quarters.

The abolition of local autonomy in the cities has been of no less importance. The elected representatives were replaced by the *Podestà*, who, appointed by higher authorities, are reminiscent

of mediæval communal Italy. (Laws or decree-laws of February 4, 1926, May 9, 1926, September 3, 1926, July 2, 1927, October 27, 1927.) Officially, the *Podestà* are unpaid, but many boroughs have presented petitions because of the high costs of the *Podestà*, as the former salaried mayors were much cheaper.

In municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants the *Podestà* may name a borough council (*consulta municipale*) to assist him. In municipalities with from 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants or such as are capitals of a province, a *vice-Podestà* may be named by the Ministry for the Interior. In these municipalities the appointment of councillors is prescribed, their number varying from ten to twenty-four at the *Podestà's* discretion. In municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants two *vice-Podestà* may be appointed by the Ministry. Here also the appointment of councillors is obligatory, their minimum number being fixed at twenty-four, their maximum at forty.

The councillors are, in every case, proposed by the local 'Corporations'. In Italy to-day a right to more than a suggestion does not exist; that is the maximum of political liberty the citizens of this country 'enjoy'. The actual appointment is made by the Ministry for the Interior in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, in the smaller ones by the prefects.

The functions of the borough councils are purely consultative: the final decision, as everywhere in Fascist Italy, is taken by those who are not responsible to the people, and in this particular case by the *Podestà*.

It seems worthy of note that neither prefect nor *Podestà* requires any university training to attain his highly responsible position under the Fascist regime; more important that any such qualification is the *curriculum vitæ* as Fascist.

The chain of dictatorship stretches unbroken from Rome to the smallest borough. In Rome the Government is in the hands of the Dictator; the prefects, as the provincial autocrats, are appointed and recalled by the Government, whilst the *Podestà*, as lords of the municipalities, are responsible to the prefects.

An example of the fruits of installing miniature dictators in Italian cities is the gigantic case of corruption in Milan. In the end this led to an open scandal, though under the dictatorship scandals are generally hushed up without difficulty. Giampoli, a former postman, became a millionaire over-night for 'services rendered' to the Fascist cause; to the one-time chemist, Belloni, Fascism had also brought financial prosperity, and these two had become masters of the city. It was, of course, all the easier for them to satisfy their mania for power, as they were personally in close connection with the Duce himself and his brother Arnaldo.

During this glorious Fascist administration the public debt of the City of Milan rose from approximately 700,000,000 to more than 1,600,000,000 lire. The bringing to light of their corrupt activities merely ended the political careers of these two despoilers of the public funds, but did not land either of them in a criminal court, for the Duce's protection sheltered them from this inglorious exit. Mussolini was compelled to this step; if not he

would have had to expose his own brother Arnaldo, who had also enlarged his pile by participating in these deals.

§ THE PRESS

Mussolini, who had fought his way into politics through journalism, knew from the moment of his ascent to power that he must give special attention to this great force in modern political life, unless he wished to expose himself to disagreeable perils with possibly far-reaching consequences. As early as July, 1923, that is to say at a time when he still hoped and wished to remain within the pale of legality, and to govern with the support of the Conservative elements of the middle classes, he had ready his measures against the Press. For a whole year, however, they lay in his desk without being put into force. Even when the Opposition papers attacked him with increasing violence, and won over more and more readers, Mussolini held his hand. Not until the campaign of the Liberal Press after the assassination of Matteotti in June, 1924, did he decide that the free making of public opinion might bring about his ruin. Hence his Law of July 10, 1924, which placed the Press under the supervision of political authority. The gagging of the Press was completed by the police laws of 1926, and several articles in the new Fascist code of penal law, which came into force on July 1, 1931.

According to article 662 of the penal code anyone who carries on a printing business without official permission may be punished either by imprisonment up to six months or a fine up to 5000 lire.

Every paper must have a responsible editor whom the Court of Appeal must recognize as such. If the editor is either a Senator or a deputy, one of the staff may assume responsibility. In the event of a responsible editor being twice punished for offences against the regulations the Court of Appeal may refuse to recognize him as responsible editor.

The prefect of the province has power either to reprimand the responsible editor, or to confiscate the paper if it has published false or tendentious news which might disturb diplomatic relations with foreign Governments, injure the national credit at home or abroad, throw the population into a state of unjustifiable alarm, or in any fashion cause a disturbance of public peace. The prefect may furthermore order the confiscation of the paper or reprimand the responsible editor, if the paper incite to crime, class hatred, disobedience to the laws or orders of the authorities, if it undermine the discipline of State officials or favour the interests of foreign countries, societies or individuals to the detriment of Italy, if it insult King, Country, or Royal Family, the Pope, the State religion, the institutions or armed forces of Italy or its allies.

Of vital importance in the enslavement of the Press was also the provision in the decree of February 28, 1928, that only such persons may exercise the profession of journalism as have had their names entered on the lists of the trade unions of journalists. As only well-tried Fascists are admitted, or those who pretend to be such, it is clear that this method of applying censorship to writers is even more effective than the censorship of the written word. In view of the fact that every year the journalist's

authority must be renewed this regulation is even more intolerable. A journalist has merely to express a slight criticism of Fascist leaders or institutions, be it either at home or abroad, in private conversation or, which is much less likely, in pursuance of his profession, to be excluded for ever from the ranks of journalism at the opening of the following year. This, in most cases, is the equivalent of an economic death warrant.

Even before the anti-Fascist Press had been done away with by law, the gangs of Fascist terrorists, who, as explained above, were acting on strict orders from headquarters, had plundered and sometimes demolished the offices of Opposition newspapers throughout the country. Since then, with the isolated exception of the official organ of the Holy See, the *Osservatore Romano*, no newspaper exists in Italy which is not pronouncedly Fascist. Nowadays a paper can neither be started nor continued unless it joins in the chorus of submissive adulation of the regime; it is not necessary to attack Fascism actively, even a dignified passivity is interpreted as anti-Fascist. Thus for instance the literary weekly *Giovedi*, founded in Milan in 1930 to create a literary weekly approximating to *Candide* or *Gringoire* in Paris, a type of weekly missing to this day in Italy, was from the very first undisguisedly attacked by the Fascist papers and by Fascist officialdom, and blatantly accused of anti-Fascism. This hostile attitude was due first to the fact that the weekly had a branch editorial office of its own in Paris and published much material upon life and letters in France, avoiding the generally accepted franco-phobia, and secondly because it refrained from all

discussion of a political character. From the absence of any political tendency the shrewd Fascist lackeys concluded anti-Fascist and pro-French sympathies on the part of the editors. Even after the first few numbers the address of the editorial office in Paris vanished from the head of the title page, and after a comparatively short space of time the paper itself, which had been established at considerable expense, had to stop publication, as it could not stand up against the official boycott and the veiled threats from all sides. The mere fact that *Giovedi* did not publish a hymn of praise to Fascism and an attack upon France in every number was sufficient to produce effective, if silent, persecution.

Mussolini's idea as to the task and status of the Press can be gathered from a speech he delivered on October 10, 1928, before an audience of more than seventy newspaper editors. 'In a totalitarian regime', the Duce expounded, 'the Press is an element of the regime, a power in the service of this regime. . . . The Italian Press is the freest in the world. In other countries papers serve the orders of groups of plutocrats, parties and individuals. Journalism is free just because it serves but one cause and one regime.' [1]

If in Mussolini's view serving is identical with being free, Roberto Farinacci, former Secretary-

[1] Giulio de Montemayor, in his book *Lo Stato Fascista*, Palermo-Rome, 1928, p. 47, bases his assertion that the great papers with world-wide circulation are 'in the hands of Jewish high finance' upon the grotesque anti-semitic forgery unmasked years before, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, by Sergei Nilus. Significant of Italy's intellectual climate to-day is the use of such an argument in a book published by the official Fascist Institute of Culture.

General of the Fascist Party, has been more outspoken in expressing this idea without the sophistry of his master. In a speech at Lucca on May 31, 1925, he actually declared: 'The Press to-day is strictly controlled. It will be given ample freedom to serve the national cause.'[1]

Criticism is severely banned in this 'freest Press of the whole world'. Here too Mussolini, with his histrionic skill, has attempted to veil the true facts. In the speech already mentioned he expatiates upon this point: 'I wish to state that, apart from strictly political questions and such as are of fundamental importance to the Revolution, criticism may be exercised to a limited degree in all other subjects'.

Thus political questions, the life blood of any serious Press, the questions which are of vital concern to public opinion, may not be handled critically. Even non-political subjects may not be criticized too sharply. Here the dictator's intention is not so much to safeguard what is attacked as to extirpate the habit of criticism altogether, even where it has nothing whatever to do with politics. The dictatorship is bound to foster a passive, slavish mentality, and the Press must help.

To all appearance the object has been attained, for the Italian is a master of simulation. Superficially not a breath stirs in the realm of public opinion, but underground criticism is all the more vehement. Thousands of satirical verses upon the Duce and the regime prove the Italian's inextinguishable disposition not to forfeit his independence

[1] Roberto Farinacci, *Il periodo aureo del Partito Nazionale Fascista*, Foligno, 1927, p. 137.

of judgment, even though circumstances may prevent him from risking too much.

Mussolini and Farinacci both speak of the 'services' of the Press. Perhaps an even better idea of what is wanted is given us by Lando Ferretti, until recently the head of Mussolini's Press Bureau, a man who doubtless knew what he was talking about.

In a speech in Brescia on January 8, 1928, in addition to urging propaganda for the Fascist regime as the most important task, he called for colonial propaganda through the Press in these words:

'It is useless to assert we want to be an Empire until such time as we inspire the masses with a fever for imperialism. It is for the papers to inject this imperialist fever, to scream that our colonies are about to transform the Lybian desert into fertile soil. One must instil the Italian people with a warlike spirit.'[1]

Papers to hound the country into war! This is the most important task of the Press according to a leading official journalist, one of Mussolini's intimates. Those who remember the frightful consequences of the subtle war agitation of the Press before and during the Great War will realize what poisoners of world peace are at work in Fascist Italy, encouraged by the Government itself. The war agitation going on in Italy through the Press is no longer a purely Italian concern, it demands international attention.

In comparison with the Press of England, Scandinavia, France or the United States, the Italian

[1] Lando Ferretti, *Esempi e idee*, Rome, 1930, p. 254.

Press of to-day is inferior in every respect. The iron clamp of dictatorship produces a grey uniform monotony, a mental void which, especially in Italy, is worse than depressing.

The foreign news service of even the biggest papers is inadequate. Although well backed financially, as may readily be understood, for political reasons they frequently have to publish only news of minor importance. To quote one example only of the Fascist international news service: During the Spanish Revolution of 1931 the Royal Family was described in all possible detail, every event within the Court was reported exactly, the registers of sentimentality were assiduously played upon, but no correspondent dared risk unveiling the real social and political background of the Revolution, for that would have injured the interests of Fascism at home. The Senator and former Foreign Minister, Tittoni, has openly admitted that 'the Italian public is not sufficiently informed about events in other countries by our Press'.[1]

But Mussolini does not merely hinder the truthful spreading of foreign news in his country; he has also set to work to control the news services of foreign papers represented there. This is managed by having all newspaper telegrams from the private telegraph and radio offices, which are in the telegraph building on the Piazza San Silvestre in Rome, passed on immediately to the Central Post Office opposite, where a 'committee of revision', the existence of which is not officially admitted, but which, none the less, works very effectively, censors the telegrams,

[1] Tommaso Tittoni, *Italien's Aussenpolitik*, Munich, 1928, p. 75.

either by detaining them so that they lose all news value, or by suppressing them altogether. This they do more especially when the news submitted deals with economic or financial matters.

The correspondents of the great papers with world-wide circulation, nevertheless, by dint of a certain generosity, obtain ample information upon almost all events and manœuvres in this censor's office and thus are placed in a position to act accordingly. The bribes the correspondents willingly mete out find their way not exclusively into the pockets of Post Office officials; it is mainly the employees of the various ministries [1] who complete the often false or worthless official pronouncements by authentic, if not absolutely reliable, reports.

The Italian public is also very incompletely informed as to current events at home. Stirring political sensations such as the dismissal of Ministers, important trials before the Special Tribunal, occurrences within the Fascist Party, and so on, are forwarded as a laconic statement by the semi-official news agency *Stefani* to all newspapers in the country. These then print them the following day, frequently using the same headlines and the same expressions of praise or blame. In the long run this monotony becomes ridiculous; it is as though one and the same record were being played on a number of gramophones.

As examples I quote a few instructions (*Ordini di Servizio*) sent out to all papers from the Press Bureau of the Prime Minister which, in spite of the police spies' vigilance, could not be kept secret and

[1] Percy Winner (former American correspondent in Rome): *Fascism: Year VIII*, London, 1931, p. 8.

leaked out abroad.[1] May I point out that, although the papers are frequently merely ' recommended ' to take some particular line, these ' recommendations ' are in fact commands.

From the order of August 3, 1932 :

' The *Popolo d'Italia* will publish a treatise by the Duce written for the *Enciclopedia Italiana*.

' Papers may publish this article from to-morrow noon onwards, not earlier, otherwise confiscation. Use readable type and correct with care. The article, which will be published on the first page of the paper, must be introduced by the following note : " The XIVth Volume of the *Enciclopedia Italiana* publishes, in the second part of the article ' Fascism,' the following treatise written by the Duce, which is devoted to the political and social doctrine of Fascism ".'

An order of August 12, 1932 :

' Publish the diplomatic *revirement* in grand style on the front page, with the title spread across the whole page, and a commentary which is to represent those who are leaving in an amiable manner.'

The following order concerning an absolutely unimportant detail of an unpolitical nature shows how tight the muzzle has been fitted (August 13, 1932) :

' Several papers, in considering the special railway rates accorded to honeymoon couples visiting Rome, have discussed the suitability of extending this favoured rate to couples who wish to visit Venice. The papers are requested to publish no further references to such an extension.'

How national discipline of the Press is fostered : ' Publish the news about increase of unemployment in England in striking style '.

[1] Reprinted in *Libertà* (Paris), October 20 and 27, 1932.

Compare this : ' Papers, on penalty of confiscation, are not to publish the news of the aeroplane accident in Rome '.

Enthusiasm by command :

' Papers are required to publish enthusiastic articles upon the return of the Olympic team to their native land and news of the receptions which are taking place in their honour in the various cities of Italy, and rapturously to praise these young Fascist athletes as well as the successes scored by them at the Xth Olympiad.'

' Speak with warmth and enthusiasm of the camp " Dux " ; praise the perfect organization of the youthful blackshirts.'

What is on no account to be published :

' Absolutely forbidden to publish the news of the alleged unrest in Apulia and the Basilica, as the events are of little importance.

' Papers are requested to abandon their bad habit of publishing letters from Paris.'

' Suppress entirely the news circulated by *Stefani* concerning a voyage of the Duce in the near future.'

' Papers are requested to avoid all neuropathic adjectives, as, for instance, " terrible, mad, marvellous ".'

Mussolini's will for peace :

' Make sympathetic comment upon the re-birth of the military spirit in Germany. It will be expedient, however, not to publish these comments under neuropathic or alarmist headlines.'

Orders concerning lawsuits before the Fascist Special Tribunal :

' Provincial papers are generally requested only

to publish the news given out by *Stefani* concerning the trials before the Special Tribunal.'

'Papers are to give but little space to the trials before the Special Tribunal. In their reports they are, in headlines as well as in the text, to avoid the terms "students" or "young men". They are simply to write, "Anti-Fascists".'

How the Duce attends to his own fame:

'Publish in grandest style on the front page news of the vast echo which the Duce's article about Germany's right to legal parity has caused abroad.'

This is a small selection from the activities of Mussolini's Press Bureau in August, 1932. Now a few samples from September and October, 1932.

On September 20: 'Comment extensively upon the Duce's speech to the Bersaglieri in Rome; the speech is to appear on the front page and in italics'.

On September 23: 'Papers are not to publish the results of the municipal elections in Sofia'.

'The greatest possible advertisement must be made for the next trip of the *Rex* [the new Italian ocean liner]; papers are to publish enthusiastic articles about this new achievement which was desired by the Duce.'

'Papers are reminded that, on the basis of the regulations of public safety now in force, it is absolutely forbidden on penalty of confiscation to publish news of suicides or attempted suicides.'

On September 27: 'Publish the news about the French manœuvres on the front page. Papers are urged at the same time to use the term: "Great French Manœuvres".'

On September 28 the agitation for war was taken up again: 'Emphasize the difficulties the

Disarmament Conference is meeting with. Comment favourably upon von Papen's declaration as to Germany's right to parity of armaments.'

On October 1 : ' It is forbidden to spread news of the granting of amnesty to and liberating from exile of the banker Riccardo Gualino'. (Gualino, as is generally known, was condemned to several years' imprisonment and exile for his vast swindles.)

' As to the damage done to the *Rex* and its stay in Gibraltar, abide by the material sent out by *Stefani*. Directors of papers are personally responsible for observance of this order.'

' Papers are not to reproduce the news of a French honour having been conferred upon Toscanini.'

On October 2 : ' The Duce's speech in Rome to members of the liberal professions must receive the greatest publicity. The text of the speech itself to be printed in heavy type or in italics.'

Although they must refrain from expressing any free opinion as to politics or other problems of national importance, the papers, as is clear from official orders, are bound to surpass each other in adulation of the Duce. It would nauseate any normal reader if I were to cite too many examples of this grovelling abasement. Two, picked out at random, speak for themselves.

La Stampa (Turin), on August 7, 1932, ended an article in memory of the retiring editor Turati as follows :

' And we turn our thoughts upon Him, who, with a firm eye, reads the human heart. . . .'

In the *Corriere delle Sera* of September 3, 1932, Adolfo Cotronei observed of the reception granted

by the Duce to the Italian Olympic victors of Los Angeles: 'What have we ever to fear? He commands us, the Invincible, the Unshakable!' After a description of Mussolini kissing the Olympic champions, this typical specimen of the Fascist quill-driver rises to the following prose: 'He appeared to you and he was at that moment—Divine!'

Mussolini, after frequent comparison at the hands of his literary lackeys to all great men, generals, poets and philosophers from Dante to Napoleon, has now happily arrived at God Himself.

We must not forget that the paragraphs quoted above are not from irresponsible minor local sheets —which offer much more than that—but from the two biggest and most respected papers in Italy, papers which have also a large circulation all over the world, whose tone, therefore, compared with the rest, is discreet.

A further cause for the low standard of journalism of Italian papers is that they are obliged willy-nilly to accept the collaboration of many leading Fascists possessed of not the slightest pretentions to literary ability. (This fact was admitted by Aldo Borelli, the present editor of the *Corriere della Sera*, to one of his own correspondents, who reported it to me.)

It seems rather ironic that although only Fascist papers exist in Italy, several of them have been confiscated. Even *Regime Fascista* (Cremona), the mouthpiece of Farinacci, the former Secretary-General of the Fascist Party, one of the most radical Fascists in the country, suffered this fate on September 18, 1931, for publishing a military article. The clerico-Fascist *Avvenire d'Italia* was confiscated

on September 20, 1931, for having shown a 'too one-sided view of history' in an article treating of the 20th of September, 1870. The prefect in charge of proceedings appears to have realised that such an act, even in Fascist Italy's records, was something of an innovation, for in his decree he did not cite any precise legal basis, but stated laconically: 'By virtue of existing regulations . . .'

The severe Press laws cannot prevent the anti-Fascist Press, be it conservative, monarchist, liberal, republican, socialist or communist, from enjoying a wide secret circulation. Some of these sheets are manufactured in Italy, others, such as the extremely popular satirical *Becco Giallo*, are introduced from abroad in a thousand ways (printed on particularly thin paper and weighing but a couple of grammes). The intelligent newspaper reader has for so long been bored by the everlasting sameness of the official Press, which is not even permitted to publish non-political news of real interest, that he snaps greedily at the anti-Fascist papers and pamphlets which are frequently merely hectographed. *Giustizia e Libertà*, the association which aims at concentrating all the anti-Fascist forces, has made the most strenuous efforts to distribute these papers. For the most part it is youths, students and workers, who edit and maintain them at the risk of imperilling their lives and liberty. Let us but recall Bassanes' flight over Milan, and Laureo de Bosis' over Rome, when both cities were strewn with anti-Fascist pamphlets from the skies. De Bosis paid for his daring with the price of his young life, but his example proves that the virtue of civic courage is still alive in Italy.

III FASCIST JUSTICE

THE attitude of Fascism towards justice was fundamentally determined by the manner in which it came into power, and has retained its character for over a decade. The application of brute force in political life for a whole year before the conquest of the State, and the violent seizure of power itself, created a psychological basis which has found expression in a marked disdain for lawfulness and for legal obligations. Moreover, the fact that the Italian people neither were nor are prepared to submit willingly to a dictatorial regime convinced the Fascist rulers that they could not trust the rule of law. Fascism cannot but trample upon justice, for it knows full well that if it did not it would collapse. Fascism and justice are in truth mutually exclusive terms.

The basis of the modern State, the equality of all citizens before the law, has been abolished in Fascist Italy. Thus Mussolini, in his famous address to the Chamber on May 26, 1927, declared literally: '*There is no place for anti-Fascists in Italy*'. The division of the people into Fascists and outlaws has been realized, not only in the administration of justice, but even in legislation.

The following two examples taken at random illustrate the manner of treatment of Fascist criminals by justice.

When Regazzi, the Fascist boss of Molinella, was prosecuted for murder, he frequently called at the residence of the prefect of Bologna, so that the prefect had to beg the fugitive criminal at least to avoid showing himself on the balcony of the prefecture. This same Regazzi was, as a prosecuted murderer, invited to a banquet in Bologna given in honour of Oviglio, the then Minister for Justice.

Count Venino, a professor of the University of Milan, who had been a member of the Socialist Party, was attacked from behind in a village near Monza whilst out driving with his four children in a car. The Fascist secretary, d'Amico, urged a member of the militia to give the anti-Fascist a lesson. This man followed the car, emptied his revolver into it, and wounded the ten-year-old daughter in the spine so that she was lamed for life. Both criminals were acquitted by the Milan jury.

By a Law passed on December 24, 1925, the Government obtained the right to dismiss those civil and military officials ' who do not furnish full guarantees as to their loyal fulfilment of duty or who show a lack of sympathy towards the general political direction of the Government '. Thanks to this law a far-reaching purge set in, for not only had politically suspect elements to be removed, but thousands of Fascists were lining up for places.

The most dangerous consequence of this law was the complete annihilation of the independence of justice. For Mussolini, who had boasted in a speech at Rome on March 24, 1924, that ' *no one respected the independence of justice more than the Fascist Government* ', thereby provided himself with

the means of exercising constant pressure upon the judges. Since then no judge dare allow himself to be guided by purely juridical argument; he must ever strive not to set himself in contradiction to 'the general political direction of the Government,' unless he desire to be immediately relieved of office.

Admission to the organizations of employers or employees is only granted if the condition of 'good political behaviour from the national point of view' is fulfilled. (Article 4 of the Law of April 3, 1926, upon the legal regulation of collective labour relations.)

In the *Carta del Lavoro* (Charter of Labour), which purports to lay down the social principles of Fascism, the economic equality of the citizens is similarly brushed aside. Article 23 of this document provides that employers may only take on employees through the mediation of the official labour bureaus, members of the Fascist Party and the Fascist trade unions being given preference. This legally established ordinance is of tremendous importance for hundreds of thousands of employees, as it decrees their economic death-warrant.

A Law of January 10, 1926, conferred upon prefects the power to withdraw Italian citizenship previously granted to an alien in accordance with the Peace Treaties if 'he who acquired citizenship prove himself unworthy of it by his political behaviour'. This cancellation of citizenship did not stop at the new Italians. Article 5 of the Law of November 25, 1926, reads as follows:

'The citizen who, in whatever form, spreads or communicates abroad false or exaggerated rumours

or news as to the internal condition of the State calculated to injure national credit or prestige abroad, or who carries on any activity whatsoever calculated to damage national interests, will be punished with five to fifteen years' imprisonment and sentenced to perpetual exclusion from all public office. This sentence passed in default of appearance entails *ipso jure* loss of citizenship and the confiscation of property.'

If an Italian abroad dares to criticize either Fascism or the conditions at present obtaining in Italy, he can look forward to loss of citizenship and of property. Economically ruined, he thus falls into that class of 'stateless' fugitives who are hounded from land to land, everywhere persecuted and protected by none.

Yet the crowning point of Fascist justice lies not in these isolated laws, but in the subtly elaborated system of administrative penal measures which, outside Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, linger on only as a relic of mediæval absolutism.

In Italy there were till the creation of exceptional legislation by Fascism only two kinds of administrative penal measures: *ammonizione*, a kind of supervision by the police of persons who had been found guilty of crimes against property or the person, and *confino di polizia*, also called *domicilio coatto*, or compulsory residence combined with severe restriction of personal liberty, for persons who had been sentenced more than three times for crimes against property or the person, and who were considered incorrigible. It was reserved to Fascism to extend these two institutions, in many respects enlarged and intensified, to political opponents.

When Mussolini realized that Italy could not be turned Fascist by peaceful means, he decided that the arbitrary actions and terrorist exploits of his Fascist bands should continue, but with a varnish of legality. The four attempts on Mussolini's life in the years 1925 and 1926 served him as a pretext.

The first attempt occurred on November 5, 1925, the author being the deputy Zaniboni. Zaniboni, however, never got beyond the preparatory stage, because a salaried police-spy, Di Quaglia, instigated and supported him in his preparations in order to have him ultimately arrested as a 'would-be assassin'.

The second attempt, that of the Irishwoman Gibson on April 7, 1926, was a failure. It was later discovered to be the act of a lunatic with no political connections.

The third attempt, that of the anarchist Lucetti on September 11, 1926, also failed.

The fourth attempt, that in Bologna in October, 1926, was the most interesting. The alleged assassin, a boy of fifteen named Zamboni, coming from the ranks of the *Balilla*, the Fascist Youth organization, was lynched on the spot by the Fascist leaders accompanying Mussolini, his dead body being dragged through the city and left unburied for eleven days. From Mussolini's evidence before the magistrate it came out with absolute clarity that the boy Zamboni could not have been the culprit. Mussolini himself described the alleged assassin, and none of the characteristics indicated by him fitted the youth. None the less, his father and his aunt were each sentenced to thirty years'

imprisonment. His brother, who was on military service at the time, was likewise deported to Lipari for five years without the shadow of proof against him. The punishment of the family was obviously intended to frighten off future would-be assassins by the terrible dangers to which their families would be exposed. Many to-day are thus terrified out of sharing in anti-Fascist activities. But few things have laid bare the inhumanity of the Fascist thugs so well as the Zamboni case.

The 232 articles of the Public Safety Act of November 25, 1926, comprise everything necessary for the annihilation of the last remnants of personal liberty.

Article 166, which enumerates the socially dangerous, puts the anti-Fascist ('those dangerous to the national order of the State') on the same level as professional bullies and dealers in drugs. Danger arises not only from actual crimes against the State; it is sufficient for 'public opinion' to denounce a person as dangerous. As there is no public opinion in Italy in the sense familiar to an inhabitant of a free country, it is evident that any insinuation or assertion, if it but come from a Fascist source, will suffice. It is worthy of note that a person may be treated as dangerous to the national order even if he has been acquitted of crime against the State for lack of sufficient evidence. The acquittal goes for nothing. It has often occurred that persons politically suspect have been arrested by the police immediately after acquittal and have never again been set at large—a method of administering justice faithfully copied by Nazi Germany, as was shown in the case of Torgler. Whereas, however,

British public opinion has raised its voice in protest against this barbaric defilement of justice, it has, with rare exceptions, remained silent in the face of similar happenings in Italy. This no doubt was due to Fascist propaganda, which presents the Italian people as a race of savages requiring a firm hand.

The first measure against persons politically suspect is the 'reprimand' (*diffida*). The police summon the persons suspected of anti-Fascism and warn them against indulging in politics. Vigilant personal surveillance and house-searching go hand-in-hand with the 'reprimand'.

The *ammonizione* has more far-reaching effects. It lasts two years. The person admonished must 'live honourably, respect the laws, give no cause for suspicion and may not quit his permanent residence without due notification to the local police'. Further, 'he may not associate with any person convicted or suspect, may not retire later at night or go out earlier in the morning than at a fixed hour, may not carry arms, may not frequent restaurants, public houses or brothels, and may take no part in any public meeting'.

The restrictions for those under police supervision are often economically disastrous. The business man, who may not travel outside his native town, loses both customers and sustenance. The workman who has to be in his factory at an early hour loses his job. Those in the liberal professions also suffer much from these impediments in the exercise of their calling.

Their social position is made still more intolerable. Their friends shun them, for they too might very soon fall victim to the degrading police

control. Even if their friends do not abandon them, they themselves must avoid their closest friends, for the law requires them not to associate with suspect persons, and in the eyes of the Fascists their friends become politically discredited the moment they come into human contact with them. In many cases these wretched people are more keenly affected by their human isolation than by the economic handicap, for they find themselves, all of a sudden, placed among the outcasts.

The last and harshest administrative measure against political opponents is the so-called *confino di polizia* (administrative deportation). Deportation, which is for terms of one to five years, is, like police supervision, ordered by provincial Commissions, convoked and presided over by the prefect, the members of which are: the Public Prosecutor, the Chief of the Police, the commander of the *Carabinieri* of the province, and an officer of high rank in the Fascist Militia. The charge is stated before the Commission by the Chief of Police. An appeal against the sentence may be lodged with a Commission for appeals at the Ministry of the Interior. In practice appeals have no chance of success, as the members of the Commission for appeals are drawn from the same sources and distinguished from those of the provincial Commissions merely by their higher rank.

It is true that the law provides for certain preliminaries; thus the accused must first be arraigned by the Commission and is to be accorded an opportunity of proving his eventual innocence, but all that is merely dead letter. The customary proceedings are far other in practice. The accused

is arrested and only en route for his place of exile is he told the grounds, if any, for his deportation.

Very frequently the reasons are somewhat far-fetched. Francesco F. Nitti, a nephew of the former Prime Minister, was arrested early one morning, taken to the police station and deported for having 'led too serious and secluded a life for a young man of his age'.[1] The wife of Sergio di Modugno, who shot Count Nardini, the Italian vice-consul in Paris, was deported with a five years' sentence for her husband's crime. Sometimes love-affairs play a rôle. If an influential Fascist pays attention to a woman and her husband dares to raise objections he is simply deported 'for political reasons' for the salvation of the regime.

Professor Carlo Rosselli was sentenced to five years' exile for complicity in helping clandestine emigration, but, together with Francesco Nitti and the former deputy Emilio Lussu, he succeeded in escaping to France. His wife was immediately arrested and well on the way towards deportation to Lipari. The English papers, however, discovering that Mrs. Rosselli was English by birth, raised their voices in protest. Mussolini, who only acts the strong man when confronted by weakness, immediately gave way, nay, more, he had the lie spread through the Italian ambassador in London that Mrs. Rosselli had never been arrested. Yet Carlo Rosselli's brother Nello, only an Italian, was immediately deported.

The manner in which the threat of deportation leads to the extortion of tremendous sums of money

[1] Francesco F. Nitti, *Flight*, New York, 1930, p. 54.

by the Fascist bosses is shameful. Thus in Bortigale, in the province of Nuoro, the mayor, who was also head of the local Fascist organization, arraigned four wealthy landowners and informed them that proceedings leading to exile were taking their course. The four men, who had devoted their whole lives to business, and had never concerned themselves with politics, wished to purchase their liberty at the price of 10,000 lire each. Eventually the negotiations became public, causing disgust even in Fascist circles.

Convicts live on the islands of the exiled as they would in gaol, for any contact with the outside world is severely controlled. The Italian navy ensures absolute isolation. On the islands themselves there is roughly one soldier or policeman to each convict. In Lipari the space assigned for the exiles is about 250 acres. The boundaries are under continual vigilance to prevent attempts at flight. Whoever may happen to cross this border even without the slightest intention of flight, is liable to six months' confinement. The penalty for attempting to escape is three years' imprisonment and a fine of at least 20,000 lire.

The supervision of particularly prominent exiles is attended to by special agents and spies, who follow them step for step and never leave them alone.

The exiled are only permitted to leave their houses at special hours : in winter (from November 1 to February 28) they may only go out from five to seven in the afternoon, the number of free hours being increased during spring and summer.

The post is strictly censored and frequently confiscated. There have been cases where sums of

money, large enough to seem suspicious, have been held back. The deported also avoid corresponding with their friends where possible, as correspondence with any person politically suspect is sufficient to establish the criterion of 'dangerous to the national order of the State' and this is sufficient, in its turn, to bring about a second exile. Any attempt to write letters without having them censored by the police leads to six months' imprisonment.

The economic outlook for the exiles is bleak. Few among them can find situations, and the remainder have no possibility of earning a livelihood. The Government used to allow 10 lire (now it is only 5 lire) per day to every exile, but this sum does not even cover the most urgent necessities. As for those who live with their families—this is permitted in some cases—it is still more difficult for them to lead a life worthy of human beings. To make matters worse the native inhabitants of the islands, who are themselves poor, exploit the distressing situation of the exiles and have raised the prices for lodgings and vital necessities.

The regime of 'profound humanity', as Mussolini and his adherents please to call it, makes life as hard as possible for the exiles, for none but members of their own families may support them. This has never been openly proclaimed, but whoever supports political outcasts is himself regarded as an enemy of the regime and is treated accordingly; that is to say, he is either exiled or sentenced by the Special Tribunal. Thus, for instance, the republican Baldazzi was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for having contributed to the support of the sister of the would-be assassin Lucetti.

The exiles who are not in a position to follow a trade or any other regular occupation try to make their common hardships easier for one another. Again and again groups are formed with purely educational aims (any political activity being strictly excluded by the minute control prevailing). Such groups also attempt to ease the economic situation by organizing co-operative kitchens. All these efforts, however, as well as the establishment of small libraries, are subject to severe police supervision. For instance, one day the libraries were searched and the following items confiscated: all books the titles of which contain the word 'revolution', all Russian books including those of Turgeniev, Chekov, Tolstoi, and all 'dangerous' authors, among them Mazzini, Voltaire and Anatole France. It is not surprising to find Fascism treat Mazzini as politically dangerous, but as a rule it cannot proclaim loudly enough its devotion to this champion of Italy's freedom.

The many groups which are formed—exchanging lessons in foreign languages is a leading occupation—are most welcome to the police, for here *agents provocateurs* can creep in and collect incriminating evidence so as to obtain possible advancement, although nothing of any danger to the regime would ever occur, as the deported are only too well aware of the constant spying.

The exiles must have nerves of iron if they are not to find themselves in gaol over and over again. It is not so much the police or the privates of the militia, who have more of 'the milk of human kindness', as the militia officers, who must ever give full vent to their sadistic instincts. The tragic

fate of a Tuscan exile, Del Moro, is well known. A captain of the militia called him a criminal *canaille* behind his back, whereupon Del Moro called him to account for it in the open road. The officer prepared to have him marched off without giving him due satisfaction, and Del Moro knocked him down. He was arrested soon after, and a little later came news of his death. No one will be at a loss for its cause. Once the gates of a Fascist gaol close behind a man he never knows whether he will ever return.

§ THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL

Police supervision and deportation are merely two of the possibilities of persecution to which non-Fascists or anti-Fascists are exposed. The climax is the 'Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State' (*Tribunale Speciale per la Difesa dello Stato*) instituted by the Law of November 25, 1926, for five years, and prolonged for another five years by the Law of June 4, 1931. The King signed these laws, although constitutionally he is pledged not to introduce any special courts for the administration of justice.

The competence of the Special Tribunal covers the crimes directed against 'the personality of the State' enumerated in the first section of the second volume of the new penal code. Many paragraphs have been formulated with an intentional lack of clarity so as to allow the courts a large freedom of interpretation in their findings. There is no point in indicating here the crimes enumerated in the penal code, since these will be dealt with more thoroughly later, and the whole purpose of the

Special Tribunal is not to safeguard law and order, but to persecute and incarcerate anti-Fascists.

One peculiarity of the Special Tribunal should be kept in view: whereas almost the whole of the civilized world has adopted the principle of punishing offences according to the code in force when they have been committed, under Fascism penal laws are retrospective. This has resulted in many convictions for activities which only become liable to punishment under newly-made laws. The retrospective principle was also applied to the laws on public safety, and thereby thousands of persons were placed under police supervision and deported. It is plain that in both cases the only object of making the laws retrospective was to deprive inconvenient fellow-citizens of their liberty, even if they had never broken the laws then in force.

The procedure which governs trials before the Special Tribunal is the code of martial law of November 20, 1869. According to article 551 of this code the Court is authorized to suspend any legal formalities.

A person denounced to the Special Tribunal is immediately put under arrest. Bail is not allowed. The law does not set any time limit to this preventive custody.

The order for the preliminary examination by a magistrate is not given by a judge but by the highest military authority of the place in which the Special Tribunal has its seat. As the Special Tribunal sits in Rome it is in practice the Ministry for War which is competent. As a result Mussolini, who almost always—as at present—retains the Ministry for War in his own hands, has the ultimate right to decide

against whom a preliminary examination is to be conducted. This shows how justice has sunk to the level of handmaid to the dictator. The examining magistrates also are nominated by Mussolini, and may be removed by him at any moment. They need not have graduated in law, so as not to hamper the dictator in his choice of suitable henchmen.

