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F A S C I S M

FASCISM

BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

CONSIDERATIONS TO BE BORNE IN MIND IN THE
INTERPRETATION OF ITALIAN POLITICS

THE Fascist movement in Italy will be more easily understood if one bears in mind certain considerations bearing on the interpretation of all contemporary Italian politics.

Let us begin by the idea of "party." The word "party" comes from the Anglo-Saxon democracies. In speaking of Italy, the better word to employ would be "group" or "following/" and thus the men belonging to some particular party or "group" might be called "followers" with more exactitude. Parties in Italy have nothing in common with those of the Anglo-Saxon countries. They are not so organized, nor are they so exclusive. No actual parties comprising the masses existed in Italy up until the foundation of the Socialist party in 1893 and the Popular party in 1919. But these parties once founded—their constitution was modelled somewhat on that of the German party system—they underwent the most rapid changes, swelling and dwindling, breaking up and fading out of existence at the will of influential leaders. It is a fact that the personality of the leader

far outweighed the actual programme of the party in importance. The leaders were not representatives but dictators of the masses, and they had at their back a group of followers personally attached to them ; but they were by no means the representatives of the people *en masse*. Italy is a country dependent upon her leaders, and although the Socialists and the Popular party sought to do away with them, they could not escape from the Italian law, which makes the man of first importance, then the principle. In Italy, if a leader is removed, the party loses more than a leader: it dwindles, practically, to one-half ; the replacing of that leader is a very difficult business, and his successor does not easily gain respect and obedience. Personal qualities are what count.

It is not necessary in Italy, therefore,* to follow slavishly any particular programme; what really counts in political life ft political action—that is to say, the acquisition of power. The struggle for power is of more importance than the carrying out of a programme. A party can change its programme without loss of public esteem : the thing to guard against is the loss of public sympathy—a fluctuating sympathy which is based upon an infinity of incalculable susceptibilities. Party power is derived less from the successful pursuit of its aims than from the sympathy it evokes. Up until the end of the war the number of members on the rolls of one or other of the parties was disproportionately small in comparison both with the population and with the electorate. The atmosphere of well-being which surrounds a government, a party or

a group, is much more important than any other factor, and reliance upon this factor rather than upon any other is the surest path to predominance in Italy. The fluctuations between favour and disfavour which Fascist demonstrations suffered in public opinion between 1921 and 1922 caused corresponding fluctuations in its political prestige ; and but for the current of sympathy then running in its favour, after the general strike called by the Socialists in August 1922, the " March on Rome " in the following October would scarcely have been propitiously received.

The second consideration to be borne in mind is, that in Italy politics are necessarily subject to regional laws and characteristics. These regional inconsistencies are due to historical and geographical causes. Italy has greater length than breadth, and is subject to three entirely different climates, ranging from the climate of Central Europe to that of Northern Africa. It is Europe that one finds in the valley of the Po, and, to all intents and purposes, Africa in Sicily. For the last seven centuries the history of Italy has been that of Lombardy, Tuscany, Venice and the South. It has been that of France, Germany and Austria rather than that of Italy herself. Italy has a dozen capitals, some of which have had closer connections with foreign countries than with other Italian centres, or so it was up until the opening of the railway system which has been the chief factor in the unification of Italy,

The regional characteristics are, therefore, still very active, every political event drawing therefrom

its tone and form; so that in Emilia one gets the Fascism of the land in a country where agriculture prevails ; and the Emilian Fascism of the land differs from the Tuscan Fascism, in that in Emilia the strongest political force is made up of the day-labourers, *braccianti* as they are called, a class practically non-existent in the Tuscan agricultural zone. The Fascism of Milan and that of the South differ as night from day, the South having introduced Fascism into local peasant disputes founded in many cases on family feuds. Never having been made the prey of the Bolshevich menace, the South has never grasped the significance of Fascism, and has abused it in its application. In the South the words " Fascist " and " Nationalist " have been used to identify the partisans of ancient factions, in the same way as the Italians have continued to speak of various historical periods as Guelph and Ghibelline long after the strife between Pope and Emperor has ceased to exist except in the pages of history. In the name of Fascism many people nursing a quarrel with the police have obtained the right to carry arms for the sole purpose of settling personal accounts. The actual significance of Fascism has never penetrated these regions for two reasons: firstly, because throughout the war the South remained patriotic, despite heavy losses and hardships which surpassed any which the North was called upon to sustain, and bore them with much greater resignation ; secondly, the social strife in the South showed none of the revolutionary tendencies which were found in the North.

The third consideration to be borne in mind is the fact that Italy has not as yet entered the field of capitalism in the present era. Her only industrial district is to be found in the valley of the Po, and can be roughly contained by a triangle sketched between Genoa, Turin and Brescia. The remainder of the country is devoted almost entirely to agricultural and household industries. Italy lacks, even more than the actual factories, the financial and industrial atmosphere which pervades the Anglo-Saxon countries and Germany and France, and from this, point of view she is for the most part a patriarchal country occupied with local interests. Even her politicians have but slight contact with the financial world, having no direct dealings with the business life of the country. Italy, in short, with her town populations of but a generation or two, who have not yet had time to cut off all rural ties, is only entering now upon the threshold of the new world born of political economy. She is still sentimental rather than calculating, traditional rather than modern, provincial and unaware of the tide of present-day international interests except when they force an entrance by long and arduous paths.

She has, in fact, the qualities of her shortcomings: strong family feeling; remarkably little corruption; temperance; sobriety; with leanings rather ethical than political. She is a country in which the middle and semi-educated classes are powerful by reason of their numbers and the force of their opinions, and where manual labour is neither appreciated nor

respected, the position of the working man being almost servile. But class distinctions are not so marked as in other countries. You will very often find a professional man, who is also a landed proprietor in the town or in the country, managing his own estate. You will sometimes find a labourer who has left the country where either he or his wife owned a small piece of land. Thus the passing from one class to another in society is accomplished almost imperceptibly.

The monarchy is still an important factor of Italian political life, and it serves to preserve moderation and balance. It appeals to the sentiment of the masses and the reason and loyalty of the educated classes. It is a fact worthy of note that in Piedmont and in the South, where the monarchy has flourished for generations, Fascism has not taken so deep a root as in Emilia, Tuscany and Lombardy, for instance, where the Communes flourished. It is due to the fact that monarchy stands essentially for rarity and respect of the law, while the Commune suggests rivalry and individual advancement. Let us remember, moreover, the tradition of common sense and solidarity in the House of Savoy, whose school in the art of government was the long-drawn-out conflict between France and Austria on Italian soil.

Let us bear in mind, then, these four considerations, these principles, one might almost say, for our better understanding of the evolution of modern Italy, and, in particular, of the dawn and development of Fascism.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

TWO interpretations have been given to the word " Fascism " : on the one hand, it has been interpreted as the Saint George of Italy, slaying the dragon of Communism ; on the other, as the watch-dog of the middle classes, ready to snap at the calves of the Italian proletariat seeking to establish a new order of things and to set on foot a new political regime. .

Both these interpretations are inadequate, and too bald to satisfy any but those content to dismiss the question with a superficial understanding of its principal factors. They fail principally from having regarded Fascism as an independent phenomenon rather than as an integral part of the social and political forces of Italy and of the world in general. The excesses of the Fascists and the censure they have evoked from the anti-Fascists arise from the same misconception : both believe in Fascism in its broader sense—not as applied exclusively to Italy—as in the manifestation of something unforeseen and miraculous, which might have transformed Italy.

Both interpretations, however, are true in part, and they are important in so far as they indicate widespread ambitions, beliefs and aspirations; and they do

serve, at all events, to dissociate Fascism from Bolshevism, revolution and disorder; so far they do explain Fascism. They show how it has been construed and judged by a large section of the middle and lower classes. Even if the principles are not very clear, they do reveal the under-currents of feeling which are likely to prove important factors in the development of Fascism itself.

The author has tried, in the following chapters, to dissociate himself from all bias and to regard the movement from as impartial an historical standpoint as possible. The object is not to write a history of Fascism, which as yet cannot, for obvious reasons, be done. By an historical standpoint is meant only an attempt to understand the views of the adversaries of Fascism, and then to reconstruct events in their true historic setting. A movement like Fascism does not appear unheralded, nor does it develop without roots; one cannot, therefore, explain it simply by its forerunner, Bolshevism, to be dismissed in its turn without explanation.

This book is intended especially for the enlightenment of foreign countries which have the advantage of an intimate knowledge of the Italian crisis since the war—a crisis which has assumed varying names and aspects, amongst which Fascism has been only one—with the impartiality of disinterestedness in the internal conflicts of the peninsula.* But the foreigner lacks an understanding of our history, our psychology and our geographical inequalities, so that his ignorance leads him into as great blunders as does the Italian's

too personal interest. The purpose of this book is to enlighten those who have held themselves aloof from the conflict, and, if possible, those who have suffered for their interference. One name should suffice to explain the attitude which the author has striven to maintain, that of Vilfredo Pareto, for I know no other who so surely stands for intellectual rather than political interest.

With that object in view, I shall endeavour to keep this book free from party hatred, sweeping assertions, predictions, malice, bitterness or apprehension, reviewing the events which have taken place in Italy during the years immediately following the war with the same impersonal interest as one would bring to the consideration of the inevitable, or to the study of such chimerical questions as the Athenian republic in the fifth century B.C. This book strives to deduce and to elucidate its deductions, while refraining from definite charges or assertions ; to consider the outcome of past and present actions, and to see how they are going to fit into the intricate system of the life of the nation ; to study political questions almost as if they were the problems of a game of billiards, weighing the good play against the bad.

I have tried, as I have already said, to be impersonal, to cut out regrets and recriminations, perhaps here and there I have allowed pity to creep in, or admiration for hot-headed devotion, where no sacrifice was deemed too great because of the conviction that every little action would find recognition in the perfected State one day to be established.

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FASCISM

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN OF FASCISM

Origin of the Word "Fascism"—Formation of "Italian Armed Groups"—Programme of the "Fasci"—Their, Activities—Nitti and Giolitti—The Growth of Fascism—Agricultural Dispute in Bologna—The Palazzo d'Accursio Massacre—What is Fascism?—The Religion of the Country—No Democracy in Italy.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD "FASCISM"—The word comes from *fascio*, a group or cluster; it is used of a cluster of plants or branches which grow stronger by being thus bound together. A *fascio* of sticks with a battle-axe in their midst was carried by the Roman lictors : it was from the lictors* *fasces* that the Fascists derived their emblem.

There was once before in Italy a political movement which also bore the name of *fasci*, a Sicilian peasant movement, led by the Socialists in 1893, but which died a natural death.

The immediate predecessors of Fascism itself were the *Fasci di combattimento*, or groups of armed men which flourished between October 1914 and May 1915. Under these were enrolled the Socialists, Republicans, Anarchists and Syndicalists who were in favour of Italy's intervention in the European war then in pro-

gress, and who were anxious to give a revolutionary aspect to the war. These *fasci* had but a transitory existence, but many of their adherents, Mussolini amongst the first, were to be found in the post-war Fascist movement.

After the month of October 1917 and the unfortunate business of Caporetto, a group of deputies of the Right, the Centre and the Left, who wished at all costs to avoid a return of the Giolitti policy or a separate and inconclusive peace, were called the *Fascio di difesa nazionale*—the group of national defence.

In this group were included several parliamentarians who later on joined the Fascists, and who were in certain respects its immediate predecessors in their capacity of defenders of the victory which was as yet only a myth.

FORMATION OF "ITALIAN ARMED GROUPS"—The origin of Fascism can be traced to the war. Those classes which had been in favour of the war and had borne its burden were convinced of its righteousness by reason of its democratic ideals as set forth by the Government upon its declaration. The belief had been established amongst these men that upon their return, with the glory of victory behind them, they should receive from their country those special privileges of which such extravagant promise had been made them. They were to be the leaders of the future in place of those who had stayed behind in safety : young, full of enterprise, and deserving, they should replace the old regime in politics and the bureaucracy, grown slothful, corrupt, unintelligent and incapable of bringing its views into line with the needs imposed by a new order of things*. They had created " a great Italy," and to them should fall the task of completing the task they

had begun. On demobilization the land should go to the men, to the officers the reins of government.

But the ex-service men, on their return, found a very different welcome awaiting them from what they had been led to expect.

In the beginning of 1919 Italy was cast into a state of turmoil. Once ended the distorting tension of war and the fictitious sense of well-being guaranteed by the support of the Great Powers, she found herself all at once faced by grave problems : demobilization, which would cast a host of surplus men upon the country; the beginning of a slump in an industry temporarily swollen to meet the demands of the army and which must now necessarily undergo a technical metamorphosis and find new markets; confusion in all branches of service—public, municipal, provincial and national—until they should have adapted themselves to the new order; the financial crisis which threatened Italy as soon as the support of the Allies was withdrawn; the solving of national and international problems accruing from the Peace Conference ; the consequences of the social revolution brought about during the war by the new distribution of capital; and, finally, the confusion induced by the undefined and undefinable aspirations of a mass of political ignorami, who, by virtue of the franchise, found themselves called upon to do their part towards political reconstruction at so difficult a point in the nation's history. In 1913 the electorate numbered 3,329,147—that is to say, one-twelfth of the population ; in 1919 it numbered 11,115,441—that is to say, 29.3 per cent, of the population; but the newly enfranchised, instead of being educated in the school of politics, knew only the school of War!

The State, faced with these formidable problems, did not prove itself equal to its task. Incapable of energy or of any clearly defined ideas, lacking, what is more, the moral strength which alone could have roused a country sunk in general sloth, the Government devoted all its activities to foreign politics, without, even in this respect, making it their business to fulfil the expectations of their country. In fact, they gave the impression of having washed their hands entirely of the life and internal interests of the nation.

No sooner had the economic and financial upheaval begun to make itself felt (following upon the closing down of the munitions of war industry, the rise in the cost of living due to the rise in foreign exchanges, and the increased demand in proportion to the supplies available) than the equilibrium of the masses went to pieces. Strikes broke out in every branch of industry, and in the absence of any organized government action the extremists were fired with the idea that the hour was ripe for political revolution, while the rulers relied on the general dislocation, on the confused and ill-defined character of the revolutionary spirit fostered by stories of Red Russia, on the essentially materialistic aspirations of the masses, on the destroyed faith of the peasants who had listened eagerly during the war to rumours of a division of the land amongst the agriculturists; but they relied above all on the innate war-hatred of the majority, who had nevertheless gone to war to make an end of it.

It was this hatred first and foremost which finally decided their line of action in favour of urging a strong course to be adopted in both questions, political and social. The greatest psychological error of the Socialists was when they taunted the middle classes

with this same war-hatred, for even though they might have joined the ranks of the malcontents, either because of the unfulfilled promises made them during the war or because of the unsatisfactory nature of the victory, they could not join with the Socialists in reviling a war which they had entered voluntarily, for which they had suffered and sacrificed themselves, and of which they had hoped and still did hope for much.

It was to this critical state of affairs and to this confusion that the troops returned, when they had looked forward to such a very different welcome. The Promised Land which had shaped itself during the last years of the war out of the promises made by the Government, seemed to be lost, and its loss brought with it the bitterness of disillusionment. Many of those who had given up position, profession or other work, returned to find their places occupied, and were compelled to begin again from the beginning of things. They saw about the streets of the towns crowds of pleasure-seeking people, shopkeepers miraculously and unjustly enriched, labourers earning more than they, peasants who had become landed proprietors, and their own economic position worsted thereby. The failure both in word and deed of the Government, that Government which had been so generous in its promises to them, to come to their rescue, only accentuated their resentment. It was not to be wondered at, then, that revolutionary feeling ran high and that thousands of people were incited to march under any flag that offered itself, provided that it was against the Government.

As it turned out, many of them flocked beneath the **red flag, and** all would have done likewise but for the

Socialist leaders, who, in their blind hatred of war, roused the masses equally against the groups of ex-service men recruited from the middle classes—intellectuals, clerks, students and professional men—and who could not bring themselves to forswear in such a wholesale manner their ideals and patriotic and national aspirations.

These particular men constituted the section of the population most to be pitied. From their ranks had been recruited the officers. They had subscribed more than any other class towards the maintenance of the defensive, and consequently to the victory, and by way of reward they received the least recompense of all. While the economics of war had favoured the upper industrial middle classes, the workmen drawing high wages and safely out of the trenches, the peasants enriched by the rise in the cost of living, the middle classes were suffering impoverishment and disillusion. That class which, in constituting public opinion, had decided in favour of intervention, was made to realize at the cessation of hostilities that another class of society had arisen and supplanted them in the economic as well as in the political world.

Disillusioned by broken faith, by the interception of their proposed attack upon the Socialists, by the failure of the authorities to satisfy national and Nationalist aspirations arising from the war, it was the ruling classes, the Socialists and the masses that these people found themselves up against, and against whom they had to safeguard not only themselves but their hearths and homes.

A sign of the times was the founding of societies of ex-soldiers in towns throughout the kingdom, societies with various political programmes, some of them

embodying the most radical spirits, such as the *Futuristi* and the *Arditi*, whose sentimental and Nationalist claims, and opposition to the current Socialist tendencies, had much in common with Benito Mussolini's programme of reconstruction after the victory and appreciation of the ex-service men. Mussolini had himself been one of them and edited the *Popolo d'Italia*, a paper representative, as its subtitle testified, of "producers and ex-service men."

. It was upon the initiative of Mussolini that there was a meeting in Milan on the 23rd March 1919, at the headquarters of the Industrial and Commercial Association, Piazza San Sepolcro, of the delegates from the various groups adhering to his programme. There were present, besides Mussolini (who immediately took the lead because of his moral and physical superiority to all the others), T. F. Marinetti, Giovanni Giuriati, Michele Bianchi, Canzio Garibaldi, General G. Douhet, Mario Carli, representing the *Fasci futuristi d'Italia*, representatives of the *Fascio futurista* in Rome, Piero Bolzon, Massimo Rocca, representing the *Fasci futuristi* in Florence, Ferrara and many others. This meeting was the occasion of the fusion of the various groups, and the formation of the *Fasci italiani di combattimento*. Michele Bianchi was made secretary of the Milan *Fascia*.

PROGRAMME OF THE "FASCI"—Many factors contributed to the determination of the first programme of the *Fasci*, a programme which showed a marked radical tendency. Amongst these were: the origin of the men who took the lead in the *Fasci* movement; the greater part of whom had been banished from the Socialist party, in which they had occupied the benches

on the Left; the character of this *avant-garde* political movement which, between 1914 and 1919, had influenced all new movements ; and the question of the ex-service men, principally of the proletarian and lower middle classes whose interests they had undertaken to safeguard.

This programme, issued by the constituent Assembly on the 23rd March 1919, was based on the principle of the rights and wrongs of the revolutionary war (the war waged by the *Fasci d'azione*, led by these same men in 1914, was looked upon by them as revolutionary), and outlined its aspirations as Nationalist in external politics and reformatory in internal politics.

With regard to internal reform their programme was based upon four fundamental factors—political, social, military and financial. In the matter of politics it put forward a proportionate electoral scale, the granting of votes to women, the lowering of the age limit for deputies from thirty-three to twenty-five years, the abolition of the Senate, the calling of a National Assembly of three years' duration with the establishment of a new Constitution as its chief aim, the founding of regular national Councils for labour, industry, transport, communications, social hygiene, etc., chosen from amongst their own ranks and endowed with legislative powers. In the matter of social reform it demanded an eight-hour day for labourers and peasants, the participation of the workers' representatives in all technical industrial questions, the handing over of industrial management, particularly in the public services, to the workers' organizations (for example, the railways should be under the direction of the railwaymen's union).

With regard to the military, it suggested the formation of a national militia with a short period of training, for exclusively defensive purposes ; the nationalization of munition and equipment factories. In the question of finances it demanded "a heavy super-tax upon capital, the sequestration of a percentage of the wealth of religious bodies, and the abolition of certain privileges hitherto enjoyed by the clergy, especially in their higher ranks ; and the revision of certain contracts for military equipment, together with the appropriation of 85 per cent, of war profits.

In foreign politics the programme emphasized the Nationalist tendencies of the *Fasci*, who, in this respect, supported the same claims as the Nationalist party itself—that is to say, the revision of the London Pact so as to incorporate Fiume and the whole of Dalmatia, a claim which gained strength from the very outset by the opposition of the nuclei of *futuristi*, of ex-service men and of *ex-arditi* to a speech of Leonida Bissolati posted for a date in January at the Scala Theatre in Milan, in support of a policy for the abandoning of both Dalmatia and Brenner.

THEIR ACTIVITIES—The *Fasci di combattimento* included all those patriotic and liberal elements which the Socialists in their unreasoning aversion to war had so unwittingly fostered. Socialist opposition was concentrated against the *Fasci* because they were run by deserters from the Socialist ranks, who were consequently looked upon as traitors, and who, for their own part, regarded war on Socialism as their chief *raison d'Ure*, and an excellent opportunity to rekindle old hatreds of Socialist leaders.

However, during the time which elapsed between

the spring of 1919 and the end of the occupation of the factories (a victory which marked the ruin of revolutionary hopes) the activities of the *Fasci* had but small compass. What activities there were were of no national importance, but merely local, and this fact applies particularly to Milan. Their greatest strength lay in their alliance to the bands of *Arditi*; in fact, their first strong action, namely, the attack on the newspaper known as the *Avanti!* in April 1919, was originated by the *Arditi*, with whom the Milanese *Fascio* joined forces on some occasions. It was but a remote connection that the *Fasci* had with D'Annunzio's enterprise in Fiume in 1919, though they supported and approved his venture, contributing thereto a small force and their public favour, but it cannot be said that success was due either to their action or to their encouragement.

Even in the elections of 1919 in November, the *Fasci* showed up but feebly, for their candidates, Mussolini and Marinetti, only obtained some 4700 votes in Milan.

Nevertheless, they began to work upon the public by means of pamphlets, speeches and patriotic demonstrations ; their attitude being one of merciless criticism and opposition, nay, even death, to Sodalism, its methods and revolutionary postulates. But at the same time they did not withhold censure from a Government ineffectual and lazy both in home and foreign politics, which, having betrayed the men who had fought, was now betraying the entire nation at the table of the Peace Conference. Nor was censure withheld from the lax and fearful middle classes who could not even stand up for themselves, but were prepared to treat with the enemy ; against them they

directed their shafts as well as against the Socialist leaders, and from that point one begins to notice anti-plutocratic tendencies which grew to be a feature of the Fascism of the Left.

NITTI AND GIOLITTI—Fascism had its genesis under the governments of Nitti and Giolitti, encountering opposition from the former and support from the latter: Under Facta it bore the fruits of the two preceding ministries, and with the " March on Rome " laid hands upon the State.

Fascists regarded these three governments as a reign of failure, disorder and treachery, but to what extent this is true of the actual facts is a question.

Francesco-Saverio Nitti was perhaps one of the most hated men in all Italy. No slightest cause for condemnation was he spared, and it must be confessed that he did all that lay in his power to render himself detestable to Italians and to weave about his own name a legend of treachery. But the actual truth is very far removed from the legend. Nitti was no traitor; he was a weakling who was the victim even of his nobler qualities.

He came of a poor family in the South, and he hewed for himself, through determination and hard work, first as professor and then as a lawyer, the road to the seat of the mighty. He had no originality, but sponged upon others for ideas. His most notable work, which brought him renown in Italy, was his book on the North and the South, which was after all only a clever summing up of the researches of Giustino Fortunato, the man who first brought up the " question of the South " in Italy. Here *he* showed, following the reasonings of his friend and patron,

that Southern Italy is naturally a poor country>and that her distressful condition is due to her union with the rest of Italy, and the severe regime of politics and taxation to which the North has subjected her. The works which rendered his name world-famous after he had signed, as Prime Minister of Italy, the Treaty of Versailles, were *l'Europa senza pace* (A Peaceless Europe) and *La Tragedia dell'Europa* (The Tragedy of Europe)—nothing more than vain repetitions, skilful paraphrases and amplifications of the books of Keynes.

These books earned him a reputation as a great modern journalist, unbiased, clear and to the point in his quotations of figures and facts, capable of setting forth and solving simply and lucidly the most knotty of problems, a journalist of European culture, and devoid of literary affectations or classical pomposities. Here we see immediately the difference between a man of Nitti's type and the type of journalist common in Italy up until a few years ago, who was a man of letters, a *Uttri* to the marrow of his bones, endowed with eloquence rather than convictions, pursuing phantoms rather than facts.

Nitti's political career was one of plain sailing, unmarked by outstanding events. He came into notice after Caporetto, by successfully establishing Italian credit and raising a loan in Italy, and in this way coming to the country's rescue. He was matter-of-fact by nature, and somewhat of a pessimist. Under the influence of Giustino Fortunato's theories he was convinced that Italy was a poor country, lacking the extensive mining resources and practical education of the other Powers, Anglo-Saxon in particular, whose life and thought he had studied and whose spirit he

strove to adopt. Hence his incurably small confidence, which transfused all his actions, in Italy's possibilities in the future ; hence his modest political programme, apart from high-sounding promises ; hence his warnings, boomed forth as the words of a prophet, of the country's impending ruin if she did not take heed ; hence his almost cynical manner of going to work, rather in the manner of a banker who despises dreams and looks to realities; hence his attitude of fear for Italy at the mercy of her powerful Allies.

Through all this runs a current of good faith and staunchness, but the whole aspect has an overwash of shadow, of something untrue, and this cloud encompasses all the political works of Nitti.

Integrity alone is not enough in a politician; he must also possess the power of leadership, understanding of men, an instinct for political events. Sometimes, even if convinced of the contrary, he must be prepared to adopt a certain attitude, to speak prudent words calculated to placate the general public. Now, and this is a curious fact, when Nitti spoke, particularly when he spoke in private, one distinctly heard him uphold such political dissimulation, but, search his works, and one is amazed at the small use he has been capable of making thereof, and of the number of occasions when he has allowed himself to be carried away by the most ill-placed enthusiasm and sincerity when called upon to pronounce judgment or come to some decision. He appeared to despise mankind for the most part, and yet how many men did he overestimate and hold in awe 1

The amnesty granted to deserters is, perhaps, his chief title to the base infamy attributed to him by patriots. But this measure, which was a necessary

step in preventing a revival of brigandage in Italy, erred only in the form it adopted. A very slight measure, some amendment rather than an Act of Parliament, would have sufficed to remove from the decree in question the hateful tenor of its expression, offensive alike to the families of ex-soldiers and of those who had lost their lives in the war. But, for that matter, Nitti's action has met with approval from many Conservatives, even from Mussolini himself.

Nitti's shortcomings were, in fact, very different from those with which the Fascists reproached him. Had he carried on a financial policy in favour of the capitalists, as he is alleged to have done, a policy whereby he reaped his own reward, as was so often insinuated, erroneously withal, he would in all probability have gained for himself a stronger support from the Press than he had the good fortune to enjoy throughout his ministry.

His attitude to the Fiume affair is understandable if one bears in mind the "fears" in which he lived: fear of the Allies; fear of the army; fear of D'Annunzio himself; fear of the Socialists.

Hardly had Giolitti reappeared upon the political horizon whence his neutrality of 1915 would seem to have banished him for ever, and taken once more into his own hands the reins of government, but one recognized the cynic who breathed no word of cynicism, the governor who despised the men he governed, but who knew how to achieve his ends by proffered honours, menaces and rewards.

Giolitti, too, was a son of the people, born of a Piedmontese family in very modest circumstances; but whereas Nitti had revealed a brilliant mentality as lawyer and writer in the school of journalism and

a professorship, Giolitti mounted slowly through the lowly channels of a solicitor, silently, doggedly, acquiring a profound knowledge of the Italian bureaucratic system, and showing a shrewd dexterity in turning to public account the private ambitions and interests of mankind. He soon gained the upper hand with the bureaucracy and with the army, for he feared not D'Annunzio, and after once having concluded the Rapallo Pact with Yugoslavia, he did not hesitate to use this as an implement against Fiume, being careful not to give the matter more importance than if it had simply been a little affair for the police.

Nitti had fought Fascism without in any way undermining it. Giolitti made the great mistake of trying to use it for his own purposes, and, as often happens in the case of those who try to call up spirits, when he had armed them and given them his support, he found them ranged against him, hostile and strong. Giolitti found in his Parliament a great evil in the law regarding proportionate ballot introduced by Nitti, whereby every party claimed representation in the Government in proportion to its numbers; hence a period of undisciplined and unstable government, dominated by forces outside the bounds of Parliament. His first step was therefore to dissolve Parliament, hoping in an election to be able to build up a Government which would permit him to repeal a law which ran counter to his old experience of the master exercising his patronage; and in order to turn the elections in the right course—that is to say, to destroy the Socialist and Popular parties—he armed the Fascists, believing that after the elections he would be able to absorb and dominate them. A double disillusion 1

The elections did not turn out as Giolitti had planned. Parliament was made up of practically the same forces ; and the Fascists, once armed and under police protection, gained so much ascendancy with the middle classes, with their youth, their courage and their determination, that it dawned upon the heads of Finance, of Agriculture and of Industry that through Fascism alone could they put down Socialism and re-establish order in Italy.