It is in accordance with the character of the Special Tribunal as a 'Military Tribunal of War' —for such Rocco, Minister for Justice, termed it in his speech in the Chamber of Deputies on November 9, 1926—that the president and the vice-presidents (whose number is fixed) are appointed by Mussolini from among the Generals, Admirals, Air Marshals and leaders of the Fascist Militia. The doctorate of law is not required for this office.

The first president was General Sanna. He had never occupied himself with juridical questions, and owed his nomination exclusively to his militant Fascism and his high rank in the Army. At present Cristini, a lieutenant in the Army and General of the Fascist Militia, graces the office of president. He has hardly passed his thirtieth year, yet already he has a fine record as a well-tried Fascist. On the occasion of his nomination the *Tevere* wrote on May 11, 1928: 'A delicate post of great responsibility has been entrusted to a Fascist who has rendered loyal services and has *participated in the activities of our storm troops.* He knew how to defend the State during the war as well as after, he has fulfilled the tasks of yesterday and is inspired by the passions of to-day.' The view this president takes of the duties of a judge in spite of his legal training—he did take his degree as doctor of laws yet never succeeded

in passing his bar examination—comes out in an interview he granted to a reporter before the trial of four Slavs (*Giornale d'Italia* of October 15, 1929): 'The guilt of the defendants', he said, 'is clear as daylight'. The verdict, accordingly, surprised nobody. One of the defendants was sentenced to death and executed, the others were condemned to thirty years' imprisonment.

The judges of the Special Tribunal, like the president and the vice-presidents, are appointed by Mussolini. While the president and vice-presidents, although army officers, are not necessarily, though usually, members of the Fascist Militia, the judges must be officers who hold the rank of consul in the Militia. No legal training is required of judges either, provided they belong to the Army, the Navy, or the Air Force.

What are the consequences of the requirement that judges of the Special Tribunal must be members of the Militia? Neither more nor less than that their verdicts are entirely dependent upon the will of Mussolini. As members of the Militia they are automatically members of the Fascist Party. Now every Fascist, upon admission to the Fascist Party, has to take the following oath: 'I vow to obey the Duce's orders without discussing them and to serve the cause of the Fascist Revolution with all my strength and, if necessary, with my blood'. The characteristic condition of the judiciary in the modern State, its complete independence of judgment, has been eradicated by Fascism. It is not justice but Mussolini in person whom the judges have to serve.

Whereas the bench in Italy normally consists of

six members, the Special Tribunal is made up of not less than thirty. Nor does Mussolini hesitate to select the judges most convenient to him for a particular trial. The case of General Capello is a well-known example.

This General, who had been Chief of the General Staff during the Great War, was charged with complicity in Zaniboni's plot, though he was a man who would manifestly never stoop to such an affair. No proof could be produced, but Mussolini demanded his conviction. General Sanna, the then President of the Special Tribunal, had been subordinate to General Capello during the war. He was perfectly aware that the accusation was unfounded, but had not the courage to give a verdict of not guilty. Instead, he pretended to be ill so as not to burden his conscience by sentencing an innocent man whom he knew and respected. Mussolini, in his anxiety lest General Capello might escape from his clutches, immediately appointed General Freri President of the Tribunal, and to make quite sure of him promoted him from the position of Brigadier-General to full General. Now the farce was staged to perfection, and General Capello was successfully condemned to thirty years' imprisonment.

The position of the accused is indeed desperate. He is not entitled to have legal assistance until after the closure of the preliminary examination. Even then the President of the Special Tribunal is empowered to reject the counsel chosen by the accused and to appoint an official counsel for the defence from the rank and file of Fascist officers on duty at the Special Tribunal. He may even change the counsel during the course of the trial if it suits his

purpose, and in extreme cases may order the arrest of defending counsel.

Only after the end of the preliminary proceedings may the counsel for the defence investigate documents in the case, and even then not all of them. This depends upon the decision of the President of the Court. As a rule the documents are only handed over to the counsel for the defence eight days before the day of the trial, but even this space of time, short as it is, may be curtailed at the President's order, so that counsel may possibly only receive the material of the case on the day of the trial itself.

As, however, the scope of the preliminary examination is unlimited, it is evident that the charge sheet may assume vast dimensions, and consequently it is impossible for the counsel for the defence to make a thorough investigation of the documents, let alone produce witnesses or material on behalf of his client. Thus the aim of precluding the defence from exercising its functions is fully achieved, and a conviction based upon the one-sided activities of the police is assured. No wonder counsel for the defence in the Zamboni trial, which was preceded by preliminary examinations of two years and ended with two sentences of thirty years' imprisonment, declared that he 'deplored not having had either time or opportunity to study more thoroughly the documents of the case' (*Corriere della Sera*, September 8, 1928).

The Special Tribunal—although it has so far never made use of this prerogative—is entitled to fix a date for the trial without having recourse to an ordinary preliminary inquiry, so that neither counsel for the defence nor accused can take any

steps whatsoever to prepare their case, even in charges punishable by death.

The defence has also to face the persecution of the Press. Many papers have demanded that only proved Fascists, who would not offer the least resistance to its vindictive conduct, should be admitted as counsel before the special Tribunal. So, for instance, the weekly paper, *Roma Fascista*, wrote on October 6, 1928:

'The exercise of defence before the Special Tribunal has developed into a kind of happy hunting ground for non-Fascist, or, even worse, for anti-Fascist lawyers. We do not speak of the fees they obtain. But who can prevent the feeling of political solidarity from cropping up, along with the feeling of gratitude for the counsel arising in the defendant? Is it impossible that the counsel infuse a ray of hope for better days, for the day of liberation, in his client during the frequent *tête-à-tête* conversations with him so as to encourage him and even, although indirectly, incite him to impudent mistrust of the Tribunal? And why, after all, tolerate or actually legalize under a revolutionary regime this contact between persons certainly upon an entirely different moral level and united solely by their aversion to the regime? The Tribunal of a revolution is like a court martial. Before the court martial a deserter or an enemy was not defended by an enemy, but by an Italian officer. Before the revolutionary Fascist Tribunal only Fascist lawyers should be admitted to defend, for reasons, we repeat, mainly of a political nature.'

This demand has not been complied with legally, but in practice it has been realized to a large extent,

as non-Fascist lawyers dare not defend anti-Fascists before the Special Tribunal. The implication that they conduct the trials of adversaries to the regime out of anti-Fascist sentiment would only too soon arise. Impossible to estimate the persecution which might ensue in such cases. After a trial before the Special Tribunal, which ended in passing eight sentences of thirty years', two sentences of seventeen years', and one of twelve years' imprisonment, *Roma Fascista* wrote (December 7, 1928):

'All the counsel for the defence are but lackeys of the Opposition who, hunted by Fascism out of politics, have now fled to the shelter of forensic life. But although engaged in professional activities, they do not fail to behave as anti-Fascists of the first water wherever opportunity offers. In this trial two lawyers allowed themselves to be so carried away by their plebeian eloquence, the eloquence of democratic mountebanks, as to utter a couple of phrases deserving of a certain attention on the part of the political authorities. It would be well to investigate further, for some responsible and conscientious comrades were present. Those jabberers who do too much talking, should at last be sent home. It is high time that only Fascist lawyers be permitted to defend the accused before this tribunal of revolution. We cannot tolerate that the first-come rascal should deal in anti-Fascism under the protection of the toga in that very hall where Fascism acquits and condemns.'

In face of this any effective defence before the Special Tribunal is out of the question. The non-Fascist lawyers, comprehensibly enough, are afraid to press legal points, for the borderline between

the political and the legal is not clearly defined in the eyes of the Fascist inquisitors, and their purely professional activity might be looked upon as the outflow of their anti-Fascist bias which, maybe, does not exist. As to the Fascist counsel, they owe it to their party oath and to the pressure which is brought to bear upon them from headquarters not to embarrass the prosecution. Thus, whether the accused be defended by a Fascist or a non-Fascist lawyer his situation is hopeless. Even under the most favourable circumstances the defence may only petition for clemency as to the terms of the sentence. But not even that is always the case. Frequently counsel for the defence degrade themselves so far as not merely to abstain from petitioning for clemency, but actually to support the penalty demanded by the public prosecutor. In a trial in September, 1930, against several Slovenes who were charged with having attempted to bomb the offices of the newspaper *Il Popolo di Trieste*, *counsel for the defence declared that a sentence of death would answer the purpose* (*Corriere della Sera*, September 6, 1930). The same lawyer achieved the insolence of demanding 30,000 lire of the defendant's father as his fee.

The problem of fees plays no inconsiderable part in cases before the Special Tribunal, as the common practice among lawyers is to charge an average fee of 10,000 lire. Take into account that the great majority of the opponents of the Fascist regime do not belong to the wealthy classes, and that 10,000 lire (£170) represents a large sum in Italy, and the object of this practice is plain. Many of the accused are rendered incapable of securing

any legal advice and consequently fall a prey to the most insane sentences from which a lawyer might have saved them. For the Special Tribunal does sometimes acquit if the accusations openly bear the stamp of absurdity and if the accused has never played much part in public life and everything points to his never having been in a position to endanger the regime. But even in such cases verdicts of guilty are easily arrived at if no counsel is there to assist.

From what has hitherto been said it is clear that a sentence passed by the Special Tribunal depends above all upon the wishes of the regime and not upon the violation of clauses in the penal code. We have already related that the Republican Baldazzi was condemned to five years' imprisonment for having given financial aid to the sister of the would-be assassin Lucetti. Authors of similar 'crimes' have had sentences of seven years' imprisonment inflicted upon them, the extent and severity of the penalty depending solely upon the judge's personal fancy and upon the importance of the persons involved. Incredible as it may seem, several women belonging to families of convicted persons were sentenced to two years' imprisonment on October 6, 1928, for daring to accept financial assistance in order not to perish.

Still more tragic is the case of Dr. Germani. He was a personal friend of Matteotti's but had never concerned himself with anything but his medical work. Yet his purely friendly relation to Matteotti was sufficient to render him politically suspect and to make it impossible for him to continue earning a livelihood, as a *certificato di buona condotta* which is required of doctors was refused him. He therefore

went abroad and worked at various clinics in Berlin, Vienna and Paris. When abroad he made up his mind to liberate Matteotti's widow and her children, who are leading a life of torment due to unceasing observation and persecution. With this object in view he went to Italy in February, 1931, but though he had crossed the border with a perfectly legitimate passport he was arrested immediately on arrival in Rome. For months and months he had to suffer torture at the hands of his Fascist gaolers without even being informed why he was persecuted. Finally they went so far as to throw in his teeth an intended assassination of Mussolini. Dr. Germani, who feared the terrible consequences of this accusation which, in spite of his innocence, might deliver him up to death, finally admitted the true aim of his trip to Italy. They did not dare to bring a charge against him for this since, officially, Matteotti's widow is free to move and to leave Italy any time she pleases, though in reality both she and her house are under vigilant permanent guard. Dr. Germani, however, was not set free. It was a foregone conclusion that he must be sentenced for something, so he was accused of complicity in the bombing plots of Bovone, an anti-Fascist who was afterwards executed. In defiance of the fact that Dr. Germani had never known or even seen Bovone or any other of the accused, and that the judges knew perfectly well why he had really come to Italy, he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment so as to prevent all possibility of his keeping Matteotti's memory alive by his own example.

In this same trial Bovone's mistress, Fräulein Blaha, a young Viennese dancer, was incidentally

sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment for not having denounced her lover. After several months' imprisonment, Fräulein Blaha was released, thanks to the protests of the Austrian Government and Press.

The judges may exclude the public from the Court; but even when proceedings are 'open' they nevertheless do not enjoy universal publicity, for only those are admitted who can produce the special certificate reserved for inscribed Fascists and representatives of the Press. In consequence the accused are delivered over to the mercy of unlimited chicanery on the part of the judges. In their defence they may say not one word as to their motives and the background of their actions. Armed police hinder them in any attempt to attack Fascism. An accused who once succeeded in shouting 'Long live Communism!' was immediately sentenced to three years' imprisonment for this crime.

Since, as a rule, witnesses for the prosecution, who happen to be mostly police agents, are admitted, whereas witnesses for the defence are excluded, the trials usually take up but little time. To achieve a maximum of efficiency whole groups of prisoners, who do not even know each other, are frequently tried in a batch. Thus the result of a trial before the Special Tribunal in February, 1931, was that nine prisoners were sentenced to thirty-five and a half years' imprisonment in all—yet it lasted precisely thirty minutes.

The barbarity of the system is shown by the fact that sentences of death are carried out within twenty-four hours. The judicial authority does not even think it necessary to give notice to the families

of the persons so sentenced, so that they might at least attend the funeral. In the trial of the Slovenes referred to above, the families of the condemned only received the news of the death sentences two hours after the execution had taken place; they were not told the place of burial.

Capital punishment is not carried out by State officials, but by squads of the Militia. This is quite in accordance with the realities of Fascist justice. Not the State guaranteeing legal protection, but the Party safeguarding its arbitrary power, is the guiding principle.

It is not surprising to find that there is no means of quashing the sentences of the Special Tribunal. According to the letter of the law an appeal lies if the President of the Court and two consuls of the Militia pronounce in its favour, but it is obvious that this provision is a mere farce; it is beyond all probability that the judges who have passed sentence would later disavow their own verdict or that any consul of the Militia would support them if they did. The revision of a death sentence, even if admitted, would be poor consolation, as the prisoner would be already dead.

Although the Special Tribunal may not confiscate the property of a person appearing before it, this restriction can easily be circumvented by sentencing the accused to imprisonment and, in addition, to payment of a fine consuming his entire fortune or exceeding it.

Reports upon important trials before the Special Tribunal are circulated by the Government agency, *Stefani*. No pains are spared to present the accused as criminals of the lowest order. If they keep silent

they are cowards ; if they give evidence frankly, they are cynical rogues. As has already been mentioned, the Press is strictly forbidden to refer to those accused before the Special Tribunal as 'young people' or 'students'. They figure in the reports as 'anti-Fascists' or, still better, 'Communists', even if it be ascertained that they are Socialists, Liberals or even Monarchists, and sworn enemies of Communism. The object of these reports is clear. Public opinion is to be diverted from scrutinizing too closely the severe sentences passed by the Tribunal, for experience has proved that even citizens of strong liberal feeling are not inclined to worry much about the destinies of Communists ; for the most part they do not ask themselves whether these Communists are really guilty or not.

This misleading of public opinion has a further purpose. It is to convince the outside world that only Communists persist in their opposition to the Fascist regime and that consequently there exist for Italy but two alternatives: Fascism or Bolshevism. This invention has not failed of its effect, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, where anti-Bolshevist psychosis is deeply rooted.

The activities of the Special Tribunal from February, 1927, to April 30, 1932, according to the figures of the anti-Fascist association, *Giustizia e Libertà*, were as follows: Seven persons were condemned to death, and in every instance the death warrant was duly executed; 257 persons were sentenced to more than ten years' imprisonment each (5920 years in all); 1360 to sentences under ten years, and 584 were acquitted. It is however impossible to ascertain how many years those who were

acquitted or released without trial had already spent in gaol, as no limit is set to the length of the preliminary investigation. As no official statistics are prepared of persons who have been imprisoned and then set free as innocent we must once more fall back upon *Giustizia e Libertà*, which reckons them at 12,000. Yet it appears that this figure, like the preceding, is calculated too low rather than too high, for not all trials have received publicity through the Press, and investigation in the archives would probably reveal a considerably higher figure.

There is another side to the picture. When in October, 1922, the Fascists had finally succeeded in getting control of the State, their first concern was with the criminals who had committed, beneath the cloak of Fascism, excesses such that even the most timid justice had to bring them to book. The famous Christmas amnesty of 1922 flung wide the prison gates for the Fascist criminals. It is, perhaps, not out of place to quote a few sentences from the report of the Minister of Justice upon this amnesty [1]:

'The relation of the crime to political aims or movements must be the necessary preliminary condition for the granting of pardon, yet in itself it is not sufficient. The action of one who commits a crime in pursuit of aims contradictory to the politico-social order cannot be measured with the same measure as some deed which injures the law but, at least as to its psychological motive, does not stand in opposition to this order but attempts to act in its spirit.

[1] Quoted in Oda Olberg, *Der Faschismus in Italien*, Jena, 1923, p. 32.

'Hence results as the further condition for the application of amnesty that the deed must have been committed for an aim which, though indirectly, is national. The State may not and cannot renounce self-defence, even for an instant. It may, on occasion, be equitable and wise to cover the deed of the individual with the cloak of forgetfulness when, although against the letter of the law, it is inspired by an aim co-ordinate with the final aims of the State.

'It is plain that a criminal action may be inadequate or unsuited to its political aim, it may also be inopportune or exaggerated; yet in this case also the motive must be decisive. . . . Action aiming to overthrow the existing organization of the State, or to establish a new order or a new regime, as well as the attempts to realize principles or theories contrary to the present conception of the State, are absolutely exempt from the granting of amnesty.'

It had been generally expected that, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome, Fascism would open the gaols for anti-Fascists also, for reasons of political opportunism if not from an awakened sense of justice. This hope was doomed to failure. True, for the sake of publicity an amnesty and reduction of sentence for anti-Fascists was promulgated with great solemnity, but this 'generosity' of the Duce's was nothing but bluff intended to mislead international public opinion. No crime was too great for the amnesty to Fascists of Christmas, 1922, even if the political motive were indirect and frequently concocted at a later date, so as to liberate common criminals from

amongst the ranks of the Fascists. On the other hand, in the second amnesty 15,000 to 20,000 common criminals, but only about 500 to 600 political criminals, were set free. This low figure may be accounted for by the fact that certain crimes were excluded from the amnesty, though reductions of sentence of from five to ten years were granted.

These crimes included plots against the safety of the State (Article 3 of the Law concerning the Special Tribunal); re-establishment of disbanded parties (Article 4); propaganda abroad (Article 5); clandestine crossing of the Italian frontier for political reasons (Article 160 of the Law of Public Safety); anti-national (i.e. anti-Fascist) propaganda abroad; organization or re-establishment of the dissolved 'subversive' parties; offences against the honour of the King, the Regent, the Queen or any member of the Royal Family; attempts against the life and the liberty of the head of the Government; plots against the Constitution; armed rebellion; devastation and plunder with intent to endanger the security of the State; incitement to civil war; attempts to hinder the highest constitutional authorities in the exercise of their office, and insults against the Crown, the Government, the Grand Council of Fascism, Parliament, and the armed forces of law and order (Penal Code, Articles 269, 270, 278, 280, 281, 283–6, 289–90). Almost all political offences, even minor ones, were thus excluded from the amnesty, special attention being taken that the former leaders of the Liberal and Socialist Parties should not be set at liberty. The truth is that behind its mask of invincibility Fascism is afraid. It knows that the people are against it, that the

freedom of the people would mean its death. Hence its sympathy for the common criminal and its panic-stricken fear of liberating political opponents.

§ THE NEW PENAL CODE

The Italian Penal Code of 1889 was one of the most recent in Europe, but nevertheless was comparatively severe. Under normal circumstances it would probably have remained in force for many a decade, since public opinion moves very slowly, and it takes even longer for reforms to reach the statute book.

It was clear from the beginning that Fascism would concern itself with the creation as well as the administration of criminal law, and a new penal code and penal procedure both came into force on July 1, 1931. The Law of December 24, 1925, only authorized the Government to adapt and improve the existing penal code, but matters soon developed in such a way that it was thought necessary to carry out a thorough re-shaping of both code and procedure. It is not surprising that this should have occurred. The Fascist conception of law and its administration differs so fundamentally from that of the modern civilized State that the complete abolition of the existing laws and methods was indispensable. Otherwise place could not have been found for the resuscitated penal system of the Inquisition.

In the first place, the new penal code reverts to Lombroso's theory of the born criminal, which entails in practice the establishment of very severe penalties. The pre-Fascist Italian criminologists had successfully combated Lombroso's view. Turati

tried to explain the criminal mainly as the outcome of the capitalist constitution of society, whilst Ferri took the middle course of presenting him as a component of both social and biological factors. Fascism has cast aside all the achievements of the formerly renowned Italian school of criminology as well as the lessons of modern criminal research, and adopts a moralizing attitude towards the criminal.

These opposing conceptions differ not merely as to suitable terms of punishment, but also as to the fashion in which it should be administered. Modern criminology, in view of the necessity for and possibility of reforming the criminal, does not limit punishment to the rigid penitentiary system, which is chiefly successful in fostering anti-social tendencies. On the contrary, it assigns well-graduated penalties as well as various forms of supervision and tutelage, thus ensuring both the protection of society and the reformation of the criminal. Fascism, on the other hand, adheres to that system of administering criminal justice which does not aim at the reformation of the criminal, but desires merely retaliation for the infringement of the law.

Fascism, which knows no other attitude toward the criminal than that of blind persecution, has not unnaturally increased the number of offences. Whilst the former penal code managed with 498 Articles, the new code counts no less than 734. We cannot now quote them all,[1] but may perhaps mention a few of the more serious innovations and severer penalties.

[1] Some are ludicrous, e.g. swearing and cursing are prohibited (Articles 724 and 726). Swearing is so characteristic of the country that the proverb says even the Pope swears.

There is, first and foremost, section ten of the penal code, which deals with ' offences against the integrity and health of the race '. Fascism, in accordance with its population policy, which will be discussed later, penalizes any action which may endanger the increase of the population. For this reason sterilization (Article 552) is punished with imprisonment (up to two years) and fines (up to 5000 lire). This penalty is to be applied equally to the person who performs the operation and to the person who has, of his own free will, undergone it. Propaganda for contraceptives (553) is punished with imprisonment (up to one year) and fines (up to 1500 lire).

The clerical bias of the Fascist penal code clearly emerges from the severe punishment for rape (519), adultery (559), and concubinage, as well as ' offences against religious sentiment and against the piety of the dead ' (402 *et seq.*). Not merely offences against religion itself give rise to punishment, but likewise those against priests (403) and the consecrated vessels. In the two last-mentioned cases the penalty inflicted is harsher: a maximum of three years' imprisonment instead of two.

It is interesting also to note that the new code makes a distinction between the *religione dello stato* (State religion) and the *culti ammessi dello stato* (cults admitted by the State) in that the same offences are more lightly punished if directed against the latter than if directed against the former.

Particular attention has been accorded to political crimes which, with characteristic grandiloquence, are defined as ' Offences against the international personality of the State ' (241 *et seq.*). Whilst in other

countries, comprehensibly enough, *political* criminals were the first to be exempted from capital punishment, Fascist Italy has introduced it extensively for offences of this nature so as to protect the dictatorship. The following are punished by death: The rendering of war services to a foreign Power against the Italian State by a citizen holding a superior command in the foreign army (242). (The extraordinary feature of this is that it is valid also for persons who have lost Italian citizenship for ever); having relations with a foreign power with intent to make war against Italy (243); destruction and sabotage of military works (253); suppression, falsification or theft of documents or deeds concerning national safety (255); illegally procuring information concerning national safety (256); political or military espionage (257); attempting to obtain information the divulging of which has been forbidden (258); and the utilization of State secrets (263).

True, the law stipulates that in cases of crimes committed under Articles 253, 255, 256, 257, 258 and 263, the death penalty is only to be inflicted in the event of 'the action having compromised the military preparation or efficiency of the State or its military operations'. It is rather obvious, however, that this vague notion of compromising may include *a priori* all the activities cited above, thus nullifying the saving clause.

Here are a few of the other offences against the 'international personality of the State'. These might be described more exactly as offences against the Fascist dictatorship, for they have nothing to do with the Italian State and serve but the aims of the party.

There is first of all, the famous Article 269, which threatens the 'citizen indulging in anti-national activity abroad' with a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment. This aims at muzzling the Italian living abroad. Whether intentionally or not the text of the law is not very clear. It runs thus: 'Any citizen spreading false or tendentious news which might disturb diplomatic relations with foreign Governments, injure the national credit at home or abroad, throw the population into a state of unjustifiable alarm, or in any fashion cause disturbance of the public peace, will be sentenced to not less than five years' imprisonment'. It is evident that even the circulation of news in accordance with the truth may be subsumed in this wording of the law. The danger of this Article is still further enhanced by the fact that a minimum term, but no maximum, has been laid down, an innovation in criminal law which is indeed deplorable.

This was not a new offence but was already dealt with by Article 5 of the Public Safety Law of November 25, 1926. One example may suffice to indicate what it then led to. In September, 1926, the twenty-year-old Mario Chiossone was arrested in Boston, Mass., for clandestine immigration and the illegal sale of liquor. As he did not want to return to Italy he told the American authorities that he was an anti-Fascist and would be killed at home by the Fascists. The authorities did not believe in his assertions and sent him back to his native land. It is true, he was not killed in Italy, but he was sentenced by the Special Tribunal to twelve years' and three months' imprisonment for his declarations in America. No one ever took the

boy's assertions seriously and the sentence shows that the prestige of Fascism and the interest of the State are considered identical.

No maximum penalty has been fixed either for the re-establishment of disbanded parties (Article 270). It is merely laid down that those responsible for 'subversive associations' will receive five to twelve years' imprisonment, the penalty to be increased in the event of the re-establishment of disbanded organizations.

Also worthy of mention is Article 274, which stipulates that anyone taking part in an international organization in Italy not approved by the Government may be fined from 1000 to 10,000 lire. This is mainly directed against international pacifist organizations (and trade unions internationally connected, of course) which are all forbidden in Italy; and gives one a better idea of the sentiments really fostered in Italy than the periodic panegyrics to peace of Mussolini and his foreign ministers. The establishment of international societies without the approval of the Government calls for even severer punishment—up to six months' imprisonment or a fine of 20,000 lire.

Next come political crimes defined in the penal code as 'offences against the interior personality of the State' (Article 276 *et seq.*).

The death penalty is to be inflicted in cases of attempts upon the life, safety or personal liberty of the King, the Queen, or the Heir to the Throne, and of successful attempts upon the life of other Members of the Royal Family.

The person of the head of the Government is placed on the same level as that of the King; in

his case also any attempt upon life, safety or personal liberty is penalized by death (280). This Article has obviously been cut to fit the person of Mussolini. There is no other penal code in which the protection of the Prime Minister receives the same sanction as that of the King. But Mussolini goes further. Article 282 enacts: 'He who offends the honour or prestige of the Head of the Government will be sentenced to from one to five years' imprisonment'. The wording is far from precise, nor is it meant to be so: Mussolini is to be referred to only in tones of slavish adulation or his 'prestige' might be injured. This Article protects Mussolini both as a private person and, still more important, as a politician.

The death penalty is also inflicted for armed insurrection against the State (284); plunder for political motives (285); inciting to civil war (286); and usurping political authority or military command during war (287).

Further offences against the 'interior personality of the State' which seem worthy of quotation are vilifying of constitutional bodies (290) (the Grand Council of Fascism is ranked among these), for which the penalty is one to six years' imprisonment; public vilification of the Italian nation, penalty one to three years' imprisonment; and vilification of national emblems (the Fascist Party emblems count among these) for which the penalty is the same.

Fascist jurists themselves admit that Italian legal institutions were not in need of a new penal code, but that it was a measure taken by the dictatorship to bestow a varnish of legality upon its rule of

violence. The reactionary social background is frankly stressed. In the great Commentary to the new penal code by Saltelli, Romano and Di Falco we read: 'The new code provides energetic means for the defence of the State against the dangerous classes'.[1] It is surprising that these lines escaped the censorship, for they reveal more of the true character of the Fascist State than is pleasing to its rulers.

Of importance outside Italy is Article 7, which enacts that offences against the 'personality of the State' committed by foreigners on foreign soil are liable to prosecution and punishment as generally stipulated in Italian law. Anybody once guilty of criticizing Mussolini or Fascism is thus liable to arrest and many years' hard labour upon arrival in Italy.

As to the administration of the criminal law, the decree of March 23, 1931, sees to it that the Assize Courts are suitably constituted. They are to consist of a president, a councillor of the court of appeal, and five assessors. To qualify for nomination as an assessor a man must be an Italian citizen enjoying full political and civic rights, between thirty and sixty-five years old and of blameless moral and political conduct, and he must come under one of these headings: Members of the Grand Council of Fascism, the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies, or the National Council of Corporations; members of the *Accademia d'Italia*, and other academies and institutes; presidents of provincial councils; mayors

[1] Carlo Saltelli—Enrico Romano—Di Falco, *Commento teorico-practico del Nuovo Codice Penale*, Rome, 1930, p. 13.

of municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants ; authors of scientific, literary and other humanistic works ; academic graduates or bearers of diplomas from institutes of higher education ; those who have passed through secondary schools and pay at least 1000 lire income tax a year ; public employees who reached matriculation standard ; presidents and secretaries of the legally recognized organizations of employers and employees, or Fascist Party secretaries.

These provisions make local justice the servant of the well-to-do and of Fascist Party officials. In practice Fascists only can be assessors, the consequence being the complete dependence of this form of justice upon the Government, since every Fascist is bound, by virtue of his party oath, to absolute obedience to the orders of the Duce. The hundreds of farcical verdicts pronounced by courts of assizes when Fascists have sat in the dock prove that they have performed their task in fitting manner.

IV EDUCATION AND RELIGION

MAKING use of the schools for the furtherance of political aims is no novelty, and it may be expected as a matter of course in such a system as Fascism. The leaders of the French Revolution were the first to recognize the great importance of public education in moulding the minds of adolescent citizens along certain political lines. They acted accordingly, and since then no ruling political class, anxious for its future, will leave education outside its sphere of influence. This assumes different forms according to whether it is exercised by democratic or dictatorial States. The democratic community contents itself with providing a thorough grounding in matters intellectual—mental armour. Democracy will not give preference *a priori* to any one doctrine of social philosophy, since it denies the possibility of applying absolute terms of measurement to political thought and political will. Fascism, on the contrary, must of necessity be absolutist in the world of ideas. It can admit but one trend in thought, and one of the main functions of public education under Fascism is, not to train youth to think for itself, but to turn it into an obedient instrument.

Gentile's 'reform' of the year 1923 turned Italy's democratically organized and democratically managed school system into a network of Fascist propaganda. It became 'an instrument of the

regime', as a well-known Fascist author declared.[1] Since then there has existed 'no educational institute, from elementary school to university, exempt from the task of moulding the Fascist conscience and the Fascist will'.[2]

Thanks to these new-found duties teaching in Italy is now mainly concentrated upon humanistic subjects, for it is very clear that history and literature are a better medium for Fascist propaganda than natural or applied science. Fascist 'reformers' are not perturbed by the fact that this over-emphasis has always been the very thing to guard against in Italy, the home of humanism. An extension of technical and professional education would be desirable instead, and pre-Fascist, liberal Italy actually pursued this line. The Fascists, however, are out to secure their political destiny, not to lay practical foundations for the education of the nation.

What then are the ideas which are to become the common property of the Italian people?

First place must be accorded to a patriotism strongly tinged with Nationalism and chauvinism. As only class-books authorized by the State may be used, it is possible to inoculate children with strong doses of Nationalism from the first reading exercises onward to their higher studies, and since no distinction is made between patriotism and Fascism the conviction that Fascism is a patriotic duty is fostered in the minds of the children.

As example we may, perhaps, quote from the

[1] Giovanni Corso, *Lo stato fascista*, Rome, 1929, p. 242.

[2] Achille Starace, secretary of the Fascist Party, in the *Europäische Revue*, Berlin, November, 1932, p. 705.

book, *Allegretto e Sevenella* (Milan, 1925), by Virgilio Brocchi and Andrea Gustarelli :

'In France, England, and Germany, in the whole of Europe, Asia and America there have everywhere been great men. But fate has smiled in especial upon Italy, for from ancient Rome onward it seems to have inherited the mission of teaching beauty, justice and science to other races.'

This is from another book with a large circulation :

'Religious dogmas are not discussed for they are truths revealed by God. Fascist principles are not discussed because they emanate from the mind of a genius, that of Benito Mussolini.' [1]

Textbooks are not everything. Most important of all is the work of the teachers. They may let slip no opportunity, be it a political event or something connected—no matter how remotely—with the lesson itself, to point to the grandeur of the Italian nation, and remind the children that they must sacrifice life itself if necessary for the mission to which the Italian race has been called. The military tinge to the patriotism that is fostered in the child mind is revealed by the fact that teachers are requested to bring home to children that 'if our country to-day is great, respected and feared, we owe this to the thousands upon thousands of heroes who laid down their lives on the field of battle '.[2]

There is nothing surprising in teachers having

[1] Valerio Campogrando, *L'Ordinamento dello Stato Italiano*, Turin, 1928, p. 6.

[2] Umberto Renda in *Civiltà Fascista*, Turin, 1928, p. 487 *et seq.*

to ' glorify the personality of the Head of the Government, Benito Mussolini ', on all occasions, fitting or unfitting. The school day itself must be opened with a patriotic song such as *Giovinezza*, the official Fascist hymn, or the *Balilla*, the hymn of Fascist youth organizations, the Royal Anthem, and so on. (Note that the Fascist hymn is placed before the Royal Anthem.)

It is furthermore the duty of education authorities and teachers to adorn the class-rooms with portraits of great personalities who won fame in the *Risorgimento*, the Great War, or the service of Fascism. Local Fascists who perished in battle are to receive special attention; their memorial tablets are to be honoured perpetually with fresh flowers.

All this applies to elementary schools, where chauvinism is chanted to melody in consideration of the mentality of small children. Nationalist education in secondary schools assumes other forms. The first term of the year is heralded in by a parade. The school children have to march past the school flag and give the ceremonial ' Roman Greeting '; then follows a political speech by one of the teachers. Further, a Ministerial Decree of May 15, 1923, recommends excursions to the ' redeemed ' provinces, or to the altar of the Unknown Warrior in Rome—these for the benefit of pupils who have especially distinguished themselves. Instead of initiating adolescents into the mysteries of art, the beauties of the ' ordeal by steel ' are held before their eyes.

Secondary school teachers are in addition required, in virtue of the Ministerial Decree of

December 5, 1929, to influence pupils to join Fascist youth organizations exclusively. One of their tasks is actually to carry Fascist propaganda into the families of their pupils.

Secondary schools are not available to all; on the contrary, under Fascism fees have been increased and terms of admission tightened up.

The introduction of religious instruction into the school curriculum is also important for the right understanding of Fascist school reform. Giovanni Gentile, the author of this innovation, declared in 1907:

'Confessional teaching coarsens the spirit and bestows a new harshness upon it. Brotherhood is replaced by division, collaboration by intolerance. It brings with it yet another defect even worse than intolerance: an instinctive resistance to the free development of scientific thought in the broadest sense. The confessional school is thus no school; it is the negation of school'.[1]

Sixteen years later Signor Gentile had become an Excellency and Minister for Education. He now discovered his Catholic heart, and we read in the Decree of October 1, 1923, signed by Professor Gentile in his capacity of Minister:

'The basis and the crown of all grades of elementary education must be the Christian teachings in the form in which Catholic tradition has preserved them. The Royal inspector for schools will conform to the views of the local clerical authorities in judging of the fitness of teachers or other persons to impart religious instruction.'

[1] Quoted by Giacomo Matteotti, *The Fascisti Exposed*, London, 1924, p. 54.

It is worthy of note that religious instruction is imparted by ordinary teachers, and that it is limited to the elementary schools. This brings out the fact that political motives lie behind the clerical aspects of this 'reform'. If Gentile had genuinely wished to raise the standard of religious knowledge and sentiment among boys and girls he would have commissioned those whose exclusive vocation it is —the priests—and not ordinary teachers, whose training in religious instruction must naturally be defective. Furthermore, the Church authorities justly raised an objection to religious teaching being limited to elementary schools. What was good for these types of school should be good for secondary schools also. Both contradictions are due to politics. The exclusion of competent priests was intended to prevent the Church from gaining a hold over the souls of little children and endangering Fascism's educational monopoly. The limitation of religious training to elementary schools proves that Fascism is fully alive to the usefulness of religion in teaching humility and submission to the uneducated, if hardly to the more cultured classes of society.

So long as Gentile was Minister, the Church really had a comparatively difficult stand to make against the State. Since his resignation, however, it has gained more and more influence, and to-day this goes so far that not only is it necessary for religious textbooks to be approved by it, but even general textbooks have been removed from the list upon request of the Church.

Fascism knew from the first that the intelligentzia was hostile to it. It therefore took steps to purge the entire body of teachers of anti-Fascist elements. In

making appointments preference is given to those who have distinguished themselves in the war, who have passed other examinations successfully, who have published works of their own or ' have other qualifications '. It goes without saying that these qualifications which are not exactly defined are none other than the *curriculum vitae* as a Fascist.

The Government has not merely exercised its influence upon newly filled appointments ; it has also constructed legal machinery to enable it to dismiss teachers who have already been appointed (Decree of January 25, 1923 ; Law of December 24, 1925 ; Decree of January 13, 1927). It has made ample use of these laws, especially in the case of secondary school teachers. One must, however, add that in spite of these measures teachers, especially in secondary schools and institutes for higher education, are to a large extent anti-Fascist in sentiment. Thousands have had to pretend to be Fascist in order to earn their daily bread, though they have never really abandoned their hostility to the dictatorship.

All Fascist teachers, from the elementary school to the university, must belong to the *Associazione fascista della Scuola*, which since the beginning of 1931 has been under the direct supervision of the Fascist Party Secretary, and is devoted to party propaganda.

One more tendency must be pointed out—the exclusion of women teachers from secondary schools and institutes for higher education. This hostility is not based upon a conviction of woman's general mental inferiority, but on her incapacity for the special tasks of Fascism. On May 27, 1929, the

Fascist deputy Lando Feretti made the following declaration:

'Among the twelve thousand teachers in secondary schools there are a large number of women and priests. Now it is a somewhat difficult task for a military education to be carried through by women and priests.'

This pronouncement, made from the State's highest tribune, is the best proof that Fascist schools have but one aim: an education firmly rooted in militarist chauvinism. All the deceitful philosophizing of Fascist intellectuals, who are never weary of loud talk about the 'mental revival' in schools under Fascism, thus appears in its true light. In Fascist Italy school is no more a cultural establishment; it is an institute for military education.

§ THE UNIVERSITIES

Even more damage has been done by Fascism through its 'reform' of the universities. Italy, a country with an embarrassingly high percentage of illiterates, suffered from a superabundance of universities long before Fascism came into power. The only course for reformers mindful of national needs would have been to reduce their number; instead, four new ones were created. Besides this a new 'Fascist Faculty of Political Science' was established at the University of Perugia so as to develop Fascism on doctrinal lines. The professorships are held by tried Fascists who need not, however, have won any renown by their writings. At the same university summer schools for foreigners were instituted in 1925. These, apart from their avowed aim of teaching the Italian language

and literature, serve to spread Fascist propaganda among foreigners.

In elementary and secondary schools, as we have seen, the criterion of judgment in appointing or retaining any teacher is his political creed, and the same principle naturally is applied to the universities. The fact that all Gentile's pupils, however young and lacking in the requisite academic experience, have been appointed to universities of good reputation, is bitterly resented. The rapid advance of Balbino Giuliano, the former Under-Secretary for State and Minister for Education, from teacher in a secondary school to professor of a university, has caused indignation even among his Fascist colleagues. This system of 'political patronage', as may be imagined, has lowered the whole standard of university teaching.

It is not surprising to find that professors active in politics, if anti-Fascist, had to disappear. But Fascism has gone further. It knows only too well that academic circles are instinctively hostile to it. It has striven in consequence to extract an oath of loyalty from university professors so as to be able to show both Italy and the outside world how devoted the learned and enlightened are to Fascism. To this end Mussolini issued the well-known Law of August 28, 1931, Article 18 of which imposes the following oath upon all university teachers:

'I swear to be loyal to the King, to his Royal Successors, and to the Fascist Regime, loyally to observe the statute and the other laws of the State, to fill my office at the university and all other of my academic duties with the intent to train up industrious, upright citizens devoted to their country and the

Regime. I swear that I neither belong nor will belong to associations or parties whose activities are not in accord with my official duties.'

This oath of loyalty established by law the complete dependence of the highest sanctuaries of speculation and research upon the Government. It forms yet another blot on the escutcheon of Fascism. And as so often happens, this bullying is not altogether a success, for the Government is well aware that the overwhelming majority of academic teachers regard it with scarcely veiled animosity. They only took the oath under coercion, and consider it consequently as null before their own conscience and that of the world. It was exclusively for their daily bread and under threat of losing life and liberty that they were forced into taking the oath.

It seems worthy of mention, however, that many of Italy's most illustrious savants had the courage to reply 'No' to the Government. They have preferred to renounce their positions rather than permit the freedom of the mind to be humiliated. Among others the following have refused to take the oath of allegiance: the former Prime Minister, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando; Professor Gaetano de Sanctis, the foremost authority on Roman history; Professor de Viti de Marco, the eminent economist, also well-known abroad; Professor Levi Civita, a mathematician of world-wide fame; Professor Lionello Venturi, whose works on art enjoy a wide circulation; Professor Guido de Ruggiero, known for his *History of Liberalism* which has been translated into most civilized languages; Professor Levi della Vida, a leading Orientalist of international

authority; Professor Zani of the University of Turin; and Professor Francesco Ruffini, former Minister for Education.

If the professors will only be loyal under compulsion, at all events the students must be educated as staunch Fascists. The G.U.F. as they are called (*Gruppi Universitari Fascisti*) were established in 1924. Their development since then has been impressive, and by the end of 1932 they had roughly 58,000 members—that is to say, the bulk of the Italian students. It is not difficult to guess why most students belong to the G.U.F. Since the State, represented by its Fascist rulers, is to be the future bread-giver, economic necessity compels them. Furthermore, membership secures certain privileges which come into effect even during the period of study. The G.U.F., for instance, are entitled to reduced tickets for theatres and cinemas, run certain charitable schemes for their members, and also offer them opportunities for sport. It is planned gradually to establish student hostels in Bologna, Milan, Padua, Rome and Turin, and here members will be assured of cheap lodgings. All this is of importance to students, who often have to count every penny; it is thus comprehensible that membership is sought after in spite of divergent political views.

The G.U.F., like all Fascist organizations, devote part of their work to military training, which is carried out by the *Milizia Universitaria*. Whereas the G.U.F. are placed under the immediate authority of the General Secretary of the Fascist Party, the university militia is organized and commanded by officers of the Fascist militia.

No picture of student life in Italy to-day would be complete if drawn only from official figures and reports. We have already mentioned that students take part, to a considerable extent, in the secret activities of the anti-Fascist *Giustizia e Libertà*. So many students have been denounced to the Special Tribunal in recent years that the Government has forbidden papers to refer to them as such. It so hopes to conceal from the public that it is particularly students who carry in their hearts the ideals of justice and liberty, and are ready to fight and suffer for them. I myself have often been in a position to gather information as to the political outlook of the students in various cities, including Rome. I found more than one student outspokenly anti-Fascist, though he wore the party badge. These youngsters could not hear enough about the working of democratic constitutions, and were sickened by the unceasing flow of official propaganda. In Rome I was actually told by a student, who must remain unnamed of course, that he and other students of economics and political science had formed a group of 'Bolshevist' Fascists. It existed as an ideal, not as an organized group, but for some time it had actually published a paper (shown to me) which preached Fascism of a particular stamp. These students, who held themselves for honest Fascists, claimed neither more nor less in their publication than that the State should take over the entire apparatus of production and that other similar Socialist principles should be adopted. As their starting-point was always their profound, patriotic instinct, their Fascist *credo*, no one thought of reprimanding these young hotheads for their heresy,

though their paper, as may be imagined, had no long lease of life.

In itself this episode is of little importance, yet it is symptomatic of the mental unrest which not even the barrack discipline of Fascism has been able to still. These active young men think far more than their commanders like them to, for they long to know and understand the great social and cultural movements which are recasting the face of Europe. The dull, prison-like atmosphere hampers them ; at the same time, however, it fills them with bitter doubts and critical reflections.

§ CULTURAL PROPAGANDA

The *Instituto nazionale fascista di Cultura*, although not a part of the educational system, is linked with it by similarity of purpose. It has its seat in Rome, and branches in all the most important centres in Italy. Founded by Professor Gentile and directed by him to this day, this institute is entrusted with the task of carrying Fascist propaganda into the more cultivated layers of the population. Another of its duties is to establish libraries and so assemble the pro-Fascist literature of all countries in one place. The institute has striven to awaken interest in the theoretical side of Fascism. This it does by promoting the publication of suitable books. But as there can be no creative work of the spirit where the freedom of the spirit has been smothered, the publications of this institute are on a low level on the whole ; they do not enjoy wide circulation even among Fascist intellectuals.

The Fascist Government makes use of every modern technical achievement for propaganda. The

Law of November 5, 1925, established a 'National Institute for Propaganda and Education through Cinematography', L.U.C.E. (*L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa*), under the direct control of the Government. L.U.C.E. films must be shown at every performance upon penalty of losing the licence. Each of these is devoted to Fascist ceremonies and personalities; and Army or *Balilla* parades, the manœuvres, battleships and bombing planes are especially prominent. Pre-war Prussia seems to live again in these films; military enthusiasm is to be kept alive at any price. After the Press, it is the programmes of the L.U.C.E. which are, to my mind, the most important instruments for mass propaganda in the hands of the Italian Government, for these reach all strata of the population. These programmes, incidentally, tell us more about Fascism than the whole servile theoretical philosophy from Gentile to Panunzio.

To-day there is a steadily growing conviction that the film is a very strong, if not the strongest, force now helping to influence social ideas, though certain political movements are too short-sighted as yet to accord it the attention it deserves. Mussolini's and Grandi's peace talks may sound all most inviting and convincing, but anyone who has seen Fascism hold out the olive branch to the entire world in the name of Italy and has then, that same evening, seen the war-mongering programme of the L.U.C.E. in the cinemas, will draw his own conclusion.

§ O.N.B.

The efforts of Fascism to win the Italy of to-morrow are not limited to the control of teaching.

Of far more importance is the Fascist youth organization, with its membership of over three million, which is known as the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (so named after a young rebel who gave the signal for revolt against the Austrians in 1746). It has a monopoly in its own field and is subsidized by the State; its President is at the same time Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education, where the headquarters of the whole organization are situated. Physical training, formerly given by gymnastic teachers, has now been taken over in its entirety in both elementary and secondary schools by officials of the O.N.B. and of the Fascist militia. This is much more than a mere change of staff. Whilst in democratic Italy athletics and gymnastics had but one object, to make the body strong and healthy, physical training by officers of the Fascist militia serves 'but one aim: the preparing of youth for military service'.[1] This is characteristic of the 'revival' of which Fascism is so proud.

The O.N.B. is comprised of boys and girls from their seventh to their eighteenth year. Boys from seven to fourteen are called the *Balilla*, girls of the same ages *Piccole Italiane*, youths over fourteen to their eighteenth year *Avanguardisti* and girls of the same ages *Giovani Italiane*. The *Balilla* and the *Avanguardisti* are divided up on military lines, the formations of the Roman army serving as models. Thus eleven boys form a *squadra*, three *squadre* one *manipolo*, three *manipoli* one *centuria*,

[1] Ferruccio E. Boffi, *La Scuola media fascista*, Rome, 1929, p. 93.

three *centurie* one *coorte*, and three *coorte* form the *legione*.

Fascism is perfectly aware that its thoroughgoing militarism might lose it many sympathizers abroad. It therefore tries to deceive the outside world as to the real character of the O.N.B. Thus a pamphlet, published in English and French, contains nothing but pious platitudes of which this is a sample :

' The basis and programme of Fascist education is the moulding of the mind and conscience of the young, who will later be called to conduct public affairs.' [1]

This is how the O.N.B. speaks to its own people :

' The basis of the organization of the O.N.B. is purely military ; at the age of eight years . . . the *Balilla* begins to practise his first military exercises. . . . The avanguardist of seventeen is a perfect soldier. He knows how to handle a gun, is accustomed to march long stretches without showing signs of fatigue, to salute his own commanders and those of the army with military correctness.' [2]

The pamphlets published for foreign consumption reproduce touching photographs of skiers, sportsmen and so forth, but the handbook of the O.N.B. for the commanders of the *centurie* offers more interesting material. As illustrations we find models of rifles and machine guns. These are amply dis-

[1] *O.N.B., The Opera Nazionale Balilla,* Rome, 1928, p. 57.

[2] From the handbook for commanders of *centurie, Il Capo Centuria,* Rome, 1931, published by the O.N.B., p. 292. The chapter on ' Training for War ', pp. 75–111, is worth special attention.

cussed in the text,[1] and the necessary attention is given to active service conditions. Now these weapons are not the subject of merely theoretical study. In the third camp (*Dux*) of the O.N.B., for instance, held at Rome in August and September, 1931, a competition in machine gun manœuvres was held for the first time (*Gara gruppi mitraglieri avanguardisti*). Every legion of avanguardists had to supply one machine gun corps which was to arrive in Rome complete with arms. The Fascist film organization, L.U.C.E., filmed these manœuvres, which were to be seen in September, 1931, in all picture palaces. In September, 1934, each *avanguardista* attending the *Campo Dux* was provided with a rifle and bayonet.

In addition to training for war on land, great attention is also given to the nautical and air sides of military education. Thus in August, 1928, six schools for seamen were placed under the direct control of the O.N.B. The outcome is expected to be 'useful for the Navy'. The naval divisions of the avanguardists are made conversant with battleships, and every year there are cruises in which the young seamen learn the art of naval warfare in practice. Trips to the Italian colonies are also arranged. Their aim is colonial propaganda, and thousands of deserving avanguardists take part. The aeronautical divisions of the O.N.B. are also trained for military purposes. Flying in both aeroplanes and gliders is studied and practised; in

[1] Special model machine guns have been constructed for the O.N.B. See *Bollettino dell' Opera Balilla, Supplemento al No.* 1, November 1, 1932; *L'Opera Balilla alla fine dell' anno X*, Ministero dell' Educazione Nazionale, Rome, 1932, p. 7.

addition, over ten thousand avanguardists are trained for air defence.

Since the crowning point of the actual education of the O.N.B. is its military training, it is plain that its moral education also will lay stress on those elements which distinguish the soldier from the free citizen. Discipline, obedience, order and devotion to Mussolini are the four cardinal virtues demanded of the avanguardist. '*Mussolini ha sempre ragione*' (Mussolini is always right) is one of his ten commandments. For the rest we may mention :

1st commandment: 'Know that the Fascist and especially the militiaman may not believe in everlasting peace '.

5th commandment: 'The rifle and the cartridge box have not been entrusted to you to be damaged, but to be kept for war '.[1]

Achille Starace, Secretary of the Fascist Party, wrote [2] of the aims of education for Fascist youth :

'Young Fascists should bear well in mind the aims laid down by the Duce. It is absurd to believe in the possibility of eternal peace, or to accord great importance to constructions of internationalism or social theory. Pacifism means renunciation of struggle, cowardly retreat from sacrifice.'

In the effort to fire enthusiasm for war no opportunity is ever overlooked for comparing the ancient grandeur of the Roman Empire with the Italy of to-day :

'If you listen carefully, with the proud, pure souls of fully developed soldiers, you may still hear

[1] *Il Capo Centuria*, p. 76.

[2] In the *Europäische Revue* (Berlin), November, 1932, p. 707.

the terrible tread of the Roman legions. . . . Caesar has come to life again in the Duce ; he rides at the head of numberless cohorts, treading down all cowardice and all impurities, to re-establish the culture and the new might of Rome. Step into the ranks of his army and be the best soldiers. . . .' [1]

The Fascist Government, forced by its empty treasury to play the rôle of champion of disarmament abroad, indulges in an unbridled war propaganda at home, a war propaganda which may have terrible consequences for world peace. These youngsters, made familiar with rifles from tenderest childhood, to whom any independent thought has been forbidden, are they still of that nation which till now has won the respect of the world for its conquests in the realm of the spirit ?

The O.N.B. has two thousand chaplains, and on Sundays and holidays the young people are in many places led in rank and file to religious ceremonies. The O.N.B. pays no attention whatever to sex problems, but then it is well known that many moral people treat this question very simply—by ignoring its existence. In the O.N.B. the groups of boys and girls are strictly separated so as to make quite sure that no sinful contact between the sexes may be established. It is hoped that the sex complexes may be sublimated by a military education from the tenderest childhood onward. As for boys with an urge towards sexual experience, there are always the officially tolerated brothels. Morning to Mass, the brothel at night ; this is to be expected of Fascism, which brushes past burning problems of life, and

[1] *Il Capo Centuria*, p. 245.

contents itself with sham solutions provided only that decorum be preserved.

The O.N.B. is an uncanny instrument in the hands of the dictatorship. Coercion and the granting of numerous privileges (free books at school, insurance against accidents in school, life insurance of 5000 lire) have already brought matters to the point where two out of three Italian children from 7 to 18 years old belong to the O.N.B. and are exposed to its pernicious influence.

§ FASCISM AND RELIGION

On March 26, 1904, Mussolini made the following declaration in Lausanne:

'It is certain that religion is a psychic malaise of the brain; it is a curtailing and pauperizing of the individual who, if he is deeply religious, appears to us abnormal. Religion is the cause of some epidemic maladies of the mind, for which a treatment by specialists for mental disorders is requisite. Religion has revealed itself as an institution which strives toward political power in order to maintain the exploitation and ignorance of the people.'

After he had deserted Socialism and called the Fascist movement into being, his antipathy towards the Church and religion continued, and the original programme of the Fighting Fasci was extremely anti-clerical. Among other things it demanded the confiscation of ecclesiastical property and the complete severance of Church and State. The martyrdom of the Catholic political and economic organizations, which suffered hardly less at the hands of the Fascist bands than Socialist and Communist organizations,

proves what sentiments Mussolini and Fascism nourished toward the Catholic Church.

Not till the assassination of Matteotti had drawn a final division between the bloodstained tyrant and the law-abiding citizens of the country did Mussolini begin to pipe another tune. Then, in his isolation, he realized that an understanding with the Papacy might be of infinite value in stabilizing his regime. In the years that followed he changed his tone in speaking of religion and the Church, though privately he held to his atheism.

By 1927 matters were so far advanced that the possible bases for an agreement between Church and State were ready for discussion. Two years later, on February 11, 1929, the Lateran Treaty between Italy and the Holy See was concluded, and the secular power of the Papacy, abolished in consequence of the military occupation of Rome by the troops of General Cadorna on September 20, 1870, and the Guarantee Law of May 13, 1871, was re-established by the delivery of the territory of the *Città del Vaticano* to the Holy See.

Even so late as October 20, 1927, in the midst of the parleys with the Holy See, the Fascist Government in the *Foglio d'Ordini* (No. 37), the official bulletin of the party, which is not available to the general public, declared:

'It is obvious that a re-establishment even of the most limited measure of that secular power surrendered by the Pope in the year 1870 would be and is beyond any discussion for Fascist Italy.'

In the same declaration, which manifestly comes from the hand of Mussolini although not signed, it is stated further:

'The Fascist regime, with the entire 20th century before it, may without surrendering any of the fundamental rights of the State, take successful action where demo-liberalism failed repeatedly.'

Not only was territory surrendered, but the Fascist Government, which was itself wrestling with great financial difficulties, pledged itself to pay the Holy See over 1750 million lire in cash as damages for the occupation of Rome in 1870.

Such were the political and financial arrangements; in other matters the Treaty was even more reactionary. The Italian State, which had freed itself both territorially and spiritually from the fetters of the Church in the course of the 19th century and had assumed the character of a non-confessional State, now became confessional once more. The introduction of the canonical law for marriage, the extension of religious instruction to secondary schools, and other concessions made to the Holy See which fell within the pale of law, have assured to the Church an influence of which it could not even have dreamt under a non-Fascist Government.

For decades the Holy See had attempted to come to a peaceful understanding with successive Italian Governments. But its claims were modest. Vittorio E. Orlando, the former Prime Minister, has declared that more advantageous offers were made to him by the Vatican, but that he had been unable to accept them in the interests of his country. Francesco Nitti, Prime Minister in 1919 and 1920, went even further. Immediately after the Lateran Treaty Signor Nitti declared (*Le Quotidien*, Paris, February 22, 1929; *Daily Chronicle*, London, March 4, 1929) that the Vatican had offered him a treaty without either the

financial obligations of Mussolini's agreement or the alterations to the non-confessional character of the code. The *Osservatore Romano*, the organ of the Holy See, attempted, it is true, to give the lie to Nitti's declaration, but when the latter challenged Cardinal Gasparri to take upon himself the responsibility for this denial, announcing that he would publish Gasparri's own proposal if he did, the wise cardinal preferred to remain silent.

Through the Lateran Treaty the Church thus regained vast influence over Italian family life and education. On the other hand, it has burdened itself with a very heavy liability. In the eyes of most Italian democrats, as well as of anti-Fascists as a whole, it has compromised itself badly through its alliance with an un-Christian dictatorship. Its political fate in Italy to-day can be no longer separated from that of Fascism. With the might of Fascism stands and falls the might of the Papacy in Italy. To their great regret, many non-Italian Catholics, interested as they are to uphold the universal character of the Catholic Church, are forced to this conclusion to-day.

The events of the summer of 1931 proved how unfounded was the Pope's expectation of making good the loss of universal respect for the Church by an increase of its power in Italy. The Fascists did not scruple to disband by force the youth organizations of the *Azione Cattolica*, to demolish their premises in many instances and even to endanger the lives of their leaders. This they did not because the Catholic youth organizations had carried on anti-Fascist propaganda; they were merely determined to let no other organizations

whatsoever exist outside the *Balilla*. This troubling of the apparently idyllic calm which had reigned between the Vatican and Fascism since February, 1929, gave rise to a serious conflict. The Pope issued a fulminating encyclical in which he pointed, on the one hand, to the absolutely non-political character of the *Azione Cattolica*, on the other, to their disbandment and the fierce persecution and violence to which they were subjected. He ended by declaring that the totalitarian view of the State adopted by Fascism is irreconcilable with the tenets of Catholicism, and even denounced the Fascist Party oath as anti-Catholic. But under the existing political circumstances he could not very well forbid Catholics to become and remain members of the Fascist Party—after all, they had to earn their daily bread. Pope Pius XI consequently recommended them to take the party oath, but with the mental reservation that their duty towards God and the Church should not be impeached by it.

The conflict between Fascism and the Vatican grew to such dimensions that the Pope was not only grossly insulted—in a confiscated pamphlet he was termed a 'renegade Italian who dares to attempt a coalition of all anti-Fascists throughout the world'[1] —but explosives were actually found in St. Peter's on July 16, 1931. An agreement was ultimately reached, the main stipulations of which were as follows:

The *Azione Cattolica Italiana* is directly dependent upon the bishops, who are to select both its clerical and its lay staff. Former members of

[1] See *Libertà*, Paris, July 23, 1931.

parties opposed to the regime may not be given any leading positions. In accordance with its character as a religious order the *Azione Cattolica* is to abstain from any political activity whatsoever; in its outward organization also it is to avoid any similarity to a political party. The flag of local groups of the *Azione Cattolica* is to be the national one. The *Azione Cattolica* may not call into existence any professional or trade unionist organizations. Finally, its youth organizations are relegated to strictly religious activities. The absolute monopoly of the *Balilla* in the sphere of physical education is thus safeguarded.

This agreement between the Government and the Holy See secured a breathing space of a few years, but nobody knows whether this merely surface peace may not be broken to-morrow by a fresh outburst of Fascist violence and murder.

It is a painful thought for millions of Catholics in Italy to-day, that Catholic social workers owe their martyrdom before and after the Lateran Treaty to the partisans of Mussolini, Pope Pius XI's 'Man of Providence', of whom Cardinal Schuster declared in Milan early in 1930:

'Since the very first hour both the Holy Father and Catholic Italy have blessed the Fascist movement and have conceived great hopes of its youthful force.'

Those hopes were brilliantly justified by the violence employed by Fascist partisans and authorities against Catholic organizations and the Church itself. The Church and its representatives have since become more chary of public adulation of the 'Man of Providence' and his party. The

expressions of international Catholicism are a more reliable standard by which to judge, for the utterances of influential Italian Catholic leaders must necessarily be reserved and prudent. From the former it appears that Fascism is completely incompatible with the fundamentals of the Catholic view of the universe.[1]

As we have said, Fascism was at first strongly anti-clerical, and it was only with the influx of middle-class elements, more especially of intellectual clerico-nationalists after the union of Fascism with the Nationalist Party, that a firmly rooted clerical *bloc* gained a footing in the party and pressed for a concordat at almost any price. Yet in spite of this the Fascist attitude towards religious and ecclesiastical problems has not fundamentally changed.

It is only when Fascism can use religion as its instrument that it accords it any value.[2] This is especially the case in social and economic questions, where religion has been allotted the task of investing the essentially one-sided policy of Fascism with the mysticism of solidarity for the common good.

'The crowd, which knows nothing of the art of subtle differentiation, requires the spirituality, the piety and the catechism of ritual. In the con-

[1] See, for instance, the excellent presentation of the relationship of Fascism to Catholicism which the Catholic priest Dempf published in the November issue of the *Europäische Revue* (Berlin, 1932).

[2] Before Mussolini had seized power, he was one day watching a great ecclesiastical procession at St. Peter's with Pietro Nenni, editor of *Avanti !*, and suddenly called out to him: 'How can a State renounce such a means of influencing the masses ?'

flict of interests the citizens of the State do not and cannot grasp the meaning of social solidarity as a community of interests; it is therefore necessary to replace this by another principle: against the idea of social solidarity must be set that of spiritual and national solidarity, as a union of higher ideals which may unite all.'[1]

The following passage emphasizes still more clearly the rôle of the Church in the Fascist State:

'The State has at all times control over religion exclusively for its own ends; for that reason it rules over it, so that the State at a given moment may oppose religion, especially in connection with the ideal of peace and the necessity of war.'

The more thoughtful Fascists have long been clearly aware that Fascism and the Church are not two magnitudes that may be co-ordinated at will. Now it is slowly being borne in upon many of them, as upon intelligent Catholics, that they are two incompatible worlds.

Noteworthy is the position which Gentile's school, adhering to the idealist philosophy of the State, is taking up. In a fundamental analysis of the problem of the modern State in its relation to Church and religion, occasioned by the pontifical encyclical of the summer of 1931, Arnaldo Volpicelli, one of Gentile's disciples, goes so far as to pronounce Fascism's conception of the State as a religion. After paying obeisance to the 'great spiritual force' of the Catholic religion, he presents as the conclusion of his investigations: 'The

[1] Guido Bortolotto, *Lo stato e la dottrina corporativa*, Bologna, 1930, p. 35 *et seq.*

State and the Church do not stand in any relationship of unity or co-ordination since the latter is included in the former '.[1]

There is no doubt that there must be friction in the long run between two opposed powers, each of which demands exclusive influence in the most important matters, above all, in the sphere of education. The ideal order of the complete 'inclusion of the Church in the State' exists to-day only in the fantasies of Fascist theorists. In practice the Church has known full well how to increase its secular power as well as its spiritual influence.

[1] Arnaldo Volpicelli, *L'enciclica pontifica e il problema dello stato moderno*, Rome, 1931, p. 8.

V POPULATION

EVEN before the war population was one of Italy's most vexing problems. The continuous increase in the birth-rate, outstripping, as it did, the economic capacity of the country, would have produced a dangerous tension within the social structure had not Italian Governments created a safety-valve in a sensible emigration policy.

And here a paradox appeared that holds good to this day : the densely populated, highly developed parts of the country yielded relatively fewer emigrants than did the more thinly populated parts, especially the South. This shows that economic under-development was the most important factor in emigration. In addition to the lesser economic development of the South as compared to the North, the obsolete land system must be considered. In Southern Italy large estates predominate, and history teaches us that countries with large estates like England, Ireland, Poland, Russia, Hungary, Spain, and consequently also Southern Italy, have witnessed mass movements of emigration, while in peasant countries such as Switzerland, France, Northern Italy and Western Germany emigration has kept within narrower limits. The Italian problem of population is consequently purely economic. It can only be solved satisfactorily if the feudal order of the South be replaced by a more democratic

distribution of land which would raise the standard of living of the entire country. Neither task can be brought to any solution so long as Fascism is master of Italy, since it has, to a large extent, grown to power with the aid of the great landowners, and has ever since remained their natural ally. Their position of vantage, so hampering to the economic advance of the whole country, cannot be encroached upon; furthermore, corruption and fantastic armaments have considerably aggravated the general economic situation, of which more will be said later.

In the last quarter of the 19th century the average yearly emigration had risen to the considerable figure of 210,000. It increased enormously between 1901 and 1914, until it reached nearly 616,000. Even mass emigration on this enormous scale could not completely prevent an increase in population, but this was reasonably proportioned to the economic resources of the people.

The early post-war years witnessed a continuation of this policy. It has been the privilege of Fascism to throw over tradition and introduce an entirely new conception; the basis of the new policy is purely military, in keeping with Fascism's imperialist tendencies.

Mussolini himself had appreciated the need for emigration before he began to cherish plans of world conquest. 'Be it good or bad', he said in Milan on April 2, 1923, 'emigration is a physiological necessity for the Italian people.'

Early in 1927 the tension in foreign politics had become extremely acute, and it was then that the new era of restricted emigration began. Economic

motives had to recede into the background before imperialist power and prestige.

In his speech in the Chamber on December 31, 1927, Signor Grandi declared:

'We, as Fascists, must have the courage to say that emigration is an evil so long as it is, as at present, directed towards countries of foreign sovereignty. Emigration is necessary, but it should be emigration to Italian countries and possessions only.'

Signor Grandi's kind invitation to those desirous to emigrate—to go to the Italian colonies, which have no work to offer them as they require capital, not labour—proves that the Fascist Government has not the fate of the emigrants, the possibilities of a livelihood for them, at heart, so much as purely militarist ends which know not citizens, but soldiers.

For reasons of foreign policy also the Fascist Government is interested in preventing emigration into non-Italian countries. In view of the development of methods of warfare the Italian population abroad may prove a source of great disquiet to the mother country. 'In case of international conflicts the presence of Italians in foreign and possibly hostile countries would handicap Italy's political liberty of action.' [1]

There can be no doubt but that these considerations are intended for France. As good patriots the Fascists would prefer to starve Italians to death in Italy rather than to massacre them with poison gas bombs in France.

Thanks to the policy of the Fascist Government the excess of emigration over immigration was only

[1] Count Antonio Cippico, *Italy the Central Problem of the Mediterranean*, New Haven, 1926, p. 40.

an average of 133,673 per annum in the years 1921 to 1927. It fell to an average of 51,085 in 1928-29, that is to say, at a time when many countries were still open to immigrants. It was only in 1930, when the widespread economic misery opened the eyes even of Fascist rulers, that the restrictions upon emigration were temporarily abolished, so that the excess of emigrants rose to 151,000, only to sink, however, to 58,000 in 1931. The year 1932 represents the lowest figures on record, the excess of emigrants only amounting to 10,000, and owing to the closure of all immigration countries this figure tends to sink still further.

In this connection it should be mentioned that anyone attempting to emigrate without proper documents is liable to receive two to four years' imprisonment and a fine of at least 20,000 lire if his action has been prompted by political motives, or from three months' to one year's imprisonment and a fine of from 2000 to 6000 lire if no political question arises. In addition, the authorities on the frontier are empowered to prevent by the use of arms any attempt at secret emigration.

But the Fascist Government is not content merely to reduce emigration to a minimum ; it has also done everything possible to induce Italians living abroad to return home. Propaganda to this end is pursued in the Italian colonies, and efforts are made to swell the stream by reducing the steamship and railway tariffs for repatriation. Since 1927 repatriated emigrants, and women who wish to return to Italy in order to give birth to children, enjoy a reduction of 70 per cent. of the fare from the frontier or port of arrival to their native town.

Whereas in pre-Fascist days Italian settlements in foreign countries acted as self-contained units, Fascism has discovered the art of cleaving the Italian population living abroad—according to the estimates of the Italian Institute of Statistics 9,600,000 souls at the end of 1931. It now comprises two hostile camps, which carry on so bitter a feud against each other as not even to refrain from deeds of violence on foreign soil. As in Italy itself, the Fascist organizations established abroad (*Fasci all' estero*), which are managed directly from Rome, are intended to tyrannize over the overwhelming majority of anti-Fascist Italians.

The United States alone had the courage to put an end to the Fascist terror, and to disband the Fascist organizations within its frontiers. On top of all else the Fascist League had dared to take up an attitude inimical to the naturalization and Americanization of Italians. American citizens had been forced, upon setting foot in their old Italian home, to perform military service, and there was a rapid increase of cases where relatives of anti-Fascists in the United States were grievously persecuted in Italy, as in Nazi Germany to-day.

Yet another consideration may have played a part in the dissolution of the Fascist League in the United States: the military Fascist training of the *Balilla* was inclined to withdraw Italian youth in America from cultural assimilation in the American nation.

§ FASCISM AND THE BIRTH-RATE

It was Mussolini himself who in speeches and articles declared in favour of an increase in the

population. In his speech in the Chamber on May 26, 1927, he expounded his views as follows :

' Italy needs 60 million inhabitants. Some unintelligent people may say : there are too many of us. The intelligent will reply : there are too few of us. I claim that the numbers of a nation condition its political, and consequently its economic and moral power. To count for something Italy must emerge with a population of not less than 60 million inhabitants at the threshold of the second half of this century. You will say : how shall we live in this territory ? The same consideration was very probably raised in the year 1815, when Italy had only 16 million inhabitants.'

In an article that has achieved very great fame in Italy he expounded a year later his theory of population : [1]

' The thesis that quantity may be replaced by quality is false ; false and stupid is the thesis that a lesser population signifies higher prosperity.

' In an Italy that will be completely reclaimed, tilled, irrigated, disciplined, that is to say Fascist, there is yet place for another 10 million people. Sixty million Italians will make the weight of their numbers and their force felt in the history of the world.'

This guiding principle is the basis of Mussolini's practical measures. In every point they are in contradiction with the lessons of history. False and stupid is the thesis which culminates in regarding numbers as the source of power. The two most

[1] Benito Mussolini, *Il numero come forza, Gerarchia*, Sept., 1928, p. 697 *et seq.*

highly populated countries of the world, India and China, prove the reverse. But the numerical magnitude of a nation is also of absolutely secondary importance to its intellectual capacity. The epoch of classical civilization did not fall in a period when Greece was numerically superior to other nations, and Italy gave more to the world in the very period of her political decadence than ever after. To anyone except Mussolini and his most intimate followers there can hardly be a question as to which Italy can boast the greater wealth of spiritual treasure : the politically disunited, thinly populated land of Dante and the Renaissance, or his own, populous, Fascist Italy.

Mussolini attempts to justify his statement that Italy is capable of nourishing many millions more in the near future by the fact that the 19th century also witnessed a rapid increase in population. This argument, from the historical aspect, is absolutely unsound. The Industrial Revolution, it is true, was accompanied by a tremendous increase in population in Italy, as elsewhere, but industrialism to-day goes hand in hand with rationalization and the elimination of human labour, and the economic conditions for an increase of population certainly do not exist. Further, the rapid increase in population is far from proving that the country can continue to sustain this pressure. The reverse is true. A good proportion of the population of Italy is notoriously undernourished. The Fascist Deputy Zingali declared in the Chamber on December 5, 1929, that 'the average food ration of the Italian is below the ration physiologists believe to be necessary for adults', and that 'Italy's food ration is the lowest of all the

countries in Europe'. Mussolini himself once made an observation in the Senate which was not permitted to leak out: 'There are communities in Sardinia and Southern Italy where people live on grass for months and months' (*Atti parlamentari*, Session of June 22, 1929).

The distinguished Italian physiologist, Bottazzi, a member of the Italian Academy, who is absolutely devoted to the Fascist Government, has proved that the Italian people of to-day do not eat enough. Completely impartial American investigations have yielded the result that the nourishment of the Italian people, which before the war stood below the lowest level designated as necessary, afterwards improved. Since 1923, however, that is to say, since the establishment of the Fascist regime, the nourishment of the Italian people had sunk again in quality as well as in quantity, and is already noticeably below the pre-war level.[1]

Now it is doubtless true that a population policy conscious of its responsibilities should not be based on economic considerations only. Where a certain standard of living has been attained or even surpassed, a Government may permit itself a policy which builds for the future, one which shakes itself free in part from the interests of the present generation and takes the moral and mental qualities of the nation into consideration. But in a country where whole areas are on the border of starvation, it is a mistake to start out from the principle that 'it is not the individual average income that counts, but the entire income of the nation'. In a country

[1] See Arturo Labriola in *Libertà*, Paris, January 28, 1932.

with the paucity of vital necessities and the acute struggle for life of Italy it is indeed a bitter jest that the State 'must take into consideration the effects resulting from economic welfare not only in the present generation, but in future generations also, whose qualities might deteriorate through too easy conditions of life'.[1] Sybarites and the sons of American millionaires are quoted as examples of the dire effects of a too comfortable style of living!

This danger of a too easy life for the Italian people exists only in the minds of Fascist theorists; the economic conditions of Italy, which is poor in raw materials and possesses little mineral wealth, indicate rather that even with a stationary population the struggle for life would continue unabatedly harsh. Not even the removal of the economic pressure of the greedy Fascist bureaucracy would suffice to relieve it.

What then are the true motives for Fascism's inflationist population policy? Mussolini himself disclosed them in a speech in Milan on October 4, 1924:

'If a race grows it has but three roads before it; either it abandons itself to sterility of its own free will, and Italians are too intelligent for that; or it makes war, or seeks markets for its own surplus hands.'

Birth-control (once enthusiastically advocated by Mussolini himself in the magazine *Libera Parola*) and the propaganda in its favour are put under heavy penalty by the new Fascist penal code; emigration, as we have seen, was virtually prohibited

[1] Corrado Gini, *Nascita, evoluzione e morte delle nazioni*, Rome, 1930, p. 129.

by the Government at a time when foreign countries still had work to offer; there thus remains but the third possibility: war. That is the goal toward which, by his own confession, Mussolini is steering.[1]

On January 27, 1926, when the official publication of the result of the Italian census showed an increase of three millions, the Rome *Impero* wrote with a foretaste of future victories: 'Only think of the wonderful and invincible armies which these children will yield in ten years!'

There is an untiring propaganda by word and by pen, which was initiated by Mussolini himself, in favour of the *battaglia per la natalità*, and the Press joins in this by frequent articles as well as daily records of the numbers of births and deaths. In addition the Fascist Government strives to promote an increase in the birth-rate by legislative inducements.

By the Law of June 14, 1928, and the decree of August 10 of the same year large families are granted considerable reductions in taxation; illegitimate

[1] See also Enrico Corradini, *L'unità e la potenza delle nazioni*, Florence, 1926, p. 216: 'The increase of population prepares for war'; and Corrado Gini, op. cit., p. 106: 'The military attitude makes nations generally inclined towards increase of population'.