* However, government became ever more difficult as a result of party dissension, and when Giolitti, faithful to his policy of abandoning the Government on every occasion when things threatened to become serious, resigned, a man third-rate in intellect and purpose, the deputy Facta, was the only one to take his place, because none of the parties feared him, and all the leaders believed that they would be able to supplant him whenever the opportunity offered.

In this intellectually and morally impoverished atmosphere the plant of Fascism found the oxygen necessary to its rapid and strong growth. It was the negative activity of a Government rapidly falling to pieces rather than the Fascist principles that drove the people into the arms of the Fascists, on condition that they would rescue them from this nightmare of confusion. Just as, two years ago, these same people had gone the length of desiring a revolution on the lines of Bolshevism, so they now saw in Fascism the inspired messenger of peace, order and security. In the heart of an Italian State capable of abandoning the power to no matter what force that might organize itself for the purpose, be it a party of scavengers, Fascism strove to create a sound State, with recog-

nized hierarchies, a recognized leader, and eventually an armed militia and responsible councils capable of establishing and administering their power with an ordered discipline hitherto unknown in the annals of the State.¹/

THE GROWTH OF FASCISM—The Bolshevik spirit in Italy towards the end of 1919 and in the beginning of 1920 was on the wane, for various reasons, and particularly because of the spread of a new element, which had grown up in the atmosphere of Communist propaganda and of a Russian Utopia. The economic protest of the summer of 1919 against the sudden rise in the cost of living, which the Socialist leaders had feared to turn to account, was in itself a proof of the inability of the Socialists to raise a revolution, and this gave rise to a feeling of disillusion and doubt regarding the revolutionary ideals of the masses. Moreover, when the greater part of the working classes and peasants, who had joined Socialist, industrial and political societies, attracted by visions of a social revolution resulting, as they firmly believed, in the supremacy of their own classes as well as in other unlimited material advantages; when they saw their*revolutionary fire die out in words ; when they learned from the mouths of the first Socialists to return from Russia that the acquisition of power by the proletariat did not ensure that ease and comfort promised by Italian Socialists in their election speeches—then confidence

¹ In this paragraph the author is obviously referring to Bonomi's Ministry, which along with those of Nitti, Giolitti and Facta, paved the way to Fascism. But the author has not mentioned it, probably on account of the insignificance of Bonomi's Ministry.—
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

in a Socialist revolution collapsed, and there took its place a fear that a following of the revolutionary flag—which had already encountered criticism even from such Socialists as F. Turati—would only involve a loss of those advances which they had already made. It was at this point that they began to look elsewhere for a solution.

Added to all this, the industrial and commercial middle classes and the landowners, during the reign of these Bolshevistic tendencies, were only too obviously seized with panic. They saw themselves dethroned. For many years past they had been tyrannized over by the working classes, violated at the hands of the masses, oppressed by the leaders, daily imposed upon by the Socialists, threatened with effacement by a new fiscal system which made outrageous demands upon their resources, subjected to ever-increasing industrial and economic upheavals in times already difficult enough, so that they had come to regard revolution as the only means of escape from a perpetual state of uncertainty—always providing that this revolution should remain theoretical—for they realized the impotency of the Socialist leaders to turn to account such advances as had been made during the summer of 1919 as a sequel to the protest against the high cost of living; these middle classes found their confidence restored in allying themselves with the *Fasci*, who had come to their rescue, not wholly from disinterested motives.

The *Fasci* went to work with a true soldierly and patriotic spirit. They combated Bolshevism and proclaimed the return of order and discipline. They tried to force upon the masses the principle of nationalism : and they showered opprobrium upon a Govern-

ment which had been so lax in dealing with the spirit of revolution. It was proclaimed that all those who, for one reason or another, found themselves under what was called "Red tyranny" might seek lawful defence by grouping themselves for combined action under the new flag.

Thus it came about that in all the big towns where *Fasci di combattimento* had been formed by the ex-service men, the sons of the industrial and commercial classes, young men of the middle classes, students, clerks, professional men, flocked to swell their ranks. In the country districts the *Fasci* enrolled the sons of the landowners, administrators, farmers and farm labourers—that is to say, all those who recognized in Socialism the enemy of their rights and privileges. J

When this vast army had come to swell their ranks, the *Fasci*, whose strength lay in force of numbers, set about organizing and adapting themselves according to individual need and the particular conditions under which they found themselves called upon to function. Another consideration which influenced the varied aspects of the movement was the variety of stand-points, social, political and industrial, which were met with in the various parts of Italy. Even to-day, for example—and this explains the small hold Fascism has gained in the South—one must bear in mind the very special conditions which prevail there; and this does not apply to Fascism alone, but to all previous movements, including Socialism.

As a rule political movements have had their home in the North, where a political education is more widespread, and where the class which most feels the need of and advantages to be gained from organization—that is to say, the industrial workers—is to be

found ; for there the middle classes are better educated, more industrialized and therefore more disciplined, because they have to consider the two sides of the question where the interests of both employer and employee are concerned.

For this reason the Fascism found in Milan tends towards idealism, patriotism and equilibrium. Having sought out the working classes, organized them into groups according to whether they were Socialist or Syndicalist, they endeavour to communicate with them in the only language with which they are familiar. Moreover, the programme of the *Fasci di combattimento*, drawn up by the constituent Assembly of the 23rd March 1919, is of a distinctly revolutionary nature, outlining reforms as clearly syndicalist as the creation of industrially representative parliaments, the eight-hour day, even going the length of workers' unions, and the handing over of the factories to the workers. The attitude of Mussolini and of the *Fasci* in connection with a revolutionary rising in Dalmino in the province of Bergamo, near Milan, was very characteristic of the trend of opinion.

A dispute took place between the employers and employees of an important engineering works; and the workers, in May 1919, went out on strike. But before throwing down their tools, they shut themselves up in the factory and installed themselves there to sleep and feed, hoisting the tricolour flag. In a word, they took possession of it, refusing to come out before a satisfactory agreement had been arrived at.

This was the first occupation which had been known to take place in Italy, and the *Popolo d'Italia* encouraged and upheld the step in view of the fact that they had hoisted the tricolour rather than the red flag.

Mussolini betook himself to Dalmino, approving and supporting the move of the workers.¹

AGRICULTURAL DISPUTE IN BOLOGNA-It was not, however, in the purely industrial centres alone that Fascism found the surest impulse to its ultimate development and its surest foundation.

Amongst the industrial classes, although doubt and discontent had already begun to spread regarding the Socialist leaders, an anti-Socialist movement such as Fascism could not hope to make its way without encountering grave obstacles in its path, for the masses after all had been ruled and educated through thirty years of Socialism, and besides, there was as yet no alteration in the economic system calculated to make them forget the advantages assured them by the Socialists.

It was in one particular centre, the agricultural centre, and even there in a very reactionary sense, that Fascism secured its victory. From that point it sent out feelers, and eventually secured a complete victory which included the agricultural districts of the Po valley, and, greatest conquest of all, those of Bologna, Ferrara and Polesina.

It may be said that there, more than elsewhere, the action of the Socialists justified the reaction to Fascism; that there, more than elsewhere, the exasperated middle classes were prepared to take any steps to regain their rights which* the masses had so foolishly and so outrageously abused. It was in those regions especially that Fascism seemed to promise the solution of the greatest evils,

¹G. B. Piozzi, *The First Occupation of Factories by the Workers in Italy during the Disturbances in Dalminog Bergamo, 1921.*

so that it assumed a particularly impressive social and economic aspect.

In order fully to appreciate the character of the political movements and disturbances in the lower valley of the Po, one must bear in mind the exact geographical position of this country. One may fairly say that there cannot be found elsewhere in Europe an agricultural region where land-Socialism is so prominent a factor. It is a well-known fact that workers on the land, as a whole, seldom lend themselves to political demonstrations of a Socialistic nature, but that the economic nature of his work on the land, the age-old tradition which binds the peasant to the fields he tends, and the conditions unlike those of any other class under which he works have made him a Conservative, a traditionalist, bound by his customs and prejudices, hard to break to Socialist and Syndicalist ideas. */

But the agricultural district of the lower valley of the Po has arrived at its present state of agitation as a result of a long and bitter industrial revolution. The soil of these regions was not originally productive; it was rather a sterile land consisting of stagnant waters and desolate plains where a deadly malaria raged. However, through a long process of fertilization extending over several centuries and not yet ended, and thanks to the work of man, aided in recent years by the most up-to-date mechanical and industrial processes, they have come to be amongst the most productive in Italy, and amongst the best tended in all Europe. Every inch of land had to be won from a hostile Nature, by means of canals, irrigation, the building of roads and bridges, and great labour to render the soil fertile. Desolate marshes gave place

to rich pasture-lands and rice-fields; then followed the sowing of corn and planting of trees, while houses went up to house the labourers, and stables for the cattle they brought with them. Finally, great industries were founded, chief amongst which were the hemp and sugar-beet industries, which gave returns of the most encouraging nature and hastened development by the erection of factories to compete with the sugar, cheese and textile industries.

The labour demanded for this immense work of cultivation could not be met by an agricultural population in a continual state of fluctuation, as in the case of other regions. It was supplied from the surplus proletariat of neighbouring districts, attracted by an exceptional offer of work in the transformation of vast tracts of unproductive lands into fertile fields. All aspects of the industrial and proletarian masses in the domain of agriculture were represented here, including not only the peasants traditionally attached to the land, but a whole population of men who had arrived on the spot for the sole purpose of working this land.

The economic conditions which ruled the work of these men were the same as ruled industry, and had little in common with those which governed agriculture. Alongside the peasant—in the accepted sense of the word—there was the hired man, or *bracciante*, who lived, for the most part, not on the products of the lands he tilled so much as on the weekly salary he drew from an horary which was the same for all, for they worked in gangs as in a factory. Thus the peasant's work lost its patriarchal character when it became a matter of being bound to the land of which he was no longer the master. It took on instead the

character of a job of work to be relegated to specific hours, with the only difference that it was carried out in the open air instead of indoors, as is the case with mechanical enterprise.

The conditions of these people were industrial also in the matter of the vicissitudes they suffered in the demand for labour, just as in industries, and quite apart from the annual fluctuations generally reckoned upon in the economic phases of agriculture. It followed therefore that these workers, subject to vicissitudes which did not come within the terms of their contracts, which had all the features of a contract in a manufacturing industry, were compelled to organize themselves in the same way as ordinary workers, for the protection and safeguarding of their own interests ; and as the dispensation of labour was concentrated in the hands of a small number of capitalists, as a result of property having changed hands so that by a smaller division of ownership expenses might be reduced, the workers' associations grouped themselves together under a kind of union, which roughly corresponds with the trade union system. There was a capital trust and a workers' trust. The unions were purely economic and had no preconceived political views.

The demand for this trade union for the workers had also another cause. The fact that labour was available in excess of demand was not caused so much by over-population as by the heavy fluctuations in the demand. To cope with the alternate abundance and scarcity of work, and to furnish a safety-valve in the labour market where the demand might be excessive to-day and insufficient to-morrow, a solution might **have** been sought in emigration, but this measure

was prohibited by Socialist propaganda; hence the necessity for a registration office for the purpose of taking a census of labour and distributing it in the various districts where there was a demand, and of establishing a method by which each man in his turn might be given an opportunity of earning.

As was to be expected, most of the hired men, finding themselves in a position to monopolize labour, set to work to exploit this scheme by not only seeking but forcing employment. Having once obviated the danger of competition, having made it compulsory for all new-comers to join the union, the union demanded from the capitalists the fixing of a minimum wage, but not a fixed wage, thus the tendency was always towards an increase ; at the same time, the union aimed at bettering the conditions of labour by a reduction of working hours.

The logical reaction against this economic pressure was very naturally a tendency on the part of capital to reduce as far as possible the employment of labour, substituting machinery and other modern labour-saving devices for cultivation. And while the cultivation of the land continued to improve, and it was found that the increased output recompensed the higher cost of production, unemployment spread amongst the workers.

It was at this point that a hitherto purely economic matter imperceptibly took on a political aspect, for the unemployment, the discontent of the masses, **and** the bar to emigration gave rise to social disorders which the Government could not ignore. So the Government, in order to stifle these agitations, began to grant subsidies for public works, purely as a measure of employing **labour**, and regardless of **whether there**

was any demand for these works. There arose from this action a practice, very soon to be exploited by representatives of this district and others, to seek State subsidies for public works in cases where it served their own or the ends of the workers' unions. And here it must be added that the demands for State grants for public works—canals, roads, etc., in fact, works touching the improvement of the soil—were actuated by the great capitalist landowners, who in this way became the beneficiaries of the State grants, so that here, as in other branches of production upon a large scale, capital and labour found themselves in agreement in the matter of appealing for State aid in the accomplishment of personal interests.

The objects of the Socialist leaders of the workers' union, which was gradually becoming enriched and supported by minor organizations (co-operative production, consumption and land management, housing, workers' councils), were simple and straightforward: they aimed at the absolute control of labour by the unions, including its regulation and distribution. To this end it was essential that they should exercise an iron discipline, disclaiming compromise as much in the matter of the work as of the workers.

The varying psychology of the population, their sudden and swift evolution, demanded that this discipline imposed by the unions should be of an almost feudal, even mediaeval character, and it expressed itself under the form of a very harsh boycott. In those little villages in a country where political enthusiasm is easily roused, the boycott assumed the proportions of cruel tyranny to a primitive people. The working man who did not bend to the will of the Socialist leaders and join a local league could not live, not only

as a citizen but even as a human being. He was immediately cut off and abandoned by both friends and relations, who feared a like isolation if they upheld him. He was insulted, hissed, mocked, threatened and scorned when he put in an appearance. And besides the torment of this moral isolation, all manner of other obstacles and difficulties were put in the way of the satisfaction of his simplest daily needs, for shopkeepers were forbidden by the league to supply him with bread, meat, wine or other food. They even went so far as to deny milk to sick children, or burial to the dead, if they were connected with the family of the boycotted man, who was, in fact, treated worse than a leper, worse than one stricken with the plague. He could only appeal to his conscience, which had nothing with which to reproach him but with refusing to submit to tiresome interference in the simplest and most fundamental rights of civilized existence to which he was entitled: the authorities, the police and magistrates, who could easily have proved him in the right, were powerless against the moral and material expulsion the unfortunate man had brought upon himself. He had no choice but to submit, to give way before his opponents, confess his guilt and enter the league.

So it was in the agricultural districts, that the Socialist spirit grew, that the power and discipline of the workers' unions continued to be the ruling force, that the union, master of all labour, arbitrary tyrannizer over league members and the entire economic system of the district, was allowed to persist. The Socialist leaders adopted that attitude and assumed the powers of dictators—but poor dictators, even though they managed to bring to their feet

simple citizens, capitalists, the working classes, even the authorities—little dictators who lacked neither the stupid pretensions which only rendered them ridiculous, not the tragic element of a power based upon continual uncertainty and doubt, defiance and hatred, and which spurred them on their erratic course which hovered between unwarranted high-handedness and the most pacific concessions.

But at last the accumulated forces of hate, vengeance, suffering and humiliation broke loose. They plotted together and combined, and then they acted. All the* outraged interests, both moral and material, which had fermented for so long beneath the surface, were doomed to burst forth in a reaction whose violence was measured by the long period of its compression. It burst forth and found in the Fascist movement a channel, a guide and a flag.

THE PALAZZO D'ACCURSIO MASSACRE — As has already been observed, at the time of the political elections of the 16th November 1919, the activities of the *Fasci di combattimento* were feeble and their effect negligible. The *Fasci* in fact confined themselves to a testimony of their good faith, and a promise of action within the terms of the programme drawn up at the cotjncil of the 23rd March 1919. On the whole, the elections ran a smooth course; there was only one fatality in all Italy. The Fascists attributed this order to the fact that the Socialist domination was so strong that it did not permit of any action whatsoever from the other parties. This fact supports the theory that Fascism was then only in its infancy as an active body.

The elections of **1919** gave an unexpected success to

the revolutionary parties, who gained 156 out of the 535 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

The first symptom of the grave menace which the Socialists saw in this victory occurred at the opening of the session on the 1st December 1919. The 156 revolutionary deputies were to appear wearing a red button-hole. At the very moment when the King entered the Camera to make the royal speech, they left the building in silence.

From that date, throughout the kingdom, revolutionary activities continued to increase.

Upon Giolitti's advent to power, following Nitti on the 16th June 1920, there was a notable decrease in these activities, due in part to the fact that Giolitti dealt with a firmer hand than had Nitti with the leaders of the Socialist organizations, whose activities were henceforth deprived of any State aid whatsoever.

But for all that, up until the month of September 1920 Italy certainly gave the impression of being the prey of the acutest disorganization and the most outrageous revolutionary follies, especially in the matter of propaganda speeches. The mania for strikes in every branch of industry, not excepting the public services, reached the limit of its tragi-comedy. The slightest excuse served as a pretext for the holding up of production in the most essential as well as in the luxury industries. The offending of a single workman's susceptibilities was sufficient excuse for paralysing the life of whole cities; and since public authority, owing to disorganization in those branches which were most vital to the life of the public, no longer possessed their old powers, the railwaymen refused to convey the police to the scene of the

disorder—all this occurred without the sanction of the employers.

Individuals still continued to live in dread of violence. Anything which savoured of the middle classes was still an object of aggression. Motor-cars could not travel about the country or pass through the outskirts, of certain towns without running the risk of being made the target of stones thrown by peasants and workmen. Everything which savoured of authorized administration, patriotism or nationalism was held up to ridicule and abuse, and individuals were likewise liable, so that the celebrations for the first anniversary of the victory had perforce to be suspended. Officers here and there, wearing medals, incurred abuse; and the very name of ex-service man—or, even worse, volunteer—laid a man open to scorn and humiliation. On the other hand, in the country a political movement was on foot for the rehabilitation of deserters from the war, a movement which resulted in the famous amnesty granted by Nitti's Government.

The economic disorders did not, however, eclipse the progressive activities of the Socialists. The ease with which the political leaders obtained the moral support and favour of the authorities reached a point when the Government granted them all the concessions of an economic nature to which they laid claim, and these concessions, added to the victory won from capitalism in the question of salaries and working hours, drove the workers to the ranks of the Socialists. The Labour Confederation reached its height in the first half of 1920, with 1,200,000 adherents, when it placed itself at the service of the Socialist party.

In the country the outrages became ever more numerous. There was a series of strikes resembling the industrial strikes, which involved the burning down of houses, the killing of cattle, and the abandoning of harvests and beasts alike to their fate. New contracts comprising ridiculous demands were drawn up and imposed upon employers. Besides an absurd new system regarding the division of profits, whereby, in metayers' contracts, the labourer drew a share substantially larger than that of the proprietor, it is enough to recall the eight-hour day which was made applicable to the land worker, and which was a feature of the wholesale transposal of the industrial system to agriculture regardless of the vast differences in the two modes of production.

In these days the spread of the Russian myth reached the fullest extent of its diffusion. Communist Russia became the ideal of the majority of the working population. The outward signs of this myth appealed to their sentiment. Beside the red flag, symbol of the revolutionary creed, they placed portraits of Lenin and the emblem of the Soviet Government. These outward signs were so broadcast over the country that one would have thought that Italy already lived in an atmosphere of revolution à la Russia and that it was now only a matter of hours before she should pass from the old to the new regime.

This revolutionary movement reached its zenith in the months of August and September 1920, with the occupation of the factories by the workers, and it maintained its reign until the Socialists seized a considerable number of municipal and provincial offices at the end of the year.

It may be said to have commenced its decline with

the incidents connected with the Palazzo d'Accursio, just as a fever declines after the crisis. On the 21st December 1920, at Bologna, while the new Socialist municipal Council was in session, a demonstration took place in the square ; bombs, prepared for the purpose in the business houses of the town, were hurled from the windows of the town hall, while, in the council chamber, members of the Socialist majority and others who had made their way in amongst them, fired revolver shots across the benches against the minority. The lawyer, Giordani, who had been wounded in the war and who represented the ex-service men, was killed.

The crime aroused very strong feeling throughout Italy and was the cause of many citizens joining the ranks of the Fascists, to whom they looked to save the nation and re-establish order in view of the paralysis which seemed to have seized the Government. The Palazzo d'Accursio murder seemed to have excited that sentimental spirit calculated to consolidate the Fascist movement. In the following year, in November 1921, the *Fascist movement* had become the *Fascist party*. That year of 1921 had been spent in enlarging, shaping, selecting and conquering public opinion. In the election of the 15th May 1921 it worked officially through the ranks of Giolitti's party, obtaining only thirty-four seats—of which only one was gained on exclusively Fascist votes—but the " preferential " votes showed that the sympathies of the middle classes were on the side of the Fascist element—young, enthusiastic, ready to fight and already fighting in the streets, in the Press, in Parliament; the only party to guarantee and to safeguard order.

Contemporarily the Socialist party was falling to pieces ; at Livorno, in January 1921, the Communists broke away, and between the right and left wings of those who remained, controversy became more heated and more personal. When the groups of the proletariat broke up, the middle classes ranged themselves behind the Fascists, and from that point the issue was no longer in doubt.

WHAT IS FASCISM ?—Fascism, then, would seem to be the *revolt of the middle classes*, inspired by Nationalist and Conservative ideals, to range themselves against the pretensions of the proletarian classes and the ill-distributed fortunes of the capitalists; the revolt of a class disillusioned by a peace which had failed to realize in internal politics those rewards in which they had been led to put their trust, and which in foreign politics had failed to obtain for them what they considered their rights and dues.

If we read the speeches made by the deputies appointed from the Fascist ranks in 1924 or those made by the Fascist majority in the municipal councils, it will be seen that the Fascist Zerboglio and the Socialist Zibordi had arrived at a very clear view of how things stood. Zerboglio says:

"I have noticed for myself among the Fascists a majority of students from the universities and from the central schools, ex-officers and junior officers, also old soldiers, professional men, small business men and shopkeepers, farmers and some labourers; many idealists and young hot-heads inspired by burning patriotism; some out purely for excitement, and for these Fascism is a sport; some ne'er-do-wells; some men of the middle classes out to defend their personal

interests, not at the expense of the general public but in their service, so *tax* as their personal danger may be judged to constitute more or less directly that of the general public."

Zibordi says: "To Fascism belong the bellicose professions, for the most part soldiers or ex-soldiers, ruffians enrolled without distinction from the slum areas; but there is also a strong force of young men inspired by fanaticism, ideals, romanticism and a love of sport. Connected with Fascism there are also groups of citizens, struggling intellectuals and well-to-do intellectuals, the former urged by economic instinct and various other sentiments, the latter by a hatred of society and an aesthetic disdain of the extremist and tyrannizing proletariat."¹

THE RELIGION OF THE COUNTRY—In Fascism, the religion of the country—which, as Pareto puts it, is the true religion of to-day—found its strongest stimulus to expression. Such a popular movement, with such impressive ceremonial, can only be traced to a form of religious expression. The strictest rites were observed round the tombs of Fascists who had met their end; and the trees which were planted to their memory were held in almost pagan awe. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier was an object of never-ending pilgrimages; and there was a distinctly religious savour about the

* On the formation of the Fascist groups and their psychology, see A. Zerboglio and D. Grandi, *Fascismo*, Bologna, 1922; M. Missiroli, *Il fascismo e la crisi italiana*, Bologna, 1921; A. Cappa, *Due rivoluzioni mancate*, Foligno, 1923; L. Salvatorelli, *National-fascismo*, Turin, 1923; M. Vinciguerra, *Il fascismo visto da un solitario*, Turin, 1923; Un Deputato al Parlamento, *Il fascismo*, Milan, 1922*

references to the dead which were a feature of Fascist ceremonies.

Fascism embodies the most exalted conception of the patriotic spirit, and that explains the presence in the Fascist ranks, as in the followers of any creed, of hypocrites and exploiters, whose presence, as all know who have made a study of social movements, is in itself a proof of the authenticity and sincerity of the religious impulse behind it. The very same thing applies amongst the bands of wounded and decorated soldiers, where there are frauds who have decked themselves out in false medals so as to attract public sympathy and esteem.

NO DEMOCRACY IN ITALY¹ - with the " March on Rome " Fascism conquered a democracy which hitherto had no true existence in Italy. Italy never had what constitutes the essence and glory of the Anglo-Saxon democracies. The primary schools were in many districts some old pit or quarry, and higher education was only open to those of ample means. There was no open competition for men of talent, except in theory, for influence and favouritism had superseded the usual system of competition in examinations. Freedom from taxation, a tradition dating back to Cavour, had been abandoned in 1880; and the uneducated masses had never had any word in the conduct of the country before a reform of 1913 introduced universal suffrage. And after the war they could not be expected to put this new implement to very good use. The acquisition of the Constitutional Statute in 1847 had not earned wide popularity, for Italians traditionally owed little to parliamentary

¹ E. Rignano, *Democrazia e fascismo*, Milan (Alpes), 1924.

regime, their political organ having been the Communes, which took the place of party or class government, and feudal over-lordship, which kept the power in the hands of certain powerful families. The formation of the Kingdom of Italy and the acquisition of freedom—in the Press, in religion, and in the holding of meetings—had not cost them very dearly; rather had they been won for them by the foreigner, or by the reflection of similar movements in France, than by their own efforts. And as for the movement for the unification of Italy, the agricultural classes had had no hand therein, or if they had, their part had been indifferent or sometimes even hostile.

Recent generations had, moreover, extinguished the feeble flame of democracy which did exist in rude form in Italy. The criticism which was brought to bear upon this supposed democracy which yet had created no schools, produced no great book, nor any man worthy of his times, very soon stripped it of all it had been supposed to stand for. And the amazing critical and philosophical renaissance which started with Benedetto Croce in the year 1900 soon brought down the last fence and imbued the age with an anti-democratic spirit.¹ The most interesting political developments in recent times had been nationalism on the one hand and syndicalism on the other, both anti-democratic. Italians began to believe in individuals, and ceased to regard minorities as a negligible body; they began to look ahead, rather in the spirit of Machiavelli, seeing in a nation actual possibilities to which Italy, far from renouncing, should attain. The war, whose realism, followed by a wretched **Peace**, had cast all these illusions to the ground, had **fallen**

¹ G. Prezsolini, *La culture italienne*, Paris (Alcan), 1925.

crushingly upon those who once cherished hopes of a future international and democratic Italy: and the defection of Wilson, once acclaimed as a great prophet only to be considered shortly afterwards as the enemy and betrayer of Italy, had struck the death-blow to democratic ideals..

Very few men retained hopes of a democracy, therefore, in the months when Fascism was gathering in its members and getting under way.

When the Fascists presented themselves before the democratic scaffold of the Italian State, they found there neither sentinel nor watchman.

CHAPTER II

MUSSOLINI

Mussolini—His Father—His Native Romagna—First Years—Mussolini the Socialist—Italy's Entry into the World War—After the War—The Fascist Movement—Fascism a Political Novelty—Mussolini after the "March on Rome"—Too Many Upstarts—Mussolini as a Will, not as an Intellect—Mussolini as a Force.

MUSSOLINI—A movement like Fascism, made up of many opposing forces, and as poor in clear ideas as it is rich in enthusiasm, very naturally throws itself open to the very worst social elements, hoisting the flag of hope to unfulfilled desires with its romantic demonstrations and strong actions; load such a movement could never have steered its course safely through to its goal in a country undisciplined and war-ravaged without some powerful, energetic and skilful leader to direct it in the right channels.) The first steps of Fascism were like those of some colossal machine set in motion before it is complete, so that it lurches along in imminent danger of toppling over; but which has on board an exceptionally clever engineer who can choose the right moment to swerve in such a manner as to leave both his mechanics and passengers mystified to know what he is about, but which will save the situation After all. Such an engineer Fascism had on board in the person of Mussolini.

His FATHER—Benito Mussolini was born on the 29th July 1883, at Varano dei Casolari, a ramshackle place which stands on a little hill in the village of Dovia, which forms part of the Commune of Ptedappio. He was born " on a Sunday at two o'clock in the afternoon, on the day of the patron saint of Camminate, a place which, from its position between the lower slopes of the Apennines and the Ravaldino hills, dominates with grave solemnity the whole of the plain of Forli."

His father, Alessandro Mussolini, had never been to school. He had been apprenticed to the blacksmith's trade at Dovaldola, and from there he went on to Meldola, where, between 1875 and 1880, he had fallen in with men of Internationalist politics. After that he opened a shop at Dovia. This hamlet was called in those days Piscaza, and did not enjoy a very savoury reputation, having a contentious population. Alessandro set to work there to spread Internationalist propaganda, and even succeeded in establishing an Internationalist group, which was later dispersed by the police.

His NATIVE ROMAGNA—The social status in which a man is born does not make him what he is, but it does constitute the conditions amongst which he grows up, and which must therefore have their influence upon him. Romagna, where Mussolini was born and spent his early years, is a political country—in fact, everything there is ruled by politics; and Mussolini's father, blacksmith and tool-forger, and eventually the centre of a group of Internationalists, was no exception to the rule. Every Romagnol belongs to one or another of the various parties, and the majority in those days belonged to the parties in power—

that is to say, Republicans, Socialists, Anarchists—in fact, every shade of red. Politics, as has already been said, ruled everything—friendship, relationship, marriage and crafts.

So we find a kind of legendary Romagna, where the ruling force is passion, where the most important attributes for a man to possess were character, pride, a strong personality, a generous nature, not righteous, but disdaining all things but power. In one of his earliest works, one of his less well-known works, which, however, was not without some talent, Giuglielmo Ferrero shows us Romagna as the type of primitive society dominated by imperious, half-civilized leaders, admiring of brute-force, using the knife or the revolver without pity or restraint, lacking absolutely the hypocrisy of our times, full of effervescing energies, giving proof of their vitality in thunderous bursts of laughter, vast appetites and pleasant or sometimes cruel jesting.

If we turn to Antonio Beltramelii, to pass from a social to a romantic writer, we find a similar Romagna, a sort of pagan country situated between the Apennines and the sea, where certain types, ranging from Homeric rhapsody to the shepherds of romance, with a gun slung over their shoulder, live on passionate amours in the midst of turbulent strife, gorging themselves on fabulous banquets washed down by formidable-looking bumpers of *albana* and *sangiovese*.

A like impression is given in a classical work by De Amicis, in which we find a typical picture of a young Romagnol, who for his sins is generously prepared to die so as to save the life of his grandmother.

And again, Pascoli, in painting for us a picture of Romagna, resorts, in his rightly famous lines, to the

sun and to the fascinating Passatore, the brigand who, arriving with his men one night in 1851 in Forlì, surrounded the* theatre, and himself appeared upon the stage, hat in one hand and gun in the other, most graciously demanding their purses and their jewels from the audience, or depriving poor girls of their dowry and robbing feudal lords who oppressed the peasants of their cattle.

And finally, Romagna is the country of Don Giovanni Verita, the priest who was instrumental in getting Garibaldi into Tuscany when he delivered himself into the priest's hands during his flight in 1849 in spite of a network of intrigue for his capture laid by the police, the military and the customs.

It was into this moral and political atmosphere that Mussolini was born and spent his early years, learning life's first lessons and gaining that experience which is the most important of all. He will never be able to forget it, for he bears its undeniable imprint. Even to-day we hear some faint echo of those yeŕs in some phrase, some intonation, some gesture of the head of the party and of the Ministry.

FIRST YEARS — Throughout Romagna, Mussolini has left numerous traces of his rebellious spirit, but none at all of infamy. On leaving his primary school, upon the advice of his mother, who was a school teacher, he went on to the normal school, whence he was all but expelled for having pronounced a defence of regicide. Having secured a diploma, he left to become a teacher. In his journal he describes his arrival at Gualtieri and his decision to set out for Switzerland in the following words :

" Gualtieri in Emilia is situated on the river Po,

between Guastalla—a town of some importance—and Boretto. It lies about one kilometre from the banks of the Po, and is protected from this river by a strong embankment along which rims the road. I arrived there on a dismal afternoon in the snow. I was met by somebody at the station, and on that same day I became acquainted with the leading men of the place, Socialists and Government officials, and found lodgings where I could live for 40 lire a month. My schoolmaster's salary amounted to 56 lire, so I could not afford to be proud. The next morning I presented myself at the school, which was distant two kilometres from the village on the way to Pieve Saliceti. I was put in charge of about forty meek-looking little boys, and I took to them immediately. My class continued without interruption during the whole morning, but when the school closed its doors I had the whole of the afternoon and the evening at my disposal. The first few days were monotonous, but after that my circle of acquaintances grew and I began to make some real friends. On Sundays everybody danced, and I danced too. But already the months were flying past and the holidays approaching. It was then that I had the notion of emigrating to Switzerland and trying my fortune there. I telegraphed to my father to send me the money for the journey, and my mother telegraphed me 45 lire. On the evening of 9th July I arrived at Chiasso. While I was waiting for the train which was to convey me into the very heart of Switzerland, I bought the *Secolo*, and experienced no slight measure of astonishment and dismay on reading the news of my father's arrest. At Predappio and Orta, the voters on the side of the Socialist party and the Popular party had broken

open the ballot-boxes so that the Clerical party might not get in. The authorities had issued several warrants for arrest, and one of these had fallen to the lot of my father. This news cast me into doubt whether to continue my journey or to return home, but I decided in favour of continuing, and in the afternoon of 10th July I alighted at Yverdon Station with 2 lire 10 centimes in my pocket."

So Mussolini experienced some of the trials and difficulties which beset those who seek their fortune outside the bounds of their own country. He became a labourer, changing his trade sometimes because his pride would not allow him to go on, sometimes in despair. He wore out the soles of his feet in the service of hard masters who disliked him because they detected in him a different class of man. One day when he was roaming about the streets of the inhospitable city, suffering the pangs of hunger, for he had not eaten, he stopped at the entrance to a courtyard where he saw a group of women, children and men, and demanded roughly, "Have you any bread?" There was no reply. "Give me some!" The same silence met him. Then a hand produced from beneath a filthy cloth a crust of bread and cautiously offered it to the beggar. He took it, murmuring, "Thank you! Good-night!"

So time went on, with Mussolini sleeping under bridges or on the river bank, until at last he obtained work on a Socialist newspaper. It never occurred to him to open an eating-house, take to teaching as other exiles did. But he was regarded with scant sympathy by the Swiss Government, and in 1908 he was forbidden the country, and returned temporarily to Dovia, where he lived in seclusion.

He only went out at night and studied music, and being a passably good violist he passed hour after hour in this manner. Then he tried his hand at journalism, making up news items and writing verses à la Carducci. This literary experience stood him in good stead when, in 1909, he went into the Trentino, where he became secretary to the Chamber of Commerce, then editor of the *Avvenire*, and finally editor of *il Popolo* and of an illustrated literary supplement. When on this work he met Cesare Battisti—a curious meeting of these two men, in Austria, who in 1919 were to force Italy into a war with Austria in which she conquered her. To-day, Battisti is a saint, Mussolini a Prime Minister, the Austro-Hungarian empire a chapter in history 1

At this time Mussolini was in league with the *Voce* and the Florentine movement. One of the results of his sojourn in Trente was a small volume entitled *Il Trentino veduto da un socialista* (The Trentino seen through the Eyes of a Socialist), published in the *Quaderni della Voce*. It reveals a Socialist who is not a Socialist to the point of loving the Germans, for his character will not allow him to be reconciled to them; a Socialist who has conceived more Italian methods of dealing with the political unrest of his country, who estimates the importance of national defence, and reproaches the Italian middle classes in the Trentino with regarding the Irredentist question too lightly.

MUSSOLINI THE SOCIALIST—In 1910 Mussolini returned to Forlì, where he spent his time in reading, discussion and political wrangling, while being kept under suspicion as a dangerous revolutionary. He was sent to prison for a year for rousing the populace

to oppose the departure of the troops to Libya, and upon his release he came out more revolutionary than ever. He was already beginning to become known, for the province of Forli had become a hotbed of revolutionary Socialists, and every eye in Italy was turned towards it.

In 1912 Mussolini plunged into the arena of the Socialist Congress at Bologna like an enraged bull. It was a most unexpected debut, for nine-tenths of the Socialists had as yet never heard of him. His speech on the reports of the Parliamentary Group remains famous to this day. The type of Socialism which aimed at going to Court, which intrigued for places in the Ministry, tried to establish a co-operative bureaucracy, and blunted its revolutionary claws on parliamentary business, infuriated him. This occasion was the first revelation of his demagogic eloquence, made up of cool, concise sentences delivered in dry or menacing tones, with eyes flashing dangerously. He dismissed the report in a single sentence, and obtained the restriction of the autonomy exercised by the Parliamentary Group.

His ideal was military discipline. From that time began his preparation for a dictatorship; and from that time he evinced his hostility to Parliament. "Italy," he said, "is most assuredly the nation where parliamentary decadence has reached its gravest limits. It is for that reason that I have come to have no opinion of the system of universal suffrage."

Mussolini's Socialist principles were never of a reformist or syndicalist nature. He never believed in conquest through election majorities or trade unions but rather in armed revolt, and strong action directed against minorities in a word "direct action." His

watchword in the party was "no compromise," and this brought about the expulsion from the party of Cabrini, Bonomi, Podrecca and Bissolati.

He had control of *l'Avanti* and of the party, and into each he breathed new spirit. The Deputies as yet grudged him recognition, so he turned upon them through the medium of his paper, attacking them openly; in his paper also he gave his support to all Revolutionary propaganda or revolt. In 1914, at the Congress at Ancona, he had another triumph, after the series of strikes and general disturbances which had excited the masses to open revolt against the State. Hardly had he mounted the platform and begun to speak than he was greeted with roars of applause and cries of, "You have saved the honour of the party I " To the votes obtained in 1912 he now added those of the masons for having officially recognized the incompatibility of the Freemasons and the Socialists. And finally, as one of his old adherents puts it, "he drove out the party " at the outbreak of war.

ITALY'S ENTRY INTO THE WORLD WAR—In July 1914 the World War broke out. Mussolini was for neutrality, though not for total neutrality. TStrt he did most strongly urge that Italy was not wholly bound by the Triple Alliance to participate. "If you make war on France, you will have barricades in Italy," were his words. His neutrality consisted in not marching with the forces of Germany and Austria. From his writings at that time one gathered that there hung in the balance in Europe something which might involve the interests of the Italian proletariat. Mussolini was not an indifferent neutral, but a sympathetic neutral whose sympathies lay with the

countries which stood for liberty—that is to say, France and England.

Then gradually there was a rumour spread abroad that he had changed, that he was in favour of intervention ; before long a letter from Lombardo-Radice forced him to declare himself. Yes; he was in favour of intervention.

After his declaration Mussolini threw up everything in his usual decisive manner and took the perilous leap. He gave up his post of director and editor of his paper.

The *Popolo d'Italia* had also been his creation. It was read only in its capacity as his instrument. It was one of the few papers which was not run on the lines of the *Corriere della Sera*, for it was a one-man paper, read for that one man's ideas, his attitude and his commentaries; not as a news organ run on the lines of a factory, where each man is expected to adhere to the same policy. Mussolini's personal note was simply the outcome of his power and superiority.

After this step Mussolini, who had never been taken as a volunteer, was recruited. He went through the war as a corporal in the bersaglieri, being sent first to the Rombon and later to the Carso. His war experiences were told in his *Diario di Guerra*, whose present edition differs only very slightly from the original which appeared at the time with certain blanks, due to the censor, in the *Popolo d'Italia*. It is one of the best of the war journals. It contains shrewd observations—especially from a psychological point of view of the Italian people—clear views and a very acute feeling about war. Mussolini appears here as a writer of bald, precise sentences.

However, he was regarded with mistrust by the military authorities—treated " very democratically/*

as he chose to put it in a letter to a friend. He was ruled out *from* following an officers' training course by his revolutionary tendencies, which were regarded as a danger, a fate which many of those who had been for intervention suffered in the war months before Caporetto. The explosion of a trench-mortar in Company 144, on the 23rd February 1917, wounded him in more than fifty places on his body, so that, after two months in hospital and several more spent in convalescence, he returned to his paper to inspire it with the strength and spirit which were needed, in those days after Caporetto, to carry on the campaign.

AFTER THE WAR—His paper changed its character in this period. It was no longer the daily organ of the Socialists, but the paper of "the workers and producers." Mussolini supported the war to its close, upholding the defensive and fidelity to the Allies at all costs, maintaining a strong opposition to Socialists, dalliers and shirkers, as well as to neutrals. The bitterest campaigns against those who questioned ultimate victory or would advocate an empty peace came from his pen.

But for all that, he was becoming every day more Nationalist, although he kept outside the narrow bounds of the Nationalist party as such. He included in his attack with the Nationalists what were called the "*renunciations*," but after Caporetto he began to support Nationalist policy, and even sanctioned the Nationality Congress which was held in Rome with the object of exciting a movement for internal disruption ~~in Austria.~~

His confident and determined course did not cease with the victory. His political sympathies went*

right over to those who were returning from the war, and his chief preoccupation became the question of whether they would join the ranks of the Socialists or the Nationalists, and if the revolutionary movement would assume the national flag or the hammer and scythe of the Russian revolution as its symbol. Mussolini's political sympathies show that for the moment he was in doubt upon this score. There was a strong force abroad of which he must make himself master if he was to lead it in the right channels ; for just as he had felt the impossibility of a Socialist victory in 1914, so now, in 1919 and 1920, he felt the impossibility of revolution in Italy under the red flag of Bolshevism attaining what the Socialists had failed to attain under what might be termed the National flag.

Moreover, with D'Annunzio and the other generals at its head the National movement would have assumed a purely reactionary aspect. Mussolini's political genius appeared in its full grandeur at this period when he was working against the menace of seeing the movement he was following with so much interest absorbed by the leaders of industry and agriculture, who sought therein only the way to the ruin of the proletariat.¹

THE FASCIST MOVEMENT—The Fascist movement in

¹ There are many biographies of Mussolini, but almost all are apologetic for his actions and of small value, having been written after his triumph. For comparison, therefore, see T. Nanni, *Benito Mussolini*, Florence ; *La Voce*, 1914, reproduced in his *Boiscevismo * fascism*, 1923. Margherita Sarfatti, Mussolini's friend and confidante, published in England a biography full of anecdotes. A Rossato also published an outline of his life which is of some importance (Milan, 1920).

Italy has had a success that few even of its leaders—I say nothing of its opponents—could have expected or foreseen. But it could never have arrived at that success but for the devotion, energy, organizing faculties and political intuition of Mussolini, Fascism, like Bolshevism, is a post-war product; like Bolshevism, it is the outcome of war in a poor and over-populated country whose political life teems with vast masses of men lacking both organization and political education. These masses swarmed to Fascism, and by its grace accomplished the revolution which Bolshevism could never have accomplished; but it was thanks to Mussolini that they chose Fascism as their guide. The Fascist movement owes very nearly everything to Mussolini, while he, on the other hand, owes practically nothing to Fascism; for he gave form to the formless; and in any case, putting Fascism out of the question, a personality such as that of Mussolini must have founded a political movement to dominate and organize.

FASCISM A POLITICAL NOVELTY—Mussolini realized after the war that the war must have altered the aspect of the political situation. Strikes were no longer a weapon. The Russian revolution had proved that armed force alone could secure the reigns of government. (And in this lay the novelty of Fascism—in the *military organization of a political party*.)

During the year 1919, the activities of Fascism, apart from a few episodes, were of scant importance or extent. In the elections of November 1919, Mussolini only obtained some few thousand votes. Whereupon the Socialist party, which hitherto had not dared to raise its voice, ventured to announce that it had fished

up its corpse from the bed of the Naviglio. Public opinion pronounced Fascism on the wane, and therefore of no account.

However, at the end of 1920, when high pressure began to relax as a result of the strong feeling aroused by Bolshevik outrages at Bologna and Ferrara, Fascism again took the offensive. Everybody is acquainted with the history of the two years immediately following the war in Italy, so that it is not necessary to give it here in detail.

The Fascists introduced their *squadrismo*, or recruiting system. They were divided into detachments composed of men who had nothing to lose. Having belonged during the war to the ranks of the *arditi*, ever ready to face a crowd or a whole population without thought for their own lives or the lives of others, they were to be seen now in the open country or in the streets of the towns, in Communist or Socialist centres, or in restaurants under the management of revolutionaries; in places where there were hostile leagues, or red newspapers; they carried out their orders or the dictates of necessity with fire and by the sword. These *squadre* were military in their organization; they had their officers, their armaments, their passwords and their discipline, and they employed modern means of transport. In silence they prepared their "punitive expeditions," to resurrect an Austrian expression ("Strafing expeditions"), during the defensive in the Trentino in 1916 against Italy, whom they held guilty of having betrayed the Triple Alliance.

An impartial observer sums up in the following words the reasons for the success of military Fascism:

The victory of Fascism over the Socialist movement

is due to the Fascists not fearing to employ the violence which the extremists had preached but had never succeeded in putting into action, and because the Fascist offensive coincided with the disruption of the Socialist party which began about that time. It was an ill-matched contest. On the one hand, the Socialists had completely alienated public opinion by their excesses during the past two years when they had paralysed all the public services by continual strikes, and violated the patriotic soul of the nation. They no longer had behind them, except in rare exceptions, the masses of the people ready to fight for them, and if necessary to give their lives for their faith and their ideals—prepared, if called upon, to make any sacrifice. As far as they were concerned, constitutional guarantees were void ; the State no longer protected, as in the terms of the statute would have been its bounden duty, the inviolability of its servants and its institutions. On the other hand, the Fascists, upheld by public opinion which saw in them the champions of the national ideal, the defenders of law and order and the enemies of Bolshevism, enjoyed complete freedom. They could, in spite of constitutional and penal laws prohibiting such action, arm themselves and inflict death at will and with impunity, nay, even with the complicity of the police. So that it must honestly be said that during the two years that the Fascists contested the power with the Socialists they were assured of 99 out of 100 chances of the victory. I The State, which appeared to have abdicated in 1919 and 1920 in favour of the Socialists—and its abdication had not been so thorough as might be supposed—abdicated altogether, from the end of 1920, in favour of Fascism.

But this *squadrisme* phase of Fascism was not important solely because of its victorious conclusion. It constitutes one of the most serious problems which Fascism, and Italy, had to face after the " March on Rome " in raising the question of the organization of a " national militia."

By 1922 the Fascist *squadrismo* was to all intents and purposes an army alongside the regular army, with its privates, its ranks and its high commands. Its organization had a feeble imitation in the other parties ; the Socialists made an attempt at organizing the *Arditi del popolo*, against which, however, the police brought the law to bear ; the Republicans and the Sardinian party too recruited *squadre* from among the numerous ex-service men to be found in their ranks. And so it went on, even to the weak Liberal party, some of whose members donned the *grey* shirt. But it was the Nationalists who formed the militia wearing the *blue* shirt, aided and abetted by strong financial support and the compliance of the authorities. Thousands of these *blue shirts* took part in the " March on Rome." Italy was swarming with hostile troops, who paraded the streets; one alone remained inactive, and that was the National army.

MUSSOLINI AFTER THE "MARCH ON ROME"—The favourable attitude of the army and of the monarchy permitted the Fascists to mobilize in October 1922 for the " March on Rome." The history of this episode still remains clothed in mystery, and cannot yet be written. The actual facts of these days are still too uncertain, with the declaration of a state of siege, by Facta's government, only to be withdrawn a few hours later by the King, the legal warrant granted

to thousands of Fascists—for the most part armed from the royal barracks—who proceeded to march before the Quirinal.

The meaning of this " March on Rome " has since come in for much discussion. Mussolini and the Fascists hold that it had the quality of revolution ; but their opponents will not accept this explanation, on the contention that it did not prelude constitutional reforms. Was it then simply a *coup de main* ?

The quarrel recalls similar quarrels in the Middle Ages as to whether such and such a poem was epic, tragic or heroic. But whether the " March on Rome " was revolution, *coup de main* or authorized conquest, it was the prearranged action which put into the hands of the Fascists the power which they retain to-day, and its significance lies rather in its bearing on subsequent events than in the causes which led up to it. That Mussolini was prime mover in the affair we know from the way it was prepared, from the way it was carried out, and from the fact that he knew exactly how far to let the matter go and in what channels to direct its course.

Mussolini is a force which timed its appearance to the opportune moment in history. He represents the immediate necessity for action, for leaping into the breach to save the ship, without stopping for further discussion. Italy had come through thirty years of projected reforms, and propositions waiting to be put into action ; but every one talked and no one had dared to act. The need was for a man of the fewest possible political commitments, abundant energy, self confidence, in short, a kind of restrained barbarity to set about carrying out this programme

The situation might have driven the country into

the hands of a Socialist bound by his promises to the masses, who would not have permitted the discontinuance of the outpouring of the nation's resources even when the strictest economies were demanded; or of some general who would not have secured the allegiance of the industrial classes or have possessed sufficient political tact to carry him through ; or yet again into the hands of D'Annunzio, who would have endangered the equilibrium of the whole of Europe, by following on a much vaster scale in Rome the example of Fiume.

Mussolini was the man of this historic moment, with his urge for action at any price. He was the man who at this crucial moment was found ready, as no other man has ever been, to answer the call for a dictator.

He had the energy of the young men who had been in the war; he had shown his capacity for organization, and he had proved that he would pay with his last drop of blood. { The economic leaders looked to him for a fall in wages, without which Italian industry was threatened with immediate ruin. The middle classes looked to him for the re-establishment of order in the public services. The army looked to him for the reward it expected from the victory. Every one looked to him for social peace, were it at the price of their liberty. | In short, it was the situation found in France at the end of the Directory, all over again, in view of which Bonaparte had appeared as a saviour, and had in fact proved himself to be one.

so Mussolini became dictator, one might almost say patron, of Italy. But every patron has some conditions imposed upon him by his servant, however *much* the servant may have adapted

who is in any case responsible for his nourishment and general well-being, and can be held responsible even to the extent of his happiness, for the responsibility differs according to circumstances. Mussolini found that he had to adapt himself to Italy as well as Italy having to adapt herself to Mussolini.

In a sense, Mussolini is the perfect classic type of Italian with his Roman head and his bearing of the party leader of the Middle Ages or Renaissance period. His face calls up memories of the pages of Dino Compagni and Machiavelli which Salandra, Giolitti, Nitti and Bonomi had never evoked. And in certain respects, too, he is the true type of Italian, the *condottiere*, as foreigners would put it, the type of a Napoleon which Taine conceived.

But it is difficult to draw the line between the point where he ceases to be naturally Italian and the point where he begins to yield purposely to the tastes of the masses and to tradition ; to decide where the shrewdness of the politician has thought fit to efface the private individual. He is purely Italian at home, where he observes all the religious pomps and ceremonies and the scenic effects which leave their impress upon all nations (each one has its own peculiar form of disguise), and which have a precedent in modern Italy in the red shirt of the Garibaldians. The black shirts, the heritage of the *Arditi* the colours (*gagliardetti*) paraded in the towns, the Roman salute, may be the political expedients, natural even though disagreeable perhaps, of one who must rouse the masses. But such a manner of going to work does indicate a certain natural predisposition. One is born with certain qualities which can never be acquired. Gloomy men like Nitti, University men like Salandra, bureau-

crats like Giolitti, could never have attained this spirit of harmony with the masses which was indispensable if you wanted to win them and use them for ulterior political ends; in politics, as in war, the end justifies the means.

Certainly this side of Mussolini is very contradictory to the other side of his nature, the essentially modern side, the side which belongs to the mover, the industrialist, the capitalist, the man who takes the wheel himself and shoots ahead, telegraphs his congratulations to Spalla, devotes part of his time to sport; in a word, the first statesman in Italy who was not thirty years behind his time. This is the true Mussolini, truer perhaps than the Mussolini of political stunts. His modern ideas are due to his youth, to the years he spent abroad and also to his experience as a blacksmith and a mechanic, which a motor breakdown enables him to put to the test, and which is perhaps a source of keener joy to* him than any great political speech. His sojourn in the Lombard capital left a profound effect upon Mussolini. Milan is one of the few Italian towns, perhaps one might say the only one, where one feels the pulsation of modern life and of the capitalist spirit in the small degree to which Italy possesses this spirit. Milan raised an echo to Mussolini's adventurous spirit, his individualism, his love of power, strife and organization.

This modern and advanced side of Mussolini makes him unlike other Italians. To be a power in a country you cannot be either entirely wrapped up in it, nor, on the other hand, entirely detached from it. If you are wrapped up in it, you may represent that country, but you cannot guide it or lead it forward; you will be swamped in it, and to dominate a country you must get

beyond it. If you are detached from the country and can study it and regard it from the heights, then you can judge it, but you cannot move it. That, in a way, was the case with Nitti; he was too much outside Italy to be in contact with her.

Italy is very far behind the capitalist organizations of other countries. Time is not money here, and comfort is not the first consideration. Dependent labour is the limit of ambition in many centres to this day. The social spirit is still rare, and organization is still scarce. Greater personal sacrifice is necessary in Italy than in England or France for the attainment of the same results. The family takes the place of the State and frequently finds itself in opposition to the latter. . Mussolini has in him the stuff to have governed a more advanced country than Italy, a country on the road to mechanical, industrial and capitalist progress. He has not the mentality of an agriculturist, for he was born of iron to the manipulation of iron, and was brought up amongst the brick walls and chimneys of great Milanese industries. That is what really sets Mussolini at cross-purposes with Italians, inasmuch as he demands of them too great an effort to attain a type of civilization which is not properly theirs. . He is an Italian coercing the Italians who would infinitely prefer to be left alone to lie abed in the morning, gossip in the cate, seek a position in some public service, and be left to digest in peace in the evening, after a good dinner. But Mussolini's whip teases them, Mussolini's goad spurs them on, Mussolini's will shakes them up, and at the bottom of it all, every reform, every little step he forces them to take, every inch gained on the path of progress, is an act of hostility on the part of Mussolini directed against his allies.

But this modern side of Mussolini has its contradictory aspects. His energy is counterbalanced by a kind of plebeian grossness which manifests itself in little vulgarities in the terms in which his notices as a dictator are couched. He offends as the self-made man offends who cannot distinguish the veritably noble line and who can tolerate surroundings and habits which his own servants would not put up with. He has been too sweeping and too blind in his disdain of mankind. While dismissing them all as scum and sluggards, he allowed the most intellectually and morally worthless people to group themselves about him under the authority of his name, people who proved to be the cause of the greatest error in internal politics, namely, the Matteotti affair. In his rapid ascent to power he did not pick and choose in his recruiting of Fascists; but that one can understand, for revolutions are not made by fragile girls and scrupulous young men. But even granting that, it is difficult to understand how he could not only tolerate but actually accept with pleasure the friendship of such men as Finzi, Rossi, De Bono and even Dumini, who have dealt a serious blow to both his own prestige and to that of Fascism.

I However, from the day when he came into power he showed that he realized that his principal enemy was not conquered Communism, nor impotent Socialism, nor non-existent democracy, nor discredited Freemasonry, nor waning Liberalism, nor the domestic Catholics, but Fascism itself. From the day when he formed an exclusively Fascist ministry, began his conflict with Fascism. His most serious troubles, his most insuperable obstacles, his severest threats, have always come from the Fascists.

Never had he so fully realized the remorseless power of mankind as he did from the moment when he took up the reins of government and was compelled to betray and spurn those who, having aided and abetted his ascent, now claimed their reward in offices and honours, and, an even more serious proposition, the realization of their ideals and aspirations which involved the responsibility of the Italian State in financial, moral, civil and international matters. Those days have been cloaked in mystery. Those who understand men and parties and social upheavals, particularly in the Latin countries where everything is expected of the Government or the party leader, can easily picture the flood that was undammed against Mussolini in the months which followed the "March on Rome." Not the most insignificant little provincial journalist, not the meanest returned emigrant, the lowest rank of retired officer, but, after having assisted in that affair, considered himself entitled to an ambassadorship, the post of Minister of War, Government financial adviser, editor of a metropolitan newspaper, deputy or prefect.

Too MANY UPSTARTS—This aspect of Fascism was bound to reveal itself when it rose to power. Composed to a large extent of the very lowest classes, without education or culture of any kind, it required but a short sojourn in the capital for them to depart from their customs and principles. With a few notable exceptions, such as the minister De Stefani, recognized by all as an honest and fine man, rumour had it that corruption was practised in the Fascist Government. The State makes no direct statement as to this fact, but it was said that no outrage was accomplished **but**

the leader or instigator paid a commission to certain powerful ministers, members of the Fascist party who were influential in the Ministry.¹ At any rate, it is a significant fact that Fascists who had been poor before the "March on Rome" became rich after a year of political life, whereas honest politicians have always tended to render their protagonists poor. Mussolini's gravest mistake lies in his having shut his eyes to this growth and increasing *business* of Fascism which was springing up around his Ministry, and against which his better advisers had already warned him on more than one occasion. And this mistake cost him dear in the days when the attempt on the Socialist deputy Matteotti disposed public opinion to encourage any rumour which cast light upon the fundamental corruption of Fascism.

MUSSOLINI AS A WILL, NOT AS AN INTELLECT—Mussolini was then a power of will rather than of intellect. His intellectual qualities fade before those of his personality. He tends rather to a quick grasp of a situation than a profound and creative understanding of it. His judgments are synthetic rather than analytical, his culture superficial. In his articles one detects hasty readings and a journalistic training with its demand for a daily article, resulting in ill-founded statements, as, for instance, after the "March on Rome," when he was so ill-advised as to promise that the lira would rise 50 centimes, without taking into account the financial and economic upheaval which such a rise would necessarily entail. In his own mind men and ideas have no significance beyond the part

¹That, at any rate, was found to be true in the *Torre-Vocs repubblicana* case.

they play in his activities, and he never wants them to cease from that capacity so that he can regard them in any other light. All his faculties are bent upon the attainment of his ends.

His urgent self-willed character does not lend itself to liberal ideas.

Mussolini might conceivably have belonged to other parties. One can imagine him in the Communist or even in the Catholic party, but he is most easily placed in the Republican party. The only one in which one cannot see him is the Liberal party. In politics he is ever active and ever uncompromising, ever in favour of intervention and hostile to liberty. He might adopt the rules of other parties but never those of Liberalism which demand a certain sacrifice of character to culture, a certain measure of toleration in the direction of social forces, in recognizing the rights of others to draw their conclusions from their own experiences. Mussolini does not oppose Liberalism, he barely recognizes its existence. But he reserves for it faint irony and mockery. He certainly esteems Bolshevism far higher, be it in open rebellion against himself or the Fascist State, than Liberalism which fights about the means rather than the end. Liberalism is the creed of the old man, the man at any rate old in thought and experience. But Mussolini is the breath of youth.