The *Corriere della Sera* of July 3, 1932, also speaks plainly. In a leading article, after discussing the disquieting falls in the birth-rate in France and England, it writes as follows: 'When a nation begins to age the heirs greedily look forward to the hour of its death, they await it impatiently and are also ready to hasten it, as it lies in the justice of history'. To hasten historical justice Italians are reminded that 'Italy has not so much to conserve as to win its place in the sun. This problem must then be present in the conscience of Italians.'

children count equally with the legitimate. Another line of attack began with the Law of January 1, 1927, which inflicted taxes upon bachelors between twenty-five and sixty-five years of age. A more serious burden is the provision of the Law of June 6, 1929, that unmarried men are no longer to be preferred in the service of the State, the provinces, municipalities and public enterprises, and that married men and among these married men with children shall be given preference. Similar orders were also issued for private businesses.

Private and semi-public clinics for pregnant mothers and babies had been in existence some time and the Law of December 10, 1925, united these as the *Opera Nazionale della Maternità e dell' Infanzia*. Like other high-sounding Fascist organizations, this has not been very effective; the mortality of women during pregnancy and child-birth has remained constant—about 3000 per annum—in spite of a fall in the birth-rate of almost one quarter in the last six years, that is to say, it has actually gained in relation to the number of births.

The local authorities naturally have fallen into line with the Government's policy. Thus in allotting flats in municipal buildings large families are given preference, and they also enjoy reductions of, and even immunity from, local taxation. Some municipalities grant reduced tram tickets, and reductions for gas and electricity. Many, besides doling out medals and diplomas, which are probably not very highly valued by the recipients, also offer premiums for prolificacy. One great municipality, for instance, has organized a real productivity competition by announcing five annual prizes of

100,000 lire each to be allotted to the families which produce most babies within six years. It is unfortunate (so defective is the standard of science to-day) that no special course for the production of twins and triplets could be recommended.

The Law of December 24, 1928, which grants far-reaching powers to prefects, is important in this connection. Any person who leaves the countryside for the town and loses his employment there or is without means of support, must be sent back to his home with the warning not to return. Mussolini attempts to justify such measures on the ground that they strengthen the pure rural mentality and protect it from decadent city morals. It is quite obvious, however, that his population policy is behind this law, for in Italy, as throughout the whole world, the birth-rate is higher in the country than in the towns.

There may be yet another motive behind it. Largely owing to the circumstances of their calling, agricultural workers are everywhere the most backward and are, to this day, tractable instruments in the hands of their masters. Work in cities, however, enlarges the mental horizon and leads to political consciousness. Political activity—and this holds good for Fascism itself—always starts from big cities. Mussolini can allow of no independent political activity; thus it is logical for him to try to prevent any relative increase in the size and importance of the cities. In this he has failed lamentably, however, for according to the latest census (1931) the cities have registered an increase of three million inhabitants, which is at the expense of the country population.

What fruits, if any, the Fascist population propaganda has borne is shown by the following table, in which the rates per thousand inhabitants are given: [1]

Year	Births	Births per 1000	Deaths	Deaths per 1000	Excess of Births	Excess per 1000
1922	1,175,872	30·7	689,937	18·0	485,935	12·7
1923	1,155,177	30·0	654,844	17·0	500,333	13·0
1924	1,124,470	29·0	662,870	17·1	461,600	11·9
1925	1,109,761	28·3	670,296	17·1	439,465	11·2
1926	1,094,587	27·2	680,307	16·9	414,280	10·5
1927	1,093,772	27·4	639,843	16·0	453,929	11·4
1928	1,072,316	26·2	645,654	16·0	426,662	10·6
1929	1,037,700	25·6	676,223	16·4	370,477	9·1
1930	1,092,678	26·7	576,751	14·1	515,927	12·6
1931	1,027,638	24·9	606,489	14·7	421,149	10·2
1932	983,250	23·6	603,293	14·5	379,957	9·1

Thus the birth-rate has declined severely in spite of the increase in population of about three millions during the Fascist decade. The year 1932 is unique in that it is the first year (with the obvious exception of the war years) since 1876, that is to say, since there have existed exact statistics on the subject, which shows less than one million live births.

The excess of births over deaths also declined to an extent unknown in pre-Fascist Italy, namely, from 12·7 per 1000 inhabitants in 1922 to 9·1 in 1932, that is, by about 28 per cent. During the first ten months of 1932 the figure was only 7·7, and 9·1 for the whole year seems rather a big jump.

[1] *Annuario statistico italiano, anno* 1932, pp. 32 and 580.

One should not forget, however, that in Italy the Central Institute for Statistics is not independent; it is under the direct control of the Prime Minister, and statistics are thus frequently manipulated if the figures are considered to be too unfavourable.

These figures show up clearly the fiasco of Mussolini's propaganda, which ended in having the opposite effect from what he intended. Here at least we can say: So far, so good.

VI THE CORPORATIVE STATE

POLITICAL systems may be investigated and assessed from many angles. But the first criterion by which all social phenomena and political regimes are judged to-day is, of necessity, their economic success or failure. Here in the domain of the hard realities which every citizen of the State encounters day after day, no shirking, no masking of facts can avail, for in this sphere of social activity, touching, as it does, the basis of existence, is revealed to everybody as nowhere else : *tua res agitur*.

The social physiognomy of Fascism is clear even from its origins. The immediate post-war years witnessed a vast growth of the Socialist movement. ' Big business ' felt its power threatened and put up a keen defence, developing into a ruthless counter-attack. The fight was in two stages : first open violence, even to murder, arson and plunder, was employed against labour organizations ; then, the moment the apparatus of State lay in Fascist hands, the machinery of law was requisitioned to blot out all democratic institutions, as well as the Socialist movement itself and its trade unions. As early as 1924 the ' free ' trade unions and party organizations were placed beneath the thoroughgoing control of the prefect. This represented an innovation in the fundamental rights granted by modern constitutions, since free association was

virtually annihilated. Finally, in 1926, under the Law of Public Security of the State, all non-Fascist parties and trade unions including their Press were forcibly disbanded, and their re-establishment placed under threat of heavy punishments. Whilst the Socialist and trade union leaders were either murdered or exiled, every kind of coercion and terrorism was employed to force the working men into the Fascist trade unions—though not with complete success. There are, to this day, millions who are not members of the Fascist trade unions.

The centre of Fascism's social and economic theory is the idea of functionalism or as Fascism terms it, corporativism. Now it is possible for the corporative principle to manifest itself in two entirely different ways in the structure of the State. It may take the form of the undemocratic, authoritarian, autocratic, quasi-feudal State, of the type destroyed by the French Revolution; or that of the democratic State in which autonomy is realized not merely regionally, but also socially and economically. Thus, whereas in the first case the corporative constitution serves to concentrate authority, it has, in the second case, exactly the opposite effect.

Modern political theory, headed by the pluralists (such as H. J. Laski), is devoting more and more attention to the problem of the devolution of powers in the democratic State not merely regionally, as hitherto, but also socially and economically, to fit it better for the steadily increasing scope of its activity.

It is the logical outcome of the whole structure of the Fascist Dictatorship that it can only make use of the corporative idea in that type of society which, since its overthrow by the French Revolution, has

become the ideal of all reactionaries — the Police State.[1]

'The Fascist State will perhaps represent one single police force' (speech on November 16, 1922, in the Chamber of Deputies), and '*What is the State? The Policeman!*' (speech on July 15, 1923, in the Chamber of Deputies): these words from Mussolini's own mouth significantly characterize the fundamental Fascist view of the nature of the State, and it is from this aspect that the corporative system promoted by Fascism must be understood. Although most of the Fascist theorists attempt to construe corporativism as a genuinely original creation of Fascism, and as a new theory of State and society,[2] there are among the Fascists themselves some honest thinkers. The rigorous Carlo Costamagna, for instance, admits that 'the corporative conception of the State is not the discovery of Fascism' (*Il Diritto del Lavoro*, Rome, July-August, 1928, p. 401). Even that passionate champion of Fascist social theory and institutions, the former Minister for Corporations, Giuseppe Bottai, has avowed that the expression 'corporative State (*stato corporativo*) appears senseless and arbitrary' (*Il Diritto del Lavoro*, June-July, 1930, p. 377).

The forerunner of the present corporative system in Italy is to be found in the Constitution

[1] Arnaldo Volpicelli, *I fondamenti ideali del corporativismo*, Pisa, 1930, p. 17: 'The corporative State is the State which, by its unified system, organizes and disciplines the whole life of society'.

[2] See Guido Bortolotto's (900 pages long) *Lo stato e la dottrina corporativa*, Bologna, 1931, which represents the most remarkable contribution in this department of Fascist literature.

promulgated by Gabriele d'Annunzio for the city of Fiume which he conquered by a *coup d'état* in 1919. The people were to be organized on the functional principle; employers, merchants and workers were to strive in a common effort for the development of production, and all possibility of class war was to be excluded. This conception of d'Annunzio's served as a pattern to the system later established by Mussolini, but with one tremendous difference. Whereas according to d'Annunzio the corporations were to be autonomous, they have, under Fascism, sunk to the level of 'obedient instruments of the State',[1] no longer capable of any independent impulse.[2]

By the Law of April 7, 1926, for the 'legal regulation of collective labour agreements', the permitted organizations are divided into thirteen categories, namely farmers, industrialists, merchants, shipping and aeroplanes, inland transport, bankers, employees in each of these six categories, and finally the professions.

It will be noticed that neither civil servants, workers in public enterprises, nor teachers of any grade, are included in the compulsory corporative system. These professional categories have since

[1] Alfredo Sermonti, *Il diritto sindacale italiano*, Rome, 1929.

[2] In his *Il Consiglio Nazionale delle Corporazioni*, Rome, 1930, p. 66 *et seq.*, Gaspare Ambrosini warns against the danger of quoting these two systems as parallel; this might create the impression that the corporations under Fascism may 'lead another life than that permitted to them by the State'. Furthermore he turns against 'the melancholy reminiscences' which the example of the autonomous professional units of d'Annunzio's Constitution might conjure up.

early in 1931 been placed directly under the Secretary of the Fascist Party.

To be legally recognized a trade union (in Italian called *sindacato* and denoting a professional association of employers as well as one of employees) of employees must comprise at least one-tenth of the workers employed in that particular branch, while, analogously, the employers' union must comprise at least one-tenth of their number. The law entrusts to the trade unions the task of fostering the patriotic and moral education of their members, in addition to their economic functions.

Only trade unions recognized by the State—which must therefore of course be Fascist—are entitled to represent the employers or the employees. Non-members must pay the membership fee to the official trade unions: this now amounts to one day's pay per year, and is automatically deducted from salaries. The Fascist trade unions recognized by the State have a dual monopoly: they alone are legally entitled to act in the name of the entire category, and they also have an actual monopoly of organization. Although Fascism with great *aplomb* has laid down its social principles in the *Carta del Lavoro* (Charter of Labour), stating in Article III 'The professional or syndicalist organization is free,' the actual situation is quite different. Apart from the Fascist there is no other trade union and there never will be under Fascist rule. This discrepancy between print and reality runs through the whole of the Fascist corporative system.

Each of the categories mentioned above has its local organizations, which in turn combine to make

higher units corresponding to districts or provinces, until finally they are all linked together to make one of the thirteen 'National Confederations'. At first all federations of employees were combined in one general confederation, but in November, 1928, Edmondo Rossoni, its President, was suspended from office by Mussolini at the demand of influential groups of employers, and thenceforth no general organization comprising Labour as a whole was permitted to exist, and the *Confederazione Nazionale* of each category has since then been the highest form of association.

Beside this vertical structure of the economic order, the Fascist corporative constitution has inserted horizontal connecting links, the 'corporations'. In contrast to current legal terminology, according to which corporations act as independent juridical persons, these are instruments of public administration, their task being to unite the corresponding employers' and employees' associations into one organ. This horizontal structure culminates in the 'National Council of Corporations', presided over by the Minister for Corporations, at present Mussolini; in addition to the representatives of the national corporations of the thirteen categories mentioned above it also comprises representatives of other Fascist organizations.

Although the formation of the corporations was provided for by law in 1926, there has not been formed, to this day, one single corporation uniting two national confederations, and of all professional sub-groups only the rather unimportant one of the cinemas (excluding theatres) so far exists. On May 9, 1934, the Central Corporative Committee,

Mussolini presiding, finally decided to bring into existence (on paper) in the course of June, 1934, twenty-two corporations representing various occupations. 'This new corporative organization', as *La Stampa* (May 11, 1934) terms it, should not, however, deceive the foreign student, since it is but a replica of the existing system so far as concerns any freedom of action. According to the same paper the Fascist Party is to retain from the start all control in these corporations from the President downwards just as in the separate trade unions of employers and employees.

The National Council of Corporations has already been formed without waiting for the corporations to come to life [1]; and a special Ministry for Corporations has been built in Rome, which offers many possibilities to a greedy bureaucracy.

According to law (for instance Article VI of the *Carta del Lavoro*) and the orthodox Fascist interpretation, the syndicate and the corporation are quite distinct: one is an autonomous professional association acting as a juridical person, and the other an administrative instrument of the State, which is to reconcile the conflicting interests of the opposed syndicates, and direct the entire economic system

[1] Mussolini himself explained this to the English economist Hugh Dalton: 'We are advancing very cautiously' (*The Economic Journal*, London, March, 1933, p. 154). See also Emilio Bodrero, President of the Confederation of Liberal Professions and Arts in his essay, 'The development of the right of property under the Fascist regime' (*Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, Munich, March, 1933, p. 20): 'The pattern is perfect', but 'it will possibly need several generations for the course of production to develop from an economic-juridical conception into a political-moral fact'.

so as to make it serve the higher interests of the State. The whole body of international literature on Fascism esteems this dualism as the particularly original feature of the corporative system, and it is above all abroad that Fascist propagandists attempt to create sympathy for their ideas by harping upon the autonomy and independence of the professional associations. Here is a typical pronouncement: 'There is a widespread prejudice that the Italian syndical organization is a creation of the State, i.e. of objective law. One thinks . . . that the professional associations . . . could have no will of their own and no autonomy. The fact is that the syndicates come to life spontaneously, that they lead an autonomous life of their own, that they regulate their inner affairs according to statutes laid down by themselves, and thus—from the juridical as well as from the economic and political point of view—exercise a number of far-reaching functions.' [1]

Another claim is that such associations in democratic countries have no powers beyond the civil law, whereas Fascism has given them a place in the public law.[2] This paper advancement is, however, outbalanced by a fact of far greater importance which is admitted by but few Fascist theorists. Formerly the trade union had free power of action even if it were then confined within civil law, which incidentally is

[1] Carlo Curcio, 'The moral foundations of the corporative order in Italy', in the *Zeitschrift für Politik*, Vol. 20, 1930–1931, p. 403.

[2] Prof. Carlo Costamagna, *Diritto Corporativo Italiano*, Turin, 1928, p. 78 *et seq.*; Guido Bortolotto, op. cit., p. 230 *et seq*; Rosario Purpura, *Il Consiglio Nazionale delle Corporazioni*, Bologna, 1932, p. 530.

not true since its collective contracts were sometimes universally binding; to-day it is little more than a puppet. 'The Fascist State has raised the professional association to a political instrument of the State which is ruled by the State.' [1]

In truth, the syndicates lack any independence whatever, since the idea of a regional, social or economic autonomy is irreconcilable with the coercive principles of a centralized, dictatorial, Police State. The one excludes the other: 'Attempts at reconciling the principle of autonomy with the sovereignty of the State are barren'.[2] Professor Carlo Costamagna has put the matter thus: 'The corporative Fascist State is an authoritarian, centralized, hierarchic State, as Mussolini has defined it. It does not seem to me that this definition still permits us to harbour the idea of local or graduated powers, with which the conception of the juridical person of public law, applied to the so-called subsidiary bodies of the State, is connected.' [3]

There can exist no relationship between the State and functional organizations within it but that of supremacy on the part of the former, subjugation on

[1] Prof. Luigi Raggi at the First Congress of syndicalist and corporative studies in Rome on May 2 and 3, 1930 (*Atti del primo Convegno di studi sindacali e corporativi*, Rome, 1930, p. 291). At the Second Congress (Ferrara, May 5–8, 1932) the lawyer, Stefano M. Cutelli, uttered a warning against deceiving the masses with 'the beautiful lie of the myth of the trade unionist corporative State,' as in Fascist Italy 'it is not the political order of the trade unions and corporations which dominates, but the Fighting Fasci' (*Atti del secondo Convegno . . .*, Rome, 1932, Vol. III, p. 216).

[2] Gaspare Ambrosini, op. cit., p. 65.

[3] *Atti del primo Convegno . . .*, Vol. II, p. 194.

the part of the latter.[1] This is no recent development; it existed from the beginning in the imagination of the famous Commission of eighteen Fascist reformers appointed in 1925, who declared that the new State must be 'opposed to the unions and ranged above them'.[2]

This subordination is faithfully reproduced in the relationship between the individual and the syndicate; which indeed is nothing but an extension of the State's control over the individual.

Professor Carlo Costamagna's opinion of the relationship of the State to functional organizations should perhaps be quoted at greater length, for Costamagna, who co-operated to a large extent in the creation of the corporative legislation as member of the Commission of Eighteen and of the Chamber of Deputies, is to-day considered in Italy and abroad the leading theorist on the subject of corporativism. In 1928 he wrote as follows:

'One still speaks of syndicalism and of professional associations in Italy to-day. Strictly speaking the terms syndicalism and syndicate might be struck out of the Fascist dictionary. The syndicate, which no longer controls the activities of the individual and of other groups, let alone the activities of the State, but is itself rigorously controlled by the State; which no longer operates with its own means to particular ends but moves according to the rules and standards

[1] Cf. Guido Bortolotto, op. cit., p. 272. Camillo Pellizzi terms their '*voluntary slavery*' the typical characteristic of Fascist trade unions (*Problemi e realtà del Fascismo*, Florence, 1924, p. 111).

[2] *Relazioni e proposte della Commissione per lo studio delle riforme costituzionali*, Florence, 1932, p. xvi.

of public law, and strives to attain ends alien to its members but proper to the State; the Fascist syndicate as defined by the Law of April 3, 1926, and as it obtains in Italy, is no longer a syndicate, but actually the anti-syndicate.' [1]

After another two years of corporative experience in Italy Professor Costamagna went still further. He denied the entire idea of the syndicate as representing any social or economic interests:

'The conception of a public representation of interests and consequently also of individual rights is absolutely incompatible with the corporative principle, for the relationship between the citizen and the State is, according to corporative doctrine, built up on the conception of duty. The members of a professional association, let alone the non-members, are not the bearers of interests served by it, and the members can be regarded as nothing but means to the ends of the syndicate.' In short, the syndicate is an 'instrument of the State, which does not represent the citizen, but rules him'.[2]

Thus the corporative system, officially construed as a dualism embracing free, autonomous syndicates on the one hand, and the corporations reconciling opposed social interests on the other, does not exist. Reality presents us instead with a completely centralized dictatorial social mechanism, leaving to the syndicates the rôle of 'submissive instruments of the State'. Fascist corporativism, as it exists in practice, should not be so labelled, for the

[1] Carlo Costamagna, *Dal sindacato alla corporazione*, Rome, 1928, p. 19.

[2] Professor Carlo Costamagna in *Atti del primo Convegno . . .*, pp. 96, 104.

corporations are left with no functions to perform the moment that the authoritarian State claims the syndicates as its instruments. Fascist corporativism is thus in no wise a social or economic system, but *a mechanism in the service of economic exploitation and the Police State.*

§ MASTERS AND MEN

On one point indeed the above account requires modification. Whereas in theory the syndicates of employers and employees face each other in 'absolute equality', all that has been said as to their complete subjugation to the State is in practice valid only for employees' organizations. From the first it was plain that Fascism, which had waxed fat with the moral and material support of industrial and agrarian capital, would be unable to turn against its own master. The historical function of Fascism was and remains to shatter the free organizations of Labour and the free institutions of democracy, in the service of economic exploitation and cultural reaction. It is self-evident that the fulfilment of this task cannot allow of equality between Capital and Labour.

This system of coercion has not brought industrial peace as intended, for the number of labour conflicts increased from 24,499 in 1929 to 49,807 in 1931.[1] Furthermore, despite the fact that strikes and lock-outs are now legal offences, the number of strikes and of persons involved has also been advancing steadily since 1928.

The close collaboration between the Govern-

[1] Confederazione Generale Fascista dell' Industria Italiana: *Lo sviluppo dell' Industria Italiana nel primo decennio dell' era fascista*, Rome, 1932, p. 29.

ment and the employer's associations was frankly and joyously admitted by both from the first day of the Fascist seizure of power. The new Government, gratified by the enthusiastic declaration quoted on page 46 returned the compliment by a *communiqué* of the semi-official *Volta* agency to the effect that the 'technical and moral efficiency of industry would not be encroached upon', and emphasizing that 'the relations between the president and the secretary of the federation of employers on the one hand, and the Head of the Government, Signor Mussolini, on the other, were more than cordial'.

Inequality in the treatment of the workmen's and the employers' associations began as early as 1923, when the Government carried out radical changes in representation in the semi-public labour insurance societies. From then on only trade unions run on 'national' lines were to be represented, i.e. the autonomous trade unions were to be replaced altogether by Fascist ones. The trade unions belonging to the 'General Confederation of Labour' pointed out that by the same reasoning employers' associations should also be excluded from representation, since they too had international ties and were members of an international organization (*Organisation Internationale des Employers Industriels*). The employers argued that their own International was purely technical in character, whereas the workers' International was political, and moreover that there was a vast difference between the workers' associations and theirs where national interests were concerned. The Government endorsed the argument of the employers, and

the non-Fascist trade unions were thus excluded from institutions which are of very great importance to them.

Even after these trade unions had completely vanished or had sunk to absolute impotence, Fascist organizations only being left, the predominance of employers' associations over workers' organizations was preserved. By the 'Pact of the Palazzo Vidoni', concluded on October 2, 1925, between the Confederation of Industrialists and the Fascist trade unions, the latter accepted far-reaching limitations in their liberty of action, the industrialists' greatest success being the abolition of factory councils, the last remaining democratic institutions in industry.

Again, the law stipulates that the president of each confederation of syndicates is to be elected by the representatives of associations incorporated in it, Government consent being necessary for the election to become valid. In reality this independence is preserved only for employers' organizations. For the Government may arbitrarily replace the workers' president by a nominee, a stipulation not contained in the statute of the employers' associations. Not that matters ever reach this stage; in practice the presidents and leading officials of workers' associations are appointed directly by the Government, which does not put itself out over much to discover the opinions of the members. On the other hand, the Government would never dare to refuse its consent to the freely elected leaders of the employers. The latter are able to entrust key positions in their organizations to real experts, but long experience of labour problems, and real intimacy with the workers and their cares, count for nothing when it comes to

filling the key positions in workers' associations. Nomination to these depends on politics alone.[1] That fact in itself renders null and void the claim of the Fascist State that it is truly co-operative, that it is the State of all producers, for the police and the Fascist Party are absolute masters of the working classes.

As may easily be imagined, trade-union officials appointed from above are bound to fail even if actuated by the best intentions. As they are not of the working classes nor have ever lived with them they cannot, with the best will in the world, discuss expertly either big matters or small with those placed beneath their authority. The result is that they are detested by the workers. The Government understands this, and has attempted to remedy the evil in somewhat original fashion, by establishing 'schools of trade-union organizers'.

It is not uninteresting to hear what the creator of these schools has to say about his work. At the inauguration of the first school in Genoa on February

[1] Thus Roberto Farinacci, former Secretary of the Fascist Party, declared at a Fascist trade union congress in Rome on May 29, 1925: 'Party and trade unions are one single concern' (Roberto Farinacci, *Il periodo aureo del P.N.F.*, Foligno, 1927, p. 133). Augusto Turati, also a former Secretary of the Fascist Party, wrote in the volume edited by him and Giuseppe Bottai, *La Carta del Lavoro*, Rome, 1929, p. 72: 'The problem consists of impregnating the trade union with Fascist consciousness, not in impregnating the political organization of the regime with trade union consciousness'. Finally, one should note the resolution of the Grand Council of Fascism of November 16, 1927, which stipulated that 'the control over the leaders of the trade unions should be exercised by ever more severe and ever more fastidious criteria'.

12, 1928, the then Minister for Corporations, Giuseppe Bottai, declared:

'Fascist youth should begin to convince itself that the days of embittered political struggle are over and that trade-union leadership assumes the dignity of a profession in the administrative and political organization of the State. It is necessary for youth to begin to turn to this organization: one should not be ashamed to exercise the calling of workers' organizer; it is nobler by far than that of a lawyer who has no cases or a lawyer who loses his cases.'[1]

From this it is evident that the trade unions are to be looked on as organs of the State, and that the trade-union leader is to be a kind of Civil Servant. Further, in artificially creating this profession of organizer of trade unions there has, from the first, been no thought of considering the requirements peculiar to workers; the aim has been to make a new opening for middle-class Fascists looking for a job. Doubtless these schools will be developed further, for the corporative system takes Fascist greed into consideration rather than Italy's financial capacity. In that case the hope of the left-wing Fascists (such as Professor Spirito), that workers, like employers, will be able to elect their responsible trade-union officials, is doomed to disappointment.

Under these circumstances the trade unions have as little contact with their members as any other organs of the dictatorship. The only share workers have in their own organizations is the membership fee which they cannot avoid paying. For the rest they are to obey blindly the orders of their officials;

[1] Giuseppe Bottai, *L'organizzazione sindacale fascista*, Rome, 1928, p. 15 *et seq.*

of rights they have not even the shadow. The chain of tyranny which binds the trade union to the State binds also its individual members.

Fascism's mistaken policy is felt all the more keenly because it is at bottom psychological rather than material. Even if the Government were really concerned for him, the worker would always instinctively abhor tutelage from above, for it wounds the last remnant of his human dignity. He, like the rest of us, needs guidance and direction, but protests violently at having to take orders from headquarters, more especially in his very own domain—that of his interests as producer—without being enabled to influence in the slightest the choice of his union leaders. The ultimate cause of this deep smouldering resentment, which fills the whole of the working class, is the dictatorship at the centre, based, as it is, on machine-guns rather than consent. Just as Fascism can tolerate no local or regional deviations, so it holds fast in the economic sphere to a soulless, centralized bureaucracy.[1]

[1] Nevertheless, according to Carlo Costamagna 'the corporative Fascist State is looked upon as the most perfect realization of the *Rechtsstaat*' (Carlo Costamagna, *Lo stato corporativo quale stato di diritto* in *Il Diritto del Lavoro*, July-August, 1928, p. 406). One must add, however, that Costamagna has peculiar ideas about the nature of the *Rechtsstaat*. 'The spirit of Fascism refuses the law in as far as it fetters instead of serves the State' (op. cit., p. 406). If the law, as is now really the case in Fascist Italy, is nothing but an instrument, a toy in the hands of those who govern, who recognize no legal bonds, then Costamagna is right, then one may look upon the corporative Fascist State as the perfect realization of such a 'legal State'.

§ FASCISM AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Fascism does not merely show its social physiognomy in practice ; it shows it also in its apologetics. With the exception of a few dreamers who nourish hopes of a 'new economy' on the basis of the artificial and coercive mechanism of corporativism, an economy which might finally abolish the dualism between the State and the individual in the economic sphere also, and whose 'fundamental characteristic' would be the 'State character of all economic phenomena',[1] the vast majority of Fascist economic theorists hold fast by orthodox Capitalism.

It must also be borne in mind that the idealist Spirito, like his master Gentile, takes the identity of State and individual as his starting-point. For him this identity is the given, the 'real,' the contrast between individual and State being 'illogical', merely the 'pathological side' of reality.[2] His concepts accordingly assume a meaning contrary to that in current use. Normally the 'State character of all economic phenomena' would imply the direct activity of the State in the entire economic process. The logic of Fascist idealism, which identifies State and individual, manages to arrive at the statement that '*individual economy and State economy are absolutely identical conceptions*' ![3]

The issue between Individualism and Socialism is

[1] Ugo Spirito, *I fondamenti della economia corporativa*, Milan, 1932, pp. 3–32. But even Spirito must admit that this hypothesis has a purely intuitive character ; in truth even the *Carta del Lavoro* still firmly upholds this dualism, which is so typical of the capitalist system.

[2] Ugo Spirito, op. cit., p. 48. [3] Op. cit., p. 19.

thus evaded. If even for the few left-wing Fascist economists like Spirito individual economy, the pillar of the capitalist edifice, appears absolutely identical with State economy, and if the identification of these opposites makes up the 'fundamental and systematic concept' of fantastic visions presenting themselves as 'corporative economy', then one need hardly ask whether the whole corporative humbug can be taken seriously.

It is not surprising that a realization of the 'slight scientific value of the new economic literature (in Italy)' should have dawned even upon Professor Spirito, that most idealistic and fanatical of all Don Quixotes of corporativism, and that he must ruefully confess that 'the most serious economists . . . prefer to keep silent . . . and entirely to omit the problems created by the corporative order. It would be useless to conceal from oneself the fact that this silence generally signifies condemnation'.[1]

What is there, in fact, to engage the attention of the economist searching for new ideas?

Article 7 of the *Carta del Lavoro* reads as follows: 'The corporative State considers private initiative in the field of production as the most effective and useful instrument in the interests of the nation'. That has a familiar ring; and it would be far from true to conclude that it needed the *Carta del Lavoro*, promulgated by the Grand Council in 1927, to mark as capitalist the character of Italian economics under Fascism. Mussolini, whom Italian business men had once thought capable of Socialist experiments on account of his past, knew which side his bread was

[1] Ugo Spirito, *La critica della economia liberale*, Milan, 1930, p. 130.

buttered, and had already given the assurance on March 18, 1923, at the International Congress of Chambers of Commerce in Rome that 'the State would renounce its economic functions, and the Government would accord free play to free initiative and would abandon any interventionist legislation'.

But there is still Article 9 of the *Carta del Lavoro*, which says:

'The intervention of the State in production only takes place when private initiative is lacking or insufficient, or when the political interests of the State are at stake. Such an intervention may assume the form of control, encouragement, or direct leadership.'

At first this Article gave nightmares to frightened employers and happy daydreams to idealist philosophers; but the more time passes, the more Fascism shows that it does not intend in the very least to encroach upon private initiative, on the contrary, that it wishes to foster it by dint of fat subventions. Shipping alone has been assured of subsidies to the amount of well over three thousand million lire for the twenty years from 1925–26 to 1945–46. Mosconi, when Minister for Finance, pointed out in his report upon the Budget that the Fascist Government is opposed to any direct intervention on the part of the State other than the subsidies for shipping and air-transport and the measures necessary to overcome the consequences of unemployment.[1]

The manner in which an intimate of Mussolini,

[1] *Relazioni della giunta generale del Bilancio presentata alla presidenza il 29 aprile*, 1932, p. 44.

Alfredo Rocco, defends the attitude of the Government, does not lack a certain piquancy: 'The collective organization of production would mean the paralysis of production itself, for the moment the stimulus of personal interest were suppressed production would shrink continually, and become ever more expensive. This is the reason why Fascism rejects the collective organization of production and recognizes and protects individual property' (*Revue des Vivants*, Paris, July, 1927, p. 937).

Gino Arias, the well-known Fascist economist and 'corporative' leader-writer for the *Popolo d'Italia*, is equally frank. 'One must first and foremost exclude the State or any public body, such as a syndicate or more important still a corporation, from taking upon itself the management of enterprises and thus excluding private enterprise or placing it in a thoroughly subordinate position. This would be in contradiction to the *Carta di Lavoro*. The discipline of economic relations entrusted to the syndicates and corporations is not planned to exclude competition by the establishment of open or masked monopolies. *This would be the new path to socialism*' (*Popolo d'Italia*, April 18, 1933).

There is in fine more than enough evidence to show that Corporativism, regarded as a new economic system which is neither Capitalist nor Socialist, is a hollow sham. The old-fashioned autocratic character of the conditions of production in Italy has not merely survived, but has been strengthened under Fascism, and Fascist policy, under the pressure of influential groups of employers, has crushed the beginnings of industrial democracy.

§ THE WORKERS' LOT

We find the same distance between promise and performance when we investigate Fascism from the point of view of the distribution of goods. Here indeed there is less attempt at legal or political camouflage. Fascism, which, according to one of Mussolini's famous phrases, wishes to replace 'Liberty, equality, fraternity' by the formula: 'Authority, order, justice', has, in the sphere of justice, brought plenty of innovations to the Italian people—from exile to the Special Tribunal and the death penalty—yet little has been heard as to justice in the distribution of goods. 'For Fascism the social problem is a question of production and not of distribution of wealth.' [1] '*One must overcome the criteria of distributive justice*': [2] by such formulæ Fascism convicts itself of indifference or impotence when faced with what intelligent people, be they Socialist or not, recognize as the greatest problem of to-day. Nor are we impressed when a movement like Fascism, which waxed great through pistols, machine-guns and bombs, begins suddenly to wear the mien of Christian forbearance when it comes down to the citizen's daily bread, and unctuously announces: 'The Kingdom of Love must be established in spirit as well as in matter. That is the great teaching of Fascism.' [3]

[1] Giovanni Corso, *Lo stato fascista*, Rome, 1929, p. 392.

[2] Carlo Costamagna, *Dal sindacato alla corporazione*, Rome, 1928, p. 16.

[3] Carlo Curcio, op. cit., p. 407. Cf. Balbino Giuliano, former Minister for Education, in *Mussolini und sein Fascismus*, Heidelberg, 1928, p. 174: 'Destiny is rarely just in the distribution of goods among men'.

The opinion of Francesco Ercole, present Minister for National Education, is born of truly Fascist mentality: 'The wealth of the few in whose hands capital is concentrated is also the wealth of the proletariat' (F. Ercole, *Dal Nazionalismo al Fascismo*, Rome, 1928, p. 62). According to this the thousands of Fascist Ras and petty Duce (ducini) who have exploited the Italian people have really done no harm, for their new wealth, dishonestly gotten, is after all also the wealth of the people. This same Ercole opines (op. cit., p. 58) that 'class war will always exist', and thus voluntarily enlightens us as to what clear-headed Fascists really think of the 'reconciling' function of the coercive system of corporativism. Note furthermore that Fascism, with that double morality *ad usum internum* and *ad usum externum* characteristic of imperialist countries, denies the existence of the problem of distribution within the country, but does not omit to emphasize outside Italy that 'it struggles for justice in distribution between the peoples' (Francesco Berlingieri, in *L'Ordine Fascista*, Rome, May, 1931, p. 335).

All the same the die-hard individualists are making no small error, even from the purely economic point of view, if they believe that the problem of distribution, passed over in silence by Fascism for their sake, can be separated from that of production. If the working classes and the organized lower middle-classes, that is to say the bulk of consumers, can exercise no influence upon distribution, and are to be kept severely in their places, the manufacturer will lack the spur required for improvement of production and, in the long run, can have no hope of enlarging his home market. On the contrary, if the masses are forcibly impoverished, the home

market must steadily shrink. Capitalism can thus seek salvation only in increased expansion of foreign markets, but here once more the lack of response at home will have sapped its power of competition abroad. There remains nothing for it but the high protective tariff system, which, however, in a period of shrinking world-trade and fierce retaliation can be no ultimate resource.

In a speech on October 25, 1924, in Busto Arsizio, Mussolini termed the Government ' over which he had the honour to preside ' a ' workers' Government '. On October 27 of the same year he declared in a speech to the workmen of Dalmine: ' Remember that I am your friend '. This ' workers' Government ' has succeeded in dragging Italy down to a level of social legislation so low as in many ways to stand without parallel in the civilized world. The item ' social services ' absorbs but *0·8 per cent.* of the Italian Budget, the lowest figure for all civilized countries as well as the smallest item in the Italian Budget itself. Whereas elsewhere the age of 14 has been recognized as the lowest for industrial labour, and there is a movement in England and America to raise this limit to 16, partly from purely economic motives, partly for the furtherance of education, in Italy there is still child-labour.

Article 2 of the *Carta del Lavoro* reads: ' Work is a social duty '. That work is also the citizen's right, more especially in a State that arrogates to itself the regulation of economic life in its entirety, this concept has no place in Fascism. If we bear this in mind, we shall not be astonished at the handling of the unemployment problem in Italy to-day. '

First and foremost unemployment in Italy, to

a degree which unfortunately cannot be gauged in percentages, has not only economic, but also political features. Employers are obliged by law to engage employees only through the intermediary of the official labour exchange, and to give preference to members of the Fascist Party and Fascist trade unions. Even the strict Fascist censorship let through the bitter complaint of an anonymous workman: 'We do not understand why a right of preference should be maintained which appears to us so beside the point. Are we not all Italians? And have we not all equal duties as fathers of families? Must we not all provide for our children, feed and educate them? Why create this distinction where it is a question of the most elementary problem of existence?' (in *I Problemi del Lavoro*, Milan, March, 1931, p. 16).

The introduction of a compulsory *Libretto di lavoro* (workman's pass) decided upon by the Permanent Commission of Labour at the Ministry of Corporations on April 1, 1933, is even more oppressive. This pass is intended, among other things, to achieve 'a sure control of the phenomenon of employment and unemployment'. From the items enumerated immediately after the personal details one may see what is taken into account in Italy, the land of Mussolini's 'workers' Government': Whether the employment-seeker has ever been abroad [a moral crime in Italy!]; the date of his entrance into the Fascist Party; the description of his military services; his qualifications as a soldier; whether wounded, war-invalid or victim of 'national' battles [i.e. Fascists wounded by their opponents], or war-orphan; his decorations. All these purely political and military details precede

those concerning the training and experience of the would-be employee. The bearing of this is obvious.