* One of the surest signs of his creed of youth is his attitude towards the art of his times. If you had gone into the house of any political man of the middle classes in Italy during the last twenty years, you would have been struck by his lack of taste, the vulgarity of his choice, his preference for the venerable classic authors—if indeed his house contained any

books at all—pictures, statues and prints. You would say that they had furnished from the most odious type of general store, costly or trumpery according to their means, but in every case entirely devoid of taste.

Mussolini is the first statesman in Italy who has ever shown any intelligent appreciation of contemporary art. Who before him, for instance, would have written a preface of Ungaretti's poetical works ? Which of his predecessors would have favoured the efforts of futurist artists, or been able to appreciate Soffici ? Art is assuredly not his profession, and in his capacity of head of the Government and party leader his duties took him more often into very mixed assemblies, both academic and vulgar; but they also took him into an exhibition of Medardo Rosso's work, and he declared in one of the foremost artistic salons of the day that he felt himself to be in harmony with the exhibitors.

MUSSOLINI AS A FORCE—That Mussolini is a great force must be acknowledged as a simple, elementary and indisputable fact. Quite apart from the party he leads or the ideals he upholds, he is a force in no matter what direction he may turn. Opinion may be divided as to the wisdom of his aims, but there can be no two opinions as to his power in achieving those aims. He breathes life into the party he joins, while the party he abandons crumbles to pieces ; so that in politics you must be with him, for it is useless to be against him. The Socialist party raised its head again and drew force from him: Nationalism became a real political force from the day when it was absorbed into the Mussolini movement; *interventionists* found

power in Mussolini's support; even the Catholic Church regarded him as an important ally, and favoured the downfall of the Popular party.

Mussolini is a force which, hurled into the very centre of Italy's body, took command of the organs and set them functioning.

Nevertheless, Mussolini's force was to find its limits in certain indisputable national factors—in a shortage of first-rate men, in Italy's incapacity to form a new ruling class, in the conservatism of the agricultural and middle classes, in the over-population of an unfruitful soil. Yet, in spite of all these obstacles, he has already done enough to have earned the title of an eminent man not only in Italy but in world politics.

Of the three men whose names have risen to fame since the war—Wilson, Lenin and Mussolini himself—he is the youngest and, moreover, the only one whose schemes are still in process of execution. Of the other two, Wilson has disappeared, struck down, as it were, by the Furies for his betrayal of Humanity, and all that remains of him is the League of Nations. Lenin too has disappeared, but such havoc has he wrought in Russia that she cannot be set to rights again without encountering continual reminders of his deeds.

Mussolini alone still lives, not in the imaginatipns of Italians alone but of all nations, like Wilson and Lenin, he was there to answer to the call of the moment, to the need for some one to break away from the parliamentary atrophy, and to devote all his energies to setting in motion once more the ponderous machine of the State, to rousing industry, threatened by the severest crisis in the experience of modern man. Desire for universal peace and social justice is strong in the hearts of men, but, faced with the un

certainities and disorders of those days, the need was felt for a firm guiding hand, even if it should involve the renunciation of certain liberties. Mussolini supplied this need, which was not confined solely to Italy, but was general, and he certainly succeeded in appealing to the imaginations of many millions of men.

I respect those who nobly defend the liberty of Italy, so long as they have not begun by trampling her underfoot. I respect them too because they are not a numerous class. Surely it is the highest of ideals, and one which must emanate from a man's very soul. But in this particular case, Mussolini found himself bound to make liberty the price of the realization of his programme, for he had to do with a country where the sense of liberty had always been weak and an epoch when war had left men ready to fight again without the slightest regard for the rules of civilization. Mussolini is a force and a politician, not an apostle or a religious reformer, and he had to work under very difficult conditions and with the resources which the country chose to put at his disposal.

Certainly, he might have chosen his closest associates in his task with more discrimination. Had he deemed such choice as he did make indispensable for the revolution, he should have swept them out of his path when he found that they were a menace to his aims and to the party. That is undoubtedly the weakest spot in Mussolini's political career, and the one which has cost him most dearly.

CHAPTER III

OTHER LEADING MEN IN FASCISM

New Men—Fernando Agnoletti—Cesare Rossi—Roberto Forges-Davanzati—Giovanni Marinelli—Alessandro Melchioni—Roberto Farinacci—Alfredo Misuri—Amerigo Dumini—Alfredo de Stefani—Secondary Figures.

NEW MEN—The type and character of its leaders are factors which count enormously in so unregulated a movement as Fascism, in so widely individual a country as Italy, and in an age of such tremendous social disorder. And in this crisis Italy found herself in the hands of new men who had risen for the most part since the war, and about whom it is difficult to discover any clear facts. If one reads what literature there is concerning them, a defence here, an attack there, but no clear facts to be gained whatsoever, one realizes that they were the objects of open hates and admirations. Their activities lie for the most part hidden in the columns of provincial newspapers, or they may sometimes be retailed in the gossip of the crowd. One must content oneself with the impressions one can glean in face of the closed pages of history. They appear as a mixture of the good and the bad, alternating between moments of inspiration and blindness, morality and corruption, sacrifice and cruelty. There are some old men amongst them, but for the most part they are young men who

have been able to infect old and reasonable people with their enthusiasm.

I will endeavour to paint an intellectual and moral picture of some of them, striving, however, to allow for the vast variety of types.

FERNANDO AGNOLETTI—I will take a romantic and sympathetic type, one of the good writers of the new generation, though he has little more than one slight volume to his credit. Fernando Agnoletti was a volunteer, having come down from the University with a literary degree and no inclination to teach. He fought in Greece in 1897 against the Turks. Then, finding that his inclinations lay in the direction of democracy, Freemasonry and Socialistic sympathies, he emigrated. He taught Italian in Glasgow, and organized the colony of ice-cream vendors and workmen which he discovered there. Upon his return to Italy, still very averse to teaching, he had a small dairy farm in the country, later he had a second-hand book shop, then became for a time a *café-concert* impresario, writing all the while and never ceasing in his struggle and his dreams for a greater, richer and more powerful Italy. Naturally, being a keen *interventionist*, he went to the war, and upon his return figured amongst the bands of the ex-service men, as president of their Association at Florence for two years, and as representative of the Fascio in 1921. He is now the leader of the Young Fascists, the *Balilla*. He is progressive and imperialist in a democratic sense. He loves his country and has her welfare at heart, and he is convinced that his ideals for her will be realized by Mussolini.

CESARE ROSSI—Cesare Rossi was Tuscan by birth.

He began his career as a worker in a printing office, and became reporter and contributor to several syndicalist newspapers between 1905 and 1910. He was a pacifist, but like almost all other syndicalists, found himself in favour of war when the Great War broke out. When Mussolini founded the *Popolo d'Italia* he joined its staff and never left it, even in its most turbulent days, until he was called up to serve as a private soldier. Later on, he went back to the paper and became under-secretary to the Fascist party.

He is not a man of wide or profound culture, but he is very much on the spot, and he would never hesitate to crush an opponent if roused to political enthusiasm.

He gave up the mayorship and later the deputyship of Milan in order to manage the Press for the Ministry of the Interior when Mussolini called him to that post after the "March on Rome," preferring to be Mussolini's *Grey Cardinal*, his close companion and daily informer, and the one reputed to hold the keys of his heart, although it had at first seemed a secondary position to what he might have had.

The scandal of the Matteotti murder showed him up as one of an evil band of confederates whose duties were to carry out the political vengeance of the Fascists; and the news columns rang with stories connected with the meals at the Brecche restaurant where Rossi met Dumini and other hot-heads of the party. He was employed on the *Corriere d'Italia*, and was accused of using that paper as the instrument of Press propaganda, sometimes even against certain Fascist ministers of whom he did not approve, such as De Stefani.

He held a post at the party's headquarters when the Matteotti affair took place.

ROBERTO FORGES-DAVANZATI — Forges-Davanzati was born in Naples in 1880. He still holds a post at the party headquarters, where he was once a colleague of Rossi. He holds a literary and philosophic degree, and from the days of his youth has been an ardent supporter of syndicalism. He took up writing for the provincial Press, and assisted in the publication of a Roman edition of the *Corriere della Sera* between 1908 and 1911. From that date he began to go over to the Nationalists, and in 1911 was one of the founders of the Nationalist party and of *Videa nazionale*, which started as a weekly paper. He edited this paper when later it became a daily. He was an officer during the war, and was awarded a bronze medal for his services, but after the peace he returned to his paper and took charge of the foreign political intelligence and musical criticism. In 1921 he was one of the most energetic workers in the "blue-shirt" cause—that is to say, the *squadre* of the Nationalists a parallel movement to the Fascist *squadre*, who brought up the rear with the Fascist ranks in the "March on Rome," and afterwards were absorbed by the Fascists in 1923. He is an honest and cultured man, and as a writer both logical and forceful. His intellectual qualities have earned for him an important position in the present Fascist Government.

GIOVANNI MARINELLI—Marinelli was born at Adria (Rovigo) in 1880, and belonged to the Socialist party until, with Mussolini, he left it in 1915, when Mussolini decided in favour of intervention. As accountant-secretary of the Socialist societies, he was made President of the Committee in charge of the activities of the famous "Red Week" in 1915, at the time of the

revolutionary disturbances which took place in the valley of the Po and the Marches just before the war. His is a mediocre intelligence of small scope, although in the years before the "March on Rome," and immediately following the war, he held the post of Minister of Finances in the Fascist party.

Such a man it was, and he was not even a brilliant accountant, who had in his possession the most important of financial secrets. All payments and receipts connected with the Fascist party had to pass through his hands. He was eventually arrested as one of the accomplices in the Matteotti murder, for he must have provided the necessary funds for that crime. After his arrest, it was discovered that there were seven millions deposited in various banks.

ALESSANDRO MELCHIORRI—Melchiorri was born in Ancona in 1901, and is one of the youngest members of the Fascist party and its Government. His only titles to fame are his extreme youth and fidelity, and his unbounden keenness as a Fascist. He was an officer in the bersaglieri during the war, and won the Legion of Honour at Fiume in the D'Annunzio escapade. He was political secretary to the *Fascio* in Brescia, his own organization. He played an important part in the affair in which he was charged with opposing with armed *squadre* the election of Nitti in Basilicata in 1921. * He was sent as commissioner extraordinary to supervise the Fascist organization in Calabria, though Mussolini wanted to have him personally attached to his Government. He contributes to the newspapers and is attached to the propaganda offices of the party.

ROBERTO FARINACCI—Roberto Farinacci is usually

quoted in Italy as an example of the provincial "ras."¹ He does, in fact, reign in Cremona. A railwayman by profession, he is a product of the Socialism of Bissolati, for whom Farinacci always protested a great respect, although he had pursued very different paths since the peace. He set on foot a vast popular movement comprising both good and bad elements. His military and popular gatherings had thousands of supporters who formed themselves into groups under separate flags in the public square of his constituency. There was no sort of life of it for anyone who refused to believe in him in Cremona. As a railwayman he served in the war as a telegraphist in the third engineering corps. He was never sent to the Front, and this caused him much embarrassment, making him appear as a shirker. In view of the Fascist mentality this accusation was very painful to him, so that when he became an established figure in the Fascist Ministry, the Under-Secretary of State for War, Bonardi, awarded him the *Croce di Guerra*. However, before this honour was conferred upon him, his portrait had appeared in a shop window in the town beside the portrait of an old Garibaldian! The conferring of a war decoration on Farinacci gave rise to much adverse criticism in the *Giustizia*, a paper which Farinacci had tried to condemn on a charge of libel, without, however, having succeeded.

Farinacci belongs to a group which is called the "savages." Its paper, the *Cremona nuova*, whose politics are inspired by a university man, a Positivist and Freemason, has the distinction of having given rise to much discussion. Farinacci represented the greater part of lower Lombardy, for he had stood by

¹ Title borne by an Ethiopian chief.

the landowners and farmers when they had been threatened with oppression by certain societies organized from the Popular party by the Catholic deputy, Miglioli—societies which were as revolutionary as the Socialist societies themselves. Strengthened by the support of organized and armed masses, Farinacci became independent, and on many occasions intractable, as in a case when a minister with "business instincts" in the Fascist Ministry concluded an agreement for handing over the railways of Farinacci's province to a private concern at the expense of the State, and with the ultimate object of reducing the railwaymen's wages. Farinacci strongly opposed this move, and finally had the contract withdrawn, which goes to illustrate the fact that the most illegal procedure may sometimes be employed to avert legal injustices.

His views are purely reactionary. He has gone so far as to propose the reintroduction of capital punishment to meet cases of unpatriotic action, or, in other words, to meet the sins of his political adversaries.

Some Fascists prefer him to the Roman Fascists, whom they find more dangerous, by reason of their corrupt practices, and even uphold this type of provincial chief, set up by the masses to guard their interests, attributing to them an integrity of political purpose which would put others to shame.

ALFREDO MISURI—The Deputy Misuri is a good example of "dissident" or "half-hearted" Fascism. The Deputy Corgini of Reggio in Emilia and Cesare Forni of Lomellina also belong to this little group. They are the type of ancient provincial "ras" or "derviches," driven to revolt against Fascism by

personal rivalries, and, once having abandoned it, being forced to submit to every form of oppression, including bastinado, to which they had formerly submitted all those whose ideas had been at variance with their own.

Alfredo Misuri has a natural science degree in comparative anatomy. He has published several scientific works, and it is worth while mentioning their titles here, if only to mark the contrast between the kind of mentality which they would presuppose and the political activities of the author. The man who wrote *The Helix in the Province of Umbria ; Researches on the Structure of the Normal and Regenerated Tail of the Lacerta muralis ; Further Discoveries regarding the Sicilian Carcinological Fauna*, all of which made their appearance in authorized reviews or scientific archives, is the same man who, in a black shirt, went to break up the Socialist and Communist meetings and ordered those who insisted upon keeping Lenin's portrait in their homes to be beaten.¹ There indeed is an amazing phenomenon, but one which was very typical of what has gone to constitute the Fascist movement.

We have his own account of his life. Until he was thirty-four he took no part in political life. He belonged to one of the so-called liberal associations, where half-hearted Conservatives were to be found who clung to the statutes handed down to them by their forefathers, and let the tide of those who had been engulfed by Socialism sweep over them. And there he was, after having served as a major in the R.A.M.C. during the war, swept along by the post-war Socialist movement. The elections of 1919 handed over the municipal palace of his native town, Perugia, to the

revolutionaries, and that roused him to action. He gathered together a syndicalist group for the organization of the middle classes, and formed an opposition of ex-service men, Conservatives and the industrial associations. This opposition was defeated, but he was returned at the head of the minority, which constituted him leader of the opposition. After that the provincial party began to drift towards Fascism, taking its orders from Milan, and fighting took place in the streets and out in the open country, in the cause of "regaining liberty."

But Misuri has a private as well as a public character,¹ and in this capacity he is a man with a very strong moral sense. He very soon found himself at loggerheads with the methods of the leaders in Milan, where the tendency was to play fast and loose with the provincial groups, and with the local leaders who tried to establish themselves as a force as the Fascists had done. But it is not here our purpose to give the history of Misuri's fight with his opponents, Pighetti and Bastianini. Commissions were appointed to make inquiries and to issue favourable reports, duels were fought, disturbances stirred up and put down again, questions were asked in the Assemblies, nothing was omitted from that long battle. Eventually Misuri left the Fascist party and joined the Nationalists, but was forced to rejoin his old party when these became one. But naturally he could not long remain there. He had become the censor of his Fascist adversaries and even of the Fascist party itself, and although his censure was conducted on honourable and calm lines it was bound to be regarded as aggressive, in spite of his winning the approval of several of the

¹ See A, Misuri, *Rivolta morals*, Milan, 1924.

Fascist deputies in a very fine speech he made in the House.

When finally he was expelled for unruly behaviour from the Fascist party, he formed with several other malcontents a little political group which they called "Patriotism and Liberty," and became a staunch upholder of the very constitutional rights which he had been the one to trample under foot during his anti-Bolshevich campaign, describing himself as a "neo-Liberal democrat with Fascist tendencies." He repented of his past and lost no opportunity of making it known that he was waiting for Fascism to give an account of itself.

AMERIGO DUMINI—Dumini was the man who stood out most clearly against the dark background of the Matteotti affair, and, as far as can be ascertained, against that of many other affairs reputed to be "for the nation's good." He has, according to the newspapers, twelve homicides to his credit, and has thus won for himself in the eyes of the world the title of "Amerigo Dumini, twelve times a murderer," just as another might add two or three distinctions after his name. Dumini belonged to the Tuscan branch of Fascism, which was one of the most powerful; and if we read two interesting books by the Tuscan *squadriste* Umberto Banchelli, we learn that men under Dumini would not desert from Tuscan Fascism.

Banchelli published the *curriculum vita* of a certain Florentine "ras," Lieutenant Tullio Tamburini by name, and here I will quote an excerpt: "1914, conviction for a petty swindle; 1915, complicity in a forgery case; 1919, smuggling of goods out of occupied and abandoned territories; 1921, dishonest handling

of the funds subscribed for Sarzana ; 1921, bastinado inflicted upon Franchi, wounded in the war; 1921, murder of a certain Cicetti; 1923, bastinadoes inflicted upon the Fascist Merciai, on a Socialist tramway employee, Parentini, and on others ; appeal with regard to the murder known as the *Pascia* murder, and found to be a 'patriotic' murder ; 1922-1923, interference by violence and threats into private lawsuits, for example, in the Murray-Fradeletto adultery case."*

Amerigo Dumini was Tamburini's adversary, but an adversary holding the same views as he did. Dumini came into prominence as a result of the Matteotti affair and of others which preceded it, and which gave proof of the existence of an organized criminal society whose work it was to carry out acts of violence inspired by Cesare Rossi. Many of the crimes hitherto attributed to young Fascist hot-heads who had come over from the Revolutionary party would better be attributed to this *squadra* which, shifting its headquarters from Rome to Milan, used all manner of means for the intimidation and suppression of its adversaries, from the burning down of shops and printing houses to duels and assassinations.⁸

ALBERTO DE STEFANI—De Stefani is the most recent addition to Mussolini's first ministry. Two years

¹ It should be borne in mind, however, that in a libel case which took place after the publication of this book, Tamburini *versus* Banchelli, the latter was found guilty. Some of the accusations against Tamburini may therefore be exaggerated or even invented. Many people, however, say that they are true; if so, it is an indication of the morality of Italy.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

^a Umberto Banchelli, *Le memorie di un fascista, 1921-1922*, Florence ; *Fascisti di professioni alla sbarra*, 1923.

before that he was neither minister nor deputy, nor university professor nor yet a member of any political party whatsoever. He was only a professor at the Institute of Technology at Vicenza, but lately demobilized from the army, where he had occupied the modest rank of lieutenant, not even going to the Front, as he belonged to the ancient body of territorials. He was almost unknown except to a few friends and men specializing in political economy, and even those few who did know him certainly did not expect him to develop into a politician. This is a case, if ever there was one, where we may justly use the word "revelation" of a man who at no mean age was able to make of himself something so different from what he had been, passing from a life of abstract and theoretical thought of the deepest and most finicking meditation to one of swift and decisive action and tactful manipulation in face of facts. And he did all this without any sacrifice of his old self or of his old ideas and convictions.

De Stefani's story is one of the strangest and the most interesting. He taught political economy for fifteen years at the Institute of Technology at Vicenza. His mentality, nurtured on Adam Smith and Ricardo, but more especially on Ferrara and Messedaglia, was that of the classic economists. He was a Liberal, founding his Liberalism on economic liberty. In speaking to me of Ferrara, he told me that in becoming a Fascist he had not in any way been called upon to renounce any of the theories of his master, for that master had taught him "not to dispute Socialism but to bridle it." I should say that he was rather a political "free-thinker" than a Liberal. As for Messedaglia, whose published and unpublished works

he had studied profoundly and whom he honoured and revered above all others, his well-balanced thought can still be traced in the workings of his disciple's mind.

De Stefani's works are few, for his writings took the form rather of short articles. These are outstanding for the clarity and vigour of their reasoning, and the style is careful, severe and heavy, savouring somewhat of the works of the ancient academicians who loved to polish and repolish their periods. Moreover, his style is distant and abhors that easy fluency which is the trade-mark of so many popular economists and sociologists whose works are on sale to-day, and which are merely elaborations of established theories, and full of glaring inaccuracies. His reasoning powers owe their wide development in part to his excursions into the realms of higher mathematics. When Pareto and Pantaleoni introduced their mathematical theories into Italy, De Stefani did not content himself with glancing through one mathematical textbook in order to clothe his arguments in borrowed formulas, but devoted three years to the exclusive study of these men. In one of his more recent works he says, not without irony: "I endeavour to understand what I read; it is for that reason that I read little." His knack of precision in summing up is apparent in a *Manual of the Laws of War*, which he compiled with great care and patience for the Historiographical Office of Mobilization. It was a work such as would ordinarily be undertaken by a recluse, and what is so surprising about De Stefani is that it was from such a man, or, for the sake of the simile, from such a lifeless chrysalis, that there came forth such a butterfly, its wings already spread for its flight. I have seen him day after day (and these days stretching out into years)

before his calculating machine, working out the numerous statistics necessary to point out the fallacy of the belief common in France that land property should be divided amongst a small number of large landowners. Another of his works, and one which even a layman may read with interest, seeks to break down the theory of Gini, that a nation's prosperity is dependent upon its birth-rate, implying that a fall in the birth-rate brings about the decline of the nation. France would do well to have this work translated and spread broadcast (it is based upon some hundred instances, but the book is now out of print), for it illustrates the fallacy of a very common belief in France—a belief, moreover, which has seriously injured her reputation in the eyes of the world.

During the elections of 1921 the Vicenza Fascists were looking about them for a candidate, but they had not found one amongst the young *bravi*, the ex-service men or the patriots. Some of the students at the Institute of Technology thought of approaching their Professor of Economics. They went in search of him and finally found him—asleep. They awakened him, and after much pressing and urging, he agreed to stand. But here for the first time we begin to see the De Stefani with whom we are familiar, for he immediately set about making conditions : no mass action, the Vicenza Fascists must act alone ; no compromise ; complete freedom of speech against the Liberals. For a fortnight he waged a frenzied war of speeches, meetings and denunciations, and at the end of that time he was elected.

As a deputy, to this day he has not lost sight of the fact that he is the only deputy elected on his purely Fascist programme, by the votes of the Fascists

alone. He adhered to a strictly independent programme. In his addresses to Fascists, he laid much stress on the principles of their masters, Pareto, Ricci and Einaudi—although this latter was a Liberal. He used Fascism as a school for individual energy to be directed to the service of economics : down with State monopolies introduced by the Socialists ; down with the system of the highest places going to private persons ; down with protective tariffs ; away with the contracts between unprogressive capitalists and circumscribed labour ! The manner of his election helped him to keep his independent views while remaining within the machine of Fascism, as did his intellectual education, which went far beyond the bounds of the average intellect of the party. He even succeeded in getting his friends to bring up in the Assembly the question of the incompatibility between the Freemason and Fascist attitudes. At the same time he insisted with persistency and eloquence upon a strong external policy, and upon the adoption of a strong line by the Government in dealing with the Germans and Slavs in the country. He was very interested in the question of the future of Fiume and Zara, and made a special study of the financial aspects of these two cities.

What exactly was the task of the Fascist Minister of Finance ? According to certain authorities, he balanced the Budget and so saved the country. That is De Stefani's chief claim to fame, but it must not be forgotten, for all that, that many a minister before him, Giolitti amongst them, had been engaged upon the same excellent work. De Stefani's genius lies, I for my part believe, not only in his rigid and dogged perseverance in this course, in forbidding the further

issue of notes, in his institution of a detailed revision of war expenditure, but above all in his having held himself aloof from the corruption to which the new regime would have brought many another man in De Stefani's place, had he been less vigilant and less conscientious. Later on we shall get a better understanding of the Fascist financial policy for which he stood ; in the meantime, it is enough to say that the good in it was due to the man, while its lapses were due to the regime.¹

SECONDARY FIGURES—A glimpse at the other lights in the Fascist world will not occupy us for long. In-genuous youth, maturity carried away by enthusiasm, mistaken sacrifices in matters of war funds and grants for public works, outrageous disputes amongst people who had grown rich in politics, the mentalities of *bravi* of the seventeenth century and warriors of the fifteenth, patriotism and avarice, shameless journalism and, scattered here and there, honest labour—all these had their part in Fascism.

But certain characteristics, such as the occupation of the high places by upstarts, easy corruption and instability of principle, were not so much a product of Fascism as of the post-war years in general. They do not indicate one tendency any more than another at the critical age in an unproductive country's development—a development suddenly interrupted by war, so that she had to look to her interior reorganization in the midst of the gravest external difficulties and at a time when her own democratic institutions were besieged by forces unprepared for democracy or Liberalism.

¹ See A. de Stefani, *Discorsi*, Milan, 1923.

CHAPTER IV

FASCISM AND CULTURE

Fascism and Culture—Fascism and Futurism—Fascism as an Anti-Reformist—A Fascist Writer : Ardengo Soffici—The Philocatholicism of Rocca—A Fascist Philosopher: Giovanni Gentile—The Theory of Fascism.

FASCISM AND CULTURE—Fascism, like any other post-war social movement—like Bolshevism itself, which it closely resembles in many of its aspects—cannot but have an unfavourable effect upon a nation's intellect. Its ideals, though to a certain extent mystic, are disturbed; though they be vital, they are indefinite.

'The watchword of Fascism was action, not thought. It was not even led up to by an intellectual movement; it was a product of war, which does not favour thought, and of youth, which does not tend to meditation. The young men Fascism attracted to its ranks were <irarlike and sport-loving rather than studious; for intellectuals are not usually attracted by a movement which adopts frantic methods for the attainment of its purely practical ends. I have on several occasions heard the few intellectuals there are to be found in the party deploring the lack of thought, of any kind of study or, reading, in the Fascist ranks. I have read in the *Popolo d'Italia* itself that the Fasci, whose membership now amounts to several thousands, do not boast a single library.

Since the Matteotti affair the Fascist leaders have begun to give serious consideration to this lack of intellectual culture, and through the medium of the Fascist press have urged the founding of Fascist clubs, schools and even universities.

The industrial and intellectual movement which had been Italy's pride and which had promised to be her power for a generation before the war, met with no encouragement in this age of violence, when converts were made by kicks or economic pressure, when force was looked upon as the natural solution of any problem, when the high places were occupied by unpractised and uneducated men.

One has only to consider the output of Fascist literature to see at once the immeasurable superiority intellectually of anti-Fascist literature. Gorgolini's book, prefaced by Mussolini himself, has had the largest circulation of all and has been the most often translated, and what is it but a discursive and inconclusive work dragged out through three hundred pages. Then, again, there is a little treatise by one, Freddi, once head of the party press, and who might at least be expected to give the history, programme and philosophy of Fascism, but it amounts to little more than a mediocre article in a provincial newspaper. Actually the Fascists have turned to journalism rather than to books; and even then* they have preferred the truncheon to the pen. The Fascist publishing house, "Imperia," although directed by a good enough man, is otherwise deplorably devoid of intellect, and the best thing they have produced is*a collection of Mussolini's speeches.

Looking at it from this aspect, then, Fascism seems to point the way to intellectual poverty, for the steps

which had been made before the war seem to have been completely lost if one compares post-war literature with that which preceded the war. It is as if a peasant set about performing an operation with instruments he had found rusted and abandoned in the fields.¹

FASCISM AND FUTURISM—Fascism, which sprang from a revolutionary movement on the Left with a demagogic programme for the abolition of the Senate, the sequestration of ecclesiastical benefices, the confiscation of war-time concessions to industry, and the taxing of capital, favours capitalist enterprise and exempts heirs from inherited taxation. Born into a new era, it found itself engaged upon the task of restoring classic conditions.

Chesterton writes that he recognizes the elements of Futurism in Fascism, but the English writer has made this assertion without, doubtless, knowing of the long-standing friendship which has existed between Mussolini and Marinetti. Like a musician, he has hit upon the concord of two instruments in a symphony and isolated it from the rest.

Certainly there is Futurism in Fascism, and I say this without malice, for Futurism is an excellent thing in so far as it has satisfied certain demands of the times, and given expression to certain tendencies round about Milan. There are certain tendencies which have passed imperceptibly from Futurism into Fascism, from Marinetti to Mussolini, and amongst these may be

¹ See C. Giachetti, *Fascismo liberatore* Florence, 1923 ; L. Freddi, *Fascismo*, Florence, 1924 ; P. Gorgolini, *Il fascismo nella vita italiana*, Turin, 1922 (trans. into French by E. Marsan, Paris (com. libr. nat., 1923))—

placed the craze for speed and violent action, disdain of the masses, the extolling of war, hatred of Parliament, a love of tyrannizing the masses, the encouragement of exclusive patriotism, and bitter antipathy to the bureaucracy; all these may be found amongst those tendencies. At certain points in history one has come upon just such common characteristics in opposing factions ; but it is quite another matter when, instead of being opponents, they are partners.

There is no occasion, therefore, to recall, as does the last Futurist manifesto, that " the Futurists had been amongst the first *intervenisti*; that they had been imprisoned for their *interventismo* during the battle of the Marne ; imprisoned along with Mussolini for *interventismo* in Rome on the 12th April 1915 ; imprisoned once more along with Mussolini in Milan in 1919 for the Fascist attempt against the State for the organization of armed squadrons " ; nor is there any occasion to recall, as does also this same manifesto, that the Futurists established the first links between the *Arditi* and several of the first armed *Fasci*; nor to assert that " Mussolini is a man of outstanding Fascist character." There is no shadow of doubt as to the truth of all these claims.

Futurism and Fascism were both born in Milan, and in the elections of 1919 Marinetti and Mussolini stood side by side as the candidates of the one and the other. It was the Futurists who founded the first Fascist newspapers—*l'Ardito*, in Milan, and *VAssaUo*, in Bologna.

To-day the Futurists may look back upon their past, but they would not dare to mention it in the present regime. In four years Fascism has not only changed its political outlook and modified the powers of its

provincial branches, it has gone further than that, and changed its intellectual outlook. Upon coming into power Mussolini did not renounce his old friends the Futurists ; far from it, he would actually have adopted one of their chief projects, a scheme for the founding of a credit bank for artists (a scheme which, however, has never been carried out), had he not had to deal with men not only unsympathetic but even averse to Futurism.

Fascism is all for the hierarchy, tradition and respect of the law. It chooses to set its standards by Rome and the classic era, to follow in the steps of the great Italians of the past, to submit to age-old Italian institutions, and amongst these it includes Catholicism.

Futurism has totally different aims. It protests against tradition, against museums and everything that savours of the* classics, even against academic achievement. The manifesto of the dawn of Futurism, which is still published as propaganda and advertisement, and which accordingly has not yet been suspended by the leaders of the movement, sets forth amongst the aims and objects of Futurism " the abolition of museums, libraries and academic institutions of every kind, and a campaign against ethics and aestheticism, etc." How can such a campaign be reconciled with Fascism with its very different policy of reinstating the ethical values of the past, and which chooses to decorate the covers of its periodical literature with pictures of genuine Roman ruins ?

Futurism is the art of free verse, free prose construction and the free use of words ; it even hints at doing away with words altogether, to be replaced by a system of touch and sound : whereas Fascism is all for the propagation of schools and for the study of

literary monuments of the past, and to that end it has introduced Latin into the school curriculum, and revived the memory of De Amicis and Manzoni and of other luminaries in the various branches of study. What wider discrepancies could one hope to find?

But they do exist, and are to be found in international questions and questions of religion. (Fascism is exclusively an Italian political movement, and cannot extend itself to other countries.) Fascism in other countries, or rather that movement which one finds in other countries under the guise of Fascism, but which is rigidly national at heart, is necessarily by its very nature opposed to Italy. For instance, an Hungarian Fascist cannot be expected to have other aspirations but for the eventual restoration of Fiume to Hungary.

Now Futurism, on the other hand, is essentially an international movement. Marinetti himself acknowledges Futurists in Russia, America, Austria, Germany and every other country in the universe. His own verses, made up of symbols, are the first steps towards the realization of an international *volapük*. *Dadaism* is a direct heir of Futurism, and its home is in Switzerland. Having started during the war in a neutral and anti-national country under the direction of one, Tristan Tzara, a nomad Roumanian, if I am not mistaken, *dadaism* expressed a profound disdain for the idealism of war. In its ranks were found perhaps the strongest and certainly the most logical post-war anarchists.

To return to Futurism: it must be confessed that in one country alone did Futurism really come into its own, and that country was Russia, for there Futurism was a close ally to Bolshevism—one might

almost say its official disguise, for its revolutionary symbols, its propaganda pamphlets, its very books, all came from the Futurists. Their alliance was founded upon a perfectly logical basis, for both movements were *anti-classical*, both having in view the demolition of the past and reconstruction of an industrial order upon new foundations. The factory was the foundation of the Bolshevik creation, and the Futurists founded theirs on inspiration.¹

To turn to the question of religion : Futurism has from its very beginning been anti-clerical. Marinetti expresses himself in one of the first Fascist newspapers in these words : " The priest is brother to the *gendarme*. Henceforward, a bitter and continuous war must be waged against these two arch-enemies, the priest and the *gendarme*." Whereas Fascism, from the moment it came into power, steered a very contrary course with Mussolini at the helm; and that was the same Mussolini who had previously spurned religion, and Catholicism in particular. When he had begun to ascend the ladder of government, and had transferred his party from the Left to the Right, he found he would have to revise his attitude towards the Catholic Church. Fascism needed the connivance of the Church, so Mussolini set about making all manner of advances, insisting upon religious instruction in the primary schools (it had been all but abandoned) and introducing the pomp of religious ceremonies into all State events. The results of this policy remain to be seen ; but in the meantime we may watch the widening of the gulf between Fascist and Futurist views on these points. The only suggestion of Futurism to be found in the Mussolini Government is

¹ See F. Marinetti, *Fascismo e futurismo*, Foligno, 1924.

a certain floweriness of speech, and a certain tendency towards spontaneous action.

FASCISM AS AN ANTI-REFORMIST—After the Fascist literature had been taken out of the hands of the Futurists it became permeated with a catholic fervour which seemed incongruous coming from men who were for the most part disbelievers.

One of the most astounding products of this kind was *l'Europa vivente* (History of the Views of the National Syndicalists), by Curzio Suckert, a much-read and much-discussed book, a paradoxical yet not illogical work, of superficial culture, but by no means void of ideas.

What manner of book, then, is this, and is it not strange to find a Fascist writing of Europe? So it would seem, but it has been Suckert's object in this work of his to consider Fascism as a European phenomenon. But it is not solely from this point of view that his views are worth looking into, for, from another point of view, they apply directly to Italy. Suckert has a strong sense of the insecurity of Fascism if it is to remain upon such a narrow basis, and also of the necessity of international interests if Italy is to thrive and progress. But what is the message of Fascism which Suckert wants Italy to transmit to Europe, to the whole world?

Granting that Italy is a country ruled out from modernity by the bonds of antiquity, he urges that it is useless for them to spend their days regretting that such phenomena of modern times as the Reformation, the French Revolution and free-thinking have passed them by, and that they must go their own way independent of other nations. If she looks back upon

what has been original and outstanding in her past* she will observe that she has always pursued an anti-modernist policy. Italy has always been anti-reform rather than for it, reactionary rather than revolutionary, catholic rather than free-thinking. Throughout the ages Italy has been governed by tyranny, whether it were at the hands of her communal system or of her nobility. The Italian carries a dagger in his pocket, not a gun slung over his shoulder. Italy can never be an industrial capitalist country with an Anglo-Saxon constitution.

Suckert gives a curious interpretation to the *Risorgimento*. He sees in it the victory of the minority over the majority, a majority made up of the masses and the respectable middle classes, chary of abandoning their peaceful life and risking ruin even in the cause of justice. It is against such a majority as this that Italy's "great men" have had to contend. It has not been the task of these men to represent the people from whom they have sprung and with whom they find themselves in conflict; it has been through opposition and not representation that they have earned their claim to greatness, through reaction, negation and contradiction of the qualities and failings of the Italian people. From the time of Dante up through the ages to Mazzini, it has been minds at war with the Italian mentality which have led the people where their own ambition would never have urged them.

So much for Suckert's book. He interprets Fascism as the successor of Italian Socialism; hence its subtitle, *Syndicalism*. Whether his interpretation is correct remains to be seen ; for the moment one cannot judge.

I doubt whether Suckert's views find favour altogether with the Fascists. They have certainly been taken up by a few intellectuals anxious to have an established theory about Fascism. One of these intellectuals, Ardengo Soffici, reputed to be a man of culture, at any rate from an artistic point of view, was concerned by the "apparent absence in the first place of any hard-and-fast doctrine to constitute a framework round which to build the body." The Fascist movement seemed to him like "a vast river, advancing rapidly and majestically over the land, which might sweep over everything and finally settle down in a vast swamp if immediate steps were not taken to dam it and to direct its course/'^x

A FASCIST WRITER: ARDENGO SOFFICI—Like Suckert, Ardengo Soffici sought the fundamental principles of Fascism, turning to Catholicism for the solution. He developed Suckert's anti-reformist theory, dividing the world into two parts. On the one hand he put what he believed to be all the good—classicism, art, invention—and all these he labelled *Catholic*; on the other he put all that he believed to be evil—Romanticism, comprising sentimental art and individualism—and this he labelled *Protestant*. Fascism was the consummation of the good or Catholic strain, the goal of classicism and all that went with it.

This historic aspect, if such it can be called, is curious. It recalls, though in a different sense, the Pan-Germanists of days gone by, whose arguments were founded with no less regard to the historical aspect.

¹ Suckert followed this book tip by another which has far more originality; *Italia bar bar a*, Torino (Gobetti), 1926.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

However, Soffici is a present-day writer, and no pedant, so that if the reader wishes to pursue his theories, he will find them fully explained in various articles by Soffici himself. Soffici tried to spare as much as possible the philosophers Croce and Gentile, whose idealism is closely allied to the idealism of the German Reformation, in his condemnation of Protestantism. The ideals which Soffici voices in his writings are generally judged to be the lapses of a man whose genius lies in another direction—in this case, in art. There is really only one Fascist writer, and that is Mussolini, with his *War Diary*, full of clever and vivid descriptions, and his *Speeches*, rich in personality. There is only one Fascist artist, and that is Soffici.

But he is a Fascist writer too, for all that.

He is a Fascist writer in every respect except that he has not registered as a Fascist. He is a Fascist at heart, having been amongst the very first, and having foretold Fascism in one of his novels, which, like almost all prophetic works, is almost unknown to the world.

He is doubtless known as a critic of modern painting, as one of the foremost of impressionist writers, as the author of two of the best war books and as the exponent of Futurism. An artist pure and simple, dropped from the literary realms of Carducci and D'Annunzio, he created masterpieces in a rapidly sketched-in landscape, in the analysis of a soul, in picking out miraculously with his pen the light and shade, the contrast between one colour and another. All his theories and arguments centre round this art; his critical essays (*Scoperte e massacri*), and his essays on modern French literature (*Statue e fantocci*), which cover the ground between Moreas and Claudel, be-

tween Apollinaire and Max Jacob. There is no hint of Fascism in his war books (*Kobilek* and *La ritirata del Friuli*), or in his still earlier ones (*Arlecchino : Giomale di bordo*), which are all colour and spontaneity interspersed with the philosophy of all classes of society.

In one book only is Soffici a Fascist, and that is in his *Lemmonio Bordo*,¹ which again abounds with descriptions and types—peasants with their carts telling each other their experiences on the sun-bathed roads of Tuscany, while their donkeys stumble along between the shafts; scenes inside old inns; mothers nursing their babes, symbol of a prolific race—but which is yet the book in which he foretells Fascism. If we consider for a moment that *Lemmonio Bordo* dates back to 1911, when there was no possibility of foreseeing such a movement as Fascism, we must realize that Fascism sprang from much older and much deeper-seated sources than the war. As a matter of fact, the seeds of Fascism were sown ten years before the war, when criticism was being brought to bear on democracy, and when there arose loud outcries for reform.

Lemmonio Bordo warrants a mention here. It is the story of a young Italian emigrant who returns to Italy filled with love for his country, but who, upon setting himself to study it, finds nothing but ignominy, ignorance and immorality. "What he saw," wrote Soffici, "was error only and wickedness, abuse, cowardice, immorality and stupidity of every kind and description. Government, politicians, workers, journalists, priests, private persons, soldiers, artists, writers, business men. The question was, which of

¹ This name was borrowed from the *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini*, and, translated, **meant** "the churlish monk."

these was responsible ? Faced with this dilemma, Lemmonio joined the Fascists. There was born in him a passionate love mingled with mad fury, like the love of a jealous husband for an unfaithful wife whom he would worship and seek to kill alternately, drag by the hair of her head over the stones of the street one minute, and the next be clasping her to him and devouring her with kisses." And in the doctrines of Fascism, Lemmonio recognized the only remedy for his country. Ever before his eyes there rose the vision of a man, half-priest, half-soldier, his face drawn, a club in his hand, walking from town to town, from country to country, and wherever he heard of outrage or persecution, thither he turned his steps, striking down the evil-doers to right and to left of him. Was this not a prophecy ?

So Lemmonio set to work in his own native Tuscany, but very soon he realized that there was one important thing he lacked, and that was strength. He joined forces with Zaccagna then, the type of strong man, the butcher, a man prepared to make the supreme sacrifice, if need be, to subjugate the wrong-doers. And the weird circumstance about Zaccagna was that he wore a black shirt. When they found that brute force was not enough and that they needed strategy, they extended their fellowship to Spillo, a pedlar and a master trickster. Together they reduced the whole of Tuscany to a state of order, until they reached Florence.

At this point Soffici must have wearied or the publisher have become faint-hearted, for the story stops here. It remains an unfinished work whose theme is somewhat weak, but it does not lack fascinating pages of adventure in village and open country.

\ After that, Soffici went to the war, and there he lost his scepticism and his internationalism; he became a patriot with an enormous admiration for his generals, and a stout supporter of tradition, and from being a prime mover in the Cubist and Futurist schools of "freedom of expression," he became a student of classical literature and art. He went about extolling hierarchy, over which he had cast a close of magic illusion of his own weaving after his return from a long visit to Paris, which had convinced him that in them lay the surest hope of fulfilment.

Soffici does not theorize. His principles are rather the outcome of his personal reasonings in which he calls the whole world to witness ; and he does this so simply and so naturally, with so glorious a disregard of practicability, that he has won the esteem and sympathy of half the world, even sometimes of his adversaries.¹

THE PHILOCATHOLICISM OF ROCCA—Another philo-catholic is Massimo Rocca. A convert from anarchy and the ranks of the revolutionaries, he educated himself out of the modest position of a hand in a printing office into the writer's study. We may gauge the full extent of his culture when we recall the fact that not long ago he undertook the direction of a small general information newspaper, *La Scienza per tutti*. Rocca had come under the influence of the movements represented by Bergson, Croce and Sorel at the end of the last century. Like many self-educated men, lest he should be reproached with a limited educational horizon, he published an uninterrupted flow of lectures on men and books. He

¹ A. Soffici, published by the Casa Vallecchi. Florence.

parades incessantly his reading, his views and the names of men and philosophers of whom he knew something, but his own originality was decidedly meagre.

He saw in Fascism an anti-intellectual movement which acted as a curb to Bolshevism. Both Fascism and Bolshevism sprang from revolt against the cold reason of intellect, which repudiates the idea of a god-head, morality and any of the accepted rules of life. Philosophic and historical research reveal criticism of a supreme power as the first step to be followed successively by criticism and then negation of intellect, then the need for a practical disproof of its existence, and this is where violence comes in; then triumph of the masses on the one hand and internal strife on the other to sustain violence; and finally the triumph of violence in Fascism and Bolshevism. The first step alone in this sequence of events marked the breakdown of evolution and the first stage on the downward path, after which the iconoclasts made remoter and ever remoter the hope or possibility of reconstruction. Fascism still supported the superior claims of instinct over reason while seeking to repair the ravages of the iconoclasts by holding up again those ideals which they had so lightly and so foolishly cast to the ground; for Fascism was as ready to sacrifice intellect as was any anti-intellectualist. To-day there is a real tendency towards the revival of a new creed founded on instinct, with its own dogma to consecrate and establish it in the eyes of the world.

This merging of the mystic and anti-intellectual movements is significant, especially where we find intellectuals joining the ranks of the Fascists.

Rocca,¹ too, like the others of whom I have spoken,

¹M Rocca, *Idea sul fascismo*, Florence, 1924.

¹ shows leanings towards Catholicism, but his is a Catholicism to suit the needs of the individual, not the Catholicism of the Church. It is a curious fact that all these defenders of Catholicism give it a wide berth when it involves religious practice, so that their religious outlook is actually aesthetic and anti-intellectual rather than Catholic.

But the Fascists—and in these I do not include the Fascist rabble—remain impervious to this conflict. Publishers and libraries can testify to the fact that the Fascists do not trouble themselves about books and study. In fact their leaders—men like Finzi and Farinacci—have on more than one occasion upheld ignorance, and in an article intended for the instruction of the Balilla, or Young Fascists, Finzi went so far as to say that he had risen to his present exalted position without study, and that it was therefore unnecessary for the Young Fascists to waste too much of their time on worthless books.

A FASCIST PHILOSOPHER : GIOVANNI GENTILE—Even the philosophy of Gentile, appointed to a place in Mussolini's Ministry after the " March on Rome " and prime mover of that scholastic reform which Mussolini described as the " most Fascist of all Fascist reforms "—even his philosophy did not penetrate the intellects of the Fascist leaders.

Giovanni Gentile belongs not only to Italy but to the whole world, before ever he can be said to belong to Fascism. Nobody, neither Gentile himself nor his disciples, would have considered up until the " March on Rome " that there existed any connecting link whatsoever between their idealist or actualist philosophy and Fascism. Before that Gentile had

worked through the medium of the Liberal party,' and had even betrayed Conservative tendencies, but he had never allied himself in any way with the Fascists, nor even turned the light of his philosophy upon that political body. Having accepted a post in the Ministry, he decided, on 31st May 1923, to give his support to Fascism, and from that day forward Gentile and his disciples devoted themselves to adapting their "actualism" and their views on State conduct to the principles of Fascism, and to proving that Fascism was the realization of the Liberal conception. Gentile was insistent upon this point throughout, but it was on one particular occasion, in his speech in Palermo on 31st March 1924, on the eve of the election, that he elaborated it in all its aspects.

"I have heard it alleged," he said, "that Fascism has no doctrine, no philosophy; that in counterbalancing the disruptive forces of the Socialist and Popular agitators, Fascism, recognizing the power of moral strength, has adopted the Liberal doctrine with its sane conception of a powerful State, ready to sink all other interests in the common cause and to prefer law and order to the caprice of individuals. I, personally, do not hold this opinion, because I make a point of not laying down hard-and-fast rules regarding a doctrine or philosophy, as so many people are apt to do in dogmatic treatises; and, besides, I am very much inclined to believe that the true doctrine is that which does not express itself in typed words, but in the actions and personalities of its exponents, in their manner of dealing with the grave problems which confront them; for a man who is not given to dissertation and theorizing may be immeasurably the abler man when faced with the actual problem.

Practice is the true test of theory. Abstract protestations and denials are of no account when it comes to the point where action is required ; what counts is the man and the line he will take—not blindly, of course, but from convictions arrived at through careful and well-weighed reasoning which can be relied upon to point out the right way to him. In the same way, suicide is the only proof that a man does not value his life, and the surest proof of its value is for a man to give up his life for the love of his country, and so to perpetuate his ideal in concrete form.

" Let us quit books, then, and consider the spirit of the deeds which throughout history have meant so much more to us than any expounded doctrines. And, above all, let us get away from the idea that the Fascist doctrine and the Liberal doctrine are one and the same thing. It might be a very good thing incidentally to have this doctrine more clearly defined by our opponents, for it is true that there is a Liberal doctrine which coincides with Fascism, but it is equally true that there are many Liberals to-day who would not have it said that there was anything common to both, and who would point out that it would be well to define this other Liberalism in order to avoid confusion.

" We might take this opportunity of looking more closely into this Liberalism. I see two distinct principles in its doctrine : for the one liberty is a right, for the other it is a duty ; for the one development, for the other a victory ; for the one equality, for the other privileges and class distinction. There is the Liberalism which looks for freedom in the individual and so sets the individual against the State, and this kind of Liberalism has no intrinsic value, providing only for

- the well-being of the individual; it is a means but not an end. It confines itself to the maintenance of public order, drawing the line at ethics which it leaves to the conscience of the individual. This is the classic Liberalism, of English origin. And, moreover, it is the false Liberalism which stops short with a half-truth. Mazzini stood up against it, damning it with a force which has earned him immortality.

" But there is another Liberalism founded on Italian and German thought, which derides this imaginary antagonism which is supposed to exist between the State and the individual, which sees that individual qualities cannot be safeguarded, for the very reason that they have a universal significance and are a part of the expression of wider interests and a common cause, and that they all go to build up the moral substance of the individual. This kind of Liberalism may have liberty as its goal and as the ruling factor of life, but only in so far as that end may be achieved by individual and social education, so that each individual may have implanted in him a common aim, a kind of guiding force to keep him in the right channels without in any way interfering with his own private activities. Thus the State and the individual become one ; and the art of government is the art of making the aims of each a common aim, so that the maximum of liberty may exist side by side with the maximum not only of public orderliness, but the fullest acceptance of the sovereignty of the law and the necessary agencies of the law. In this we arrive at a point where the maximum of liberty and the maximum of State control are co-existent and interdependent.

" What is this control of which we speak ? Those who do not know what State control, and hence liberty,

involves want to be clear on this point. They set a distinction between moral and material power, as between the power of accepted law, and violence directly opposed to the welfare of the citizen. These distinctions are surely too crude to demand further analysis. All power is moral, because all power has to do with the common weal; and whatever the instrument employed, be it sermon or rod, the effect is always the same, for it is always working for the same end. Any master knows that the means of getting at his men varies according to temperament and circumstances. Everything then comes down to the fact that there is no liberty but the liberty which is inherent in the State, and that the State is not the arbitrary indulgence of the will of the first comer, but an authorized body for the repression of arbitrary will, and a guarantee to society in general, and to the individual citizen in particular, that his safety is guarded by the mailed fist of the law."

Summing up, Gentile continues :

" In this respect Fascism coincides with Liberalism—the second form of Liberalism, that is to say. But there is this difference between them, that Fascism not only theorizes but acts : whereas Liberalism as it existed in its final form stopped at theorizing.

" But in what lay the success of Fascism when Liberalism had failed ? It can only be supposed that it owes its success to the masses who had already flocked beneath the standards of the *Fasci* when the theory of State control was still only the dogma of some solitary intellectual who had found his way into the ranks of the Liberals, who, up till then, as a body, had but an inkling of its meaning, and had not yet got beyond a vague and indeterminate formula of

abstract liberty. Whereas Fascism was a mass movement, Liberalism was a philosophy gradually taking shape in the minds of a few intellectuals. And the difference did not lie only in numbers, but also in the fact that the masses got hold of an idea which spread like a fever, until eventually it became a force, and once it had become a force it was all-encompassing. Fever leads to action, so that it becomes an active force working its way into the vitals of world activity. That is why Fascism has come to the top as no other party has done ; that is why it has become a supreme power whose doctrinal formula has lost nothing in being put into action. Had it lost sight of its doctrine it could not now hold and rule socially and politically many thousands of men."

These are the words of the great Fascist philosopher. The weak point in his argument regarding the State which is to embody the ideals of the nation (hence its title of an *ethical and moral State*) is the difficulty in which it places us of deciding whether the Bolsheviks have a right to a part therein. Supposing that this conception gave the Russians Liberty in Russia, would that mean that democracy or Liberalism would not mean liberty for the Italians in the Italian State ? Then, wherefore the " March on Rome " ? In conclusion, Gentile asserts that it is morally just to take possession of the State, but he does not explain how it is that in the ethical State what was honourable yesterday is a crime to-day, and vice versa.¹

¹G. Gentile, *Il fascismo nel governo della scuola*, Palermo, 1924; B. Giuliano, *La politica, scolastica del governo nazionale*, Milan, 1924; *L'esperanza politica dell'Italia*, Florence, 1924. Gentile's most interesting work from a political point of view is a collection of speeches and defences, *Che cosa è il fascismo*, Florence (Vallecchi), 1926. But Rocco should also be added to the list of a student of

THE THEORY OF FASCISM ON the whole, the principles of Fascism have had very little influence on the movement. They are kept alive by the little groups of intellectuals, and even there these principles rule their outlook rather than their activities. They really serve as a moral justification of a series of questionable motives and selfish interests.

It is impossible to get a clear notion of the theories of the authors of Fascism except by studying the leading provincial Fascist newspapers. The predominant points, however, are : keen patriotic as a manifestation of nationalism; a benignant State whose task it shall be to direct and uphold the activities of the individual; and most important of all, the acceptance of the State as Fascist property, as formerly it had been military property; that the nation be divided into two parties, the Nationalists or Fascists—to be endowed with unrestricted rights—and the anti-Nationalists or anti-Fascists, who must submit to the will of the others. The Fascist mentality explains the attitude very much better than any theories can be expected to render it; it also explains the behaviour of the Fascists, and the reactionary tendency of public opinion resulting therefrom. But the philosophy of Suckert, Rocca and Gentile have their place in the intellectual and political development of Italy; and in turning their philosophy upon Fascism, they certainly credit it with much finer principles than it would have claimed for itself.

Fascist principles. Alfredo Rocco made an official statement regarding the anti-liberal Fascist State in his speech at Perugia.—

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

CHAPTER V

THE FASCIST STATE

The Ruling Element in Fascism—Mussolini's Dominant Personality—State Departments and Fascist Departments—Characteristics of the Governing Power—On the Higher, not the Lower Path—Fascist Representation—Competent Authorities—The Press—The Reserve and the " Balilla "—Provincial " Fasci "—The " Fasci " Abroad—Colonial " Fasci "—Assessments, Budgets and Stipends—The Trade Unions—Fascist Syndicalism—The National Militia—Conclusion.

THE RULING ELEMENT IN FASCISM—It is always difficult to describe the organization of a party which is still in process of formation, and especially when it is as unstable as the Fascist party. I shall have to confine myself to describing it as it was conducted from the time of its coming into power up to the Matteotti affair, and even then I shall have to overlook the continuous changes which were ever taking place from month to month in the central government departments in the Cabinet, the Triumvirate, the secretariat and finally in the Directory of Four, and confine myself to seeking the meaning of certain tendencies in the constitution of various departments without regard to chronological exactitude.

The national Fascist party, when it came into power after the " March on Rome," did not take up a revolutionary attitude, but set about trying to come to a compromise with the men and agencies of the old

regime, most of whom, either through fear or patriotism, appeared to be perfectly willing to accept Fascism. Having acquired power by force of arms (an illegal act in itself, and one which was only legalized by the King sending for Mussolini to form a Ministry, and by the House passing a vote of confidence), the Fascists could very easily have occupied all the important posts, revised the entire political constitution, and even, I venture to say, have done away with the monarchy. But from the very beginning Mussolini made it clear that he did not desire a republic, whether for personal reasons or because he knew that some sections of his party, especially the Nationalist wing, would not have followed him all the way, I cannot say. Mussolini kept to the regular procedure and formed a Ministry in which there were several Fascists, but also representatives of the Popular, demi-Socialist, Democratic and Liberal parties ; he even went so far as to keep a member of Facta's government, whom that minister had cast out after the " March on Rome." No essential State department was suppressed, either the House, the Senate or the legal and financial departments. The only thing that he did was to see that the " ruling Fascist class " was represented in every one of these. By so doing he was able to achieve two ends : he was able to mete out rewards to all those men who had devoted themselves to the Fascist cause, and at the same time to test them and afford them the government and administrative education they so sorely needed.

But with the growth of its power the party became in an ever-increasing degree an official part of the Liberal State, as it added new laws to those already in existence.

The Fascist revolution had much in common with the Russian, in so far as it arose out of activity coming from the minority who were out to conduct reforms, and [to sweep away the old electoral, parliamentary and democratic systems. But there were differences, too*, between the two movements which did not end with their economic aspects—communist on the one hand and capitalist on the other; for Fascism did not wipe out the old constitution but merely added to it, whereas Communism set up a new constitution in the place of the old. The Russian revolution was thorough; the old judicial and legislative institutions had to go to give place to the new there ; in Italy the old and the new existed side by side. In Russia there was a wholesale substitution of Communists for the men who had held office in the old regime : here and there one might be retained, but he was well-schooled to Commtnism. In Italy the Fascist was introduced like leaven or like a parasite, as the case might be, into **the** old departments, but the skilled posts remained in the hands of the men who had held them in the old regime, and who were prepared to bow to the new, even though they might not approve it. It is obvious from this that the Bokhevic ruling class had gone much further towards fitting themselves for their task than had the Fascists.

The slow and inefficient working of the agencies of the liberal State was what drove the Fascists to introduce a new constitution. For many years past, and in particular during the war, the liberal State had increased its personnel without seeing to it that it got proportionately bigger returns ; it had, besides, given **way** before all the demands of Parliament and of **the** trade unions without consulting public interests.

So that when Fascism promised governmental economies, support of industrial claims on Parliament, the appointing of special officials with full powers and acting upon their own authority, a heavy reaction at once set in in its favour.

MUSSOLINI'S DOMINANT PERSONALITY—It is difficult to understand the co-operation of these two distinct organizations, the party and the State, unless we bear in mind the fact that throughout a single mind handled the reins of both. That mind was Mussolini, and his extraordinary force of personality may be grasped when we consider that the usual titles of deputy or president were not found adequate in his case, but that an old Roman word—a word which belongs to the language of Dante, *dux* or *duce*—had to be revived to express this leader, this spiritual guide, this general, whose power and authority and fascination over the people could not find expression in any of the commoner words.

Il duce expresses everything that he stands for, which is everything. In the first Fascist Ministry¹ he was Prime Minister, Minister of Home and Foreign Affairs, Air Minister, and President of the Fascist Council-General.