If in face of such pressure as this approximately one-third of Italy's working class has yet remained outside the Fascist trade unions (*Compendio statistico italiano 1933*, Rome, 1933, p. 150), this testifies to its admirable firmness, which one day will lead to its liberation.

Unemployment insurance is compulsory in Italy, except for the following: public employees; domestic servants; employees whose salaries exceed 800 lire per month; artists; employees in theatres and cinemas; home workers; and agricultural workers. (It should be noted that Italy was the first country to introduce compulsory unemployment insurance for agricultural workers in 1919. The Fascist workers' Government was privileged to abolish it in 1923.) Further notable exceptions from compulsory insurance are masons, silk-spinners, miners, and such seasonal workers as are in uninterrupted work for less than six months in the year. The upshot is that out of $6\frac{1}{2}$ million employees in Italy only $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions are comprised in compulsory insurance.

Insured persons receive 1.25 to 3.75 lire (5d. to 1s. 3d.) per day when unemployed. A collaborator in the social legislation of the Fascist Government, Attilio Lo Monaco Aprile, writes in his semi-official work, *La politica assistenziale dell' Italia Fascista* (Rome, 1930, p. 306): 'The amount of the daily subsidy, which varies from 1.25 to 3.75 lire, is not in accordance with needs, and in view of the fund having a surplus it could easily be increased without having to raise the premiums'. His plea has remained without effect.

The insurance money is paid for 90 days in all, after which hardly anyone gives a thought as to how the poor wretches are to keep alive. The homeless, starving unemployed, however, may console themselves with the uplifting sentiment that 'Italy in the sphere of social legislation leads the vanguard of all the nations' (Mussolini at the third Congress of Fascist syndicates in Rome, May 7, 1928). Bearing in mind that Italy in 1932, on a monthly average, had one million officially admitted unemployed (impossible to ascertain the actual number as statistics are directly controlled by the Government); further, that even the official figure rose to over 1,200,000 in 1933, and that the index of employed (1926 = 100) averaged only 67 in 1932,[1] i.e. the lowest figure in Europe, one can then envisage the unparalleled misery of these masses not all of whom receive even the beggarly 90 days' dole before they are abandoned to die of starvation for all the Government cares. In this connection it is not difficult to understand why the Government has ordered the Press to publish no news about suicides. Mussolini, in his speech in the Senate on December 18, 1930, did not shrink from proclaiming that 'fortunately the Italian people have not yet accustomed themselves to eat several times a day, and in consequence of their yet humble standard of living, they feel the sufferings and privations less acutely'.

But the most extraordinary fact is that whilst pre-Fascist Italy provided a State subsidy toward unemployment relief as early as 1919, realizing that

[1] *International Labour Review*, Geneva, March, 1933, p. 409. Even then short-time workers constituted 28·5 per cent. of the whole, and the fully employed were therefore only 38·5 per cent. on the 1926 basis.

these questions are of concern not merely to employer and employee, but to the entire nation, the subsidy was abolished by the Fascist Government in 1923. As if that were not enough, Fascist Italy is also the only country where the premiums paid by the insured are not actually used for their benefit. According to semi-official statistics, the National Institute for Social Insurance in Italy received 1057·5 million lire as unemployment insurance premiums in the nine years from 1922 to 1930, and paid out only 466 millions in relief.[1] The surplus of 591·5 million lire rose by 1933 to 757 million lire,[2] in spite of the catastrophic rise in unemployment. The more the unemployed starve, the higher wax the 'savings' of the Institute for Social Insurance in Fascist Italy.

The same thing has occurred with old age and health insurance, the Institutes of which in the years 1920 to 1932 paid out only 1640 million lire, or 41 per cent. of their receipts, to insured persons.[2] In all some 6900 million lire were employed in the period 1922 to 1932 by the National Institute for Social Insurance, not for insured persons who had paid the premiums, but for loans to provinces and municipalities, for grants to shipping, construction of railways, house building, for the financing of

[1] Guido Toja, 'Modern Tendencies and the Present State of Insurance in Italy', in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Philadelphia, May, 1932. According to Professor Salvemini (*The Journal of Political Economy*, Chicago, December, 1931, p. 825) the costs of administration amounted to 9,821,702 lire in 1926 as against 22,365,117 lire paid out in relief.

[2] Giuseppe Bottai, 'Die Entwicklung der Sozialversicherung im faschistischen Italien,' in the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, Munich, March, 1933, p. 27.

joint stock companies in straitened circumstances, and for public works of every kind. In other words, the Fascist Government, left with insufficient means in consequence of its armaments and its gigantic parasitic bureaucracy, plunders the mass of the workers, whose contributions are deducted from their salaries.

§ PUBLIC WORKS

Abroad as well as in Italy the Fascist Government attempts to justify its policy by declaring that, unlike most other countries, it does not wish to apply the system of 'demoralizing' and 'unproductive' unemployment relief, but attempts to meet the situation with public works on a large scale. It has to some extent succeeded in distracting attention from its oppressive labour policy by efficient advertisement of these public works.

It is impossible to read in an Italian paper of the laying of a foundation stone, or the opening of a new motor-road, without gaining the impression that pre-Fascist Italy slept in the open and drove cars through thickets and brushwood. The huge apparatus for Government propaganda, which is at ease only with superlatives, looks to it that the inauguration of the most insignificant building, monument, or institute is celebrated as a triumph of the regime. Every dictatorship is of course inclined to present the people with *circenses* first and *panem* after, but the Fascist Government's behaviour here is particularly out of place. After all, what have public works to do with a political philosophy? Surely no normal human being would dream of describing the drainage of the Zuydersee as a consequence of the democratic constitution of Holland, or the vast construction of

dams by Great Britain in India or Egypt as a consequence of some particular intellectual doctrines. It was left to the unwearying efforts of Fascist self-advertisement, with its unshakable faith in the stupidity and forgetfulness of the world, to extol as an immediate outcome of Fascism the inauguration of an elementary school in some small provincial town, the opening of every new motor road, the launching of every new steamer, and to suggest that elsewhere, in the 'stagnant', 'decadent' democratic countries, no new boats are ever built, new roads constructed or new monuments set up.

There is yet another deception concealed beneath this vainglorious attitude of Fascism toward its public works. Italy more than other countries has suffered constantly from an excess of hands, and a lack of capital and technical development, especially in the South. As a result public bodies, State and municipal, have always undertaken relatively extensive public works. But it was done without fuss, which makes it all the easier for the Fascists to enhance their fame as 'renewers' of their country by unscrupulous depreciation of pre-Fascist Italy.

The public works undertaken by the Fascist Government, partly with the object of increasing economic productivity, have proved largely unproductive. To begin with, one must point out that in the Budget item 'public works' expenses occur which certainly are not such in the usual sense. The costs of the street militia, of rebuilding after damage through flood, earthquake, or volcanic eruptions, and the reconstruction of war-zones, cannot be considered either as finding new openings for labour or as adding to the national resources; they are really only running expenses. Of the other works

designated 'public', like road making, anti-inundation plants, public and private buildings, etc., it is impossible to ascertain to what extent the expenses involved serve for normal upkeep, and to what extent for really new construction. But in the latter case also one must stress that no considerable increase in the economic capacity of the country can result from most of these enterprises. Fascism, in establishing its programme, allows itself to be guided less by a long-range view of economic requirements than by a hankering after outward effect and momentary prestige. For instance, the making of roads, the cornerstone of public works, is directed less to opening up economically under-developed parts of the country than to providing for motor-traffic, so that Italy possesses some magnificent luxury roads, while whole districts to this very day have to use dried-up river beds as roads in summer. And yet Italy at the end of 1930 had but one-sixth of the number of cars owned in England or France.

As regards the financing of public works, Italy's Liberal Governments in the sixty years before Fascism spent the equivalent of approximately 83,000 million depreciated lire without involving the country in debt. Fascism, which has ready money only for the extension of its armaments, makes use of the system of deferred payment. As a result, the work costs far more, since contractors—a fact made known by the courageous Senator Ciccotti in his speech on June 24, 1930—are forced to borrow the necessary capital from the banks at 10 per cent., and even 12 per cent. interest. In addition, the Government, by assuming gigantic obligations amounting to 30,000 million lire according to bank experts, has completely crippled the national Budget for decades

in advance, for apart from the sinking fund for public works the Budget even to-day contains fixed payments amounting to 75 per cent. of its total. The light-hearted optimism which guided the Government in entering upon such debts, extraordinarily high in view of the capacity of the country, will lead to inevitable catastrophe in the State finances, even if it is decided to reduce liabilities by a radical devaluation of the lira. In either event there will be a severe shock not only to the financial stability of the country, but to its entire economic fabric. Significant of the trust reposed in the Government at home is the fact that the discounting of the bills is not handled by private financiers, but by public and semi-public banks, savings banks and Social Insurance Institutes, upon which of course strong pressure is brought to bear. As a consequence, the accumulation of capital in this, the poorest of all the great States, is impeded by what is in reality a confiscation of present or future savings, for the benefit of unremunerative and mostly unproductive public works.

As for the influence of public works upon employment, it is clear that even the wealthiest country would be unable thus to absorb all its unemployed workers in periods of crisis, when unemployment jerks by leaps and bounds to heights hitherto unknown. In 1927, with an average unemployment of 315,000, the number of workmen employed in public works was 73,000, i.e. 23 per cent. In 1928 the corresponding figures were 340,000 and 67,000, i.e. only 19 per cent. For succeeding years the figures are as follows :

1929: 335,000 and 80,000, i.e. 23 per cent.
1930: 485,000 ,, 103,000, i.e. 21 ,,
1931: 775,000 ,, 100,000, i.e. 13 ,,
1932: 1,000,000 ,, 110,000, i.e. only 11 per cent.[1]

It is thus clear that the Fascist Government's efforts to make unemployment relief unnecessary through the provision of additional work have hardly been crowned with success. The sum total is that the unemployed receive neither payment out of their own insurance premiums, nor work from the Government. Mussolini's 'workers' Government' does not desire the former, while it is unable to circumvent the economic and financial obstacles which make the latter impossible.

§ HOURS AND WAGES

Before we investigate wages we must first look at the regulations about working hours. The Fascist Government has not yet ratified unconditionally the eight-hour day and the forty-eight-hour week. Fascist economists, however, are not honest enough to give the real reason for this; they say instead —in the words of a high Government official and professor of economics—that the law about the eight-hour day is '*immoral*'.[2] For the same moral reason bonuses for overtime have been lowered to 10 per cent., contrary to the Washington Convention's figure of 25 per cent. (in many cases more

[1] *Annuario statistico italiano 1932*, p. 234; Ministero delle Corporazioni, *Bollettino del lavoro e della previdenza sociale*, January-March, 1932, p. 259, July-August, 1932, p. 122, September-October, 1932, p. 318.

[2] Lello Gangemi, *Il problema della durata del lavoro*, Florence, 1929, p. 365.

was paid when there were autonomous trade unions in Italy). This undoubtedly encourages employers to let their men work for more than eight hours, which can hardly fail of unfavourable effects upon unemployment. To make matters worse, employees are obliged by law to give one hour overtime daily in industrial workshops. In a whole category of enterprises an excess of even two hours a day was declared admissible. Yet even this 10 per cent. extra for overtime exists only on paper. In practice contracts of service are drawn up with not merely no additional pay for overtime—*overtime hours are not paid for at all in Fascist Italy.*

As an instance we quote from a collective contract for agricultural workers in the province of Mantua :

'The normal working day, including care of cattle, amounts to eight hours ; if the requirements of the estate should demand it an *elongation of the working day* of not more than two hours per day in the months May 15 to August 15 is permissible, *this without claim to salary at all.*

'In the harvest period the employee must, *without any extra claim to salary*, place himself at the disposal of his employer by day and night, in working hours and outside them if the harvest calls for urgent labour.

'Breaks during work, time taken going to the fields or to and from the farm, are not considered as work and are therefore not counted in the hours of work.

'The landowner is entitled to divide the daily hours of labour according to the needs of the estate' (*Lavoro agricolo fascista*, February 1, 1931).

Of one thing Fascism is particularly proud : the abolition of the minimum wage. A. C. Pigou,

professor of political economy at Cambridge University, one of the first economists in the world, is convinced that the institution of minimum wages, quite apart from ethical and social needs, must influence favourably the national income. He goes further: even if low wages are in accord with the worker's productivity one must nevertheless advocate minimum wages, as higher wages will soon justify themselves by increasing the worker's productivity, and this must also lead to an increase in the entire national income.[1] To-day one may safely assert that Professor Pigou's view has become almost everywhere common property in theory and in practice.

Far otherwise in Fascist Italy. Gaetano Napolitano, a leading light of the younger school of economists, proclaims with pride that Fascism has surmounted the 'long and wearisome outpourings about minimum wages, which cause so many discussions in and give so much trouble to the International Labour Office'.[2] Wages 'should be fixed by criteria *a posteriori*, i.e. in relation to the work performed'.[3]

The Ministry for Corporations imagines a still simpler solution of the problem:

'The syndicalist Italian system solves the question of minimum wages in the simplest of manners: *it denies its existence.*'[4] This short

[1] A. C. Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare*, London, 1924, p. 574.

[2] In the volume edited by Turati and Bottai, *La Carta del Lavoro*, Rome, 1929, p. 249.

[3] Gaetano Napolitano, *Corso di economia politica*, Rome, 1928, p. 271.

[4] Carlo Alberto Sabatini, in *Il Diritto del Lavoro*, published by the Ministry for Corporations, July-August, 1928, p. 437.

sentence reveals in a flash the character of Fascism. While in other matters it arrogates to itself the right to control and regulate the life of its citizens from their birth to the grave, upon this one subject, so decisive for the interests of millions of citizens, it can find nothing to say but: 'The State has no reason . . . to intervene' (op. cit., p. 439). To the intelligent captain of industry in England and America, Fascism must seem not a guide to the future, but a curious survival from an almost forgotten past.

By the principles established in Article 12 of the *Carta del Lavoro* the worker is also most unfavourably placed. In periods of prosperity the 'normal exigencies of life', in bad ones the 'possibilities of production', i.e. not even the satisfaction of the normal exigencies, serve as criteria for the standard of wages.

Gino Olivetti, for years secretary to the industrialists' associations, striving as a true Fascist in peaceful harmony for the entrance of the 'Kingdom of Love' and the exit of wages from the workers' purses, has taught that 'one prepares for the morrow with the renunciations of to-day'.[1] This admonition, supported by Christian preparedness for suffering, is distinctly addressed to Italy's working classes, as a large part of Italian employers are of the opinion that all their woes, and especially difficulties in the export trade, may be traced back to the 'too high' wages of Italy, and that 'in order to defeat competition in the international market, workers' wages must be reduced'.[2]

[1] Gino Olivetti in *Civiltà Fascista*, p. 331.

[2] Ernesto Fodale, *Sindacalismo e vita economica*, Rome, 1928, p. 15.

But he who knows the economic structure and the relatively backward equipment of Italy knows also that in improving these and not in starvation wages lies the hope of vanquishing the difficulties, objective and subjective, which Italian business has to struggle against.[1]

A comparison of the cost of living with wages under Fascism is more revealing than all the theories of Fascist idealists, and all the manœuvres of Fascist legislation. Whereas according to the estimates of the statistical service of the League of Nations the cost of living fell by only 5 per cent. in the first ten years of Fascism (1923–32),[2] wages have fallen in the same period by 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. The great offensive against wages set in in 1927 with the stabilization of the lira, by which wages were officially reduced by 20 per cent. 1930 brought a further official reduction of 10 per cent., and the next two years they fell another 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. In some provinces wages had already been reduced by as much as 45 per cent. to 60 per cent. in 1931 (*Lavoro Fascista*, November 29, 1931). Even the *Corriere della Sera* (July 27, 1932) admits to wages having been reduced by almost half in the previous four years.

[1] This fact is even admitted by the German sociologist, Robert Michels, who now labours in the service of Fascism. See his pamphlet: *Der Einfluss der faschistischen Arbeitsverfassung auf die Weltwirtschaft*, Leipzig, 1929, p. 19.

[2] League of Nations, *Bulletin mensuel de statistique*, Geneva, February, 1933, p. 74. According to the (unreliable) figure of the *Bollettino dei prezzi*, published by the Institute of Statistics in Rome, January 12, 1933, p. 44, the reduction in the cost of living in the same period, taking as basis 1914 = 100, amounted to 10 per cent.

Particularly severe have been the reductions in wages of agricultural workers, who still represent the bulk of the working classes. The encroachments upon the eight-hour-day, which force the agricultural labourer to be at his master's beck and call at any hour—day or night—with no claim to wages for his additional services let alone overtime, are not everything by far. Thanks to the help of the classless idealists who stand above all party, the great landowners, actively supported by Fascism in their fight against the Socialist and Catholic trade unions, have brought down the agricultural workers of Italy to the level of coolies, though before the advent of the Fascist regime Italy held a leading position on many a point of social legislation concerning agriculture.

The fact that agricultural wages have in recent years alone been reduced by about one-half is not sufficient (*Lavoro agricolo fascista* of August 7, 1932). Thanks to Fascist connivance the masters do not even pay these starvation wages all in cash, but make up the larger part in kind. The president of the Fascist agrarian associations, Luigi Razza, declared on this point: '*We must return to the old conditions*' (*Lavoro agricolo fascista*, September 20, 1931). The liberation of agricultural labourers from payment in kind, the work of centuries of embittered struggle, has been wiped out at a stroke. Any reduction in salary is invariably taken off the small cash wage, so that the cash payment to-day is microscopically small. It should also be borne in mind that the worker does not receive all the various foodstuffs he may require as payment in kind but only such as happen to be produced on the estate in question. Now for two reasons he cannot obtain

a good price for the products of his labour. First the quantities are small, secondly he must sell immediately and at any price, for he is in no position to look round for a favourable market. Little imagination is required to grasp that wages, low in themselves, in the form in which they are paid out in Fascist Italy do not even suffice to buy the most essential food, let alone clothing and other necessities. Mussolini's declaration in Parliament (session of June 22, 1929) that in some parts of Italy 'people feed on grass for months' seems perfectly in accord with the present situation under the circumstances described above.

There has been yet another innovation, or rather reversion to type: *the establishment of a slavish bond with the soil.* Under cover of the watchwords 'deproletarization' and 'countrification' of agricultural workers and tenants, 'shares in the proceeds' have been established in many contracts in the place of payments in cash or in kind. The following words, let fall at the Congress of agricultural workers and tenants of the province of Milan, testify to the bitterness aroused by this move: 'In not a few cases the system of sharing in proceeds degenerates and in the hands of the less correct landowners becomes a weapon for the infliction of heavy duties upon the tenant, duties which are granted no just reward. Small wonder then that the natural tendency of so many peasants should strive toward cash contracts, which are considered a *redemption from oppressive slavery*' (*Lavoro agricolo fascista*, May 21, 1929).

Furthermore, the reductions in salary by 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. and even more, rising in agriculture to 60 per cent., are only those officially

admitted. In reality salaries have suffered even larger reductions in many provinces; and labour contracts are not always adhered to by the employers.[1] The practice of many employers, who actually pay the labourer *less than appears in the workman's pass*, a fact disclosed by a Fascist trade union official, sounds incredible, yet it is true (*Lavoro fascista*, May 21, 1929).

Thanks to the thoroughness of Mussolini's Government in its wages policy, Italy has achieved the lowest real wages in the whole of Europe, as is shown by the following statistics published by the International Labour Office (*International Labour Review*, Geneva, October, 1930, p. 545):

Basis: Great Britain = 100.

Great Britain	100
Germany	73
Austria	48
Canada	155
Spain	40
United States	190
Ireland	93
Italy	*39*
Holland	82
Poland	61
Yugoslavia	45

[1] See *Lavoro fascista* of May 5, 1929, in which it is stated that 'in almost all communities the agricultural labour contracts are not strictly adhered to'. See also the *Lavoro agricolo fascista* of March 13, 1931, where we read that the provincial secretary of Apulia attempted—unsuccessfully—to remedy 'the convenient, general and undisturbed lack of respect for the laws concerning the exchange of labour, social insurance and labour contracts'.

These are the figures for 1930; the corresponding figures for later years are even less in Italy's favour. Whilst most States only turned to reductions of salaries as a weapon against the depression in 1931 or 1932, Italy was the *first country* which, as early as 1930, carried through a radical programme of wage reductions.[1] Any resistance, be it noted, was excluded in advance by the corporative mechanism.

Great Britain, America and Japan went off the gold standard in order to balance their Budgets and improve their chances of export, but the Fascist Government decided to maintain the lira at par in spite of the sinking gold reserve of the Banca d'Italia, declining export figures and weakening confidence abroad. This it did purely for reasons of prestige, thus enforcing a fresh deflation on a large scale. The Budget deficit for 1933–34, amounting to 4000 million lire (£67,000,000) as opposed to the original estimate of 2900 million lire, induced Mussolini to launch a new campaign against salaries in the beginning of April, 1934. These most recent reductions in salaries run from 6 per cent. to 20 per cent. and we take the liberty of quoting the opinion of *The Economist* (April 21, 1934), as to what is happening in Italy of to-day:

'Indeed, it is particularly interesting that Fascist Italy has deliberately adopted the remedy which is everywhere recommended by the *rentier* class. Not only is there to be no devaluation, but as in France, the Budget is to be balanced wholly by cuts and not at all by increased taxation.'

Judging by Mussolini's Budget speech (May 26,

[1] League of Nations, *La situation économique mondiale 1931–32*, Geneva, 1932, p. 261 *et seq.*

1934) the outlook is indeed gloomy. He foreshadows a period based upon a lower scale of living and calling for hitherto unimagined asceticism. Fascist glory must be paid for—we are left in no doubt by whom.

It is incredible, yet exposed in official figures, that Italy, the traditional land of lack of capital, in the four years 1929–32 alone has been deprived of 1077 million lire for the insatiable Fascist corporative bureaucracy.[1] This gigantic sum refers only to the compulsory contributions to the syndicates. The exact figure for the 'voluntary' contributions is, comprehensibly enough, not made known, but according to a Fascist ex-Minister the total sum of the compulsory and voluntary contributions amounts to 600 million lire (£10,000,000) per annum, whilst another Fascist authority gave the figure of 1000 million lire (£16,000,000).[2]

We believe we have sufficiently exposed the true position of the Italian working classes under Fascism. Yet in theory Fascism's attitude toward the workers is that expressed by Giuseppe Belluzzo, the former Minister of Trade and Commerce:

'To the uncouth, ill-kempt workers who make their way on foot or by bicycle from an unhealthy city dwelling to the factory close at hand Fascism prefers the educated workers who are in a position to make their way from the hygienic cottage surrounded by trees, in the none too distant country, *as the American workmen do, by motor-cycle or in*

[1] *Compendio statistico italiano 1932*, p. 162, and the statements of Bruno Biagi, the Under-Secretary for State in the Ministry for Corporations, in the *Corriere della Sera*, April 4, 1933.

[2] A correspondent in *The New Statesman and Nation*, March 17, 1934.

cars' (Giuseppe Belluzzo, *Economia fascista*, Rome, 1928, p. 179).

The Fascist reality, however, does not even bring the dole to protect the working classes of Italy from starvation, let alone small motor-cars, which are manufactured by the exuberant imagination of this illustrious Minister of Commerce, endowed apparently with a strong sense of humour. Lies, suppression and exploitation: into these three words may best be fitted the attitude of Fascism towards the labouring masses. The 'renewing' doctrine of corporativism, so far from protecting them from the severity of the world depression, has placed the heaviest burdens on those least able to bear them. It is a policy as foolish, even regarded from the point of view of the self-interest of the dominant faction, as it is revolting in its cruelty.

VII ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF FASCISM

We have already shown that Fascism's claim to have constructed a new 'corporative' economic order, differing equally from Capitalism and Socialism, is not in accord with the facts, since the existing structure has not merely been left untouched, but has been strongly supported by Fascism. Hence it is, to our mind, a mistake to swell the chorus of those desirous of debiting every bank failure in Italy, every closure of a factory, to the Fascist regime alone. It would, after all, occur to no one to put the responsibility for the crash of the Danat-bank in Germany, or the standstill of large sections of the Ford works in the United States, on to the shoulders of the Governments which happened then to be in power. It is only where the specific influence of Fascism upon Italy's financial and economic situation may be discovered that we shall turn our attention to it.

The assertion that Fascism rescued Italy from financial and economic collapse, rests, as do many other mainstays of the international machinery for the advertisement of Fascism, upon pure invention. Giorgio Mortara, the most dependable chronicler of current Italian economic history, believes that there was a perceptible improvement in the financial and economic situation as early as 1921 (G. Mortara,

Prospettive economiche 1922, Città di Castello, 1922, pp. xv f.), and this improvement was even more marked in 1922. The fact that the period of recovery continued has nothing whatever to do with Fascism, which was lucky enough to come into power during a period of universal prosperity. When the slump came, Fascism did nothing to protect Italy from its effects but on the contrary intensified them.

Italy's balance of trade was always adverse before the war, but so long as sane common sense was free to manage its economy, the large deficit was made up by remittances of emigrants from abroad, and the disbursements of tourists in the country itself. Fascism has undoubtedly assisted in shaking these two pillars of Italian wealth, hence necessitating a large decline in the surplus of imports, which is not (as foolish 'patriots' proclaim) a proof of greater economic strength, but of lowered power of consumption, of increased poverty.

The Fascist population policy, which we have already discussed, has naturally played a part in lowering the remittances from Italians living abroad —their number to-day being 9–10 millions according to official Italian estimates—from approximately 600–700 million gold lire to less than 200 million gold lire per annum.

An analysis of the deposits and withdrawals by emigrants in the Savings Banks shows clearly that so long as emigration from Italy was not hampered too severely the former still remained well above the latter. But with the initiation of the militarist emigration policy in 1927, long before the world economic crisis, 178·4 million lire were deposited,

and as much as 822·4 millions were withdrawn. Altogether in the seven years 1927–33, 1545·3 million lire were deposited, 3556·9 million lire were withdrawn. Through the Banco di Napoli, which was and still is to a large extent the traditional bank of emigrants, 679·8 million lire were remitted to Italy by emigrants from abroad as late as 1925. This figure fell to 256·7 millions in 1933.

All these figures [1] tell the same story. Nor is it surprising, for it is the newly emigrated who send the largest sums home, while the tie with the old country is still very close. Besides, we must not forget that the mistrust and animosity with which the Fascist regime inspires the majority of the emigrants—who are mainly peasants and labourers—induces them to refrain from sending their money to Italy for investment. Whereas Italian emigrants were formerly characterized by a moving attachment to the old country, returning in crowds the moment they had saved sufficient money for a decent living at home, they now, comprehensibly enough, prefer to remain where they are. This is why land values have fallen for the first time in recent Italian history. It is impossible to estimate the number of Italians who do not return home because of the present regime, and the consequent loss of capital from what was always a regular and important source, but it must be considerable.

The tourist revenue also, Italy's second largest source of wealth, has fallen off considerably. The year 1924 still brought 1,060,000 tourists who, according to estimate, spent 2862 million lire, but

[1] Unless otherwise stated the figures quoted in this chapter are from official Italian sources.

the number for 1931, the last for which dependable statistics are available, fell to 637,627 tourists who, according to estimate, spent only 1000 million lire in Italy (*Ente Nazionale Industrie Turistiche : Relazione sull'attività svolta nell'anno 1930*, Rome, 1930, p. 80, and *Statistica delle stazioni di cura, soggiorno e turismo 1931*, published by the same office, Rome, 1932, p. 3 *et seq.*).

It would be a mistake to ascribe this severe reduction exclusively to the Fascist regime. No doubt general economic causes also play their part; but nevertheless the share of the present political system should not be underrated. The atmosphere of terror weighs upon the country to such a degree that many foreigners, rightly or wrongly, hesitate to go to Italy. The traveller who has but once, be it from whatever frontier station, passed into Fascist Italy, knows how suddenly the atmosphere changes. Hardly is one out of peaceful Switzerland, or placid France, when armed militia suddenly board the train, leaving no compartment unmolested by their inquisitorial presence. The laughter and gaiety die away; that sensation of being constantly under observation lays hold of every traveller. Nobody dare speak out loud; every one begins to rack his brains as to what subject may be discussed and what must on no account be mentioned. Even in the cities the same mood prevails, and is revealed to any foreigner endowed with insight. The Italian friend falls silent in the midst of a conversation, for instinct tells him he is under observation, and even the foreigner is infected by the general mistrust felt by each toward his neighbour, and in any too attentive host he guesses a spy or a denouncer. This mistrust

is, of course, unfounded in ninety cases out of a hundred, but it suffices to cause a feeling of apprehension, which may spoil much of one's delight in this wonderful country.

The depression in world shipping has been felt in Italy with particular acuteness. The Government, which spends thousands of millions on naval armaments, has also granted substantial subsidies to the mercantile marine (over 3000 million lire for the years 1925–26 to 1945–46, an amount increased by continual additional allowances). Yet in spite of this the Italian mercantile marine is run at a loss. The ruinous influence of the Fascist system is manifested mainly by building liners for the sake of prestige alone, instead of inaugurating a shipping programme in accord with present strained conditions and the needs of the Italian labour market. The fulsome eulogies of the Fascist press on the subject of the two huge new liners *Rex* and *Conte di Savoia* passed over the fact that these vessels, which could not have been constructed but for the immense Government subsidy of 800 million lire, were unsound investments from the start ; in consequence of her geographical situation Italy will never succeed in snatching the North America traffic from the more favourably situated English and French ports. These two boats are, moreover, pronouncedly luxury craft, doomed to be a constant load on Italy's shoulders at a time when other and wealthier countries are beginning to grasp that in these days one-class boats suitable for the cheap tourist traffic are the most lucrative. Had the vast capital engulfed in these two molochs been devoted to the renovation of the existing body of shipping, and possibly also to the

construction of boats in accordance with the requirements of the times, the mercantile marine might have shown itself better able to resist the depression. As it is, Italy has to thank this vainglorious policy for the fact that foreign vessels are getting the preference even in its own harbours. The proportion of foreign vessels loading and unloading in Italian ports rose from about 35 per cent. in 1929 to about 37 per cent. in 1933.

Above all, however, Fascism has harmed industry. The hundreds of thousands of workers who emigrated openly or secretly to escape from physical torture at the hands of Fascist bullies and the continual reductions in wages and worsening of labour conditions, were the flower of Italy's working classes. For it was precisely the highly qualified workers who knew—and as experience has proved, knew rightly—that they might anywhere else earn their bread under more favourable circumstances than in Fascist Italy; it was they who had the strongest sense of their human dignity and their social position, and felt in no wise inclined to allow themselves to be turned into robots.

That is only a part of the damage done by Fascism to industry. The general spread of red-tape and the intrusion of political tests have almost silenced the creative spirit. In 1924, 10,387 patents for inventions were taken out by Italians, but this figure fell to 3566 in 1931. Fascism, whose 'renewal' of the schools consisted in drilling little boys and teaching them to shoot, has also succeeded in impairing technical education. Whereas technical institutes could boast of 57,162 pupils in 1922–23, the numbers fell to 43,333 in 1931–32, although the

number of boys of school age had risen in the interim. The Fascist youth organizations possess schools of their own for those going into the Navy, but the number of pupils registered in nautical training colleges for civilians fell from 4434 in 1922–23 to 1097 in 1931–32. The Fascist Press and pamphleteers—following the august example of Wilhelm II—never weary of stressing that 'Italy's future, its life, lies on the high seas'.[1] It is clear, however, that Fascism's concern is for the future of torpedo boats and submarines rather than for that of the mercantile marine.

§ THE BATTLE OF WHEAT

The *Battaglia del grano* is a keystone of Fascist economic propaganda. The guiding principle which inspired Mussolini in his campaign of the years 1925–26 was 'to free the Italian people from the slavery of foreign bread', although it is necessary for Italy to import all the most important raw materials such as coal, metals and cotton, and its dependence upon foreign countries would thus remain even if it were fully self-supporting in respect of cereals. The mode in which economic polemics are carried on in Fascist Italy is indicated by the following utterance of Giuseppe Belluzzo, the former Minister for Trade and Commerce: 'I know not who first wrote or declared that Italy is poor in raw materials; that man was certainly *no good Italian*'.[2]

It should be borne in mind that the figures here

[1] Francesco Coppola, 'L'idea imperiale della nazione italiana', in *Politica*, February, 1926, p. 32.

[2] G. Belluzzo, *Economia fascista*, Rome, 1928, p. 145.

given are taken from official Italian publications, and are thus to be accepted with reserve, for since July, 1926, the ' Central Institute for Statistics of the Kingdom of Italy ' has been placed directly beneath the control of the Prime Minister, and since then statistics have been consistently decked out according to Fascist taste and requirements. (Article 1 of the amending Law of May 27, 1929, runs thus: ' The central institute for statistics of the Kingdom of Italy is a State institute, possesses juridical personality and is *placed in direct and exclusive dependence upon the Head of the Government* '.)

The record harvest in 1932, which yielded 75 million quintals of wheat, was celebrated by the Fascists as a ' crowning victory ' (*Corriere della Sera*, May 7, 1932), and ascribed solely to the genius of the divine Duce. Judging, however, from the following comparison with countries of similar climatic conditions, the Duce's influence must be more extensive than even he has claimed:

WHEAT YIELDS

(*in million quintals*)

	Spain	*France*	*Italy*
Harvest, 1931	36	73	67
,, 1932	49	90	75
Increase	13	17	8
Increase percentage	34	23	12

For years indeed the communiqués from the front line of the ' battle of wheat ' have revealed one remarkable fact. If the heavens smile on man's efforts, there is no end of the hosannas to the genius of the Duce. Yet for poor harvests, year

after year, the stereotyped excuse of bad weather is repeated.

The attempt to bring the backward South into line has been a complete failure. Whereas 17 quintals a hectare represents the average yield of wheat for Northern Italy, the yield for the South is but 9 quintals a hectare. Wheat occupies but 36 per cent. of the area devoted to cereals in the North, so that the wheat problem is pre-eminently one for the South. The best way to set about increasing the yield would be to encourage first the specifically southern products such as oil, wine, almonds, oranges, etc., and to give more attention to cattle farming. A diminution in the area devoted to corn with a corresponding intensification of cultivation by the employment of artificial fertilizers, would then lead to better results for corn also. Technically this would be the only means of raising the productivity of the South—though, be it said, there is no lack of need for social reform also. The breaking up of the famous *latifundi* (great estates), for instance, might produce a lot of good, though one can hardly expect this of a Fascist Government.

The Government had indeed ideas of quite a different order. In high protective duties it believed it had found the remedy for all ills. Apart from the effects of these duties on consumers, they had a fatal influence upon Italy's foreign trade in agricultural products. At a time when, thanks to the concentration upon corn production, Italy's exports of oil sank by 50 per cent., Spanish oil exports were more than twice as large as before. Whereas the export of Italian oranges showed no

increase, Spain successfully doubled hers. The Spanish lemon exports increased four-fold, but the Italian remained stable. Italy, from an egg-exporting country, was transformed into an egg-importing one. The like occurred with other products of the South. Anyone who has had the opportunity to discuss with people from the South their experience of the 'battle of wheat', though he eschew politics, will know with what bitterness they complain of the enforced concentration upon corn, a type of farming thoroughly unsuited to the South and which can, moreover, bear no comparison with fruit growing. 'Mussolini knows that too, but he believes that economic needs must be sacrificed to the requirements of a possible war.' This remark crops up over and over again.

Have all these sacrifices achieved their aim, the liberation of the country from the slavery of foreign wheat? The best answer to that question is given by the following figures:

IMPORTS OF WHEAT

Yearly average	*Quintals*
1900–14 . . .	11,990,000
1921–25 . . .	23,900,000
1926–31 . . .	20,640,000

Moreover, the production of wheat has not kept pace with the increase in population. To-day—in spite of the land reclamation (*bonifica integrale*) carried out in continuance of pre-Fascist plans and enterprise—the imports of wheat come to 25·5 per cent. of the entire consumption, compared with 21·5 per cent. before the war. The

decrease in imports since 1925 is only an apparent advance in Italian self-sufficiency, for in the same period the imports of maize rose by 3 million quintals per annum. Thus Italy is more dependent on foreign countries for her food than she was in pre-war and pre-Fascist years. Fascism's only achievement is that instead of wheat the people to-day have to be content with maize, the food of the poorest of the poor.

The import duty upon wheat has been screwed up successively to 75 lire per quintal. Thanks to this duty prices in Italy are about 30 per cent. higher than those on the world market. The wages of an industrial worker in Italy amount to about 4000 lire (£70) per annum, that of an agricultural labourer to barely 3000 lire, so that this indirect taxation bears very hard upon them.

§ FINANCE

Italy, in the forty-five short years from the Union to her entry into the Great War, had successfully performed a financial task of considerable difficulty. The construction of a network of railways and telegraphs, of harbours and other modern facilities, and of the whole apparatus of government appropriate to a newly-born great European Power, was realised, thanks to the patient readiness to sacrifice of the Italian people, though very large sums were needed and the country was poor.