At the same time Fascists occupied the following posts : Under-Secretary to the Presidency, the deputy Acerbo ; Under-Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs, the deputy Finzi ; the deputy De Stefani, Minister of Finances and Chancellor of the Exchequer, which were combined after the death of M. Tangorra ; De Vecchi,¹ who was later made Governor of Somali-

¹ He was replaced in October 1924 by General De Bono, who kit the position of head of the militia to fill this post.

land, Under-Secretary to the Treasury; the deputy Oviglio, Lord Chief Justice ; the deputy Sardi, Under-Secretary of Public Works ; the deputy Lupi, Minister of Education; the deputy Federzoni, formerly a Nationalist, Colonial Minister; the deputy Ciano, Naval Command ; the deputy Torre, Secretary of Railways; the deputy Giuriati, Minister of Surrendered Territories, an office which was later abandoned.

In this first Mussolini Cabinet there were three ministers and Under-Secretaries of State from the Popular party, one Liberal—Senator Gentile, who subsequently became a Fascist—one semi-Socialist, the deputy Di Cesaro, who resigned later—one Democrat, who became a Fascist later on, the deputy Canazza.

STATE DEPARTMENTS AND FASCIST DEPARTMENTS—Alongside of the State department which was the Cabinet, there was a corresponding Fascist department known as the Fascist Council-General. It was not, as might be supposed, the headquarters of the party turned into a secretariat. The Council-General was formed by Mussolini in Rome after his accession to power. It resulted from a meeting of the Fascist leaders in an hotel in Rome, on a certain evening in December. So well pleased was Mussolini with the success of this meeting that it was decided that it should be repeated periodically in the future; and the date fixed for its assembly was the twelfth of each month. This regularity, however, was not strictly adhered to, and the meetings now only take place as the need arises and at the command of Mussolini. There are not as yet any fixed statutes which govern *this* assembly, and the number of those present has always varied up to the present, but, roughly, it com-

prises: Mussolini, as president; the Ministers and Under-Secretaries of State out of the Fascist party—De Stefani, Oviglio, Giuriati, Federzoni, Finzi, Acerbo, Ciano, Lupi—and later, from April 1923 onwards, Gentile,¹ the Chief of Police; De Bono,² the Commissioner of Railways; Torre;³ members of the old headquarters of the party—Starace, Bolzon, etc.; the secretaries of the party—Bianchi, Sansanelli, Bastianini, Maxaviglia; members of Parliament who are called upon from time to time to furnish reports; and Cesare Rossi, head of the Fascist Cabinet up until his arrest for complicity in the Matteotti affair.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOVERNING POWER—It would take too long to give the characteristics of all the Government personnel. Some features at any rate are common to many of them, and these with explain well enough the original and general character of the new ruling class, f i n Russia the Bolshevist Government staff was picked from the ruins of revolutionary Socialism, and from the bands of emigrants who returned after the revolution. In Italy it was picked from the ranks of the revolutionary Socialist who in 1914 had stood out in favour of war; from the ex-service men; and for the most part from *native of the valley of the Po* and from the northern parts of

¹ Count Casati took his place as Minister of Education, and after the crisis of January 1925, he in his turn was replaced by Professor Fedele.

² Appointed Governor of Somaliland in October 1924, and replaced as head of the Fascist militia by General L. Balbo, who resigned in November 1924, after some disclosures regarding his attitude towards anti-Fascists and was succeeded by General Gandolfo.

³ Left the Fascists in February 1925.

the peninsula in general. A very few were *Syndicalists* who represented that branch of Italian Socialists who, before the war, had refused to accept the reforming and pacific policy of the Socialists and sought an alternative in revolutionary action, strongly urging the expedient of a general strike. These were A. Olivetti, Arturo Labriola, Enrico Leone, Alceste De Ambris, *Agostino Lanzillo*, Paolo Mantica, *Michele Bianchi*, *Edoardo Rossoni*, *Cesare Rossi*: the names in italics being those who joined the Fascist ranks; the others, like Leone, remaining among the revolutionaries or, like Labriola, becoming Reformist Socialists, or yet again, like De Ambris, following D'Annunzio, but all of them more or less opposed to Mussolini.

ON THE HIGHER, NOT THE LOWER PATH—There is nothing democratic about the Fascist organization. The first party leaders may have been elected by the Committee of the *Fasci* representatives, elected in their turn by the usual ballot system.

To-day appointments are made by the supreme authorities. Departmental staff, district inspectors, officers in the national militia, members of Parliament, are all nominated by the central Government—that is to say, by Mussolini.

The provincial Federations, and local *Fasci* holding their meetings, alone preserve their democratic character. But even there a word from Mussolini will break up a meeting, or disband a *Fascio*, and set another up in its place without delay, composed of the elements which it shall please the *duce* to dictate. Innumerable *Fasci* both in Italy and abroad have been disbanded for lack of discipline and other causes ;

and more than one has been disbanded and recruited over again during the same year. These groups are not even allowed to choose their own leader, but are sent some man who has proved his trustworthiness from headquarters. These men are called *fiduciari*. They are controlled from headquarters, but they are dependent upon the local *Fascio*, which is authorized to settle disputes of an economic character, rather in the capacity of representative of the workers than of intermediary.

FASCIST REPRESENTATION—The Fascist organization may be said to work alongside of and to protect the State organization, for the President of the Council-General is also the Prime Minister of the country ; the head of Police is also the head of the National Militia.

Wherever there is a provincial council there is also a provincial Fascist federation ; where there is a municipal council there is a *Fascio* ; alongside of the Prefects, with authority over them, there is a political Commissioner ; the Fascist Chief of Police controls the Police authorities ; and a High Commissioner of Railways exists at the side of the Secretary of Railways.

Where this protective authority is not called for, for instance, in societies of a national character such as the Society Dante Alighieri, which before the war had held Nationalist views, Fascist members are introduced in the capacity of supervisors. The Italian Red Cross admit the deputy Bottai to a place on its council ; the Italian-American Society took the deputy Sardi as their president ; the deputy Caradonno, Postmaster-General, had a place on the council of the wounded soldiers' association ; the ex-service men's

association was reconstituted in order to make place for Giuriati; Massimo Rocca was made vice-president of the national trust society; Prince Boncompagni, who had won the favour of Mussolini by deserting the Popular party, when that party passed a vote of censure on Fascism in the Camera, took over the control of the Bank of Rome from the old Count Santucci. And presiding over the Sports Society, the Aviation Society, etc., we find Finzi and Capanni. In fact, Fascism has its representatives and officials in every branch of the Government constitution.

COMPETENT AUTHORITIES—The Fascist competent authorities are the only organization which have no counterpart in the State organization. They are groups of men with technical knowledge charged with keeping the public authorities informed of all that is going on and of any schemes which are in view. They are elected by the Secretariat of the party, and have been the special care and achievement, very characteristic of the Fascist Government of Massimo Rocca, an independent ex-anarchist who turned Nationalist after the Libyan war, a tireless worker and an excellent lecturer, and of Giovanni Preziosi, an unfrocked priest who, ever since the days of *interventismo*, has taken a prominent part in politics, and who is now in charge of the review, *La vita italiana*, and of the Neapolitan daily paper, // *Mezzogiorno*.

There were four of these competent authority groups—administrative, educational, colonial and literary; and it is a significant fact that they had to look outside the party for men fitted for such responsible positions, and let them go to people who were barely sympathetic to Fascism.

It cannot be said for certain that these competent authorities' reports (which embrace not only the capital but also the provinces) actually do influence the action of the Government. Many of the competent authorities are themselves members of the Government, and know what questions are going to be brought up by the groups, so that if the Government and groups disagree the conflict may even result in the dissolution of a group, as was the case with the educational group which stood out against Gentile's reforms.

For these reasons many Fascists doubt the utility of these groups and look forward hopefully to a constitutional reform which should supplant them by technical consultants in Parliament.

Some Fascists of Syndicalist tendencies assign to the groups not only the rôle of consultant, but also that of mediator, arbitrating between the employer and the worker, preserving the interests of all classes and safeguarding the masses' against tyranny.

However, the groups were only a tentative effort, and at the end of a year they had altogether ceased to exist.

THE PRESS—The party press embraced about twenty dailies and a considerable number of small weekly publications. Since the "March of Rome," the daily press is almost without exception favourable to Fascism, so that it is a simpler task to mention those papers which maintain a hostile attitude. There were the *Corriere della Sera*, of Milan; *La Stampa*, of Turin ; // *Mondo*, of Rome ; and to a certain extent *Il Maitino*, of Naples ; not to mention the unitarian Socialist papers such as the *Giustizia*, of Milan; the *Lavoro*, of Genoa; or the Communist and Maximalist

Avanti/; the Republican *l'Unità*; the *Voce Repubblicana*, of Rome; and the Democratic Catholic or " Popular " *Popolo*.

The most important organ of Fascism is the *Popolo d'Italia* of Milan, founded by Mussolini, and conducted by his brother Arnaldo since Benito became Prime Minister. The *Corriere Italiano* was founded in Rome on the instigation of Finzi and at considerable expense, for it set out to be a great paper, but unfortunately nobody ever read it until it began to publish a pornographic serial story. It was immediately suppressed upon the discovery that its editor was one of the chief conspirators in the Matteotti affair. *L'Inpero* is an extremist paper run by the one-time Futurists, Carli and Settimelli, which take up a very strong line against all those who do not see in Mussolini the prophet of Fascism and hence the saviour of Italy. The *Nuovo Paese* is edited by Carlo Bazzi, a very moderate Fascist, who upholds Mussolini, but would have him go over to the Left and adopt a more Syndicalist attitude ; it attacks fiercely the Minister of Finance, De Stefani, and his followers, whom it accuses of supporting the *Banca Commerciale*.

Even the Fascists themselves are bound to admit that these papers have a very small circulation, and particularly since the Matteotti affair anti-Fascist papers have had an increasingly wide circulation.

There are very few Fascist reviews, but the most important one is the *Gerarchia*, on account of its having started under the direction of Benito Mussolini, **and** having been passed on by him to Margherita Sarfatti, his trusted friend. The *duce* still contributes **articles** to this **paper**. **It is published in Milan.** The *Critica fascista*, **on the other hand, is published in**

tome, and is conducted by the deputy Bottai; it is the organ of a group which is known as the *revisionists*—that is to say, those who are for modernizing Fascism by adopting methods of persuasion instead of the sporadic violence which was the practice in the provinces.

We may also add to this list *La rivoluzione fascista*, of Pisa, the organ of a group of young Independents who were looking for an intellectual renaissance, and the *Conquista dello Stato*, under the direction of Cuckert, the organ of Fascism "pure and simple."

The instrument of the Syndicalist Fascists is a daily paper called // *lavoro d'Italia*, and also a review, *la stirpe*, both of which are published in Rome; while Milan is the centre for the hostile Socialist publications.¹

THE RESERVE AND THE "BALILLA"—Youths between fifteen and seventeen years of age enrol in the "reserve," and the children between the ages of nine and fifteen in the "Balilla." They all wear the black shirt. Dr. Bastianini is at the head of the "reserve," and Dr. Agnoletti of the "Balilla." These organizations each have their own newspapers, which have a wide circulation, for the number of their adherents is round about 80,000.

The conditions of the Press have undergone a radical change since 3rd January, when Article 3 of the provincial and communal laws was passed authorizing Prefects to suspend papers "calculated to incite public disorder." Now it is entirely in the hands of the Fascists, or that part of it which has not been suppressed. Amongst those still published are the *Corriere della sera*, *Il Giornale d'Italia*, *la Tribuna*, etc. *Il popolo* and *La Giustizia* have been suppressed, and are following still await suspension: // *Mondo*, *La Stampa*, *La Voce lepubblicana*, *L'Avanti!* *L'Unità*.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

THE PROVINCIAL "FASCI" — There are several thousand Fasci altogether, and they are far more numerous in the South than in the North. The headquarters of the party, however, has no precise record of the exact numbers.

The *fasci* choose their secretaries, and secretaries cannot simultaneously hold the position of deputy. After the elections of 1924, Mussolini forbade that any man should hold office both in the party and in the Camera dei Deputati, but this decision had to be repealed in certain cases where it proved inconvenient to certain useful props of Montecitorio.

The life of the provincial *fasci* might be said to be the true life of Fascism; it is scarcely commented upon in the important papers, but it has a considerable influence upon the life of the nation.

It may be noted that in many cases during 1923-24 the new elements which had come with the new regime and the *squadristi* were replaced by the old again ; old customs were reinstated and the old local politicians came into their own again. Their politics were modified, and tended to indulge personal interests once more, and the younger and more ardent generation who recognized in themselves the embodiment of the Fascist ideal began to rebel against this reaction.

Then again there was the perpetual quarrel between the *fasci* and the local syndicates, for the *fasci* were drawn from the employers' class and could not be expected to see eye to eye always with the workers and the peasants.

This general spirit of unrest was accentuated by private disputes which never failed to find their echo in the masses. Disputes of this nature took place at Alexandria between the mayor Sala and the deputy

Torre, in Perugia between the deputies Pighetti and Misuri, in Lombardy between Forni and Giunta, at Bologna between Dino Grandi and Baroncini, in Naples between Padovani and Greco, at Pisa, at Piacenza and in many other places, where there were fierce disputes giving rise to dissension in the *fasci* themselves, press battles and grievances, law-suits, bastinado, even armed resistance ; but in spite of all, the unity of the party was preserved.

Then there were cases such as Farinacci in Cremona, where the presence of the " ras " maintained law and order. This " ras " was the successor of the old " santone," the *derviche* of the Socialist and Popular parties. Farinacci, in fact, had merely stepped into the place of the old Popular deputy, Miglioli.

The most notorious " ras " besides Farinacci were Baroncini in Bologna and Tamburini in Florence. They usually held political views hostile to those of the Roman group, which was accused of having shouldered the burden only to turn it to its own account. Their legislation was autocratic, but they had to consult the interests of the masses who put themselves under the wing of their " ras," so that they were more closely concerned in the welfare of their people than other leaders. It was against the " ras " principally that the *revisionists* directed their fire, when, having got as far as Rome, they started their campaign for *normalizing* politics, partly from perfectly sincere motives proper to persons of culture and ideals who must have a natural distaste for violence, partly on account of the very natural political outlook of those who, taking Rome as the centre of their analytical excursions, cannot be expected to appreciate the individual needs and interests of any one particular

province. This circumstance explains that indefinable hostility which existed between the capital and the provinces, and the abusive terms in which the "ras" were wont to speak of Rome, that "foreign city." The Matteotti murder gave rise to an outcry in Rome which quite mystified the provinces, where the likes of such a crime were not such a rare occurrence ; but in the provinces public opinion and the Press are not the menace that they are in the towns : the "ras" has a freer hand with the Commissioner and the other authorities.

Mussolini's government has always aimed at *normalization*, but the obstacles have so far proved too numerous and too insurmountable, and the Matteotti affair revealed the fact that Mussolini had a force to reckon with in his own government, who had ends in view which were anything but pacific.

THE "FASCI" ABROAD—The *fasci* abroad have quite a different organization and are totally independent of the *fasci* at home. It was evident to the Fascist Government that the formation of *fasci* abroad was a delicate matter which called for very discreet handling; and that they must be dissociated once for all from any connection with the home enterprise. Theoretically, therefore, the *fasci* abroad are not a political party: such was the contention of the Fascist witnesses in the Bonservizi case which was tried in Paris in October 1924. It simply has the capacity of a society to bring together Italians in foreign countries. It has no anti-Bolshevist policy, but is merely a form of propaganda to interest foreigners and Italians abroad in Italy and Italian commerce.

There are somewhere about **150 *fasci* abroad**,

divided into five sections which comprise all parts of the world. Some of them enjoy the support of influential Fascist syndicates. They represent, as a rule, a fresh element, and are not, as might be supposed, organized by persons high up in the Italian colony, who, as a matter of fact, are not usually very popular with their compatriots, for their success has very often been at the expense of Italy and of her good name, and on that account they are regarded with suspicion. In spite of excellent motives the *fasci* abroad are often found to be a disturbing element; this is explained by the fact that many of the Fascists abroad have been forced to quit their country on account of Fascist violence, and when they meet other Fascist refugees, of whom there are a great many in France and elsewhere, they are very apt to continue their quarrel there.¹

THE COLONIAL "FASCI"—There are four colonial *fasci*—one in Lybia, one in Cyrenaica, one in Erythrea and one in Somali.

Their programmes represent the revivalist spirit of the middle classes in the towns, who have begun to assert themselves against the indolent inefficiency of bureaucratic red-tapeism. The colonial *fasci* are generally found to be hostile to the local Government authorities, so that their agitations have sometimes, as in the case of the Cyrenaica *fascio*, necessitated their dissolution. They are not a powerful influence in the colonies.

ASSESSMENTS, BUDGETS AND STIPENDS—Which are

¹ There are now 470 *fasci* abroad; with a total of 44,000 members.
—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

the offices which carry salaries, and from what sources do the funds come ?

Some of the offices are paid by the party. The party funds are derived from its adherents, one million in all, who pay 24 l. per annum, of which 2 l. goes to the central secretariat and the rest towards the upkeep of the local *fascio*. Otherwise it relies entirely upon voluntary subscriptions from well-to-do adherents. In Bologna, for instance, 300,000 l. was asked for, for the purchase of an old palace as the headquarters of the *fascio* ; this sum was raised in a few days, thanks to the levy of a tax of 1000 l. per head. The monthly subscription usually exceeds 2 l. per head. Payments are regulated according to the supposed means of the individual, and in certain provinces they are determined by the tax collector, who also collects the subscriptions to the party.

A recent law case brought to light some singular facts connected with the system of the super-tax. The deputy Torre, head of the Railways, was discovered to have asked a man who had just concluded an important business transaction with the State to subscribe 1,400,000 l. towards the expenses incurred by the Fascist party in the " March on Rome." This discovery goes to strengthen the rumour which had gained wide acceptance that a State contract was often bought by some such " voluntary subscription " to the party, and the same explanation might account for the vast sums which were discovered in Marinelli's safe when that Minister's complicity in the Matteotti affair came to light.

f Naturally all the active posts are salaried, such as the Secretaries, members of Parliament, district inspectors and secretaries of the Fascist organizations.

The State, on the other hand, is responsible for the remuneration of the commissioned officers of the National Militia (which has no pension system) and all staff officers. But officers and men who are not regulars in the service receive no payment whatsoever.

THE TRADE UNIONS—It was only to be expected that, alongside of the political organizations, economic societies should spring up. Each party in Italy has its own trade unions, just as Fascism had its *Italian Trade Union Syndicate*. Two enterprising men were at the head of this Syndicate: G. Postiglione, an engineer, and Dr. E. Civelli. Their programme was as follows :

1. Organization for national purposes of the trade unions on industrial and practical lines.
2. The appointing of financial, industrial and commercial experts to take in hand the economic reconstruction of the country.
3. The development of Italian propaganda abroad.

This Syndicate undertook to protect all unions of Fascist persuasion. These differed from the Socialist trade unions in that their interests were extended to the colonies. Fascist pioneers sought to introduce the trade union movement into Lybia and Cyrenaica, but without great success.

FASCIST SYNDICALISM¹—In June 1922, at the first meeting of the Syndicalist trade unions, the following motion was carried:

¹ See Pighetti, *Il sindacalismo fascista*, Milan, 1924; Rossoni *Le idee dette ricostruzione* Firenze, 1923.

" In view of the fact that more than 2000 Fascists have given their lives for the liberty of the working classes, it is the opinion of the Congress that the election and nomination of the leaders of the Federation and of the organizations dependent thereon should be carried out in conjunction with the headquarters of the National Fascist party."

Within the terms of the motion were set forth the two principles of Fascist Syndicalism :

1. The adoption of a strong line of resistance against Socialist monopoly.
2. The dependence of the syndical on the political movement.

To-day the *National Confederation of Syndicalist Trade Unions* has deserters from the other parties swarming to it in such masses that they have almost more than they can deal with. It is estimated that it has 1,500,000 members on its books.

The headquarters of this vast Confederation is entirely Syndicalist in origin. The Secretary-General of the Confederation is Edmondo Rossoni, who was previously secretary of more than one Chamber of Commerce, and until 1919 was a revolutionary. He has entire charge of the dispatching of emigrant Italians to the United States. The Under-Secretaries are: A. Casalini, the deputy G. Pighetti, B. Cugini, L. Razza, M. Rachile, A. Isola and E. Terrusio. All of these, with the exception of Casalini, a convert from the Republican party, came from the revolutionary Syndicalists.

There were fourteen unions—industrial, commercial, agricultural, scholastic, theatrical, labour, sanitary, cinematograph, food supplies, hospitals, artisans,

aeronautics, docks, academic professions, transport and communications, and State industrial enterprise. Their headquarters were in Rome and Milan. They had as their secretaries men with more or less Syndicalist tendencies, like Dino Grandi—secretary of the academic professions union—a young ex-soldier, known to the Fascists for his democratic tendencies.¹

[All the syndicates in a province belonged to the provincial Federation. Each province had its Federation, whose secretary was elected subject to the approval of the local Fascist powers.

The national Congress is in no way connected with any international body, but it is represented by Grandi at the International Labour Bureau at Geneva. So far it has had no connection, either, with any other national Congress, but the day may dawn before so very long when collaboration becomes imperative, for the Congress has to deal with the emigration question and the organization of syndicates and unions which will enable the emigrants to preserve their nationality by independent enterprise, instead of seeking employment with foreigners.

This Syndicalist organization savours not of democracy in any way whatsoever. It is conducted calmly and pacifically, and there is no doubt but that it has reduced the number of strikes considerably. The Syndicalist leaders, all members of the Fascist party, and in that capacity responsible for any popular movement, regard the strike as a last and desperate means only. But this organization, whose officials, like all other Fascist organs, were recruited from Government headquarters, failed to achieve an altogether Syndicalist national life.

¹ From July 1924 he has been Under-Secretary for Home Affairs.

The year 1924 saw two great "Fascist" strikes—one at San Giovanni Valdarno and the other at Carrara (marble quarries). This last one threw 30,000 men out of employment, including the tramwaymen.

If Syndicalist Fascism is ever to achieve economic peace, it must open up negotiations for collaboration with private industrial owners in the task; and this they have so far omitted to do. The agriculturists have kept their old societies; the *Industrial Confederation* has not accepted the amalgamation, keeping to its old organizations for the settlement of disputes arising between employers and employees, and the situation became increasingly difficult until some trouble arose in July 1924 which caused Mussolini to send for the deputy Bagnasco, secretary of the Fascist Labour Confederation in Piedmont, and accuse the industrial leaders of having wrongly extorted a subsidy of 300 millions from the State, from which sum the workers had drawn no benefit. The national Syndicate of Commerce and the smaller industries (the Fascist upper working classes) proved more tractable.

Fascist Labour, which rates class secondary to the nation, does not deny class differences, but considers that they can be reconciled by the maintenance of cordial relations between employer and employee; and in any case, no matter what the circumstances may be, it condemns strikes in the public services. It recognizes that capitalism has its functions, and would have the workers recognize it. ~~to contribute, but in~~ return* capitalism must not exploit labour. In this respect it holds the views of the Catholic syndicates. But Labour organizers are up against the representatives of the private owners who seek to use the Fascist Labour organization merely as a means of preventing

strikes and reducing wages; and here we find in Fascist Syndicalism the revolutionary germ which might, should the occasion arise, prove increasingly dangerous. What is more, Mussolini could at a word let the revolutionary Jack out of the box of Syndicalism if he were to choose that method of striking fear into the private owners, should they prove intractable. But there again, one can never judge how far it is his intention to realize one of the pet schemes of the Syndicalists—that is to say, to institute a sweeping parliamentary reform by the introduction of Councils of specialists, or even technical parliaments where the proletarian forces might work side by side and on equal terms with the private owners.

This situation is perhaps not fully understood by the Labour delegates, who boycotted the Italian delegate Rossoni at the International Labour Council of the League of Nations. Every year this delegate has the utmost difficulty in carrying through his mission, and in 1924 so poor was his support that he would never have done it but for the votes of the South American private owners.

Fascist Labour, in fact, is still very much of an unknown quantity in the political Fascist movement, particularly because it is difficult to judge how far its leader and members, who as Catholics and Socialists had waged class war, have since modified their views.

THE NATIONAL MILITIA—The National Militia, the outcome, as has been seen, of the Fascist *squad*riste*, had for its task to organize and co-ordinate the *squadre* and to transform them from an undisciplined and impulsive body into a force ruled by responsible authorities, and obedient to the State. *Squadrisimo*

was the gravest menace which faced the Fascists upon their accession to power, and the National Militia was a perfect solution of the problem, for not only did it canalize energies which were impossible to subdue, but it removed the danger of the other parties—Nationalist, Republican and the ex-service men's societies—turning them to their own account. It gave them a uniform dress, put an end to their unauthorized manoeuvres, and any signs of insubordination were dealt with by the expedient of immediate dissolution.

The National Militia was entirely voluntary and unpaid.¹

Up until 20th July 1924 it had not taken the oath of allegiance to the King, but only the oath to God and the Country. It was entirely a party organ, and dependent solely upon the Prime Minister. It was made up of two clashes, and the second included all the members of the Fascist party. Its errand, as a text of 25th July 1923 puts it, was "to act as a powerful police force, and as a precaution against any interference with public order or any seditious action or attempt against the Fascist Government." Mussolini declared in a speech made at the Palazzo di Venezia, "that anyone attempting to oppose the National Militia should be shot."

To meet the expenses incurred by the upkeep of the Militia, 47 millions were paid out in the first half of 1923, where it had been reckoned that 25 millions would suffice to defray the expenses for 1923-24. Armaments were supplied from the barracks of the "Royal Guards/" which had been disbanded. **The**

¹ See A. Businelli, *La miliria nationals : manuals tsorico pratiso*, Milan (Treves), 1934.

arms had always to be returned to the barracks. The officers alone and the military staff received payment. The other militiamen remained in their own trades and only received pay when actually called upon for service. They were authorized at all times, in the absence of other arms, to carry a revolver.

The Militia paraded generally on Sundays and on fete days, or for any public ceremony. They consisted of foot soldiers and groups of gunners. The Militia had three generals—Italo Balbo, Cesare de Vecchi and Gandolfo, who replaced De Bono in October 1924. After the speech from the Crown, which formally recognized the Militia as a branch of the regular Army, efforts were made to give it a more military constitution. In the first place, it was called up to take its oath of allegiance to the King. Later on it will become a wholly military organization, and the conferring of commissions which formerly had a purely political justification will be* revised on the lines of the regular Army. A great deal of discontent has been caused by officers of the Militia holding higher ranks than officers of the regular Army who had made it their career and spent years in earning their promotion. Balbo, for instance, was a lieutenant during the war, and in the Militia he was a general.

Italy is divided into fifteen zones for the purpose of the distribution of the Militia, but these zones have nothing whatever to do with the political divisions. The commandants of the various zones are periodically called to a general meeting by the Prime Minister, who, although he only holds the honorary title of a corporal in the Militia, nevertheless supervises in person its formation and activities.

The relations of the Militia and the regular Army.

towards one another are still so indefinite that regulars are not compelled to salute an officer of higher rank in the Militia.

\ CONCLUSION—The Fascist ruling class is not a very numerous class; it does not exceed in all one thousand. Their chief qualifications have to be youth, organizing powers, a limited experience of public affairs ; a bold and soldierly spirit; preferably of northern origin and industrial interests ; an understanding of how to deal with the masses, and a certain amount of military prestige ; mediocrity of intellect, and a not too extensive knowledge of foreign countries.

The future of this class and the survival of its power—quite apart from that of its leader, Mussolini, who defies speculation—depends entirely upon its skill in *combining its own active capacities with the wisdom borrowed from other parties and other spheres*, and from those who have keener insight into the principles of government than they.¹

¹ The number of "competents" has increased considerably in recent years, since the Moderates, Liberals, Democrats and Socialists—that is to say, all the bureaucracy—have gone over to the Fascist ranks.

CHAPTER VI

FASCISM, CATHOLICISM, NATIONALISM

Fascism and Catholicism—The Attitude of the Vatican—Fascism and Masonry—Fascism and Nationalism.

FASCISM AND CATHOLICISM—The Catholic Fascist union was not solely and simply philosophic ; it was one of the chief features of Mussolini's programme. Catholicism was not merely the natural philosophic resource to which Fascism would be forced to turn, but a very vital instrument of the " imperial " policy which Fascism was striving to Implant in Italy.¹

When Fascism took over the reins of government, a Protestant weekly paper printed in Rome expressed the hope that Fascism would bring with it a religious reformation, the Protestant Reformation which had left Italy untouched in the past, but which should reach her in 1923. Gradually, however, that hope faded, and to-day the paper in question has declared its hostility to Fascism on the grounds that Fascism has come to restore the authority of the Catholic Church and to identify Italy once for all with Catholicism. The fascist view is that a good Italian has only to be a Catholic, and since Catholicism is the instrument of expansion and power in Italy, this is the foundation of the Nationalist conception of Om

¹ See R. Murri, *Fede e Fascismo*, Milan (Alpes), 1924.

Catholic religion which has ibund so many supporters amongst the leading Fascists, amongst whom we may include Mussolini himself.