The financial policy of the men at the helm was, however, cautious. As a result, the internal debt of the Kingdom of Italy, amounting to 11,289 million lire in 1876, was no more than 15,766 million lire in 1915. It was clear that the war, which had

cost Italy over 100,000 million lire, would shake the country badly and cause a budgetary deficit. Thanks, however, to the energetic financial reconstruction of the post-war Liberal Governments the budget was as good as balanced by 1922–23, and the national debt was only about 22,000 million gold lire in 1923. Owing to the inflation of prices in relation to gold this internal debt, which was to be paid off continuously, would have represented no special burden in comparison with pre-war days.

Three great financial measures were carried through by the Fascist Government during the period of office of Count Volpi. First came the settlement of war debts with Great Britain and the United States. Volpi visited the creditor countries in person. With the United States he achieved a reduction of roughly 80 per cent. in comparison with 18 per cent. agreed to by the United States with England and 46 per cent. with Belgium. He obtained a reduction of 86 per cent. from Great Britain as compared with 65 per cent. granted to France.

The second measure was the enforced conversion of the floating debt of about 28,000 million lire in November, 1926, to bonds bearing the relatively low rate of 5 per cent. interest, the size of the debt having stiffened market rates to an unusual extent. The State lost several thousand million lire by this exchange of bonds because of the stabilization of the lira which had occurred meantime.

The third measure was the stabilization of the currency, the guiding impetus to which was national prestige, as is amply proved by Mussolini's famous speech at Pesaro on August 8, 1926. Although the

exchange value of the dollar had wavered between twenty-five and twenty-six in the two years previous to stabilization, the lira was artificially stabilized at the rate of 92·46 to the pound and 19 to the dollar. The export industries have never recovered from this blow, and the same applies to internal debtors. Not very long ago the economist, Mazzocchi-Alemanni (in the *Giornale degli Economisti*, August, 1932), drew attention to the fact that Italian agriculture's immense debt of over 10,000 million lire is above all due to the unbearable 'shifting of financial relations between creditors and debtors as a result of stabilization'. The national debt amounted to over 20,000 million lire at stabilization, so that the real increase in debt due to the changed value of currency is a very great burden in a country so poor in capital as Italy.

It is not easy to scrutinize the subsequent course of Italian finance, every imaginable device being employed to veil the truth about the budget. Italian Members of Parliament have complained loudly of its lack of clarity. Thus Senator Mayer made the following declaration in the Senate on June 6, 1928:

'It is indispensable for our national accounts to be clear, precise and obvious. That will certainly help Italy abroad. Losses have certainly occurred. What are they?'

The answer of Volpi, Minister for Finance, was negative and evasive.

Senator Ciccotti, in his speech on June 24, 1930, also indicated that 'there are many who hold a view different from that of those who believe the structure of our balance is already clear'.

There are two main difficulties. First, beside the *bilancio di competenza* passed by the Chambers, there are supplementary accounts (*bilancio dei residui*) which do not come before Parliament, and 'treasury returns' (*gestione della Tescoreria*). The Court of Accounts has been placed by law in direct dependence upon the Head of the Government. All this renders difficult any perspective of the actual state of the national finances.

The second difficulty is due to the separation of the accounts of autonomous State enterprises (railways, road construction, post and telegraph monopoly) and of corporations in which the State retains various financial interests, which formerly appeared in the budget. A thorough investigation of national revenue and expenditure is thus next to impossible.

The total revenues of each year from 1922–23 to 1931–32, adjusted so as to include the receipts from the same sources, unlike the official revenue figures, where receipts from railways, etc., figure sometimes under national revenue, sometimes outside it in the special returns for the autonomous enterprises, are as follows:

Year	*million lire*
1922–23	15,702
1923–24	17,168
1924–25	18,707
1925–26	20,130
1926–27	20,551
1927–28	19,283
1928–29	20,187
1929–30	19,642
1930–31	19,782
1931–32	19,033

Taking into account currency fluctuations this gives a rise in revenue of 40 per cent.

The receipts of local authorities are as follows (in million lire):

Year	*Provinces*	*Municipalities*
1925	675	3111
1928	1226	5309

Thus the revenues of municipalities and provinces during the three years 1925-28 (later statistics are not available) were nearly doubled.

The annual income of the semi-public corporative bodies is estimated at 500 million lire a year at least (1000 million lire or 600 million lire according to a Fascist ex-Minister and another Fascist authority quoted by an anonymous correspondent in *The New Statesman and Nation*, March 17, 1934). In addition more than a thousand million lire, paid into public funds for social services, are withdrawn and simply confiscated by the Government to defray necessary expenses and subventions. With these sums, which are tantamount to compulsory taxation by the State, the increase in revenue under the Fascist regime reaches at least 50 per cent.

A glance at the method of raising taxes will show a steady increase in indirect taxation. The Fascist Government cannot do other than favour indirect taxation, since this affects the well-to-do less than the poor. On the one hand, the tender handling of *rentiers* and big business men, on the other, enormous duties and taxes upon such things as bread, coffee, sugar, etc. This is—in broad outline—the taxation policy of the 'Workers' Government' of Signor Mussolini.

The following table shows the expenditure side of the Italian budget (adjusted like the revenue figures to a uniform basis):

Year	*million lire*
1913–14	2,490
1922–23	17,814
1923–24	17,265
1924–25	16,950
1925–26	19,757
1926–27	20,128
1927–28	28,799
1928–29	19,646
1929–30	19,946
1930–31	20,979
1931–32	23,307

Thus expenditure has increased nine-fold in paper lire, or, allowing for monetary depreciation, almost three-fold, under the Fascist regime as compared with pre-war days. If we go further and exclude expenses entailed by the war, such as pensions, indemnities, etc., we find that the regular expenditure has risen from 13,277 million lire in 1922-23 to about 22,000 million lire in 1931-32.

Whereas in each annual budget the appropriations for education and social services are astonishingly low, those for military, police and the colonies rise continually.

In addition to the regular Army, Italy has a militia (*Milizia volontaria per la sicurezza nazionale*) which consists of some 30,000 officers and 400,000 men. Of these, according to official statistics, 1773 officers and 23,795 men (railways, 18,699; forests, 756; ports, 3378; streets, 581; posts and telegraphs, 381) are on permanent active service. These figures, however, are certainly too low. The

Fascist Government enters 67 million lire annually in the statistical year-book of the League of Nations as the entire cost of the militia (League of Nations: *Annuaire militaire*, Geneva, 1931, p. 691), whereas in their own statistical year-book they enter 120 million lire annually as costs for personnel and material for harbour and forest militia alone (*Annuario statistico italiano*, Rome, 1932, pp. 442, 448). As these represent but one-sixth of the entire militia on regular active service, we shall not be far wrong in concluding that the Fascist Party militia costs the Italian nation not much under one thousand million lire per annum.

Half of the budget increase under Fascism is ear-marked for military and police expenditure. The following figures for the development of military expenditure [1] in the most important countries of the world show that the militarization of the Italian budget is unique, in comparison not only with pre-Fascist Italy, but with the other Great Powers in Europe:

MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN MILLIONS OF POUNDS (GOLD)

Country	1909–13 (average)	1928	1929	1930	Increase per cent. over 1909–13
Great Britain.	64·0	99·9	99·0	95·0	48
France . .	60·0	79·2	98·7	94·0	57
Germany .	70·0	37·6	33·8	35·1	—50
Italy . .	*25·0*	52·7	50·4	53·6	*114*
U.S.A. . .	61·7	138·9	146·2	145·4	135
Japan . .	19·7	48·8	48·0	48·0	143

[1] E. H. Davenport in *The New Statesman and Nation*, London, January 30, 1932.

Even more instructive is the following table, which gives the development of military expenditure in proportion to national income :

ARMAMENTS AND NATIONAL INCOME

(*in millions*)

Country	Currency	Year	Estimated National Income	Armaments Expenditure	Per Cent
Great Britain.	pounds	1913	2,250	77·	3·4
		1928	3,800	115	3·0
France . .	francs	1913	37,500	2,062	5·5
		1928	250,000	11,400	4·6
Italy . .	lire	1913	20,000	737	*3·2*
		1928	110,000	4,761	*4·3*
Germany .	marks	1913	45,000	2,056	4·6
		1928	60,000	766	1·3
U.S.A. .	dollars	1913	34,400	491	1·4
		1928	80,000	868	1·1

These figures are taken from a statistical analysis by P. Jacobsen, of the economic section of the secretariat of the League of Nations. They show that Italy alone has increased her expenditure on armaments in a greater proportion than the increase in national income, and this in spite of the fact that Italy is by far the poorest of the Great Powers. On top of this it should be pointed out that the increase is even greater in reality. The precise amount of expenditure cannot be tested since all control is lacking for Italy, and quite apart from the militia it is impossible to know exact figures for military training and for the supply of material to the Fascist

youth organizations. Yet even the figures officially admitted are sufficiently disquieting.

In face of this black and white testimony General Gazzera, the then Italian Minister for War, calmly stated in the Chamber on March 16, 1933, that 'the expenditure for the army is moderate in comparison with the enormous budgets of other States' (*Corriere delle Sera*, March 17, 1933).

Italy to-day expends well over a thousand million lire for police per annum, which represents ten times the equivalent of pre-war days. 'What is the State? The Police.' This, Mussolini's conception of the State, makes it not altogether incomprehensible for Italy to expend so much on her police forces. Although the Dictatorship gives the outward appearance of unshakable security (the regime has described itself as a *blocco granitico*), the vast police expenditure, four times as high as that of France, which has double the territory and needs a well-organized police because of her large numbers of foreigners, proves the precise opposite. Senator Ciccotti, in his speech before the Senate on the budget of the Ministry for Home Affairs on May 30, 1928, instanced that 50 million lire were set aside for 'political investigation' alone, in addition to the costs of the secret police (*spese confidenziali*) officially entered as 3 million lire.

Incredible but true is the scandal, also brought to light by Senator Ciccotti, almost the only man who has dared to speak out in Italy, that the costs for keeping under observation one well-known Italian writer (presumably Benedetto Croce) ran into 25,000 lire per month. Ciccotti continued in his memorable speech on that occasion: 'Reflect that what

results from this system is not order. It is merely compulsion, which may very well be a crystallized disorder.'

Pensions have also been inflated under the dictatorship. Fascism dismissed many officials on political grounds without regard to their intrinsic qualifications, filling their places with faithful, if less efficient, partisans. From 147 million lire at the end of 1921 the cost of pensions rose to 730 million in the budget of 1931.

No less a sum than 2000 million lire a year is absorbed by the Fascist bureaucracy, including militia and secret police, youth organizations, etc. Those are just the regular overhead expenses. It is impossible to discover how much the Italian nation is daily cheated of by the Fascist profiteers in high places in 'financial transactions' for the benefit of their own pockets, but every man of the people knows that these *mangianze* (enrichment with public moneys) have made millionaires overnight out of paupers. The collapse of the Banco di Milano demonstrated amply that leading Fascists suffer from no inhibitions in such matters. The Fascist Party itself owed the ruined bank the presentable sum of 18 million lire, and one of Mussolini's closest collaborators was personally involved and had to resign his post shortly after. As a newly-fledged millionaire he will doubtless know how to console himself for this loss.

To understand the budget expenditure upon the colonies of well over 600 million lire, a few facts and figures are required:

AREA AND POPULATION OF THE ITALIAN COLONIES

Colony	*Area in sq. kilometres*	*Population* (1931) *white*	*native*
Tripoli . . .	900,000	30,866	509,714
Cirenaica . . .	738,000	18,861	145,746
Eritrea . . .	119,000	4,565	617,211
Somaliland . . .	500,000	1,658	989,157
Total . . .	2,257,000	55,950	2,261,828

Now of the two million natives, as recently as four years ago only some 600,000 were really under Italy's sway (Georges Valois, *Finances Italiennes*, Paris, 1930, p. 153). Allowing for the tribes since conquered, the Government is apparently employing some 700-900 lire per annum for every native in the colonies it can look upon as subjected.

COLONIAL FOREIGN TRADE

	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
Exports in millions of lire						
Tripoli . .	17·2	28·4	35·4	36·1	29·7	29·2
Cirenaica . .	14·9	24·9	21·2	21·2	19·3	10·2
Eritrea . .	84·6	93·7	72·5	76·2	69·0	59·1
Somaliland .	25·3	42·3	49·9	47·9	78·8	125·6
Imports in millions of lire						
Tripoli . .	243·8	265·4	250·0	215·2	185·0	160·5
Cirenaica . .	178·2	260·9	138·2	146·6	147·0	124·0
Eritrea . .	201·5	195·6	207·5	176·8	186·8	173·0
Somaliland .	156·2	134·2	143·9	136·1	128·8	117·3

Imports to-day are still three times as large as exports—a grave sign in colonies whose wealth

consists solely in the production of raw materials and the export of goods. The totals are negligible when compared with the trade of other colonies.

As early as 1912, that is, in the midst of the colonial fluster, Professor Robert Michels asserted in his book *Elemente zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Imperialismus in Italien* (Tubingen, 1912, p. 61 *et seq.*):

'Of her own strength Italy can finance no colonies. It will only be possible to exploit Tripoli with French and English capital, and in that respect there is but little to differentiate between this and the Italian emigration in Brazil and the Argentine. Here as there it will be said: Italian labour and foreign capital.'

The assertion that Italy can finance no colonies was sound enough. On the other hand, neither English nor French capitalists were sufficiently naïve to invest capital in '*colonies that are largely sand*' (Mussolini at the first Fascist meeting in Milan, March 23, 1919), nor were Italian emigrants eager to exchange America, France, and Belgium for Mussolini's imperial wastes.

According to an estimate by Francesco S. Nitti, former Prime Minister of Italy, colonial expenditure has run into 6000 million gold lire, i.e. about 20,000 million depreciated lire. For a country so deficient in capital as Italy this sum represents a loss of blood from which it has not yet recovered, the consequences of which grow steadily more acute, since this unproductive expenditure increases rather than diminishes. Italy's entire technical and economic equipment might have been renovated with this squandered capital.

Outside Italy there are to-day, according to official Italian estimates, 9,600,000 Italians; in the Italian colonies only about 40,000. Not one-half per cent.! The Italian population of New York City alone is 25 times greater than that of the entire Italian Empire. The boldly exaggerated absorptive capacity of the Italian colonies is untenable. The larger part of these possessions are sand and desert rock, and where the soil is cultivable there are native squatters.

Even an official of the Fascist Government has admitted the economic folly of the Fascist colonial policy: 'Till now the colonies have been a heavy burden upon the Italian budget as they cause *an annual unproductive expenditure of about* 600 *million lire*' (Dr. Attilio Oblath: 'Italian Emigration and Colonial Policy', in the *International Labour Review*, Geneva, June, 1931, p. 830).

No wonder that the vast, unproductive expenditure for the sake of prestige has brought Italy to seek loans abroad for productive purposes which amounted in the years 1925–30 alone—according to an estimate of the Banca Commerciale Italiana—to about 8000 million lire, raised by the State, municipalities, and large industrial concerns. On the one hand, thousands of millions for megalomaniac, uneconomic imperialism, on the other, loans of like amount from Wall Street. Such is the most remarkable feature of the economic policy of the Fascist Government, which has set out 'to free the Italian nation from economic slavery to foreign countries' (Mussolini).

The unproductive colonial expenditure lessens not at all the chronic illness of economic underdevelopment at home. On the contrary, not until

Italy is economically consolidated and has accumulated a sufficiency of surplus capital will it perhaps be expedient to consider colonial expansion. In its present state every lira withdrawn from use upon the country itself and squandered on colonial propaganda, on Fascist colonial institutes and films, on the conquest of rebellious native tribes, is the greatest disservice that can be rendered to the country's economic needs.

The national debt amounted to about 95,000 million (paper) lire in 1922–23. The expenditure for unproductive ends such as military, police, colonies, etc., induced budget deficits of 3000 million, 4000 million lire and even more. More informative than the results of the *bilanci di competenza* are the final results of the *bilanci dei residui* which exhibit a deficit of nearly 15,000 million lire over the last ten years. The State debt to the issuing banks totals over 4000 million lire, and public works—as described above—have entailed a debt of 20,000 to 30,000 million lire. Consequently in the ten years of Fascist rule the internal debt has risen from 95,000 to at least 135,000 million lire—in round figures, over 10 million lire of new debts per day! If we take into consideration the increased real burden arising from the revalorization of the lira, the rise in the national debt amounts to not less than 60 per cent. The national wealth is estimated by Mortara at only 450,000 million lire, so that we have here a state of affairs hardly to be met with elsewhere even in a colony, let alone among the Great Powers of Europe.

On the Fascist assumption of control Italy had but two foreign debts—her war debts to England and

America. In the years 1925–30, loans were raised abroad to the amount of 7887·7 million lire as follows :

	Millions of lire
State or municipal	3201·5
Public enterprises	755·9
Electricity works	2322·0
Engineering and metal-working	470·5
Chemical industries	340·4
Shipping companies	265·5
Artificial silk industry	152·3
Mortgage institutions	95·0
Finance companies	94·4
Rubber industry	76·0
Textile industry	48·9
Various	65·3
Total	7887·7

Of these loans 6559 million lire came from the United States, the remainder having been taken up in Switzerland, Holland and Great Britain. It seems that though Wall Street was prepared during the era of prosperity to pump money into Italy, the City was always distrustful, subscribing in all no more than 3 million pounds. Fascism has had admirers in England, but cannot stand the test of expert scrutiny in the very field in which it makes the greatest claims—that of economic advancement.

VIII SACRO EGOISMO

FEW conceptions of legal and political philosophy have caused as much harm as that of 'sovereignty'. Bodin, the 16th century French theorist, formulated it in classical form as the absolute and eternal power of the State, limited neither by time nor space, recognizing nothing above itself but God (J. Bodin, *Six Livres de la République*, Paris, 1577). It cannot be denied that Bodin himself was less concerned to establish the absolute power of the State than to render the king independent of Church and nobility, thus opening up the way for juridical sovereignty, i.e. the State as exclusive source of legal reference. Unfortunately Bodin's definition has survived to serve purposes for which it was not intended.

In particular Bodin did not go so far as to demand unconditionally the primacy of sovereignty over international law; it is thanks to German idealist philosophy (Hegel), and later Treitschke, the Hohenzollern philosopher, that the conception of sovereignty has been misused to deride and combat the idea of international law and the establishment of universal peace.

Recent legal science and political philosophy have recognized that the idea of sovereignty has become an anachronism in the international sphere. To-day, the nations are so interlocked both politically and economically that the idea of the absolute

independence of each is as untenable as the idea of the absolute independence of the individual within the nation. If the principle that no one may act as judge in his own affairs has become an inviolable part of the legal system of all civilized States, then in the same manner, and supported by the same logic, the principle holds good that individual States also may not act as judge of their own affairs, but must be bound by the rules of a legal system above them. Failing that, all social life—be it between individuals or between organized communities—would of necessity degenerate into bloody anarchy, for each would then wish to be his own judge and would give way only to physical force. Internationally, the claim to absolute sovereignty and the denial of the idea of international law, must lead inevitably to war.

Thus the question of sovereignty is not purely juridical, but touches supreme interests of a universal nature, and we must needs investigate the attitude of Fascism to this, the fundamental problem of political organization, a fateful *motif* in the coming epoch of history.

Nobody can deny that Fascism, in spite of its revolutionary pose, is thoroughly conservative in its political thought, that it looks to the past for its ideas, and that above all Hegel, one of the greatest traitors to the spirit of man the earth has ever borne, and Treitschke, the philosopher of the Kaiser, have left the deepest impress upon the Fascist political creed.

'*There is no value outside and above the State.* Our entire personality gravitates towards and converges into it' (Arnaldo Volpicelli, 'Stato corporativo e stato etico', in *Nuovi Studi*, Rome,

January-February, 1930, p. 76); '*There is no value*, there is no spiritual reality which *man has not through the State alone*' (Hegel, *Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Leipzig, 1920, p. 90).

'*The State displays in war its own strength*' (Giovanni Gentile, *Che cosa è il fascismo?* Florence 1927, p. 34); '*The health of a State generally displays itself*, not in the calm of peace, but *in the movement of war*' (Hegel, *Der Staat*, Leipzig, 1924, p. 102).

'As to its own political interests, be these preservation or expansion, *every State is its own judge, unique and without appeal*' (Antonio Pagano, *Idealismo e Nazionalismo*, Milan, 1928, p. 53); 'The two ideas of sovereignty and limitation exclude one another. *The State* as sovereignty and power is absolute, it is *beyond law*' (Giuseppe Maggiore in *Il Diritto del Lavoro*, April-May, 1928, p. 192 *et seq.*); '*There is nothing superior to the State*' (G. Maggiore, *Un regime e un epoca*, Milan, 1929, p. 71); 'The essence of the State consists in its *enduring no higher power above it*' (Heinrich Treitschke, *Politik*, Leipzig, 1899, vol. i, p. 37); 'It follows as a result of the essence of the State as a sovereign power that *it can recognize no arbiter above it* and that consequently legal obligations, in the last instance, yield to its own decisions' (Treitschke, op. cit., p. 102).

Here we have complete identity in their conception of the State and particularly of sovereignty between the most famous philosophic representatives of Hohenzollern imperialism, and the 'revolutionary' Fascist authors.

We are not surprised, therefore, when Mussolini informs the world that he does not believe that perpetual peace is possible or desirable, that the

fundamental virtues of man are fully revealed only in bloodstained struggles (speech in the Chamber of Deputies, May 26, 1934), and that Italy is to become, not merely a military, but a militaristic nation (speech at the Army manœuvres, August 24, 1934). These utterances have the authentic ring, and have at least the merit of clarity. The world has no excuse for pretending not to know whence Fascist doctrine derives and whither it leads.

§ FASCIST IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is apt to go hand in hand with an exalted view of sovereignty and Fascism proves no exception to the rule. It should, however, be borne in mind that Italy is still far from ripe for imperialism of the modern, that is primarily economic, type. No one can accuse Italy of having failed to exhibit great energy and striking economic advance in the few decades since the Union, but, compared with the other Great Powers, and their more abundant natural resources, she is still very much in arrears. Modern imperialism means the export of surplus capital and surplus goods, as the period of the conquest of colonies suitable for white settlement on a large scale is long past. Lack of capital, however, is Italy's traditional economic disease, and if the colonial policy of former Governments was of disservice to Italy's economic progress, still more so is the insanely exaggerated colonial policy of Fascism with its squandering of thousands of millions. No one will attempt to conceal from himself that Italy to-day must face considerable hardships. The only path to improvement lies in conserving the scanty available capital, and pursuing a reasonable economic policy which eschews

purely militarist and chauvinist motives; a policy, moreover, which takes into consideration the country's potential economic forces, keeps stride with necessary social reforms (such as the breaking up of the *latifundi*), and adopts a sensible population policy. Fascism has chosen otherwise.

At the outset of his Fascist career Mussolini himself declared to his faithful on March 23, 1919, in Milan, that 'Fascism would oppose the imperialism of other countries and peoples to Italy's detriment and the eventual imperialism of Italy to the detriment of other peoples, and would accept as highest postulate the League of Nations'.

The great imperialist breakers first flooded the Fascist ranks with the coming of clerical chauvinists and nationalists of the type of Coppola and Corradini.

Francesco Coppola admits that the basic imperialist trait of Fascism is 'political, ethical, national' rather than 'economic and social' ('L'idea imperiale della nazione italiana', in *Politica* of February 1926, p. 30). The same essay contains the following passage: 'Compared with *England*, which is shaken by a deep social crisis and is paralysed and sometimes governed by the centrifugal and Americanizing tendencies of the Dominions; with *France*, weakened in numbers, crushed between elegant plutocratic materialism above and communism below, ruined by the parliamentary weakness of the republican regime; with *Germany*, half-Catholic and half-Protestant, undermined by a violent communism; with *Russia*, Asiatic, Byzantine, European, in which nations of the most varied race and language have been caught up in the fateful Bolshevist disintegration; with the *United States of America*, in which the process of the homogeneous

assimilation of innumerable races and innumerable religious sects has scarcely begun ; *Italy*, fertile and growing, young and sober, one in blood, in culture and in spirit, wholly Catholic and wholly monarchist, glowing with patriotism and faith in her own destiny, *is among the great nations truly the most compact, the most united, the most dynamic.*

'If there be a universal genius in the world capable to think or create *sub specie aeternitatis*, it is the Roman and the Latin.'

This crude pronouncement comes not from a third-rate hack-writer, but from a man who represented Italy for many years at Geneva, and is distinguished as the editor of the only journal in Italy exclusively devoted to foreign policy. Later we shall have opportunity to expose more closely the arrogance of Fascist political propaganda. This foretaste, however, of the train of thought of a man in an influential position shall suffice for the moment.

Now it would be most dangerous and reckless to pay no heed to Fascist imperialism simply because it is based, not on economic and political realities, but on vague sentiments and pathological desires. Even if we will not go so far as to see, in these manifestations of an exalted nationalism, the most dangerous threat to world peace, the greatest optimist will have to admit that, amongst a people whose information is wholly one-sided, they create a psychological condition which is by no means unfavourable for war-like complications.

The belief in the spiritual superiority of Italy and the inferiority of the rest of the world leads the Fascist philosophers, not to the laudable idea of an intensive Italian propaganda of culture so as to redeem the outside world from barbarism and guide

it toward the light of Fascist civilization, but to a highly dangerous militarism: 'A people which soars has rights toward the nations which are falling into decay. And these rights are chiselled in letters of fire into the leaves of our book of fate' (Mussolini, on April 4, 1923, in Venice).

'To expand means *to alter the existing balance;* and to alter the existing balance means to disturb the peaceful digestion of others. . . . It is evident that Italy, if she will not rush blindly into ruin or servitude, must gain lands of her own for settlement, obviously enough outside Europe. And it is not less evident that these will not be graciously presented to us. If then we do not wish to perish, we are compelled somehow to take them. And to take them necessarily and in the first place means to change the present political map of the Mediterranean, more particularly the imperial extra-European map, and necessarily to change it *by violence*' (F. Coppola, *La pace coatta*, Milan, 1929, p. 90 *et seq.*).

'It is to-day not only a question of revision of treaties that would fashion more favourably the life of European nations; what is more important is a revision of the imperial hierarchies, a revision to which nothing but hard tests and acts of violence will bring us' (Asvero Gravelli in *Antieuropa*, Rome, November-December, 1930, p. 1502).

Such is the inevitable logic of imperialism. Imperialism, however spiritual at first sight, however masked under pure idealism, can but lead in the end to talk of violence, in other words, to aggressive war, so that these sentimental longings do represent a real danger to the peace of the world. From depreciation of others and the concealing of self behind the universality and grandeur of the eternal

Italian genius, to the sentence: 'Where there is collision there is war' (Corradini, *L'unità e la potenza delle nazioni*, Florence, 1926) is a logical and also historical progression of cause and effect. We need only recall in this connection that the pre-war Germans who wished most loudly and vigorously to heal the world at the font of the Teutonic spirit, were at the same time the most intransigent and overbearing of military imperialists.

It is above all a great craving for Africa which fills the imperialist tirades of Fascist politicians. As 'heirs to ancient Rome' and as enemies to France, which is held to be after all weaker and easier to wound than the also 'decadent' Albion, they never weary of envisaging the resurrection of the old African Empire which passed away from Rome so long ago. Lando Ferretti, the Fascist deputy, expressed himself as follows in a speech delivered on September 5, 1929, in Rome: 'You see this map: it is the map of the Roman Empire. Every school must have it in its hall. Look at the Mediterranean, *Mare Nostro*, where Italians have ever been victorious. This sea has always been ours and will be ours once more.'

Now it is surely rank insanity for a people of to-day to attempt to set up the frontiers of its period of glory—and by violence at that. Imagine the chaos to which the world would be reduced within twenty-four hours were England suddenly to feel pangs of annexation for those parts of northern France once hers, were the Norwegians to stage an invasion of Russia or of England, were Germany to attempt to occupy once more the old frontiers of the Holy Roman Empire. Just so it is with the craving for the restoration of the old Roman Empire which

haunts the brains of Fascist would-be world conquerors.

We cannot refrain from reproducing here the opinions held by the well-known Professor Robert (now Roberto) Michels in 1912 and 1930:

'The Mediterranean is still ever addressed as *Mare Nostrum* by *poets and historians of old*, and in default of Tunis, now no longer open for conquest, they lay claim to Tripoli as the territory of ancient Rome. This claim, in the heads of the *romantics*, amounts to a positive *legal claim*, a moral postulate. The theory: What was once ours and soaked in our blood must again be taken by us into our possession, must with its manifold *confusion of all conception of right*, of language frontiers and of the right to self-government of the peoples, lead on to provoke *war by all against all*, and to a revision of history, not on the basis of modern legal maxims, but on that of ancient injustices' (*Elemente zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Imperialismus in Italien*, Tübingen, 1912, p. 72 f.).

'To the creation of this colonial empire, however, the Italians were urged on by demographic necessity, and also by the *proud historical traditions* of two great empires whose *rightful successors* they may consider themselves and the memory of which has ever remained alive in the hearts of the best: Rome and Venice' (*Italien von heute*, Zurich, 1930, p. 180).

True, Mussolini, in a speech in the Chamber in December, 1928, attempted to calm international public opinion by declaring that Fascist imperialism 'was not dangerous for other nations', and that it was a question of 'peaceful expansion'. Not long after, however, he had the following admonition published in a booklet disseminated in hundreds of

thousands by his party, and destined for the schools and the mass of the people: 'The 20th century must be the century of our power in all respects' and 'the soldiers of the Fascist idea must have the will to achieve their end at all costs' (*La dottrina fascista*, Libreria del Littorio, Rome, 1930, p. 10).

§ THE CORFU INCIDENT

Shortly after its first year of rule Fascism gave the world opportunity to judge of its ideas upon world policy not only by official declarations but by actual proof. On August 27, 1923, three Italian officers, who had been instructed by the Conference of Ambassadors of the Allies to establish the Greco-Albanian frontier, were treacherously murdered on Greek soil; by whom is still unknown.

This sad event, regretted by no one more sincerely than by the Greek Government, provided Mussolini with a welcome opportunity for imperialist exaltation. On August 29 the Italian Government presented an ultimatum to the Greek Government through their ambassador in Athens. In spite of all lack of positive evidence whatsoever, the ultimatum declared that 'the Italian Government had come to the conviction that the moral, as well as the material, responsibility for the murder fell upon the Greek Government' and consequently made the following demands: (1) An official apology, (2) ceremonial funeral with the presence of every member of the Government, (3) the honouring of the Italian flag in the Piraeus, the Greek flag to be dipped as a sign of atonement, (4) a thorough investigation within five days on the place of the outrage in the presence of the Italian Military Attaché, (5) the execution of all guilty of the crime,

(6) the payment of an indemnity of 50 million lire within five days, and (7) military honours at the embarkation of the corpses of the murdered officers.

The Greek Government protested it had no responsibility for the murders, and declared further that it must decline to accept points (4), (5), and (6) as an infringement of the sovereignty of Greece, but that it was prepared to enter into further discussion.

It was clear that Mussolini had from the outset deliberately chosen an offensive, humiliating, tone so as to make his note impossible of acceptance by the Greek Government and then—after the well-tried model of Austria against Serbia in 1914—to be able to take reprisals. Perhaps, too, the then international atmosphere may have influenced him in part. The occupation of Fiume by d'Annunzio in 1919, and of Vilna by the Polish General Zeligovski in 1920, were examples to follow. Why should not he too demonstrate for once the strength of new Italy upon small, weak Greece? Mussolini, in his vain optimism, at first believed that the Western Powers would leave him a free hand in his little imperialist adventure.

On August 31, on the pretext of the unsatisfactory answer of the Greek Government to his ultimatum, he had the Greek island of Corfu bombarded and occupied. True, thirteen innocent refugees from Asia Minor and eight soldiers were killed and thirty-five persons were wounded, but that is a mere nothing to a large-minded Government like the Fascist. Their political chronicler, Ugo d'Andrea, contentedly proclaimed to the world, both the present generation and posterity, that 'the occupation announced had passed off, *without incident*' (*Politica*, August-September, 1923, p. 331).

Meanwhile the Conference of Ambassadors had taken up the incident of the murdered Italian officers, for, strictly speaking, these victims were assassinated when acting under their instructions, not as representatives of the Italian Government. On September 1 the French chargé d'affaires in Athens handed the Greek Government the Note of the Conference, the tone of which was moderate —a clear snub to the Fascist Government, whose arbitrary procedure was contrary to international law—and required satisfaction for the incident. The Greek Government declared itself ready to give this and hastened, on the same day, to bring the matter before the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva, on the ground that Italy's action had impugned the territorial sovereignty of Greece.

When Mussolini saw that England and France would not support him, and that the whole civilized world was on the side of outraged Greece, he was furious because this little country had dared to call its violent neighbour before the tribunal of the League of Nations. In the Italian Cabinet meeting of September 4, 1923, Mussolini declared that, 'in so far as the League of Nations is concerned, it has shown the tendency to take upon itself the task of settling the matter under dispute. That is absolutely inadmissible.'

Although the competence of the Council of the League was unquestionable, since it was for just such cases that the League and its procedure had been created, Mussolini threatened that Italy would secede from the League, his representative Salandra declaring on November 5, 1923, in the session of the Council, that *the occupation of Corfu represented no act of hostility*, adding that 'the creation of the

League of Nations indicated no renunciation by States of their authority to deal with the defence and safety of their rights'.

So as not to complicate the situation unnecessarily, and since the Conference of Ambassadors was already concerned in the matter, the Council of the League, after a legal commission had declared invalid the Italian objection of non-competence, transmitted to the Conference guiding lines for the settlement of the conflict.

The Fascist Press raged into unbridled fury at the League of Nations. Signor Coppola, later Italy's representative at the League, wrote in his *Politica* in September, 1923 (reprinted later in *La pace coatta*, Milan, 1929, p. 18 *et seq.*): 'The League of Nations is a real and growing danger against which we have to defend ourselves'. In the League of Nations this man, one of the foremost Fascist theorists, sees that 'rationalist, individualist, essentially unhistorical spirit, the Hebraic ferment which, impregnating European blood, has for hundreds of years deformed the civilization and the history of Europe'. The League of Nations is for him a 'childish, grotesque institution', whose 'bourgeois internationalism is in the service of England', and 'an international instrument for the lasting suppression of Italy's vital expansion'.

The Western Powers had observed with surprised indignation the first political act of Mussolini on the international stage. The British ambassador in Rome did not omit to indicate, in a friendly conversation with Mussolini on September 2, 1923, the attitude of the rest of the world. Possibly it was the tact of the British ambassador, possibly the sudden concentration of the British fleet before

Malta, with the clear objective of Corfu, which changed Mussolini's mind. The fact remains that in the same month he evacuated Corfu. The sole material success of the ultimatum and bombardment was that Greece, at the proposal of the Conference of Ambassadors, paid 50 million lire indemnity. Even this was small consolation for the Italian Government, for the costs of the occupation had attained the considerable sum of 80 million lire.

Of more importance than the 30 million lire which Italian tax-payers had to find for the imperialist adventure of their divine Duce were the moral and political consequences of the affair. England and France drew closer together and made common cause against this incalculable, violent breaker of peace. *The Times* of October 23, 1923, openly accused the Italian Government of grossly infringing the League Covenant, which Italy had signed, by her brusque warlike act in Corfu, and the whole civilized world was filled with deep abhorrence and honest anger at the action of the Duce, reminiscent, as it was, of the worst proceedings before the war. 'The Italo-Greek incident', wrote Coppola in the above-mentioned essay, 'has brought home to Italians Italy's difficult position in the League of Nations. It would be useless and foolish to conceal what the whole world knows: in Geneva we had more or less all against us.'

There were those, however, who did not hesitate later to tell the Italian public, which receives its international information rationed and censored like convicts in prison, that 'with the Corfu incident the appreciation of Italy in Europe and the world began,' and even generously reckoned that 'the solution of the conflict is of no importance'

(Umberto Nani in *Educazione Fascista*, 1929, No. 3, p. 161). How it comes that a violent snub, a moral condemnation without equal, can cause one to rise in the estimation of the world, this casuistry must be left to Fascist logic. Arrigo Solmi, the present Under-Secretary of State, also attempts in his book *Italia e Francia nei problemi attuali della politica europea* (Milan, 1931, p. 38) to falsify history after the event, declaring that the Corfu adventure 'has renewed the whole might of the young, victorious nation in the Orient in spite of the wild attacks and slanders of the international Press'.

Mussolini himself was cautious enough, in his speech in the Senate of November 16, 1923, to declare that the occupation of Corfu pursued the end of 'enhancing the prestige of Italy'. But not even the Duce, otherwise far from modest, this time rose to the heights of asserting that he had been successful.

§ THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The moment that Fascism's theories regarding Imperialism and State sovereignty become clear, its attitude towards the League of Nations is comprehensible, for this is the sole instrument so far created by the civilized world to oppose the excesses due to a conception of the State which leads to anarchy. The relation of Italy to the League cannot be disguised by occasional expressions of peace and declarations of loyalty on the part of Mussolini and his propaganda staff abroad, nor was the Corfu incident really needed to demonstrate to the world at large the insurmountable antagonism between these two political creeds.