Mussolini was, in fact, one of the very first promoters of this idea. On 21st June 1921, the leader of the little group of Fascists rose to make his first speech before the Camera. It was, as it were, a tentative declaration of the principles underlying the recent movement. " I am convinced," he said on that occasion, " that the Latin tradition and the tradition of Imperial Rome is alive to-day in Catholicism. If, as Mommsen said twenty-five or thirty years ago, one cannot be in Rome without getting a sense of its universality, I am convinced that that sense emanates solely from the Vatican. I am very disturbed when I see national churches springing up around me, and when I realize that there are millions and millions of men who do not turn their eyes in the direction of Italy and Rome. It is for that very reason that I advance this theory. Indeed, I believe that if the Vatican were to renounce its temporal power—and it appears to be well on the way towards doing so—I consider that it would be the duty of pagan and lay Italy to put at the disposal of the Vatican all those material aids and facilities with which the pagan power is endowed, for the development of Catholicism throughout the world. The fact that 400 million men have all got their eyes focused upon Rome should be a matter of importance and of pride to us Italians."

So in 1921 Mussolini has progressed far, when one recalls that on 25th March 1904 he told the people in the meeting-house at Lausanne that " God does not exist; science has proved the absurdity of religion,

and practice its immorality; men have proved it to be a disease " !

His parliamentary declarations of 1921 were followed by much more audacious declarations in the Press. In the *Popolo d'Italia* of 27th June 1922 he writes : " It is not the intention of Fascism to drive God from heaven and sweep religion from off the face of the earth, as certain materialists have unwarrantably claimed. It does not regard religion as a priestly creation or an artifice of the powers of government to cow the masses."

And the practices of the politician were in no way a contradiction to the theories of the critic. The educational reform, introducing religious instruction into the schools, was the work of a Council presided over by Mussolini. The cult of a lay State had caused the schools to abandon this part of their curriculum, as it had caused every other suggestion of religion to be abandoned. On this point Gentile and Mussolini were in complete agreement.

At the first meeting of the new Board of Education in November 1923, Gentile, Explaining his views on a lay State which cannot be either agnostic or indifferent, declared that " an irreligious State is not a State at all; and that is assuredly not what the Italian State is aiming at to-day. Let it not be said, as one so often hears it said: ' Let us have a religion, most assuredly, but not a prescribed religion.' That is as much as to say: ' Poetry, yes; but not Dante, of Homer, or Shakespeare, or any other poet you may like to mention.' Poetry is always poetry, and the same may be said of religion. And in Italy, if the State is the active conscience of the nation, continuing to act out of the past into the future, if it is the

conscience of history, then it is the conscience of the Catholic religion, alike for those who think that the Catholic ritual, like all expressions of things spiritual, stands in need of revision, of beautifying, of uplifting and of maintaining in that state of perfection.

" The Italian has always been Catholic in his philosophy ; Catholicism has been the very inspiration of his philosophy, from Bruno and Campanella to Vico, Rosmini and Gioberti, and of his art too. On more than one occasion he has repelled the advances of Protestantism into these realms, though ardent spirits have from time to time been prepared to submit to the cruellest martyrdom for the Protestant ideal . . . "

In the opinion of Gentile, Italy must return to her religion if she ever wishes to become a nation founded upon her traditions. Only by these means will she avoid the undermining and extinction of her moral fibre; for even so has scepticism been the worm which has eaten its way into the soul of Italian intellect ever since the Renaissance.

As is only to be expected, many people who knew their old views have read hypocrisy into the curiously changed attitude of these two statesmen, so often at war with one another, and who have so rigorously defended the positions which they now occupy with security. But a short way back we alluded to an atheist Mussolini, mocking and reviling God openly before the people. Now, then, is the time to recall his words in his preface to his *Giovanni Huss, il ver ace* :¹

*' I publish this little volume in the hope that it may jawake hatred in the hearts of my readers for all manner *pi* tyranny, spiritual or pagan, theocratic or Jacobin."

When addressing the Garibaldians on their return

¹ Rome, 1913.

from the Argonne, in the " Conservatorio " at Milan on 28th September 1919, he said : " Give me a pagan people who will fight for life and progress, who will not accept a creed blindly nor a miracle without question!" There is a paganism almost worthy of D'Annunzio for you, and one which has no contradiction before the speech in the Camera which I have quoted above. In his *War Diary*, Mussolini recalls some of his religious-experiences, some of which date back some thirty years : " I went to Mass. That Christmas is still vivid in my memory. My father and one or two others were there, I remember. I followed behind with my mother. Inside the church there were masses of flowers, and in the middle of the altar, in a cradle of flowers, the new-born Babe. It was all very picturesque and it worked upon my imagination. Only, every now and then the fumes of the incense caused me extreme discomfort. At last the service ended in the swelling, surging strains of the organ. The congregation dispersed. All along the road there was a babel of self-satisfied voices. At midday the traditional appetizing Romagnol *cappelletti*^x were steaming on the table." All purely sensual impressions, you see—vivid, but scarcely expressive of any religious emotions of the heart.

As for Gentile, he answered his critics collectively, thus taking the ground from under their feet. In a speech of his which I have already quoted, he adds: " I spurn the censure of those who, under the cloak of morality, accuse me of petty political motives of which I humbly but honestly declare myself incapable. Several years before the birth of the Popular party, in a report upon the lay schools at the Congress of

¹ A sort of paste.

Secondary School teachers in September 1907, I condemned the lay schools, or rather declared that in order to be truly lay, they should be religious in so far as an inclusion of religious instruction in their curriculum would make them so. As for the common herd of critics who are so fond of reminding the minister not to forget the philosopher, I will answer them simply by referring them to documents which are easily accessible, for the Congress in question took up my views, and my report was published over and over again. As for my other critics who have proved so formidable, and who exhort me so incessantly not to forget my devotion to Giordano Bruno, I can only say that my report was headed by a quotation from Giordano Bruno, which formed the text of my discourse; and they must allow, from the proof provided in a lecture he delivered in 1917, that Bruno, Minister of Education, would himself have introduced religious instruction into the schools, and that religion would have been the Roman faith. This knowledge may be uncomfortable, but there it is."

Gentile was quite right, and he continued to go his own way. Any real opposition with which he met was entirely party opposition. Both Mussolini and Gentile attached much importance to the desirability of encouraging the religious—and by that was meant the Catholic—spirit amongst the Italian people. Time alone can prove whether they will have succeeded, and having succeeded whether it has been for the best.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE VATICAN—Had Æsop been alive to-day, he would most probably have invented a fable entitled " The Alliance between the Stag-Beetle

and the Tortoise," and the moral would have been that people with nothing whatsoever in common cannot successfully live together.

The alliance between the Vatican and Fascism has been frequently foretold in the Press, and they most assuredly have provided it with foundation for its prognostications. On one occasion it was a meeting between Mussolini and Cardinal Vanutelli at the wedding of the deputy Finzi; on another it was the visit of Commander Cremonesi, High Commissioner in Rome, to the *Cardinale Vicario*; and on yet a third occasion, Don Sturzo's dismissal from the post of political secretary to the Popular party, then the exclusion of the names of the unfrocked priests Romolo Murri and Giovanni Preziosi from the Fascist rolls; and finally the introduction of compulsory religious instruction into the primary schools. The name of God was perpetually on the lips of the King after years of silence; Mussolini attended religious services with much display of devotion; the Cross once more adorned the Capitol.

Fascism can never be anything but the stag-beetle, flying from one religion to another; while the Vatican will ever remain the old-established, slow-moving tortoise: the first sprang up in a week, the other is a development of centuries. So, characteristically, Fascism could not wait for the union, but the Vatican took time to reflect, accepted every offer but committed itself to nothing, hesitated, ventured a few cautious words, then retired within its shell again. When the results of the elections of 1924 were known, the Popular party of the region of Brianza were found to have remained true, and this defiance so irritated the Fascists that they set about burning their houses,

attacking their societies and even threatening the people. The Pope, hearing of this, sent 50,000 lire to the adherents of the Left, accompanied by a letter from the *Cardinale Vicario*. This move on the part of the Church caused much very strong feeling, and the Fascist newspapers formulated anti-clerical menaces which they made scarcely any attempt to veil.

Actually, the alliance between the Church and the Italian State is not a movement of to-day at all; the Church is much too slow-moving a concern to have accomplished this in so short a time; it dates back to the days of Pius X and Giolitti, when Pius X gave the Catholics permission to vote for the Moderate deputies who undertook not to support any law contrary to the laws of the Church (the Gentiloni pact of 1913). Gradually connections sprang up of an unofficial character between the Vatican and the Viminal,¹ thanks chiefly to the efforts of Baron Monti.

After the war still more serious negotiations were set on foot for a formal alliance, which should embrace the recognition of the sovereignty of the Pope. The Italian press laid much emphasis upon the relations between Cardinal Gasparri and the minister Nitti,* and the foreign papers, in reporting the quarrel which arose therefrom, showed that they appreciated the full significance of this proposed alliance.

When Mussolini's Government came into power it tried to hurry things on, and if Mussolini had had his way, the alliance would already be *a fait accompli*.

What was it, then, that held the Vatican back? First and foremost, the traditional tardiness of its decisions, and secondly the international situation.

¹ Ministry of the Interior.

It must always be borne in mind that the Vatican is an international institution, and that it dare not therefore, without due consideration, take any line of action which might offend the many interests and susceptibilities which are particularly acute at the present date. One is apt to forget that in actual fact Europe is still at war to-day, and that the Vatican stands in the same position with regard to France and Germany as it did during the years of the war. This being so, how could the Vatican possibly have concluded an alliance with Italy in recent years, and how should it be any more possible to-day when it is as ignorant as the rest of the world of what the situation will be in Europe to-morrow ?

There was a moment when the alliance might have been deemed possible, but the still precarious position of Fascism has naturally induced the Vatican to hold back. It is a generally known fact that Cardinal Gasparri was hostile to the alliance, while the Pope, in view of his having been a Moderate Catholic, was inclined in its favour; but, although the Vatican has shown its appreciation of the consideration it has received at the hands of Mussolini's Government, it has continued to hold itself aloof. The Matteotti affair also stirred up the Catholics who had pinned their hopes* on Fascism; it moved the Vatican from the position of a contracting party to that of a protector of Fascism, and had that affair meant the fall of the Mussolini* Government, the first cry of alarm would undoubtedly have come from the Vatican.

Mussolini's policy during the year 1923 was concentrated upon liberating himself from the Popular party. He realized that the best approach to this party was through the Vatican. The Popular party

would be impervious to a frontal attack. They had a stronger mass resistance than the Socialists, for they drew their inspiration from their priests, around whom they grouped themselves, even though the priests could not be held directly responsible. This priestly influence not only strengthened their position, but also served to safeguard them against suspicion. Mussolini, however, wanted to show the Vatican that he laid more store by the support of the Fascist than of the Popular party; hence his pro-Vatican policy. In return he asked the Vatican to withdraw its favour from the Popular party, but the Vatican only half yielded to this request. It dismissed Don Sturzo from the Secretariat of the party, and forbade priests who had charge of souls to belong to political societies, but it did not prevent Don Sturzo from pursuing his political career, and through the agency of lay members the Popular societies still kept up their connection with the Church.

On the whole, the alliance may be said to have failed. The tortoise beat the stag-beetle after all. The Vatican gained much, yielding little in exchange ; and it was the Vatican which ended, contrary to plan, in the rôle of protector.

FASCISM AND MASONRY—Now that we have seen the attitude of Fascism towards the Vatican, its attitude towards Masonry will explain itself. Masonry was regarded as an enemy, and no Mason was allowed to wear the badge of a Fascist.

This is a fact of some importance, for no Italian Government had dared before to oppose Masonry, which, wrongly, according to the best historians, was considered as one of the prime factors of Italian unity

and the guardian of the democratic, progressive and anti-clerical cause, upon which the middle classes had been in the habit of forming their philosophy and their creed ever since 1870. It must be clearly understood what Masonry stands for in Italy, and what causes have gone to constitute its antagonistic spirit towards Fascism.

Masonry is a very different thing in Italy from what it is in England or in America. It is not a philanthropic institution, but a political mutual aid society. Its tendencies* are anti-clerical, but its policy is constructive, and is chiefly concerned in securing the material welfare of its adherents. To become a Mason has for many years been regarded as a confession of a desire to make your way successfully in the world. Whether it be in the State, the army, education, the arts or the navy, be it always in the spheres of competition, Masonry has always been found a useful handle. It is a significant fact that nearly all the modern statues which ornament the squares in Italian towns are the work of Freemasons.

But the psychological influence of this masonic brotherhood was an even greater menace than its actual activities. The Neapolitan philosopher, Benedetto Croce, called it the "Masonic mentality"* just as he had termed the "mentality of the free-thinkers"^v that legacy of the eighteenth century in France which time had not quite effaced, and which based its philosophy upon a programme common to the whole world, according to which certain institutions, such as parliamentarism and democracy, were to lead humanity to happiness. Croce very strongly

¹ "Camorristica" is the word used in the text. The significance of the *camorra* in the southern provinces is well known.

opposed this anti-historic and crude conception in his writings.

The anti-clerical campaign had always been one of the most important Masonic activities, howbeit a verbal rather than an active campaign. Masonry never sanctioned the primary schools, chiefly because they wished to restrict as far as possible the scholastic activities of the Catholics. Incapable of creating schools of its own, it was determined to prevent others from doing so. The Masonic ideal was a neutral school where children should receive an entirely impartial education. They had gained considerable support in their anti-clerical programme from an ingenious campaign by which they had succeeded in spreading the belief that they had been largely instrumental in establishing a united Italy. There was, as a matter of fact, a very slim foundation to this belief, for if Garibaldi was a Mason he was a very passive one, and his meagre education was no criterion for Masonic intellectuality; besides, Mazzini was certainly not a Mason.

Moreover, Masonry had degenerated since the heroic days of the *Risorgimento*. The secrecy which had enfolded its movements in days when secrecy was imperative is no longer necessary to-day ; and where once it masked generous and heroic projects, it is now used to conceal intrigue and fraud.

The most hostile force in Italy with which, apart from its natural enemy the Catholic Church, Masonry had to contend was Socialism. This new political force which led the masses of the working classes who had never heard of the " Architect of the Universe " into open strife, was bitterly opposed to Masonry. For a long time the Socialists remained hostile, not

to Masonry alone, but also to their anti-clerical policy, which they regarded as a concern of the middle classes. However, this opposition was not so strong but that Masonry, persuaded of the importance of the Socialist movement, succeeded in working its way into Socialism. This fusion took place at the time of the fight for constitutional liberties which took place about 1900, and which led to the union of the more advanced parties—Radicals, Republicans and Socialists—under the name of Popular party. From that moment Masonry set to work to insinuate Socialism into the spheres of the middle classes. The leaders of the Socialist party became Freemasons, and there were special lodges created for the working men.

As was only to be expected,, there was a large section of the Socialists who would not be won over, and who were for preserving the independent character of their party with regard to the middle-class element of the State. Mussolini himself was the most prominent representative of this group, and his hostility was based upon the hatred of the revolutionary for the hole-and-corner methods of the Masons. It was he who in his triumph of 1911 succeeded in passing a vote of incompatibility with regard to the Masonic-Socialist question. This motion, which was carried after a strong fight, relieved the Socialist party of its uncertain element, which had wavered in favour of Masonry.

During its years of preparation it cannot be said that Fascism was altogether opposed to Masonry. In fact, Masonry, or at any rate some of its elements, had helped in divers ways in the building up of Fascism.

* It is scarcely necessary to add, after all that has been said, that Masonry in Italy was not by any means the

rigid society it is elsewhere. It made a special practice of adjusting itself to circumstances. In spite of their professed anti-clericalism, many Freemasons send their sons to religious schools, and in the matter of marriage or other important ceremonies they observe the rites of the Catholic Church ; so that Masonry never took up a very decided attitude towards Fascism. The "irredemptist" elements—that is to say, in the provinces which have been redeemed by Italy—favour Fascism and *d'annunziantismo* rather than Masonry.

Mussolini, however, knew no such thing as compromise, and would not be bound by anything, so that while Fascism was in its infancy, not a single article appeared from his pen which questioned Masonry. His first anti-Masonic manifestation was not until after his accession to power, after the "March on Rome." His decision to purge Fascism of Masonry met with little opposition from the masses, who had never really come under the influence of the Masonic "mentality": there were very few workmen's lodges, and not a single agriculturist had become a Mason. On the other hand, several leaders, amongst whom was General Capello, left the Fascist party rather than renounce Masonry. But it has never been quite decided whether those who abandoned Masonry for Fascism altogether lost the "Masonic mentality."

FASCISM AND NATIONALISM—The Italian Nationalist Association and the Fascist party were amalgamated in March 1923, or, to put it more exactly, that was the date of the absorption of Nationalism by Fascism*. And what did this absorption stand for ?

During the revolution in October the two parties had carried on a joint campaign, although it was

always the Fascist party which took the initiative and the Rationalists followed in their wake.

Nationalism was older, more dogmatic, more aristocratic than Fascism, which was characterized by youth and a popular spirit. Nationalism, moreover, was opposed to war. It arose in 1903 with Enrico Corradini's review, // *Regno*, and registered as a political organization in Florence in 1910. Being a party depending on a minority and aristocratic in character, the Nationalists drew their force from the strength of their doctrine and from their uncompromising attitude rather than from force of numbers. In face of Liberalism whose principles had been swamped by Socialism in their readiness to compromise with the Socialists, the Nationalists constituted a reaction in the shape of a powerful State and a ruling class which knew how to enforce its authority.

The Italian Nationalist doctrine differs only very slightly from the French. It regarded international problems from an intellectual standpoint, based upon the survival of the strongest, never from the economic point of view or admitting of compromise. The State was a power whose task was to dominate other powers, and to that end no other element could exist between States but the element of force; hence a foreign policy of conquest; hence the importance of military power; hence their admiration of an oligarchy on a monarchic basis; hence their disdain of democracies and of all other bodies with international tendencies, be it the bankers, the Jews, the Masons, or the Socialists.

Fascism, on the other hand, had quite a different foundation, and its absorption of Nationalism was a very slow process. Its tendencies were more or less

democratic ; its leaders came from the revolutionary Socialist group. Its early programmes were almost entirely democratic or Socialist in tone, and comprised the eight-hour day reform, the abolition of the Senate, acceptance of the League of Nations, denunciation of the Treaty of Versailles, etc. Fascism, in fact, both in word and deed, was a proletarian party. Whereas Nationalism devoted itself to the ruling classes and did not attempt to win the masses, Fascism, a product of the war, and essentially a movement of the masses, set about immediately a material and moral conquest of the Socialist and popular masses.

Their aims would certainly seem to be as far apart as the poles—theory on the one hand and action on the other—but time brought about a fusion chiefly on account of the existence of a common enemy, namely, Socialism, and Nationalism came to accept Fascist action while Fascism accepted the theories of the Nationalists.

The first glimpse of this was seen in the apparition of a curious phenomenon which might be termed *Popular Nationalism*, for shortly before and immediately after the " March on Rome " an obvious imitation of Fascism was observed in organized *squadre*, a militia, and even workmen's unions.

But this adoption by the Nationalist party of a policy of action was fraught with dangers. In the South particularly, disturbances arose between the Nationalists and the Fascists which sometimes resulted in fatalities. And so far did they abuse their powers that in many parts the titles of one or the other party were employed merely as a mask for family feuds.

Finally things reached the point where there were but two alternatives : either the parties must amalga-

mate if their respective aims made this possible, Or else the Nationalist party must go.

At last, after long and weary negotiations, the Nationalist Association found itself absorbed in the Fascist party, until its identity survived only in the little intellectual group which existed in the centre of the party. In exchange, Fascism accepted the traditional superiority of the doctrines of Nationalism, so that from an intellectual point of view it almost seemed as if Nationalism had been the absorber.

Fascism, however, has never quite been able to adopt Nationalist theories or Nationalism Fascist action, for there was always the liberal element in Fascism, represented by Suckert, and the *Idea Nazionale* of the intellectual Nationalists, represented by R. Forges-Davanzati, R. Cantalupo and F. Coppola, whose paths necessarily lay in different directions. The Matteotti affair in itself was enough to rouse the dormant energies of the more civilized, more honest and saner Nationalists, and to admit a Nationalist in the person of the deputy Federzoni to the Ministry of the Interior.

It will always inevitably be the Fascist party which prevails in a matter of action, but where thought comes into question the honours will ever lie with the Nationalists. One day the Nationalists may cut adrift from Fascism to join forces with the Conservatives: this is more than likely if, as is not improbable, Fascism decided to renew its offensive against Rome, a situation which might arise from a victory of the provincial opponents of law and *normalization*—to employ, a term dear to politicians and journalists—over the pacific Fascists who stand for compromise and unity,

CHAPTER VII

FASCIST ACTIVITIES ,

Progressive Work of the Fascists—Restriction of Political Liberties—Why Liberty cannot be Encouraged in Italy—Financial Reform: The Balancing of the Budget—Educational Reform—Further Reforms: Justice, Railways, etc.

PROGRESSIVE WORK OF THE FASCISTS—What did the Fascist Government achieve in the year of its activities, extending from the " March on Rome " to the elections of 1924 ? What results do we see ? and how have they affected the country ? Here again we must bring the historian's eye into focus, in order to distinguish malicious fabrication and party exaggeration from facts proven by statistics and by trustworthy authorities. In the first place, we must rule out the assertions of the extremists of both classes, both the Fascists who declare that Italy was a ruined country, saved only by their powerful action, and the anti-Fascists who see in the work of the Fascists merely a factor of the general endeavour to reinstate Italy, and a very ill-conducted factor at that. Some anti-Fascists go so far as to pronounce Fascism the moral and material ruin of Italy, already unfortunate enough in her frontiers, and regarded with suspicion by the foreigner. **I**n Most assuredly Fascism has not fulfilled all its promises, it has sometimes even acted contrary to

promise; but that is a very common and human failing when faced with reality. And it has achieved some very famous reforms.

Many of them would doubtless have come about without the aid of Fascism, for Italy had already made great advances in political economy and labour conditions. But what does it matter, from a political point of view, if the public believes that it owes its reforms to Fascism, and that it would never have achieved them without the help of Fascism? Bolshevism was put down in Italy actually by the good sense of the Italian people who were able to judge its merits by their own experience of the poor results of revolution: but there was a widespread conviction amongst the general public that they owed this to Fascism, whereas Fascism was, in actual fact, the *outcome* rather than the *cause* of the disruption of Communism. However, in politics, as in the "world," what you appear to be is much more important than what you actually are;

RESTRICTION OF POLITICAL LIBERTIES—The social peace and order brought about by the Fascist regime, and so advantaged, not only to commerce and industry, but also to the everyday life of the middle classes, were obtained, it cannot be denied, at the price of political liberty, and in some cases of personal liberty.

It had been imagined that when Fascism had become master of all the powers and forces of the State, so that they were at its disposal for the carrying out of its policy, there would be an end of individual and political violence and bloody warfare. And if violence had not entirely abated, one must allow for the dying

kicks of past friction, and not regard them as a new outbreak. But that was not the case at all. Every day the papers told a new tale of riots, and *normalization* appeared like the deceptive mirage in the desert once more.

However, we must try to realize what the word *liberty* means in Italy. If you travel by rail in Italy to-day, thanks to Fascism, you may be confident of arriving at your destination, whereas formerly you were quite liable to be held up half-way. Farmers will tell you of the boon they have received from Fascism in being able to conclude a contract without any fear of the tariffs, imposed one fine day as a result of an insurrection or by some municipality in search of popularity. The industrial employer will tell you that he can reduce the price of his goods by a reduction in the wages of his men without the fear of a strike. One and all, even though Fascism may have had its drawbacks for them, feel that the country has been more peaceful and better governed during 1923 than ever during the period extending from 1919-22. The Matteotti affair was a very serious blow to Fascism, because it shattered this sense of national well-being which the country had enjoyed for a year and a half, and because the Press, which was still on the look out for Fascist crimes, made the very most they could of the affair.

But all that is not what is meant by liberty. I do not think that the Anglo-Saxon conception of liberty has anything in common with what the Italians complain of having lost.

In Italy, if there is a notice which reads "Do not pick the flowers," the picking of those flowers, trampling down the plants and tearing down the offending

notice, constitutes "liberty." Now, in America the notice is respected and the flowers left untampered with, but a legal protest is made, and an effort is made to have the terms of the notice modified.¹ Liberty in America consists in the repeal and modification of the law; in Italy it consists not only in the violation of the law, but in complete disregard thereof •

A large proportion of those men who protested against Fascism in the name of liberty were the very ones who had suppressed the liberties of selling, buying, practising a trade or belonging to one society rather than another; they had done this in whole provinces where the authority of their party was questioned. These restrictions of liberty had been enforced, it is true, by less stringent methods than the Fascists employed—that is to say, by boycott—but they were not any more humane. The Socialist boycott had preferred mental to corporal punishment, and one must understand the life of remote country villages to appreciate the plight of the rebel, who was made a complete outcast, and refused all means of subsistence from bread to shoe-leather, from medicine to education, or nursing in case of illness.

In fact, before we pass on to the question of the restriction of liberty, we must ask ourselves if Italy understood what liberty was in the modern acceptance of the word, and the answer cannot be an unqualified affirmative.

Let us turn from theory to fact, and consider precisely in what branches of the national life Fascism did suppress liberties which had formerly been enjoyed. They are as follows :

- (1) Liberty of reunion: this suppression extended

¹ This was true even of Prohibition)

not only to public meetings, but also private meetings by invitation. Needless to say this law applied exclusively to anti-Fascists; the Fascists enjoyed perfect freedom to meet as they wished.

(2) Liberty of association : this liberty was limited. Many societies were abolished or were warned, which practically amounted to abolition.

(3) Liberty of the Press: a liberty which existed, in theory, until July 1924, when certain leaders seized the papers, prosecuted the directors and forbade publication, without any legal authority whatsoever. And even graver was a campaign of blackmail which was carried on, not by the Government, but by the Fascist authorities, against journalists and printers. You could, however, get anything published if you had the courage to face the consequences, and the Matteotti affair was, as it were, the explosion of the time-fuse for forces which had only been biding their time.

(4) Liberty of the individual: this was left to the discretion of the Fascist authorities. In the provinces this power was sorely abused, and even in the capital Nitti's house was stormed and the furniture smashed and burned. The deputies Misuri and Amendola suffered like abuses, and although they were able to furnish the names of the offenders they could get no compensation for the rough-handling they had received. Not until after the Matteotti affair was any restraint put upon the treatment of the individual.

WHY LIBERTY CANNOT BE ENCOURAGED IN ITALY—
This interference with liberties did not cause serious discontent until the occasion of the Matteotti murder. The country, in fact, appeared to be accepting the

Fascist Government with a very good will. There was, of course, a certain amount of discontent, but there had been that all through the ages, and the malcontents were, for the most part, those who suffered directly from the Government's economic measures, such as cutting down the bureaucracy, keeping down expenses, hastening the balancing of the Budget and abolishing favours and other injustices.

Their discontent may be explained thus. The Italian people have no liberal tradition like the Anglo-Saxon countries. Liberty to them means personal liberty rather than national liberty; liberty in the practice of certain customs means more to them than freedom of the Press, for instance, or liberty of reunion, or a universal franchise. Fascism would have a much harder task to diminish the National Debt than to suppress hostile newspapers.

Parliamentary institutions do not come spontaneously into existence in Italy; they are borrowed from England or from France, so that their significance and value have been lost sight of since their direction has passed out of the hands of some hundreds of thousands of electors, as was formerly the case, into the hands of some millions of illiterate and uneducated electors. The Italian people never sought liberal institutions; their political institutions are the Commune, a Government founded on class and party; the Aristocracy, a Government founded by a great man, and carried on by successive members of his family.

And there is another thing. The last generation, to which I myself belong, has since about the year 1900 been reared in an atmosphere essentially anti-parliamentary, an atmosphere created by the ilhis-

trious names of vilfredo Pareto, Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile, Georges Sorel—more read in Italy than in France—Alfredo Oriani, Giovanni Papini.¹ Parliamentary institutions had reached the maximum of discredit in public opinion in Italy. The deputy had come to be regarded rather as the agent of corruption and injustice than the guardian of liberty. The inability of Parliament after the war to form a strong and efficient Government had been quite sufficient to damn that institution henceforward and for ever more. It is only too natural, therefore, that no deputy or elector has ever since felt disposed to lay down his life for Parliament.

However, it cannot be said that the Fascist Government leaders, once the first fire of revolution had abated, contributed very lavishly towards the undermining of parliamentary institutions. Mussolini took up a double policy; on the one hand, he derided Parliament and lost no single opportunity of making mock of its institutions—he went so far as to term its elections a *jeu de papier*; while, on the other hand, he did all he could to strengthen Parliament, and insisted that the majority, elected without strife and without canvassing—nominated, in fact, by Government consent—should prove its value and exercise its initiative. But no sooner did it show signs of setting up an opposition—which constitutes the backbone of any assembly—than Mussolini, or his Press acting for him, hastened to repress its efforts*. The minorities, resulting from the elections of 1924, and obtained at great personal risk to the electorate, numbering some two millions and composed of the

¹The name of G. Amendola might be added to these. See G. Prettoini, *G. Amendola*, Rome, 1925*

harden and best elements, felt their position to be stronger than ever before. That is the reason why the Fascist majority of 1924 was so very inadequate. It was the result of Mussolini wanting a liberal Parliament with liberal institutions, without knowing it. But the opposition, whether active or inactive, has never succeeded in reawakening parliamentary faith in the souls of the Italian people, if ever that faith existed.