In the early days of Fascism, when Mussolini still wished to pose as the saviour of the working classes, he was not disposed to be hostile to the League of Nations. In his first Fascist speech in Milan on March 23, 1919, Mussolini declared that 'Fascism accepts as highest postulate the League of Nations', but it was not long before the proletarian and ex-Socialist element in the Fascist party declined into insignificance, and the lowest type of 'patriot' dominated its foreign policy. For the new-comers the League of Nations was not the embodiment of an honest endeavour to free the relations of peoples and States from the ever-recurring threat of war and anarchy, and place them on the stable foundation of binding international law and lasting peace. For them it was but an instrument created by France for the suppression of other nations. This nationalist view of the League conformed exactly to Mussolini's new conception of it, a conception expressed by him as follows in Trieste on February 6, 1921:

'Fascism does not believe in the vitality and the principles which inspire the so-called League of Nations. In this League the nations are not in the least on a basis of equality. It is a species of Holy Alliance of the French and Anglo-Saxon group which, in spite of inevitable conflicts of interest, guarantees to them the exploitation of the greater part of the world.'

Later also Mussolini made no secret of his feelings towards the League of Nations, and even after learning from the Corfu episode that one must employ the 'hypocritical' pacific manner of speech usual in democratic circles in order to cut a good figure in European diplomacy, he still allowed him-

self, as Prime Minister of a country which is a permanent member of the Council of the League of Nations, the luxury of declaring in a speech in the Chamber on March 3, 1928: '*The League of Nations? Geneva? Vain hopes!*'

In face of the contrast in the principles upon which Fascism and the League of Nations are based, the question early arose for many Fascists whether Italy should not prefer a voluntary, honest secession from the League to an insincere membership. Others, however, were in favour of remaining in the League, not out of enthusiasm for peace or any similar ideals but—to be in a position to shatter the League utterly when opportunity arose. Only in a country of such low political morality as Fascist Italy could one enjoy the spectacle of its representative at the League of Nations formulating the following arguments for remaining in the League:

'The League of Nations is the perfect international instrument for the eternal suppression of Italy's vital expansion.

'Simply resign from the League? No. To leave it intact, capable of growth, of consolidating itself independently of us? No, not that. Resign from the League? Yes. But only at such a time and in such a fashion that our resignation would mean the end, or at least the certain beginning of the end.

'*It is the duty of our policy to hasten this end;* and meanwhile to limit the League's possibilities of action, to prevent it from damaging us and also, so far as is possible, to direct it along the path of our interests.

'Two things above all: first, to rely upon our strength alone and therefore to reinforce it unceasingly not only by means of military preparations, but also by technical ones. Secondly, with open

vizors to hold the *banner of reaction* fast in our closed fist without making clever concessions of principle to "romantic democratic ideology"' (F. Coppola, *La pace coatta*, Milan, 1929, p. 33 f.).

This felonious plan, to remain in the League so as to transform it into a heap of ruins at the given hour, has so far been beyond the power of Fascist foreign policy and, in view of the comparatively limited influence of Italy in controlling the decisive forces of world politics, will remain unrealized. It bears witness, however, to the latent danger which Fascism represents for every endeavour towards the realization and the maintenance of a regulated and peaceful system of international relations. After Germany's withdrawal from the League the Fascist Government thought the moment had come to fulfil its long nourished hopes. Under the pretence of bringing forth a programme of reform it tried to wreck the delicate negotiations then in progress and utterly to discredit the League and all its works. It was thanks to the representations of the British Government that the Fascist 'reformers' abandoned for the moment their sinister plans.

The solution of Coppola—to exploit the League in the interests of Italy till the day of its final destruction—became the *leitmotif* of Italy's attitude towards the League. There was no thought of using the services of the League of Nations to further the peaceful aspirations of Italy. On the contrary, the plan was to bring together a group of malcontent States 'which deem it necessary to pursue a more dynamic policy in the world in lieu of the purely conservative policy of France and England' (*Popolo d'Italia*, September 2, 1925). To bring nothing but unrest into the agitated inter-

national arena; this and none other is signified by the 'dynamic' policy. Those at home in the language of Fascist journalism know full well what is meant by a 'dynamic' policy. Mussolini, it is true, has sanctimoniously attempted to convince international public opinion of his respect and sympathy for the idea of the League of Nations by offering hospitality and support in Rome to institutions of the League, such as the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. But for him the League of Nations and Geneva remain but 'vain hopes'. 'Since the peoples pursue the course dictated by their strength and by their dynamic nature, then in spite of conferences, protocols, and good intentions, war will be with mankind in the centuries to come just as it was at the dawn of history' (Mussolini, August 24, 1934).[1]

That Fascist Italy is not prepared to abandon its hostility to the League, in spite of all official assurances to the contrary, is also shown by the words of Alfredo Rocco in a leading article entitled 'The League of Nations and Italy' (*La Stampa*, September 25, 1931):

'The man in the street has perhaps made for himself a simple but clear idea of the institution

[1] See also Luigi Chiarini in the official Fascist journal of education, *Educazione Fascista* (No. 11, 1929, p. 730): 'But who really believes in peace in spite of League of Nations and pacts? No one.' Tittoni, former Minister for Foreigns Affairs and Fascist President of the Senate, expressed his opinion of the League in the formula: 'In short, one may say: help yourself if the League of Nations shall help you' (Tommaso Tittoni: *Italien's Aussenpolitik*, Munich, 1928, p. 79). A third-rate journalist might perhaps have allowed himself this brilliant formula, but not a man of the prestige of Tittoni, whose words were once held in esteem by international public opinion.

in Geneva: a machine equipped by England and France to guarantee to themselves the peaceful enjoyment of the vast booty won by them through the victory. To see the two greatest beneficiaries of the system *at discord* to-day . . . is a *pleasant surprise* for those who viewed as an established fact the existence of an Anglo-French monopoly of the League of Nations.

'France, alarmed by the development of German and the accomplishment of Italian regeneration, has attempted by wary means to transform the League of Nations from an indirect into a direct means of preserving her hegemony. She wished to transform the whole League into a monstrous Holy Alliance for the defence of her predominance and that of her vassals.

'It is thus easy to explain the triple star of France: arbitration, security, disarmament. Arbitration: that is, moral pressure to win over the enemies of France where possible without recourse to war. Security: that is, a world-coalition to destroy her opponents in war. Disarmament: that is, the reduction of armaments rendered possible through the most powerful coalition the world has ever witnessed.

'In this attitude France has not had and cannot have the approval of England. There is no risk in saying that after the economic, political, military and maritime rise of France, the English to-morrow may prefer another peace to the peace of to-day, which secures the continental hegemony of the great Republic, and maybe also its dominance at sea and in the air. Peace, in truth, is no end in itself, it is a means to an end, good or bad for a people according to the advantages and disadvantages it

creates for them.' War, like peace, is also not an end, but a means to an end. If Geneva can accord justice without disturbance of the peace, who is not happy to prefer it?'

Almost simultaneously with this outburst by one member of Mussolini's Government, another, Dino Grandi, was playing the apostle of international co-operation and disarmament, claiming Italy as the flag-bearer of the ideals of the League.

In pursuance of the principle of a 'dynamic' policy in the League of Nations, Italy has attempted to make common cause with the states desirous of revision, especially Hungary and Germany. The history of the Four Powers Pact showed Italy fighting with every means available to eliminate the League and League institutions from the programme of revision. The fact that France dared to oppose to the 'decisive and generous' proposition of the Duce the 'extinct Briand ideology' (*Corriere della Sera*, March 26, 1933) of working within the framework of the League, called down upon her frenzied attacks throughout the entire Fascist Press. For 'the attitude of the Fascist Party to international and supranational bodies such as the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, etc., is one of *natural aversion*. They tend to limit the freedom of action of the national community, and as a consequence actually weaken it in a certain sense' (Corrado Gini: 'The Scientific Basis of Fascism', in *The Political Science Quarterly*, New York, March, 1927, p. 104).

§ RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

At the centre of Fascist foreign policy stands its relation to France. The legend of the 'hereditary

foe', which is responsible for so much evil in critical periods of history, is not a spontaneous growth but is created artificially by certain classes of society.

Until the close of the Great War correct, at times even cordial, relations existed between France and Italy. The timely assistance rendered by France to the cause of Italian independence in the preceding century doubtless consolidated reciprocal feelings of friendship and sympathy, and the alliance with the Central Powers was anything but popular in Italy—a fact by no means unknown to judicious German and Austrian statesmen. At the outbreak of the Great War, the Nationalists were the only political group to plead for Italy's entry on the side of the Central Powers, though later they turned furiously against them. The same political group set to work after the war to din into the Italian people the legend of France as hereditary foe.

Mussolini was almost the only Socialist who developed into a Nationalist and (after the reception of French cheques) into a flaming advocate of the entry of Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. To quote but one of his utterances: 'Would you offer phrases alone to that France which has bled for Europe from the revolutions and wars of 1789 to 1871, and from 1871 till to-day? Would you offer France, the country of the Rights of Man, mere phrases?' (speech at Parma, December 13, 1914).

Not till post-war years did the mood change. At first, when the nationalist and chauvinist politicians believed that England and France had defrauded their Italian associates in the division of the spoils of war, their rage was directed equally against the two countries. These were the great representatives of the plutocratic Powers of the

world against whom Italy, the 'proletarian' among the nations, could not but take up a combative attitude. Only later did it become clear to responsible leaders of Fascist foreign policy that it was insane to begin by throwing down the gauntlet to the two most powerful countries in Europe. As a consequence expressions of sympathy for Great Britain began to increase in the same measure as the propaganda against France flared up. No gift of prophecy was required to prognosticate that Fascism would select France as its target. She was by far the weaker and more vulnerable of the two. Furthermore, as the very heart of democracy on the Continent of Europe and the asylum of anti-Fascists, she must needs appear alien, even hostile, to the Fascist regime.

Naturally France is not the only country which has offered to fugitive anti-Fascists a hospitality as warm as that extended to the victims of other dictatorships. The United States too harbours many Italian anti-Fascists, who have a powerful Press and well-developed organizations at their disposal there. Great Britain, Switzerland and Belgium have also willingly offered refuge to the exiles, and hinder their political activities in no way whatsoever, provided they do not offend against public law and order.

Yet the Fascists direct their propaganda of hate against France and France alone. True, the majority of emigrants fled to France, and write and tell in freedom what they suffered in Italy and what is of everyday occurrence there. True, the million Italians living in France refuse to enrol in the Fascist organizations on French soil since they wish to remain faithful to Italy and its future. True, the overwhelming majority of Italians living in France—

as in other countries too—do not omit to stress to their hosts the difference between the Italian nation and Fascism, between the Italy of yesterday and to-morrow and that of to-day. True, the bulk of Italians living in French territory testify freely and unreservedly before all the world that they prefer the free, democratic organizations of France to the prison-like atmosphere of their own country. All that is true, but the Fascist regime is not therefore justified —either by international law or still less by moral right—in slandering the French Government, and blaming it for not launching special tribunals and armed militia against all Italians who are not enraptured at the Duce, but see the present condition of Italy and the tendencies of the Fascist regime with the same eyes and in the same manner as the rest of what may properly be called the civilized world.

So long as Italy was free, the Italians living abroad formed solidly closed communities thoroughly in keeping with the Italian people's high sense of folk and family. Now they are divided, and we have the spectacle of political contests in the Italian colonies of America and Europe, contests which not infrequently lead to violence. Now there is a double representation for Italy abroad: the agents of the Fascist regime, and the free representatives of the Italian people which may not raise its voice in its own country.

The Fascists know this well enough, yet they pretend that the political contests in France are due not to their own terrorist methods, but to France's attitude. The following comment by the editor of the *Giornale d'Italia* (Rome), a paper in very close connection with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is typical:

'Fascist Italy cannot forget how often on French soil political crimes have been committed against its officials and its faithful citizens, crimes instigated by anti-Fascist propaganda and by organizations which live and work in freedom beyond the frontiers. It cannot forget that the instigators of these crimes have been encouraged by receiving the most ridiculous punishments, the trials of murderers being transformed often into trials of Italy and its regime, ending in a glorification of would-be assassins. Franco-Italian friendship suffers from these acts and these never-ending misunderstandings, which force Italy at all events into an attitude of increased reserve' (Virginio Gayda in the *Giornale d'Italia*, May 15, 1932).

It will surprise no one that the Fascists disapprove of the French courts and read political motives into their judgments; more, place direct responsibility for these on leading French politicians. To the civilized European it may, of course, appear strange to hold governments responsible for the verdicts of juries or learned judges—except after deep consideration or if in possession of concrete proofs. But seen through the eyes of a true Fascist this is nothing unusual; for him the conception of independent justice passing sentence and not wreaking party vengeance is something quite inconceivable, something one could persuade only nations living in the 'lie of democracy' to swallow. The second charge—that the trials of anti-Fascists become trials of the Fascist regime and end in moral condemnation of it—is doubtless justified and will continue. The bands of Ukrainian murderers might for this same reason have taken offence because the case against the Jewish watchmaker Schwarzbart, who shot their

leader, Hetman Petljura, in Paris, developed into one long exposure of their inhumanity.

There is, however, no ground for accusing the French of inflicting 'ridiculous' punishments upon the authors of anti-Fascist crimes. Under most penal codes political offences are punished more leniently, not more harshly, than others. Moreover, the offences of anti-Fascists are not as a rule premeditated, but are due to provocation on the part of Fascist spies and agents. (We cannot concern ourselves here with Fascist crimes against anti-Fascists as this does not affect Franco-Italian relations today and, moreover, presents but a reflection of the methods applied in Italy.) In spite of mitigating circumstances, to give an instance, the murderer of Savorelli, the Fascist *agent provocateur*, who staged bogus plots in France and Belgium in 1928, was condemned to ten years' imprisonment. Di Modugno, the murderer of Nardini, was, it is true, condemned only to two years' imprisonment, but in view of the history of the case the punishment seemed too severe rather than too mild. Di Modugno, like many another, had been forced to flee from his native country, and when at last he had found work in France he hoped that his wife and little child might follow him. When, however, the young Italian, despite frequent requests, saw that the Fascist authorities were not disposed to grant his wife and child permits to leave the country —which amounted to lasting separation from his family, for they could not come to him nor could he go to them—he drew his revolver in despair and shot Count Nardini, the vice-consul in Paris. Soon after, Di Modugno's wife and child were arrested and sent to the island of the exiled. In view of this

every man with a sense of justice must feel that a sentence of two years' imprisonment was harsh enough.

The Garibaldi and Menapace cases are of the first importance as illustrating the methods employed by the Fascist Government to discredit anti-Fascists living in France through plots staged by their own agents. In 1925-26 Ricciotto Garibaldi, grandson of the famous Garibaldi, pretended to be a revolutionary opposed to the dictatorship of Mussolini. In anti-Fascist circles he promoted the positively insane plan of marching with his legions into Italy. After the two attempts on Mussolini's life in September and October, 1926, there were no bounds to the Fascist propaganda against France, which was openly accused of instigating the crimes, or at least of approving of them. Excitement rose so high at the time that several French consulates were attacked in Italy. Then on November 4 the French police arrested the 'anti-Fascist' hero, and proved that he was in constant touch with the Italian Ambassador in Paris, and that through go-betweens he had received from the Italian Government large sums of money, running into hundreds of thousands of francs, for his services as *agent provocateur*. That exploded the whole campaign of denunciation. Mussolini, who had been making frenzied speeches against France, had now to apologize through his Ambassador for the attacks on French consulates. Even though the French police [1] did not make public the whole of the material incriminating Garibaldi

[1] For the not always unimpeachable conduct of the French police see Camillo Berneri in his *Lo spionaggio fascista all' estero*, Marseilles, p. 9. Berneri's booklet details a great number of cases which the anti-Fascists themselves or the French police were able to unmask.

and his backers in Rome, the material published was nevertheless sufficient to show that the Italian Government remained true to its character as revealed by the murder of Matteotti.

The second great scandal of the Fascist *provocateurs* in France was the Menapace case. This gentleman cultivated the acquaintance of leading anti-Fascists in Paris, so as to implicate them in a terrorist plot in South Tyrol, and to get from them the names and addresses of anti-Fascists still at work in Italy. Menapace also managed to become friendly with Giannini and Cianca, the two editors of the satirical anti-Fascist paper *Il Becco Giallo* (published in Paris and widely circulated in Italy). By using the forged signatures of distinguished anti-Fascists abroad he attempted to obtain from them declarations of sympathy for an armed rebellion in South Tyrol. But the two journalists were too clever for that; they very soon saw through the game. However, to secure a good exit from France and to satisfy his principals in Rome, Menapace thought out a masterpiece which should win for him, the first and most industrious of Fascist spies in France, yet further laurels. He planted explosives with the anti-Fascist leaders and immediately informed against them to the police. Frantic were the ravings of the Fascist Press at discovering once again anti-Fascist plots to conquer Italy with French dynamite. Unfortunately for them, Menapace had the ill-luck to be found out. It was not difficult to ascertain that he was responsible for the entire plot. By this time he had crossed the frontier and had long since pocketed the reward for his patriotic services on French soil. In 1930 he was condemned in Paris to two years' imprisonment *in contumaciam*.

A more recent espionage affair proves that France is not the only country to be honoured by the envoys of the new Fascist civilization, and that only too frequently they visit Switzerland also, to whose Italian-speaking cantons the Fascist regime has not waived its claim for ever.[1] On December 16, 1932, the Swiss Federal Council deported a whole band of Fascist *agents provocateurs* and secret service men from Swiss soil for upsetting the public law and order of Switzerland and endangering its foreign security.

In Belgium M. de Brouckère declared in the Senate on January 27, 1932, that the Italian consulate in Brussels had granted false passports to the Fascist agent and spy, Salvatore Addis, an individual who had been condemned to fourteen years' hard labour *in contumaciam* in Italy for his enormous frauds, and who was nevertheless employed as a spy by the Italian authorities in Belgium.

This is but one isolated example of the methods which Italy's consular representatives employ to-day. They are not only the representatives of the Italian kingdom abroad, but a valuable instrument for espionage and the persecution of anti-Fascism. In the Garibaldi scandal, besides the Ambassador in Paris, Count Spezia (a member of the Italian consulate in Nice) also played a part. In Switzerland too it has long been an open secret that the Italian consulates in Italian-speaking districts such as Lugano, Locarno, Bellinzona, etc., take an active

[1] See for instance, *Calendario Atlante de Agostini*, Novara, 1928, p. 55, where Italian-speaking Switzerland is described as land which 'although it lies within our physical frontiers is not included in the territory of the Kingdom'.

part in the work of espionage, while the Italian embassy in Bern is no onlooker.

The incident of the kidnapping of Cesare Rossi, the former press attaché of Mussolini and accomplice in the murder of Matteotti, comes to mind. He was seized on Swiss soil by bandits who had been hired by Fascist authorities, and lured into Italy; he has now ample time in exile to meditate upon his future or to write his memoirs, for he will never return to Italy alive. He knows far too much about Mussolini's part in the criminal history of Fascism from the Matteotti murder to the faking of plots, and the attacks of Fascist bands upon unarmed Catholic, Liberal and Socialist leaders.

On Italian maps and atlases Corsica is marked as Italian. The Fascist Colonial Institute in Rome publishes special year books in its honour and there is considerable irredentist propaganda. The Roman *Impero* which, as the name indicates, promotes the cause of imperialist expansion, wrote on April 29, 1928, as follows:

'For many years Corsica has been in a state of complete destitution. France looks upon it as a market for human flesh, one not to be despised in time of war. Discontent is general. The idea of autonomy, conceived and inaugurated by Petru Rocca and other men of courage and vision, spreads ceaselessly. The persecution of the autonomists profits not in the least. They fight with the faith of apostles because they love Corsica and wish it strong, great and independent.'

We do not believe, however, that the autonomy of Corsica is the final aim of Fascist irredentism. After autonomy is to follow incorporation in Mussolini's Empire.

Professor Volpe, an intimate of Mussolini, collaborator in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, general secretary of the Royal Academy of Italy and official historian of Fascism, a man, in short, who enjoys immense respect in Italy among Fascist intellectuals, has for years published the *Archivio Storico di Corsica*, a political and historical review which, under the cloak of pure research, indulges in political and, more indirectly, in irredentist propaganda. Further, colonial and maritime journals such as *L'Italia coloniale*, *Mediterranea*, and *Tyrrhenia* do not abstain from eagerly canvassing for the separatist idea in Corsica and the future incorporation of the island in the Fascist Empire. The Leghorn *Telegrafo* has carried its propaganda so far that the patience of the French authorities came to an end and they forbade the circulation of the paper in French territory. It is still smuggled out, however, especially to Corsica, as a mental tonic to its depressed inhabitants.

It should be noted that Mussolini's Government is responsible for this open irredentist propaganda against France, for in Italy opinion is not free, and a hint from the Government would suffice to tone down the exalted melodies of the various inflammatory papers and to prohibit their secret distribution in Corsica. Further proof of the feelings cherished for Corsica by the Fascist Government may be provided by the annual scholarships which are granted to young Corsicans. These are to enable them to study in Italy and—indeed the only aim of this kind of cultural propaganda—to train them as irredentist fighters in their home country.

As a rule the French Government takes the

irredentist propaganda of the Fascists none too seriously, for it well knows that the population of the island is loyal to France and will never unite with a country where bandits are not—as in Corsica—tracked down, but are raised to the highest positions in the State.

The propaganda in Nice and Savoy is run on similar lines. It is no accident that the Fascist associations there are not under the control of headquarters in Paris, but stand directly beneath the hierarchy in Rome. In France too it is no longer a secret—the Garibaldi scandal and the arrests of military spies that followed showed this most clearly—that Nice and Savoy are the centres of Fascist espionage, the consulates there also taking a zealous share. These districts have enjoyed the special honour of inspiring the poetic vein of youth filled with the new Fascist spirit. It is perhaps not out of place to quote a specimen of these gay little songs :

> 'If France is not just a pig
> She must return us Nice and Savoy !
> France is a great whore,
> We want Nice and Savoy.' [1]

A further important question which complicates Franco-Italian relations is the problem of Tunis. At the proclamation of the French protectorate roughly 20,00 Italians were living there; the number, according to French returns, now amounts to 91,178 compared with 94,427 French.[2] To a great extent

[1] 'Se la Francia nun è 'na boja,
Nizza e Savoja cia d'aridà !
La Francia è una gran troja,
Vogliam Nizza e Savoja.'

[2] *Annuaire du Commerce international*, Paris, 1932, p. 959.

the Italian population originates from poverty-stricken Sicily and Southern Italy. Tunis lies just across the water, and the trip costs but a few lire. The Italian colonists are mostly occupied in agriculture and fishery, but they also form a considerable portion of the population of the city of Tunis itself, many parts of which give the impression of a purely Italian city. The position of the Italian population was regulated by the Franco-Italian Agreement of 1896, by which Italians in Tunis kept their own nationality and were permitted to build their own schools, while other privileges were also assured to them.

This legal status lasted till September, 1918, when France revoked the agreement, at the same time declaring herself ready to negotiate a new arrangement and permitting a three months' prolongation of the *status quo* until such time as a new agreement should come into being. This step was a blunder of the first order, for it flung the door wide open to anti-French propaganda, and discussions of the problem of Tunis have only added to the bitterness between the two countries.

Nationality is the most delicate of the problems to be resolved. The French leave no stone unturned to avoid having a non-French majority among the whites in Tunis. Impediments in the way of obtaining land, differential wage scales and labour conditions, and various kinds of moral pressure, are used to induce foreigners—above all Italians—to acquire French citizenship. This is certainly not an ideal method of procedure, but one can understand the endeavours of the French colonial administration to see the French element head the white population in a country under French

suzerainty. Nor is the position of the Fascist critics a very strong one. The history of the new Italian territories under the Fascist regime is nothing but one long list of oppression of those parts of the population which are of foreign race. The compulsory changing of the names of cities and families, the forcible Italianization with the assistance of armed militia, give the Fascist Government no moral claim to play the part of defender of the suppressed rights of a national minority.

It is but natural for France to have recoiled from an agreement on this question with a Government which openly supports anti-French propaganda in Tunis and has selected France as the objective for mass-hatred. With a free, democratic Italy a *modus vivendi* would assuredly be found, but the French are afraid, perhaps not without cause, of granting Fascist imperialism concessions which might produce only further demands. Yet it is precisely in Tunis that Franco-Italian co-operation would be of the greatest importance for both nations, since the awakening of the East, which has long grown from a sensational catch-word into sober reality, is not without its effects in North Africa. If Europe wishes to save the fruits of human energy invested there, it will have to forget inter-European conflicts and stand for the common cause. Fascism is chiefly to blame for the difficulties in realizing this collaboration, for it cherishes an anachronistic doctrine of sovereignty in which the relations of States are conceived in terms, not of sincere collaboration, but of the rule of the strong over the weak.

Tunis is not the only objective of Fascist imperialism. ' If we could allow our mortified colonial appetite to speak, we should, in so far as Africa is

concerned, lay hands on Tunis and with it a piece of Morocco; on the other side again a piece of Nubia, so as to unite our possessions on the Red Sea through the Nile. As for Asia, we may assert that the whole district opposite the Dodecanese and Cyprus, from Smyrna to Antioch and even further, interests us a little' (*Impero*, April 4, 1926).

Mussolini assumed a markedly imperialist attitude in the years 1925-26, believing it necessary to divert the attention from the destruction of civic liberties at home by a spectacular foreign policy. His journey to Tripoli in April, 1926, his increasingly bellicose pronouncements, and the unceasing attacks in the Italian Press, which spoke of France having 'stolen Tunis from us in the year 1881' (*Corriere della Sera*, May 26, 1926), finally led to energetic protest on the part of the French. Mussolini had to make amends in public for his imperial escapades, stressing in an interview granted to the *Daily Express* (June 24, 1927) that he had not the slightest intention of seeking or taking colonies or spheres of influence from other Powers.

We have already pointed out how the Fascist intellectuals are prepared to run down other nations where it is a question of raising on high the glory of the new regime. In anti-French propaganda they descend to the lowest forms of abuse. Thus Leo Longanesi, in his preface to the *Vade-Mecum del Perfetto Fascista* (Florence 1926, p. 7), gives the following advice to his readers: 'You, my Italian reader, are very ill. Fifty years of Liberal government have brought you into a very bad state. At present good muscles and a good head are necessary, then pay good heed to these precepts if you wish to recover from the *French disease—syphilis and freedom*.'

Italian nationalists have for many years made a dogma of French decadence. A perusal of the tirades of experts in the new 'civilization of Mussolini' gives the irresistible impression that France is a cemetery, whereas Fascist Italy resembles a blossoming garden. And yet every one who has lived among Italians of the educated classes knows that the Italian to-day as always prefers French books to his own, and that the French Press has a wider circulation than that of all other foreign languages put together. Under Fascism Italy lives in a state of intellectual isolation; whoever feels an urge not to succumb to the narrow new provincialisms in mind and literature, not to live cut off from the important spiritual movements and tendencies, has recourse to French literature and the French Press. France is still the greatest clearing-house of ideas; every Italian of average education is at home in the French language, whereas English and German are but little spoken in Italy.

When in Italy we ourselves did not omit to make a test in the laboratories of the new Fascist civilization, the 'National Fascist Institutes of Culture', and could not forbear an inward smile at sight of the verve with which the young apostles of Fascist culture flung themselves upon every freshly arrived copy of any French literary review, while the corresponding Italian publications lay unheeded in a corner.

Perhaps therefore we should not be surprised if the envious Fascists are reduced to the basest of insults:

'How these Frenchmen, who cannot even make their wives pregnant, must envy the unusual virility of Italian youth who know how to transform into

national wealth the wonderful fertility of our splendid women!' (*Impero*, October 28, 1925).

What is behind these sentiments is clear from the more guarded words of the *Corriere della Sera*, which still represents the flower of Italy's journalism and is read abroad more widely than any other Italian newspaper: 'When a nation grows old its heirs watch greedily for the hour of its death; they await this with impatience and are also ready to hasten it, as it is in the justice of history' (*Corriere della Sera*, July 3, 1932).

No one reproaches France more violently for her armaments on land and sea than the heirs who are so ready to hasten her end. The Italian Press campaign against French armaments set in at the very moment when the Fascist Government realized it could not keep pace with France in free competition. Mussolini himself wrote in the *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna) of January 24, 1932:

'The state of Europe demands disarmament. But for its economic helplessness I fear that Europe would already be entangled in a new war, its poverty alone has till now saved it from war. There are great and small nations which are armed to the teeth although their subjects are almost collapsing under the burden of taxation and military expenditure.'

The latest opportunity for coming to an understanding with France upon reciprocal armaments was offered Italy at the London Naval Disarmament Conference in 1930. The arguments upon which the Fascist Government based its armaments demands are interesting:

'One of the principal difficulties of the Conference is the question of naval parity with France, which is recognized by the Washington Protocols.

It is absolutely impossible to renounce parity. It is not important that parity be agreed upon at a higher, a lower, or the present level; but it is essential that the right to parity be retained in the new Protocol which must conclude the labours of the Conference in London. Italy not only fully maintains its right to parity at sea with France but demands ideally the right to parity even with the strongest sea-power in the world. Italy renounces its right to naval parity with England solely and alone because of its modest economic and financial resources. It is possible that the reef of Franco-Italian parity may split the craft of the London Argonauts on the search for peace: such an eventuality for such a cause leaves us perfectly calm' (*Foglio d'Ordini*, No. 62, January 13, 1930).

In a world where there actually existed universal law and an organization to enforce it upon all States, discussions about parity of armaments would naturally be superfluous. As, however, internationally speaking, we still live in a condition of anarchy, we cannot well refuse to admit arguments which are in accord with the mentality and practical requirements of an imperialist world. We have already indicated what value the Italian colonies possess, and that of a certainty Italy needs no special weapons of defence for their protection, since they are not far distant from the mother country, and under present conditions no Power would dream of conquering those sandy wastes. A very different situation is presented by the French colonial Empire, which covers nearly four million square miles and has a population of 50 millions. France has to defend 9400 miles of colonial coastline as well as 1650 miles of her own shores. With this length of coast she

ranks behind England and the United States as third in the world, whereas Italy has only 4400 miles to protect. The French lines of communication (40,000 miles) are only a little shorter than those of Great Britain, and are followed by the United States, Japan and Italy, the latter boasting no more than 4400 miles.

These are facts which a Government like the Fascist, addicted as it is to *Realpolitik*, might be expected to recognize. But once more the nature of Fascist imperialism is revealed as based not on realities but on nationalist fervour. 'In the demand for parity with the most heavily armed continental Power our character as a Great Power is at stake' (A. Solmi, op. cit., p. 155). This utterance of Solmi, the present Under-Secretary, shows clearly that thinking Fascists themselves are well aware that the difficulties of a Franco-Italian understanding upon the question of armaments are not of an objective nature, but arise from the exaltation of the idol of sovereignty and the inferiority complex of the Fascist statesmen which they overcompensate by an exaggerated national pride. The hypersensitive national conceit of Fascist Italy is constantly hurt by its treatment as the smallest of the Great Powers. It seeks to achieve its ascendancy not by positive attainments, but by methods against which the Great Powers well know how to protect themselves.

During the Disarmament Conference the Italian Press began a systematic anti-French campaign. The French proposal, approved by an influential part of British public opinion, to create an international force capable of bringing to its senses immediately any State which broke the peace, was branded by the *Popolo d'Italia* (February 7, 1932)

as a ' manœuvre against disarmament '. The same paper declared (February 15, 1933) among other insinuations against France : ' France will not disarm and does not disarm. No one threatens France : *but France threatens Europe and the world.*'

Even in the middle of the idyllic Four Powers Pact negotiations the *Corriere della Sera* (May 7, 1933) thought it necessary to contribute, in these terms to the improvement of Franco-Italian relations and the safeguarding of European peace : ' For the States which France leads and for *France itself* a conflict, as it appears, is not only to be foreseen, but unavoidable, necessary, desirable and *desired.*'

Now it is well known that if there is a country on earth anxious to avoid war like the plague, that country is France. France suffered terribly from the German invasion, and horror at the very thought of a new war is common to all ranks of the population. The guiding star of French policy since the end of the War has turned on the magic word ' *sécurité* ', the security which is to free France from the nightmare of her neighbour in the East and her ' heir ' in the South. The longing for a stable peace has been no mere political slogan, but a deep sentiment running through the whole nation. In these circumstances it is, we think, an absurdity to accuse France of aiming at war.[1]

[1] Count Antonio Cippico, one of the Fascist Government's many propagandists abroad, goes as far as to compare France of to-day with pre-war Hohenzollern Germany and to claim that ' France, as no other nation, is equipped for an offensive and prepares its naval programme for the coming years against peaceful neighbours ' (Count A. Cippico, op. cit., p. 58). A sense of responsibility is hardly shown in judging France's gold policy, not as the outcome of the entire economic policy of the

That is not to say that the forces which influence public life in France are all equally pacific. The notorious *Comité des Forges*, in which the most important French armament firms are represented, cannot, simply on account of business, be prepossessed in favour of everlasting peace. The Fascist Press tries at all costs to spread the legend that the whole of French politics from extreme Right to extreme Left is nothing but a marionette in the hands of the cannon manufacturers. But these charges against the sincere will to peace of the overwhelming majority of the French people and their political leaders have no foundation, and such wholesale accusations remain the privilege of the Fascist Press alone; even the Nazis do not often venture to see in the France of to-day a country eager for war.

Whereas enthusiasm for war is Fascist Italy's national pride, and youth is brought up to the clangour of trumpets and the patter of machine guns; whereas in Fascist Italy the founding of pacifist organizations and the promoting of pacifist ideas incur harsh penalties, in republican France democracy is strong enough to hold the militants in check. In contrast to Germany and Fascist Italy, France is not only not ruled by generals in time of peace but—far more astonishing on the Continent—not even in time of war, as the history of the Great War amply demonstrated.

France wants an understanding with Italy, not because she is afraid, but because she confronts the

country, but as seeing in 'gold the synonym of cannon, munitions and other instruments of warfare' and 'a fearful powder magazine' in the 'strong-rooms in the vaults of the Bank of France' (*Corriere della Sera*, December 21, 1932).

realities of war with more discernment and common sense than Fascism which, to distract the people from conditions at home, must keep them in a state of exalted frenzy and, as its representatives themselves admit, has a natural aversion to obligations of an international character. France is prepared to make concessions, but she is entitled to ask for the discontinuance of the campaign of hatred against her.

In spite of repeated remonstrances anti-French propaganda never ceases for long. Characteristic of the ambiguous attitude of the Fascist Government is a political incident that occurred in May, 1933, when the deputy Garibaldi (not to be confused with the *agent provocateur* mentioned above) made a speech in which he advised against exaggerated friendship with Nazi Germany, and pleaded for closer collaboration with France. His speech was received unfavourably, and was suppressed by the Italian papers, which published only the inflammatory reply of Orano. All this occurred in the midst of the idyllic atmosphere of the Four Powers Pact. Thus whereas the mask of reconciliation is donned for the benefit of the outside world, the Italian people at home may not, for one short instant, be spared the propaganda against France.

Hitler's attempt to annex Austria has indeed brought about a temporary *rapprochement* between France and Italy, since both were equally interested to sustain Austria's independence at all costs, but this concord rests on no positive foundations, serving rather as defence against a common danger, and will fall to pieces as soon as this danger no longer exists. The artificially stimulated antagonism between Italy and France is now too deep-seated for there to be any likelihood of smoothing it over in

the immediate future. If Fascism does not take care—and nothing points to this—the tension between Italy and France may lead to a catastrophe both for Europe and for the world.

§ ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA

No less dangerous is the attitude of Fascist foreign policy towards Yugoslavia and the Little Entente.

Dalmatia is the heart of the Italo-Yugoslav problem. Thanks to the imperialist propaganda of Fascism Dalmatia to-day has taken the place in the public's thoughts that the Italian regions under Hapsburg rule occupied before the war. But whereas there really was an Italian majority in the Trentino this is by no means the case in Dalmatia. The Italian claim to Dalmatia is based on no tenable political or moral title, but solely on the fantasy that Dalmatia, which once was under Roman and later Venetian rule, must consequently, in the epoch of the ' heirs of Rome ', belong to Italy again.

In general the Fascists attempt to represent the struggle for Dalmatia as a fight on behalf of culture in which it behoves them to defend the ' Light of Rome ' against the ' Obscurantism of Belgrade '. A book by Silvio Perone entitled significantly enough *Dalmazia nostra* (Milan, 1933, p. 124) goes so far as to assert that the Roman and Venetian monuments in Dalmatia are being destroyed by a band of rowdies, abetted by Belgrade and provided with ample means from Paris (p. 25). It is indeed true that criminal elements demolished the Venetian lions in the city of Trau (Trogir) in December, 1932. Comprehensibly enough this insane behaviour met

with unanimous condemnation throughout Yugoslavia, and the Government could not do enough to emphasize its disapproval of these disgraceful acts. Truly a piquant contrast with Fascist methods; for in the Slav and Teutonic regions of Italy the attack on foreign languages and civilizations is carried on not by irresponsible individuals but by the Fascist Party and the national authorities themselves. One must turn back to the history of past centuries to find similar methods of denationalization. Famous monuments have been destroyed, and even the tombstones of the humble have had to exchange their non-Italian inscriptions for Italian ones.[1]

Of greater importance than the destruction of Slav monuments is the fact that the 400,000–500,000 Slavs living in Julian Venetia and the province of Trieste are being forcibly Italianized. Slav schools are not tolerated and every cultural effort, however unpolitical, is nipped in the bud. Slav names are daily transformed into Italian ones; the Trieste newspaper *Il Piccolo* has a special column for changes of name, nine-tenths of which are Slav. We cannot think that this mass-forfeiting of family names and the frantic tendency towards assimilation on the part of the Slavs, can be the spontaneous outcome of pure love for Italian civilization.

Even the Slav clergy are kept under close observation. The children may not even receive religious instruction in their mother tongue, and

[1] The Fascists, in their zeal for preserving the integrity of Italian culture at home and abroad, even went so far as to mutilate monuments in Italy. All Garibaldi monuments, for instance, which bore the insignia of the Freemasons (Garibaldi, as is well known, was a Freemason) were despoiled of these and adorned with fasces and axe.

sermons also must be given in Italian. Religious pamphlets or prayer-books in Slav are forbidden. Priests who dare to preach in the Slav tongue before their fellow countrymen or to distribute purely religious tracts in Slav are liable to severe persecution. We may mention that in Fiume, which has a colony of a few hundred Hungarians, religious ceremonies may be conducted in the Magyar language, yet the 20,000 or so of the Slav population are forbidden to avail themselves of any language other than Italian even in the exercise of their religion. The Slav parish priests are supplanted more and more by Italians, nor are the higher clergy spared from interference. The 'resignation' of Monsignore Saedej, Archbishop of Gorizia, towards the end of 1931, and his substitution by an arch-Fascist named Sirotti, suggest that the Slav population in Italy can expect no help from the Pope.

An amusing incident sums up the popular feeling in districts which fell to Italy by the Peace Treaties. In Julian Venetia it is customary to recall a girl who has run off with her lover by the following admonition in the papers: 'Come back, Maria: all is forgiven.' What was the astonishment of the citizens of Trieste at finding one morning the following inscription in large letters on the walls: '*Torna, Cecco Beppo: tutto ti è perdonato*' (come back, Francis Joseph: all is forgiven).

It is not only the Slavs and Austrians who long once more to be beneath the 'yoke' of Austria; a good proportion of the Italian population of Trieste and the province of Gorizia would be delighted to exchange Fascist 'freedom' for Hapsburg 'slavery'. Indignation abroad is great at the suffering of the Slavs in Julian Venetia and of the Austrians

in South Tyrol, but it does not occur to many that the whole Italian people must suffer in just the same fashion under the dictatorship.

It is difficult to compare the treatment of the Slavs in Italy with that of the Italians in Dalmatia, for whereas there are still about half a million Slavs in Italy, according to the official statistics of the kingdom of Yugoslavia there are but 4706 Italians in Dalmatia out of a total population of 620,432.[1] It is obvious that the Government has more important cares, and that it contemplates adopting no special measures against this small minority. Since in Yugoslavia there still prevail more civilized methods of government and administration than in an Italy illuminated by Fascist culture, the Italians enjoy every freedom: they have their own schools, and may pursue their aspirations to cultural autonomy to their heart's content.

At clearer moments the Fascists themselves appear to divine that their excuse of defending civilization will not go far towards convincing international public opinion of the necessity for the transference of Dalmatia to Italy. At such times they admit the real object of their Dalmatian aspirations. 'It is indispensable', writes Signor Perone (op. cit., p. 52), '*for the Adriatic to be in the exclusive possession of Italy*, since sooner or later there might arise the necessity for us to conduct an effective defence of the Mediterranean and the Tyrrhenian seas, where other and not less weighty interests demand the most vigilant solicitude and the most delicate attention of the *heirs of Rome*.'

[1] Cralјevina Jugoslavina, *Opsta Orzovna Statistika. Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovnistva, od 31 Januara 1921 God.*, Sarajevo, 1932, pp. 246 f.

Thus beneath the sanctimonious mask there lies the naked greed for foreign land. Although the Fascists themselves are bound to admit that ' there exists but an insignificant Italian minority in Dalmatia at present ' (Perone, op. cit., p. 85) and with statesmanlike guile omit to quote the exact figures, which might prove embarrassing to some Italian readers, they artificially foster Dalmatian irredentism. ' From 1866 to 1914 Trent and Trieste were the be-all and end-all of our national aspirations. To-day it is Dalmatia which appeals to the passions of Italians.'[1] And further: ' *The first objective to which Italian youth aspires with absolute faith and infinite love is the soil of Dalmatia* ' (Perone, op. cit., p. 124). These words, addressed to the youth of Italy just after the conclusion of the Four Powers Pact and the ushering in of universal peace by the Italian Prime Minister in person, were published by Alpes, Milan, a house which also publishes the works of Mussolini and is therefore considered to be semi-official. They show that the peace of Europe is permanently threatened by Fascist Italy, for to-day it is the minds which they recklessly drive towards war-psychosis, to-morrow it is the cannons which go off.

A further reason which justifies Yugoslavia in doubting Fascism's peaceful intentions is the Italian policy in Albania. The two treaties of friendship between Italy and Albania of November, 1926, and November, 1927, were designed to turn the latter into a blind tool of Fascist foreign policy. As, however, King Zogu was clever enough not to sell his country for a paper treaty, Italy was generous

[1] Edoardo Susmel, *Mussolini e il problema adriatico*, Rome, 1929.

and granted Albania a loan of 60 million gold francs in 1926. Officially intended for the economic development of the most backward country in Europe (Albania still has no railways), these considerable sums were actually employed for the most part for military purposes. As security for this loan Albania mortgaged several State monopolies, which are administered by Italian officials. The loan carried interest at 7½ per cent., and a sinking fund was to ensure repayment within 40 years. Actually Albania had to declare itself insolvent at the maturity of its first liability and applied for a delay of payment. Nevertheless in the summer of 1931 the Fascist Government granted a new loan of 100 million gold francs. It is in any case unusual to grant such high credit to a bankrupt petty State, but it is remarkable that Italy, which showed a deficit of thousands of millions in the summer of 1931, could be playing the rôle of a rich uncle. More than that, the conditions upon which the new loan was issued put everything else into the shade. Italy, of course, which has itself to beg for loans abroad and pay good interest on them, can afford to give credit to the extent of 100 million gold francs without interest. In view of Albania's chronic financial weakness and its inability to repay the first loan, any plan for amortization would have been nothing but a farce. Yet to preserve a certain outward semblance of a serious transaction and to avoid the impression that it was simply a present, it was agreed just the same that Albania should begin to make repayments when its public revenue amounts to more than 50 million gold francs, always provided that the stability of Albanian State finances would not be disturbed by repayment. The first assump-

tion is large enough, for the revenue of Albania amounts at present to less than 30 million gold francs annually and tends to fall rather than to rise. The second assumption is intentionally obscure, for it is evident that an eventual stability of Albanian finances would always be more disturbed by the repayment of millions of francs than it would be if Albania confined itself to declaring: We cannot pay.

To characterize the present state of Albanian finances it may suffice to quote the fact that out of an average annual expenditure of roughly 30 million gold francs more than half is devoted to gendarmerie and the army. Italy's financial generosity may be explained only in this sense of promoting the militarization of Albania. The loans serve only to equip the country further for war and to incorporate it in the Italian strategic plans. True, in 1926 the 'S.V.E.A.' (Company for Albania's Economic Development) was founded, but in reality the activity of the Italians in Albania is concentrated upon military training and armaments. The army is drilled exclusively by Italian officers, and the more talented young Albanian soldiers are sent to Italy to complete their military education. The whole country is provided with a network of barracks, building material for this purpose being naturally placed at its disposal in profusion by its Italian protectors. It is not for fishing smacks that the harbour of Durazzo is being developed by the Italians.

The Albanians themselves will one day provide the answer as to whether the draining of their malaria-stricken swamps, the foundation of an orderly education system and the construction of railways might not have proved more useful than the transformation of the country into a future battlefield.

In view of Albania's geographical position it seems to be predestined as the basis for operations in an Italian-Yugoslavian war ; and the military consolidation of Albania by Italy, carried out according to strategic requirements, fills Yugoslavians with the greatest anxiety.

Exactly as Nazi Germany interferes in the internal affairs of Austria and openly incites the population to rebel against the Government, so Fascist Italy attempts to aggravate the ethnical and religious differences within Yugoslavia and, in particular, to turn the Croatians against the Belgrade Government so as to undermine the territorial unity and military efficiency of the Yugoslav State. But in this, of course, love's labour's lost. The experiences of the Slavs in Istria have taught the peoples of the kingdom of Yugoslavia how much Fascist flatteries are worth, and whatever the political factions within the pale of the Yugoslav State, they will all rise as one man against the Fascist intruder.

The Italian Press presents events in Yugoslavia in such a manner as to make one believe that the Croatians are daily arming for revolution. Every utterance of a second-rate Croatian journalist is puffed up in the most irresponsible fashion and is stamped as the official expression of the Croatian people. At the same time the Croatians are regularly reminded openly that they may, in case of need, count upon Fascist assistance. Fascism's Croatian sympathies are to be accounted for partly because it attempts in every manner possible to undermine the unity of the newly created Yugoslav State and to make it ridiculous in the eyes of Italian public opinion, partly because Mussolini, probably with the approval of influential papal circles, has for long nourished

the conception of a renewed Austro-Hungarian-Croatian monarchy under the House of Hapsburg. Now it sounds quite out of the question for an Italian statesman to think of reinstating anew this natural competitor in Southern and South-Eastern Europe. But what do national requirements and the lessons of history matter, when it is a question of bringing the Fascist principle of 'Authority', supported by bayonets, to vigorous realization in some part of Europe?

There is irony in the spectacle of the Fascists assuming the rôle of champions of the principle of national self-determination. These gallant champions of revision enumerate all minorities but their own. Mussolini himself takes the view that the world has no right to concern itself with the situation of the oppressed minorities of South Tyrol and Istria, but that the Fascist Government has the right to interfere in a neighbouring State's internal affairs and to assume the rôle of liberator of the Croatian people.

§ THE LITTLE ENTENTE AND THE FOUR POWERS PACT

The policy of Fascist Italy towards the Little Entente is naturally closely bound up with the development of her relations with Yugoslavia and with France. The Little Entente is the most important pillar in the edifice of French continental policy, and Fascism's struggle against this system is a struggle to weaken France on the Continent and increase its own influence in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The same result would of course be achieved by a temporary understanding between France and Italy which gave offence to the Little Entente.

It was plain to Mussolini that the only one of the

three States which came into consideration for active, cordial collaboration was Rumania. Yet the Treaty of Friendship concluded between Rumania and Italy in Rome in September, 1926, was of no practical importance, as Rumania continued to stand by its close military and diplomatic relations with France, Poland and her fellow-members of the Little Entente. Rumania's relationship to Fascist Italy cannot get beyond certain formal speeches and paper treaties. The cause for this should not be sought in any *a priori* indifference on the Rumanian side to an active collaboration, but exclusively in the Fascist patronage of revisionism. Rumania is one of those countries whose interests demand absolutely the territorial *status quo* in Europe, and every attempt to upset it will meet with her embittered resistance.

Rumania cannot regard with exaggerated cordiality the protector of Hungarian irredentist agitation, as Mussolini has once again proved himself to be in his speech in Rome of March 18, 1934, after the Three Powers Pact between Italy, Austria and Hungary. She does not forget that in both the contraband arms scandals, St. Gotthard in 1928, and Hirtenberg in 1933, it was Italian armament firms which, with the ready tolerance of the Italian authorities, infringed international obligations by secretly delivering arms to Hungary. On both occasions the entire Fascist Press attempted to gloss over the affair and treat it as an occasion for jeering at French and English 'hypocrisy'. In Austria, then still democratic, the President of the Austrian Federal Railways, who knew of the Hirtenberg affair and was hand in glove with the Fascist instigators in Italy and Hungary, lost his position, but in Italy and Hungary the scandal had no further consequences.

Mussolini's gravest mistake, however, in his policy toward the Little Entente was in connection with the Trogir affair in December, 1932. We have already mentioned that the Italian Press seized upon the circumstance that Venetian monuments had been damaged upon Yugoslav soil as a pretext for unbridled agitation. Yugoslavia came to realize very clearly that she alone with her 14 million inhabitants and her limited military and economic resources, would not be able to hold out against the continual pressure of Fascist imperialism. She naturally communicated her fears to Czechoslovakia and Rumania, and, in the conference of the three foreign ministers held in December, 1932, that is to say, immediately after the Fascist provocation, it was unanimously decided to convert the Entente into a true alliance, with definite statutes and a permanent organization, so as to ensure that the foreign policy of the three members should always be pursued on uniform lines.

In a sudden access of concern for the League of Nations the Fascist jurists attempted to brand the new organization of the Little Entente as 'an open defiance of the League of Nations Covenant', and went on to assert that the treaties were 'true and actual instruments of war' (*Corriere della Sera*, March 1, 1933). They were not, however, able to produce any juridical proof to the effect that the League of Nations Covenant would be injured in any of its articles by a closer political and economic collaboration between the three States and their forming one international unit.

Actually the Little Entente was not merely prepared to include Poland in the new alliance, but also Austria and Hungary, and thus at least in certain

respects to re-establish the economic unity of Central Europe which had been torn asunder by the Peace Treaties. But Italy and Germany were, of course, interested in retaining the existence of many small States in Central Europe, and so the project came to nothing. Fascist Italy may hold the view that it has the right to contest any project to reconstruct Europe on a broad basis, from Briand's Pan-European Union onwards, with all means available, and to bring new elements of tension into the troubled atmosphere of Europe. But the Fascist Press, which is supposed to inform the Italian nation of political events abroad, should not brand, as it does, every attempt at a total or partial reconstruction of Europe as working for the dissolution of European unity, unless it comes from Mussolini in person. The Three Powers Pact, of course, concluded upon Mussolini's initiative by Italy, Austria and Hungary in March, 1934, was hailed unanimously by the whole chorus of the Fascist Press as the most brilliant achievement of recent European politics.

On the occasion of conducting the parleys concerning the Four Powers Pact early in 1933, Mussolini had for the first time an opportunity to acquaint himself with the new organization of the Little Entente. In opposition to the Mussolini project of carrying through a new territorial order in Europe without paying much heed to the opinion of the States concerned, the ' Permanent Council of the Little Entente ' issued a communiqué in Geneva on March 25, 1933, in which among other things it stated:

' On the principle that one cannot, either directly or indirectly, dispose of another's property, the States of the Little Entente hereby formulate their definite reservations concerning an eventual con-

clusion of agreements which affect their rights and policy. Agreements of such a nature are a thing of the past, and belong to a time when the League of Nations did not exist.

'The States of the Little Entente furthermore regret that during recent conversations the idea of revision should have been emphasized. Taking their stand upon the basis of the general interest of peace, and taking into consideration the unanimous and profound sentiments in their own countries, they believe it to be their duty to point out that a policy of revision necessarily leading to energetic reactions is not calculated to pacify the minds of the nations and to fortify the feeling of confidence which alone renders possible mutual collaboration.'

In face of the agile diplomatic activity which the Little Entente displayed during these conversations, Mussolini felt himself called upon to criticize its new organization in a long syndicated article. He refused to realize that the members of the Little Entente had been forged into a firm unit by his own aggressiveness, and his exaggerated zeal for revision at the expense of others. His sneers at the pretensions and military resources of the Little Entente brought a sharp reply from Dr. Benes, the Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovakian Republic, in his exhaustive speech on foreign policy on April 25, 1933, at Prague.

In the end the Four Powers Pact, planned by Mussolini as a sort of European Directory, was shorn of its objectionable features largely owing to the firm attitude of the Little Entente. The Pact has had no practical consequences whatever, but it is interesting to compare Mussolini's draft with the French counter-project and the final text.

In the first article, it was intended that the four signatories (Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy) should not only collaborate in maintaining peace in accordance with the Kellogg Pact, but should see that this policy was accepted by non-signatory States. The French insisted that the four Powers should act within the framework of the League of Nations, and should confine themselves to matters which concerned them. The final text virtually accepts the French thesis and so meets the objection of the Little Entente.

Mussolini's second article raised the subject of revision of the Treaties under the Covenant of the League (Article 19). The French reworded this so as to give equal prominence to Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant, which guarantee the territorial integrity of the members of the League, and the final text accepts the alteration almost word for word. It may be mentioned here that the Little Entente has not completely excluded revision of frontiers. Thus Dr. Benes declared in his speech on foreign policy on April 25, 1933, that some small changes might indeed be within the range of possibility, but only on condition that 'this should not be effected by means of external pressure' and that 'such an agreement could only be reached in an atmosphere of quiet after years of peaceful collaboration *without terrorism and pressure*'. Just as France was prepared to discuss revision and a new order with a Stresemann, and to make concessions to him, but is not prepared to do this with a Hitler, so the Little Entente cannot agree to a revisionist policy as long as the States interested in revision receive their roders from Rome.

In the third article Mussolini embodied a joint

declaration by France, Great Britain and Italy that in the event of the Disarmament Conference having an inconclusive result, German rearmament was to be allowed by stages, and a similar privilege extended to Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. The French sought an acknowledgment by Germany that equality of rights could be realized only in a regime of security, and the deadlock was resolved in the final text by pious hopes for the success of the Conference and no mention of rearmament, equality of rights or security.

The fourth article, stipulating for a common policy on all questions, was restricted, following the French counter-project, to consultation on all economic matters of European interest.

France and the Little Entente thus succeeded in drawing the poison from the Mussolini Project, and transforming it into a meaningless document brimming over with the familiar words 'collaboration', 'the maintenance of peace' and so forth, a worthy addition to its predecessors in respect of shallowness and lack of content.

§ FASCISTS AND NAZIS

Nazi Germany, in spite of the Duce's vigorous efforts, received no advantage from the Four Powers Pact. Mussolini's endeavour to secure equality of rights for Germany, or rather to push through rearmament, failed—a fact which does not prevent the Nazis from quietly and diligently adding to their military resources and running munition factories on three shifts a day. It may, however, prove of some moral importance that the French counter-project contained a preamble, which was included word for word in the final text of the Four Powers Pact, and in which there is a passage

confirming the allegiance of the signatories to the obligations of the League of Nations Covenant, the Treaties of Locarno and the Briand-Kellogg Pact. As a result the Nazis, who refused to acknowledge the Locarno Treaties at the time, and abused them as a further step in the enslavement of Germany, have now, thanks to Mussolini's diplomatic assistance, graced these very Treaties, which acknowledge the validity of the Franco-German frontier, with their signature.

Nobody will conclude from this that France should cast aside her mistrust of her Eastern neighbour. In Hohenzollern Germany, which was not ruled over by sadists and drug-addicts, a Chancellor could refer to an international treaty as a 'scrap of paper': one may then realize that the Nazis are hardly likely to respect treaties and solemn obligations.

Italy was for long the only country in the world where the sinister activities of Germany in relation to Austria, which abhors the blessings of *Gleichschaltung* and wishes to maintain its independence, did not cause any violent reaction. If Germany had been without the moral support of Italy, her isolation would have been complete, and a unanimous warning would certainly have been far more effective than the diplomatic protests of England and France.

In spite of the recent transformation of the Austrian Government into a dictatorship on the Italian pattern, the majority of the Austrian people believe that one day German cannons and poison gas will weigh more with Italy in pursuance of her far-reaching political designs than the interests of Austria, and regret the turning of Austria into a blind tool of Mussolini. Thanks to the frequent trips to Rome of Dr. Dollfuss and Prince Starhemberg Italy has succeeded in

making a second Hungary of Austria. The shocking murder of Dr. Dollfuss has provided Mussolini with an opportunity for sabre rattling which he has seized with enthusiasm, and the influence of Italy seems as strong with the new Government as with the old. Yet Austria will do herself no good by adhering to Fascist foreign policy. To-day she is linked with France financially and commercially. Moreover, she would be wiser to seek friendly relations with the succession States of the old Monarchy, her neighbours and the natural partners of her trade.

To this it should be added that the South Tyrol has not yet ceased to interest certain sections of the Austrian population. The late Dr. Seipel went so far as to express the bond Austria feels with its co-nationals in South Tyrol from the tribune of Parliament in February, 1928. This speech called forth a sharp attack on Mussolini's part and unmistakable threats against Austria. It is true that Austro-Italian relations have grown more cordial since then under Chancellors Schober and Dollfuss, but Austrians do not cease to feel concern for the sufferings of their brethren over the border. It is plain that Fascist Italy, which always assumes the rôle of warm-hearted friend to the minorities of other countries, 'will allow of no intervention or control whatever in the treatment of its subjects of foreign race, this being a matter of home politics exclusively' (F. Coppola, op. cit., p. 133). For the Fascists 'the inviolable Brenner is not the aim, but the *starting-point*' (L. Ferretti, op. cit., p. 183) for further conquests.

A free democratic Italy would doubtless have been on the side of the Austrian Republic from the first in its struggle against the gangster methods of

Nazi Germany, displayed in bomb throwing, murder, and arson, but Fascist Italy can really help neither Austria nor her opponents. Italy will always consider it a vital interest not to have the German *Reich* as neighbour on its northern frontier, and it cannot therefore support the Nazis' annexationist plans. At the same time Italy, the only country in the world to have stretched out the hand of cordial friendship and admiration to Nazi barbarism, is a good deal to blame for the Nazi excesses in Austria.

The rôle played by Mussolini prior to February, 1934, should not be forgotten. The bulk of the Austrian people, including most of the Social Democrats, had long realized that the most effective defence against continual Nazi aggression would be for all Austrians faithful to their country to stand shoulder to shoulder against the common foe. If this failed to occur it was Mussolini's doing. His encouragement of the Heimwehr, and keeping them supplied with arms and money, gradually destroyed the influence of the more conciliatory groups in the ruling Catholic party. Prince Starhemberg's struggle against Austrian 'Bolshevism' (to wit, the men who wiped out slums from Vienna, replacing them by fine popular dwellings studied and admired by visitors from all over the world) drew its inspiration as well as its military organization and equipment from Rome.

The dismissal of Parliament, forced through by the presence of machine guns in March, 1933, by Dollfuss, was the first great visible achievement of Heimwehr Fascism. Nevertheless the Social Democrats still hoped for a peaceful solution of the crisis, and attempted more than once to come to terms with the Government. But the Heimwehr would never

tolerate a policy of conciliation, and, led by the Vice-Chancellor, Fey, they egged the Government on to a policy which was to result in national catastrophe. Signor Suvich's visit to Vienna in January, 1934, precipitated events. No precise official statements were issued as to the exact mission of Signor Suvich, but on February 11, 1934, Major Fey declared that the day had come to shatter Marxism for ever in Austria. The day after began the offensive of police and Heimwehr in Linz, thus entailing inevitable civil war. Austrian democracy fell before the rattle of machine guns and the boom of howitzers which did not discriminate between fighting men and helpless women and children, thus building up a new 'Christian' Austria, so Christian that it did not refrain from hanging a badly wounded man who had to be brought to the gallows on a stretcher.

Thousands of innocent women and children, whose supporters had been imprisoned, sent to concentration camps, or had lost their work, were brought to the verge of starvation. Had it not been for the generous help of British relief workers innumerable of these unfortunates would have literally starved to death. It was a sign of the new mentality prevailing that the Austrian police even arrested several of these British friends of Austria for distributing money and goods.

By the 12th of February the seed sown by the Duce had borne fruit. Following the Italian model, political opponents were hanged, beaten or imprisoned. Faithfully copying the Fascist method of administering justice, men (among them the sick and aged) were sent direct to concentration camps after having been acquitted or, as more frequently happened, without trial.

Such was the price Austria had to pay for Italy's assistance in her fight against Nazi aggression, while Great Britain and France stood aside, leaving the Duce a free hand in Central Europe.

In his speech in the Senate on the occasion of the signing of the Four Powers Pact on June 7, 1933, Mussolini solemnly declared that 'Germany wanted peace and not war; a constructive peace both at home and abroad'. German nationalists had certainly borrowed their love of peace from Mussolini even before the Nazi regime, as witness the following expression of admiration for the divine Duce: 'Mussolini trains *even the small boys* of the Balilla as *soldiers*, and he does not train *girls* to be secretaries, but to be *soldiers' mothers!* And he has said: "Words are good, but big guns are better"' (A. St., 'Ein Mann am Werk!' *Der Tag*, Berlin, February 7, 1932).

It is then very clear which elements of the 'doctrine' of Italian Fascism have been taken over by German Nationalism, and the *Popolo d'Italia* (January 31, 1933) was not far out in celebrating the appointment of Hitler as Reich Chancellor by a leader entitled 'Our Revolution'. The *Corriere della Sera* too, in a leading article dedicated to the Nazi election successes of March 5, 1933, announced that '*The success of Hitlerism in Germany awakens the greatest sympathy in Italy* on account of the undeniable kinship of its feelings, ideas and programmes. It is, in a way, *our victory too*.'

'We are faced with an international, a universal assertion of the revolutionary content of Fascism', cried the *Popola d'Italia*. Although we may hardly term movements revolutionary which in Italy borrow their foundations from a historical epoch of thou-

sands of years ago, in Germany from hoary Teutonic antiquity, the victory of Hitlerism in a country which lies in the very heart of Europe means fresh inroads of the barbarism inspired from and supported by Rome into the painfully built up unity of European civilization.

It is easy to understand that Italian Fascism was not perturbed in the least by the Nazi murders of Liberals and Socialists, passing them over in silence. The German concentration camps, in which opponents of the regime are to be made into useful human beings and devoted admirers of Hitler by dint of daggers, clubs and castor oil, cannot call forth condemnation in Fascist Italy as in the rest of the world, for Italy, with its Special Tribunal and *Confino*, was a shining example to Nazi barbarism.

Although Jews as such have not been persecuted in Italy, in the entire civilized world it was only the Fascist Government to which the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis appeared a trifle. Instead of putting the Nazi gangs of murderers and terrorists in the pillory they admonished the persecuted Jews ' to return to their sense of responsibility '. Whilst public opinion in the British Empire, America, France and other countries had no forbearance with Nazidom and told the naked truth to its face, public opinion in Italy was left almost entirely uninformed about the persecution of the Jews in the third Reich. Among all the atrocities of which the Nazi regime was guilty it was the senseless racial persecution which was rightly considered the most barbarous abroad, the one which called for the deepest indignation and bestowed upon Nazi Germany an unenviable moral standing. The fact that Italy,

in contrast to the rest of the civilized world, has, by its passive silence and active support, connived with the persecutors, drives it, with invincible logic, into the moral sphere of Nazi Germany to-day.

This should be understood once and for all, for unfortunately the world has grown accustomed to the dictatorship of Italian Fascism and still distinguishes between the now—after its opponents have been murdered, exiled or otherwise disposed of—'civilized' Italian Fascism and the 'wild' Nazi Fascism which, by those same methods of violence once employed by Italian Fascism, has seized power, consolidates it and identifies itself with the State. To-day there exists in Fascist Italy *a legal terror* which differs from the *terror of fact* in Nazi Germany only in that, in Italy, it has already been swathed in a layer of paragraphs and legal formulæ to lend the appearance of justice, while Nazi Germany will yet require time to replace S.A. and S.S. atrocities by official acts of the State in accordance with new codes of law. The quarrel over Austria, and the strident Press polemics that have followed it, are merely what we should expect of rival gangsters. Italian Fascism and German Nazism are two movements of the same political and social type, and both equally mean an incursion of barbarism into that Europe which respects the life of the individual and his spiritual autonomy, into that Europe which has liberated itself from dark, mediæval narrowness and has made mutual tolerance and respect the foundation of its social life.

§ RUSSIA

The relations of Italy with Soviet Russia have, on the whole, been cordial. Even before the advent

of the Fascist regime the two countries had, on December 27, 1921, concluded a commercial treaty which was to be the forerunner of a political rapprochement. When Mussolini, Communism's most violent antagonist, came into power there was naturally a change of atmosphere. Fascist storm-troops did not even shrink from attacking the official Russian commercial agency in Rome and wounding employees by revolver shots. But Mussolini was circumspect enough to put a quick stop to these incidents in order to avoid light-heartededly jeopardizing the friendship of so powerful a State. At the end of November, 1923, he even declared emphatically in the Chamber of Deputies that he intended to recognize Russia, though he made conditions for a commercial treaty at the same time which to Russia seemed too high a price to pay for recognition by Italy. The discussions dragged on and neither party seemed willing to give in. Then on February 2, 1924, the news that the British Government under MacDonald had *de jure* recognized the Soviet Union reached Italy. Thereupon Mussolini hastened to come to an understanding with the Russians, and five days later Soviet Russia was also recognized *de jure* by Fascist Italy. Since then Mussolini, instead of honestly acknowledging the priority of British diplomacy, has again and again attempted to spread the legend in Italy that 'Italy was the first country, on February 7, 1924, to take up once more normal diplomatic relations with Russia' (Mussolini in *La Stampa*, October 1, 1933).

Trade relations between Italy and the Soviet Union have since become rather brisk. While Russia buys little in Italy, since Italian finished goods cannot successfully compete with British, American

and even French on the Russian market, Italy depends upon importing wood, grain, and, above all, oil from Russia. The imports of Italy from Russia are about five times as large as the Russian imports from Italy, so that the Soviet Union does well out of its friendship with Fascist Italy. Although the Fascist Government guarantees 75 per cent. to Italian exporters to Russia, Italy cannot succeed in assuring to itself a place on the Russian market similar to that already occupied there by the other Great Powers.

Mussolini's plan had been to win the political friendship of the Soviets by meeting them half-way on commercial ground, as he needs both Russia and Germany in order to break French influence on the Continent. The military relations between the Soviet Union and Italy grew very close; the Soviet Union had military planes built in Italy, while Italy for years has mainly employed Russian oil for her Navy. The Soviet oil agency in Italy even to-day furnishes approximately one third of the oil consumed in the country, and this proportion is increasing; the annual import of Russian oil and its by-products has now reached nearly 1,000,000 tons. Next to England Italy has thus become the greatest buyer of Russian oil. The tremendous increase in imports may be explained more particularly by the growth of the Fascist Navy, and the Government is well aware that Italy, which is poor in raw materials, would in case of war be dependent on Russian oil and grain, without which it could not wage war for six weeks even though it might take full advantage of its granaries and oil-tanks and do its best to hoard for the future.

In spite of all efforts it none the less appears doubtful whether the Soviet Union would fulfil

Fascist hopes of at least benevolent neutrality in the event of a European conflict. The establishment of the Nazi regime has brought about a fundamental change of outlook in Russia's foreign policy. The former markedly German bias which also found its expression in the military intimacy prevailing between the Reichswehr and the Red Army, an intimacy whose disclosure amounted to high treason even in republican Germany, has given way to a definitely French bias. Herriot's visit to Russia in September, 1933, resulted in a marked rapprochement; the air-squad which arrived in Moscow shortly after under the personal guidance of Pierre Cot, the French Minister for Air, clearly showed the direction in which Soviet foreign policy has moved of late.

The conclusion of non-aggression pacts with Poland, the Baltic States and Rumania, which gave Russia the security she needs for the realization of her far-reaching economic and social schemes, was also to be attributed to French diplomacy. It is mainly thanks to Herriot's diplomatic ability that France has gained her present standing in Russia. It seems to-day that Fascist Italy may bury any hopes of eventual Russian support. True, on September 2, 1933, the two Powers concluded a treaty of friendship and non-aggression. This, however, counterbalances not at all the new Franco-Russian *entente*, which looks back to a long tradition and may be strengthened any time by France's financial power, whereas Italy is far too poor to be of much assistance to Russia in the economic field. On the other hand, we should not be too ready to believe that Russia will now unconditionally follow the plans of French diplomacy. What the Soviet Union requires above all to realize its plans at

home is a feeling that its frontiers are menaced neither on its European border nor in the Far East, where it feels uneasy since Japan's new lust for expansion.

§ ITALY AND GREAT BRITAIN

The relations of Fascist Italy with Great Britain were not always as smooth as they appear to-day. The Fascist objective of an Italian Mediterranean contrasted sharply with British interests in these waters, and for some time Britain was bitterly reproached by the Fascists. It was only after the Corfu adventure, which brought home to Mussolini that the British flag was still the strongest in the Mediterranean, that a change of opinion set in. Instead of engaging upon an absolutely hopeless struggle against the British Empire, Fascist foreign policy now conformed to Great Britain's wishes, in return for which Italy received territorial compensation in the shape of part of Jubaland in East Africa. Of no importance for the British Empire, to hungry Fascist imperialism this territory represented a very desirable enlargement of its East African domain.

Anglo-Italian relations have ever since been cordial on the whole, but there remain nevertheless some fundamental problems of which Fascist Italy is well aware. Above all it is Malta which occupies Italian public opinion. Fascism no more renounces its claims to Malta than to Corsica. The decision to exclude the Italian language from the law courts and elementary schools in favour of Maltese, aroused a storm of indignation in Fascist Party circles as an attack on Italian cultural interests. The Fascists, who can never boast enough of having re-established and increased Italian world prestige, were crushed by shame at receiving from England

a blow which democratic Italy would probably have been spared, for undoubtedly the support received from Italy aggravated the situation and encouraged the Nationalist opposition to provocative actions which ended disastrously.

The importance of Malta for Italy lies far more in its geographical position than in the claims of Italian humanism. Fascism believes 'that not only Italy's liberty, but its entire life depends on the good will of those who, for imperial, not national, reasons, have settled on Malta and Cyprus' (Cippico, op. cit., p. 32), for 'more than forty-one million Italians could be starved to death in a couple of weeks if those who hold the doors of the Mediterranean made up their minds to hostilities and closed these doors to the import of grain, coal, oil and iron, in short, to all the raw materials essential to the life of a modern civilized nation'.

Fascism does not—in spite of the apparent Anglo-Italian idyll of to-day—believe in eternal friendship between these two countries, for England 'could to-day or to-morrow partake in some coalition hostile to Italy' (Cippico, op. cit., p. 44), made up of France, England, Yugoslavia, and Greece. It is true, of course, that all these countries have important interests in the Mediterranean, but wherever several peoples step upon the international scene the Fascist thinks straight away of the possibility of 'hostile coalitions'. He cannot believe in the possibility of international collaboration, for he has, as Professor Corrado Gini has already told us, a 'natural aversion' to international organizations and the law of nations.

Francesco Coppola (op. cit., p. 15), the theorist of Fascist imperialism, has expressed himself most

plainly of all upon the necessity of Italian expansion and its points of contention with the British Empire: 'It is absurd, unfair, immoral and profoundly unhistorical that England, at the zenith of its development, wishes to-day artificially and immutably to preserve its present hegemony even if its Imperial power weakens while that of Italy grows. For Italy this would mean the necessity to smash of its own strength the balance of the world which suppresses it.'

Fascism pursues other interests which conflict with those of the British Empire. Its foreign policy has been striving for years toward obtaining at least a mandate, if not colonies. It is pre-eminently the Near East that Italy has her eye on, for many Italians are settled there and that alone justifies in Italian eyes the transfer of a mandate. Syria is continually claimed from France for the Fascist Empire, but Italy would also gladly take over the mandate for Palestine. This would help it to a firmer foothold in the Near East, while the Vatican would not unnaturally prefer to see it under the Italian rather than the British flag. After the Arab revolt in August, 1929, Italians repeatedly stated their desire to turn Palestine, which was giving Great Britain so much trouble, into an Italian mandate. This friendly offer, however, was declined, for apart from the fact that Palestine does not burden the British taxpayer by a penny, it is of strategic importance to the British Empire. The air route to India passes over Palestine, and the Suez Canal is open to attack from it.

When Fascist foreign policy had at last come to realize that no mandatory Power would, of its own free will, present Italy with a mandate in any part of the world, it changed its tactics on this point

also and attempted to extend its influence by advocating that mandated territories should be given independence as fast as possible. The British-Iraq Treaty of June 30, 1930, which contained stipulations intended to retain Iraq within the British sphere of influence after the termination of the mandatory period, was regarded as 'an obvious infringement of the rights of third parties, and incompatible with the principles laid down in Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant' (Gaspare Ambrosini: *Paesi sotto mandato*, Milan, 1932, p. 135).

Mussolini's declaration on March 18, 1934, in Rome, that 'the historic objectives of Italy have two names, Asia and Africa', once more affirms Fascism's steadfast determination to carry out to the end the imperialist mission it has ordained for itself. England took for granted that this latest marching order of the Duce was only directed against France. But this illusion was not to subsist for long, for Italy's active support in May, 1934, of the Imam of Yemen in his war against Ibn Saud, who in his turn is subsidized by Britain, showed that Mussolini's recent declaration is to be taken at its face value.

Apart from all these political questions, important as they may be, a more fundamental difference reveals itself. The mental abyss which separates England from Fascist Italy does not seem to us bridgeable by any political friendship. 'In a decade Europe will be Fascist or fascistized', Mussolini declared on October 24, 1932, in Milan; and countries which consider following in the footsteps of the new Fascist civilization should not omit to recall his words of May 17, 1930, in Florence, the very quintessence of his 'doctrine': 'Words are a beautiful thing, but rifles, machine guns, vessels,

aeroplanes and cannon are more beautiful things'; and this, in an article on 'The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism' (*Popolo d'Italia*, August 4, 1932): 'A doctrine which from the first starts out with the postulate of peace is alien to Fascism, as all internationalist constructions are alien to the Fascist spirit, although it may accept them for reasons of utility in certain political situations.'

In addition to the Fascist love of war it is above all the deification of the State, the standardization and regimentation of the spirit, which are repellent to the English tradition. England has been foremost in resisting both Bolshevism and Americanization, the two forms into which European civilization degenerates, because in this country the idea of personal freedom and mutual tolerance in all walks of life is still alive, because in this country the truly European ideal of quality is still preferred to the un-European phantom of quantity. We therefore believe that England will be strong enough not only to keep Fascism from conquering her own country, but also, by her guiding example, to vanquish it in Europe and throughout the world. When once British public opinion grows conscious of its new historical task, Fascist barbarism will vanish from the earth faster than seems possible to-day, in the age of Hitler and Mussolini.

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