FINANCIAL REFORM : THE BALANCING OF THE BUDGET—Fascism has never had a set programme, but has worked on spontaneous action, with negative aims. That is why, upon its accession to power, it made up for its own lack of programme by the adoption of the programmes of other parties adapted to the temperaments of its own leaders.

For thirty years Italy had been crying out for reforms, and for thirty years the parliamentary regime had failed to bring these about. The war had added considerably to the already heavy burden of the parliamentary institutions ; and when experts pointed out remedies for the many evils, no one was capable of putting them into action.

During its first year of government, Fascism did not get beyond carrying out the suggestions which had already been made, and these had come principally from the Liberals. Everything was in readiness, all the statistics had been worked out ; all that was lacking was the will, and this Fascism was able to provide. The Fascist reforms were chiefly confined to three departments:- in Finances, for the reduction of expenditure ; in Justice, for a reduction in the number of law courts : in Education, for the reorganization of

courses of study. And finally, Fascism attacked the reform of State industries, Railways, the Post Office, and the bureaucracy, turning them into regular State services and reducing their staffs.

The ultimate object of all the Fascist reforms was the balancing of the Budget. Italy's financial situation was the question which vexed her leaders most of all when the Fascist Government was formed ; and it was in that direction that its most notable reform lay, in the balancing of the Budget. Having achieved this success, it forgot its promises as to the recovery of the lira, and these have never yet been realized.

De Stefani's Ministry had appointed a Commission to examine the various items of the Budget and to discuss them in detail with the directors of the different ministries, in order to reduce expenditure to a minimum. Two great economists sat on this Commission, the Senator Maffeo Pantaleoni and Professor Umberto Ricci, also a representative of the State in the person of De Bellis, Controller of Public Finances. They succeeded in effecting drastic economies.

Two outstanding features of De Stefani's financial reform were publicity and regularity concerning the Budget. Since 1913-14 there had been no legal passing of the Budget to act as a bridle upon the fiscal system. The Treasury accounts, statistics of State officials, assets and liabilities accounts, monthly accounts—in fact, all those documents upon which a country's financial policy at home and abroad is founded—were either never published or else only very belatedly.

De Stefani reorganized and thinned out his ministry, suppressing five minor administrations and fifty departments, and cutting down the central administration by 500 members of its staff. He had the domanial

taxes published, the Official Record of laws and decrees, and a catalogue which had long been needed of official publications ; and he opened a library run on commercial lines for the sale of these publications.

His object was not so much to enact sweeping reforms as to enforce the existing taxes so as to catch the half-million taxpayers who had been eluding taxes on their personal property, and to stop the leakages in the fiscal system through which so many defrauders managed to evade taxation. In fact, he sought to increase the number of taxpayers rather than the number of taxes.

Reduction of expenditure and increase of revenue were the two bases of his financial reform; and besides these must be added a somewhat negative and, it must be confessed, ineffective effort to withstand the demands of Parliament for the right of State intervention in the matter of finances—ineffective, I say, because, although De Stefani had earned for himself the reputation of being the snarling watchdog of the public pence, and although he had a host of enemies, he did not stand out against those demands which seemed either to himself or to the Fascist regime " national necessities." It was with the taxpayers' money that he succeeded in saving the " Banca di Roma " which was about to crash, that he let the State in for a joint-stock enterprise—the State and private individuals—for the extraction of iron from ore ; and yet he could not find it in his heart to refuse the demands for increased army expenditure, particularly in the aeronautic department, or by the national Militia, or by other services which cannot be specified on account of their secret capacity, both at home and abroad. The Fascist in him sometimes prevailed over the

Liberal, or perhaps it would be more exact to say that he had to accept one evil to avoid a worse, as so often happens in politics.

But, for all that, he accomplished a task of which he may well be proud, and won for himself a title to honour which even his enemies could not deny him. Just as that unpopular minister, Quintino Sella, had arrived at balancing the national Budget after the Wars of Independence, so Alberto de Stefani restored the balance after a much greater upheaval occupying an infinitely smaller war period. But the fiscal reform was not everything even from an economic point of view. The greatest of all reforms, the re-establishment of social order, was also effected by Fascism, brutally perhaps, but in this the work of De Stefani was only indirectly instrumental.¹

EDUCATIONAL REFORM—In spite of the opinion of many professors, students and the majority of Italians, who have criticized it unmercifully, this reform, the work of Gentile, has been called by Mussolini "the most Fascist of reforms." It was certainly the most radical and most revolutionary, even in its most conservative capacity, of all the reforms accomplished under the Fascist regime.

Yet Fascism had actually no hand in this reform, for it owed itself to a school of ideas which dated back some twenty years, presided over by Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile: and its name was "idealism." Gentile it was who most strongly felt

¹ There are two authorities on the work of De Stefani, **and** each take a directly opposite point of view. They are J. L. Gangemi, *Vopera finanziaria del governo fascista*, Bologna, 1923; **and** O. Matteotti, Milan, 1924.

the importance of education, and he formulated some extremely interesting pedagogic ideas which gave birth to a veritable Italian school of pedagogy. When Gentile began to put his pedagogic ideas into practice, he had to form a conception of the Italian educational system to which to apply his ideas, and this conception he defended with skill and determination, hurling a thunderbolt into the midst of the Ministry of Education. But Fascism had not adhered to Gentile's ideas; and at the Congress in Naples, which took place a week before the "March on Rome," the fascist group of professors declared their opposition to the "State examination" which constituted one of the main features of Gentile's reform. *

Who, then, suggested Gentile to Mussolini as the Minister of Education? Some say it was Professor Gioacchino Volpe, a mutual friend of both; others affirm that it was the deputy Agostino Lanzillo, who at that time only wrote for the *Popolo d'Italia*, but who was better informed as to the new intellectual currents than was Mussolini. The truth was that Gentile thrust himself upon Fascism and upon Italy, and so obtained, thanks to the Fascist revolution, which, a Liberal, he had not supported, the full powers necessary for the reform of Italian education.

Gentile, besides being a deep thinker and a very learned man, had also an enormous capacity for hard work and headstrong opinions. He set himself determinedly to work, and sweeping before him the opposition of professors and students, at the end of a year had established, with the aid and support of a group of his disciples, a new system of study.

What was the extent of his reform? I will not

enter into details of his work, which could not prove a matter of interest to foreigners, but will confine myself to the brief statement that it was based on the principle that the State should aim at a *formative* rather than a practical education, seeking to *educate* in the original sense of the word rather than to instruct ; a humanist education would achieve this end. In pursuance of this notion he introduced singing and drawing into the curriculum of the primary schools, being natural expressions of the personality of the child, and religion, as the philosophy of the child, to be moulded in adolescence into philosophy in the generally accepted sense of the term. And as, historically speaking, there could only be one religion in Italy, the religion to be taught was Catholicism, just as in the same way one language must be taught—the Italian language.

In the secondary schools, Latin was taken as the basis alike of classical, technical and teachers' colleges. The classical colleges included Greek as well as Latin and one foreign language ; the others excluded Greek. The school programmes distinguished between a study of the language and a study of grammar, so that a choice could be made between a speaking knowledge of the language and a literary and historic knowledge, with a view to developing the student and the aesthete. There was a limited number of State secondary schools; but there was no restriction placed upon the number of private ones, which might be created on the same lines as those which belonged to the State. However, whenever a pupil passed from one grade to another, he was forced to undergo the State examination* which was the same for all schools, national or

private. Financial autonomy was granted to the universities, but their discipline was not altogether independent of the State.

The educational reform was not wholly successful. It was given a year to prove itself where ten years would have been a fairer limit for all it had to accomplish. Many of the professors were not prepared for the reform, while others were undisguisedly hostile, for it often meant the revolutionizing of their methods and the abandoning of their privileges. Some of the results which Gentile looked for could not be obtained ; for instance, the number of national secondary schools, instead of diminishing, increased; then again there was the question of doing away with some of the universities and the less useful faculties by concentration and specialization of the best elements in higher education, which only resulted in the creation of two new universities and the refusal of the local authorities to suppress any of the old ones.

Nevertheless, the foundations of reform had been laid, and these could not be forgotten. Many of Gentile's measures were found impracticable in their original form and had to be modified, and some had to be abandoned altogether ; but his work, *wide* in compass, far reaching in its results and fundamental in its structure, will long constitute the basis of Italian education, and the mould for future reformers.¹

FURTHER REFORMS : JUSTICE, RAILWAYS, ETC.—
As in the case of the educational reform, the judicial

¹Many foreign publications on the subject show the interest which Gentile's reform roused in other countries. One of the most notable is the work of H. Goy.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE, May 1926.

reform was directed against provincialism and the individualist municipal spirit which were so strong in Italy. But this reform, unlike the other, was wholly successful. Italy's unification had brought her a legacy of provincial strongholds which had formerly been the centres of independent states, and whence it had so far not been possible to abolish the local governments. The question of these courts had dragged on for nearly fifty years, with the aid of the parliamentary system which backed up no matter how insignificant a court, no matter how small a judicial circuit.

The Fascist Government was the first—and even it was not altogether successful—to reduce the number of circuits and to strengthen the powers of those which remained, to conciliate the various higher courts and Courts of Appeal, whose opinions were so often found to be at variance, to suppress 5 Courts of Appeal, nearly 60 law courts and 500 criminal courts—of which, it is true, 250 were subsequently re-established.

The reduction of the number of railway employees was another reform of the same practical order, although certain political criterions about which Sig. Torre, Special Commissioner for the Railways, agitated—the favouritism which had been allowed to pass unnoticed, and a Fascist police force which had been introduced into the ranks of the railway police—had prevented the wholesale industrialization of the railways which had been hoped for. But, on the whole, this service was better conducted, trains arrived at their destination to time, and the unauthorized leaves of the employees were reduced by 50 per cent.

The provinces annexed by Italy had their governments restored to them. Many agencies were abol-

ished as well as many of the autonomous organizations which were to be found in ports. As for the postal and telegraphic services, it had not yet been deemed advisable, as it had been hoped it might, to entrust these to private direction. As for the Public Works departments, in these the system of private enterprise prevailed,¹ casting, however, so much suspicion on the morals and integrity of the ministers, that Sarrocchi, Minister of Public Works, upon coining into office in July 1924, after the Matteotti affair, was forced to make radical changes in the system.

¹ Note the effect of the recent transmission of the telephone service to private enterprise.

CHAPTER VIII

FASCISM ABROAD

Foreign Policy of the Party and Foreign Policy of the Government — The World Peace — The Question of the Adriatic — Corfu — Commercial Treaties — Relations with Russia — The Mediterranean Question and the Ticino — Italy's Present Position in the World.

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PARTY AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT— There was much anxiety both in Italy and abroad as to the Fascist Government's policy when Mussolini came into power. There was a very general belief current that the Fascist ship must founder when it struck the rock against which the winds of Nationalism must necessarily drive it, for that was the wind which had undoubtedly borne it thus far on its perilous course. But quite the contrary was the case. At the end of a year and a half even its opponents were forced to confess that in the matter of its foreign policy, apart from the Corfu episode, which can be accounted for in various ways, the Fascist Government had steered its course safely and with nothing but happy results for Italy. But at the same time we must not forget that, between Fascist promises before its accession to power and the realization of those promises, there is a world of difference, and this difference can be described as much in the attitude of Fascism as in its administration.

In its attitude, because promises, threats, imperialist programmes and assurances of development all disappeared except as a form of speech ; in its administration, because Mussolini adopted, as soon as he came to power, a policy of Balkan penetration whose keystone was a pact with Yugoslavia, a policy with which he had reproached the present " tenants " and which he had once opposed with all the forces at his command. The Fascist party had been, in fact, one of the most violent and extremest partisans of the anti-Slav policy, founded on the claims of Dalmatia and on the belief in the inevitability of war between Italy and Yugoslavia. It had opposed the action of the ministers who favoured a pact which would have relieved Italy of the dead weight of the Adriatic question, and whereby she could have played her part with more freedom in the reorganization of Europe, where she would have found a much wider and more important field for her interests than in the possession of Sebenico or even Fiume. The occupying population, represented first by Leonida Bissolati and then by Count Carlo Sforza, had wanted what Mussolini had accomplished, that is to say, an *entente* with Yugoslavia which was indispensable if they were to join the Little Entente, and if Italy was to exercise a powerful influence in Balkan politics; but they had always found Mussolini and the Nationalist party the stumbling-block in the achievement of this end, and had been treated by them as outcasts and enemies of the country.

Hardly had Mussolini come to power than he turned completely round in the matter of his foreign policy with regard to such questions as the Adriatic, and relations with Russia. However, in the general

Fascist public he maintained the principles of Fascism, whatever may have been the state of affairs in the council chambers of the State. In his foreign policy he realized that which had eluded him in his home policy—the difference between the head of the party and the head of the Government—and abroad he displayed as much wisdom in the capacity of head of the Government as he did boldness as head of the party.

After all, with the exception of Prince Caetani, he had introduced no new elements into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nor into the diplomatic service ; but this prince had been Ambassador in the United States, and was well equipped for his office by his experience as an engineer in North America, and also by the respected name he bore. The man to whose counsels he had most readily lent ear in a year and a half of government was Senator Contarini, a notoriously moderate element in foreign affairs, and representative of a tradition very similar to that of Sforza. It is commonly believed that, if Sforza had not handed in his resignation from the embassy in an unsealed letter which caused some scandal at the time, Mussolini would have employed him too.

In short, there was not a single move of a revolutionary character in Mussolini's foreign policy except the transference of the Ministry from the Palazzo della Consulta to the Palazzo Chigi.

THE WoRtD PEACE—Mussolini has given one more proof in his foreign policy of his toleration and practical good sense, which forms a contrast to the theatrical declarations he had formerly made for the benefit of the Fascist public. It may honestly be said that, with the exception of one episode, his foreign policy was con-

sistently circumspect and prudent, and that his energies never lapsed from furtherance of Italian interests.

In regard to the question of reparations and of the Franco-German situation in general, he worked for a settlement which should not impair Italian interests—that is to say, Germany's payment in full combined with the cancellation of all inter-allied debts. On this capital point he based all his negotiations, until, after the stormy meeting at Territet, the two irreconcilable countries, England and France, had repelled mediation. Mediation, as Mussolini very truly said, can only be effected with the concurrence of the conflicting parties. Italy could not prevent France from occupying the Ruhr where England had failed; but she made it known that she was not in favour of any territorial change, and limited her own activities to an industrial interest, so as to continue to receive from Germany the coal which England could afford to forgo, but not she. Mussolini's suggestion, brought forward more than once in London in January 1923, but in vain, proposed securities and guarantees to be furnished by German banks and industries. These same suggestions were later included in the Dawes Report, and were accepted then as the best expedient. Having failed to gain a hearing, there remained no action open to Italy but to wait until the statesmen and diplomats had learnt their lesson from the turn of events, and such was her attitude during the last part of 1923 and all 1924 up to the London Congress in July 1924.

This attitude played a direct part on the road to peace, inspired as it was by a fundamental wisdom based upon a true appreciation of the forces of Italy herself and of the inflexibility of France.

Moreover, Mussolini put down just in time (2nd March 1923) an alliance of the steel trades with France, an alliance which would undoubtedly have had disastrous effects on the peace had it been allowed to go through. A group of Italian financiers had attempted to work upon public opinion in France so as to bring about a common campaign directed against Germany in the iron and steel trades, in which by a common interchange of policy, Italy should supply what was lacking in France. This agreement, which, it was hoped, would be the forerunner of an alliance, did not find favour with Mussolini, and was therefore abandoned.

THE QUESTION OF THE ADRIATIC—The most delicate question in Italian politics after the war was that of the Adriatic. Italian national pride had suffered a severe blow in the loss of Dalmatia, the greater part of whose population was Italian, and in the sacrifice of Fiume, threatened not only by a hostile race but by international interests. The Nationalist and Fascist parties had been the most active in determining the country's attitude in the matter, and it is therefore easy to understand what must be the feeling with regard to the results obtained by Mussolini.

From the beginning he declared his intention of concluding and ratifying the treaties negotiated by Giolitti, known as the Santa-Margherita agreements, although he had not given his approval to these when he was head of the party. In spite of the disapproval of the Dalmatian deputy Dudan, these were passed by the Camera and by the Senate in February 1923, in the course of the session which

Mussolini termed the "political week" because it was chiefly devoted to the discussion of the Santa-Margherita and Washington treaties, both of which, it was hoped, would bring about world peace.

It is a curious fact that the subsequent agreements between Yugoslavia and Italy encountered more difficulties from Yugoslavia than from the Italian side of the question, for the former raised obstacles and would not come to a decision. The Commissions appointed after the ratification of the agreements and the evacuation of the third division of Dalmatia still could not come to any satisfactory agreement as to the fate of Fiume, and on two separate occasions, 25th August and 12th September, Mussolini had to exhort them in a message to the Government in Belgrade to come to a decision one way or another.

Yugoslavia found herself, it almost seemed, forced to decide between war and friendship, since the third alternative of pacific neutrality was taken from her—a neutrality which had been ruled by the usual forces, but lacked the spirit of an Entente. Mussolini's proposal of an alliance between Yugoslavia and Italy reopened the ports of the Balkans to Italian ships, put an end to the "*tours de valse*" which seemed pending after the war between Yugoslavia and Hungary or Bulgaria, was the first step on the road to Prague, the heart of the Little Entente, and deprived France of her centre of intrigue in middle Europe, and of the possibility of stirring up strife for Italy there. Bissolati's and Sforza's Mazzinian policy, carried out on new lines and under a new aspect, regained its full force. The alliance, with Yugoslavia, followed by Italy's annexation of Fiume (March

1924) and by the negotiations for a protective alliance between the two countries (October 1924), freed Italy from the trammels which had hitherto hindered her fearless participation in European politics, and made possible a treaty with Tchechoslovakia in July 1924.

CORFU—The only move which proved contradictory to this sane and circumspect policy was the occupation of Corfu on 30th September 1923, as a result of the murder of the delegates of General Tellini's mission, who had been assassinated a few days previously in Greek territory. The affair is too well known to call for a detailed report here, but it should be mentioned that the effect it produced in Italy was very different from the effect abroad. In Italy, whether it were that the anti-Mussolini papers considered it the wiser thing to forbear from criticism of the Government in a critical moment for the nation, or whether it were because of their ignorance of the facts and problems of foreign politics, the fact remains that the occupation of Corfu was regarded as a great triumph for Mussolini.

What actually happened was that Mussolini very skilfully succeeded in extricating himself from a situation in which a false step had landed him in a moment of furious indignation. The occupation of Corfu did not affect Greece nearly as much as it affected England and France. Corfu is, as a matter of fact, one of the spots which England would not like to see in the hands of a strong military power. In attacking Greece, therefore, Italy found herself faced with a much more serious proposition in the shape of England.

These are the facts which explain Mussolini's

ready acceptance of the solution suggested by the Embassies, although he affirms that the condition of his withdrawal from Corfu was the acceptance of every one of his proposals by Greece. He could not, nor did he wish to, risk the fate of Italy by a blunder, and preferred the escape offered him by the Embassies, an indication of his shrewd judgment.

His subsequent disagreement with the League of Nations was not without its advantages either, for it brought Sir Eric Drummond, secretary general of the League, to Rome to see Mussolini (5th November 1923), a visit which would not have been necessary but for the friction which had arisen. The genuine fear of seeing Italy leave the League was skilfully exploited; but the cordial peace-making which followed Italy's disturbing threats put another spoke in the wheel of Italy's interests.

If Mussolini was guilty of a serious indiscretion in precipitating himself into the occupation of Corfu, it must be owned that he extricated himself from the imbroglio with remarkable promptitude and remarkably little hurt to Italy. The whole affair cannot be given greater significance than an isolated episode in a policy of peace. That day Mussolini, as it were, entered a gunpowder factory with a lighted cigar in his mouth, which he promptly extinguished when his attention was called to the notice "Smoking prohibited," and there remains nothing more than a little dead ash to recall the incident.

COMMERCIAL TREATIES—Those who realize the importance of the influence of economy on politics can be in no doubt as to the pacific nature of Mussolini's economic policy. Mussolini worked for commercial

treaties in various branches of industry not only with the object of lowering the cost of living at home, but of establishing economic bonds between the industries of the various countries, so as to achieve a peaceful basis for negotiations. Between the *modus vivendi* with Spain in February 1923 and the commercial treaty with Yugoslavia in July 1924, one could mention a whole series of similar acts which all had as their principal aim European peace and the development of political economy in Italy.

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA—The same constructive and unprejudiced policy explains Mussolini's action in the matter of relations between Italy and Russia, which at first seems somewhat incomprehensible.

At first sight it would seem that a Fascist Government should refuse all dealings with a Soviet Government, and follow in this matter the uncompromising policy adopted by the French before M. Herriot's Cabinet. But Mussolini was a man of surprises, and where one would have expected a hostile policy towards the Soviet Government, he adopted the attitude of hurrying on a policy of recognition. England may have forestalled Italy by a few days in this policy, but she certainly did not arrive at such a rapid commercial treaty.

Mussolini began by obtaining from Moscow assurances that their action would be distinct from that of the Third International, whose aim was to rouse communist rebellion in all the countries of Europe (Vorowski declaration, 3rd March 1923). With that assurance he approached Moscow, promising that Italy should be the first of the Great Powers to have a regular ambassador installed there. This, quite

apart from the fact that Bolshevism and Fascism had a common bond in their anti-democratic policies, found favour with the Russians, and they responded without delay to Mussolini's advances. RykofE was so loud in his praises and gratitude during his stay in Italy in 1924 that it gave rise to a certain amount of scepticism on the subject of the " brothers " in Communist *Unita*, and even after the Matteotti murder the Russian Embassy held to its intention of asking Mussolini to his first diplomatic dinner.

We will not support the theory put forward in several newspapers that this attitude foreshadowed the possibility of further alliances with Russia, a union, perhaps, between the proletariat oppressed by Anglo-Saxon capitalism, for that is as groundless as the hypotheses of D'Annunzio. Mussolini knew too well what would be the fate of such a union, which would probably land all parties concerned in the ditch, like the seven blind men of Breughel, who all fell in because the first fell in, and they were all depending on him.

Mussolini was not going to give up the advantageous position which the war had brought Italy in the midst of the Allies, but he had to safeguard her interests in the Black Sea from the point of view of the grain she received from southern Russia, and from the point of view also of a market for Italian motor-cars. That was all.

THE MEDITERRANEAN QUESTION AND THE TICINO—
As for Spain, Italy's sole interest in an alliance with that country was their common concern in French hegemony in the eastern seas of the Mediterranean. In South America Italian and Spanish interests did not clash, but on the other hand formed a happy enough

combination. Spain exercised a more or less aesthetic influence over those parts which had generally adopted the Spanish language; they supplied the culture and the faith, a faith which had recently been re-affirmed by King Alfonso XIII before the Pope; while Italy had supplied a large part of the population with her emigrants, whose devotion to the old country had been revived by a recent visit from the heir-apparent to the Italian crown.

But any question which may have arisen with regard to an alliance between these two Mediterranean Latin countries has never been pursued, and is likely to remain in abeyance until some new turn of events makes it imperative, or until the present regime has had time to evolve—perhaps the Spanish regime itself, which, for the moment, is very far from being in a position to establish itself as Fascism has done, on a movement which concerns the interests of the masses; perhaps again the invasion of Europe by the Moroccan Riffs.

In the western seas of the Mediterranean Mussolini has not lost sight of the questions of Corsica and of Tunis, but the former he has left to his friend and journalistic colleague, Gioacchino Volpe, the latter to his faithful friend, Signora Margherita Sarfatti, who rims the intellectual *Fascist Review*. Both these are at the moment questions for thought and not for action, so that they do not concern the statesman who has no desire to rouse sleeping dogs.

For precisely the same reason Mussolini hastened to dispel the unfortunate impression left on the Swiss Government by the attitude of certain Fascist papers with regard to the question of the Ticino, which has been a bone of contention for some fifteen years and

which some little newspaper and a group of students from the Ticino district have chosen to bring up as an urgent matter, in which they have secured the support of the Nationalists and Fascists when these were merely parties with no representatives in the Government. However, since November 1922 any manifestations of irredentism in the Ticino have immediately been quelled by the local government, even when these manifestations have come from Fascists.

ITALY'S PRESENT POSITION IN THE WORLD—Here we have the outline of Mussolini's foreign policy—I say Mussolini rather than Fascism, because it was actually the policy of the individual, and no other minister was concerned therein. To-day, at the time of my writing, it has been consummated by the final surrender by England of Djubaland in Somaliland to Italy after four years of insurmountable obstacles and objections put up by the Foreign Office in its efforts to evade the terms of the London Pact.

The question is whether Italy has gained prestige under the policy of Mussolini. The Fascist press assures us that she has, but we lack means of proving this assurance.

The results of Mussolini's foreign policy are, in themselves, good, because that policy has been conducted on sane lines and with one purpose—that is to say, the interests of the Italian people; and added to this it has been a policy of peace. In this sense Italy's prestige certainly has prospered.

But it cannot be said that Italy owes her successes to having been in the hands of the Fascists. Any man who had led the country on the same lines as

Mussolini, even if he had lacked Fascist sympathies, would have obtained the very same results. The path of a wise Italian diplomat is so obvious and so straight that he cannot miss his way. Mussolini's genius lies in his resolution, in satisfying the extremists with promises and then forcing them to accept the reasonable course and abandon the dangerous course which their principles as well as their temperaments dictated. Italy, by her co-operation and obedience, did the rest. Europe to-day looks upon Italy as a solid factor which can be counted upon to do her part in the reconstruction of the old world. The menace of the Fascist revolution did not extend to foreign States, so that between October 1922 and July 1924 Italy has assuredly gained in international esteem, for she has steered a course from which even a change of ministry was powerless to divert her. The Matteotti affair, to whose grievous consequences in home politics I have more than once drawn attention, did not even impair the international situation, for, atrocious though the crime may have been, and the more so because it was followed so soon by the assassination of the deputy Casalini, the extenuating circumstances which have been brought up in explanation of its ethical and political significance have been accepted abroad.

CONCLUSION

MUCH has been prophesied regarding Fascism. Every day we hear from one source or another that it is already on the downward path ; while others tell us that in its present state, which is a more or less modified state, it has come to stay.

It has not been my purpose to theorize in this work, but as an impartial historian and a conscientious observer to explain the beginnings and development of Fascism up to the end of the year 1924, during which time Parliament, as represented by some 140 important names, amongst which are those of Giolitti, Amendola and Turati, has done its utmost to ruin Mussolini and his campaign of *normalization* ; all in vain.

Troubled in its origins, troubled in its impulses and ideas—and its impulses were far more numerous than its ideas—fascism owes its power to the feebleness of its enemies, to the personality of its leader Mussolini and a few of his immediate circle, and to the support of the central organization. It has realized! at home as well as abroad a number of reforms, while! at the same time, as a result of the immorality and peculiar circumstances existing in Italy since the war, countenancing actions which, from the most rudimentary political or moral point of view, would be considered beyond the pale.

Its future lies in the years to come, not in present

hypotheses and defences. And that future will be determined by its capacity to adapt itself to the demands of the new Italian mentality. It will be called in to deal with the question of syndicalism, religion, parliamentary traditions, Socialist and democratic survivals; on all these questions it will be expected to revise its programme and to formulate a definite course of action. On the other hand, a weapon of Fascism itself, the individualism of the "ras," upheld by the provincialism of Italy, may germinate an unforeseen reaction, and turn against Fascism. But however Italian the Fascist movement may purport to be, its practical activities and the practice of its ethics, especially in its foreign policy, must be enacted in the heart of Europe and of a world where Fascism has been condemned and extolled and whose influence cannot fail to leave its impress on the development of the movement.

But whatever the future may hold in store, a study of the present is enthralling enough to urge my readers to further investigations and greater detail, to seek in wider knowledge the light which it should cast on the many dark places in the programme and achievements of Fascism.

FINAL CHAPTER

FASCISM IN 1925-26

I—THIS book was compiled by Giuseppe Prezzolini in the summer of 1924 and published in Paris in 1925. A very important scene in the drama of Fascism has been enacted since the publication of the book in 1925 and during the first months of 1926. The general aspect of Fascism has undergone a fundamental change, and the present chapter purports to account for this change. It has been compiled by the translator, who has striven as far as possible to adhere to the principles observed by the author. In its early years the lastingness of Fascism might have been called in doubt; it might have been judged as the breaking-point of a highly strung people, or a reaction which only awaited the time when it might conveniently return to the liberal standards of the pre-war period.

The year 1925 has decided this question and dispelled doubt. There is no longer any talk of "normalization." The word now is "revolution/* It seems almost as if Fascism from existing in 1924 has come to life in 1925. In this year it has really settled its accounts, strengthened its stand, and sent its enemies about their business; it is busy; WW passing laws for the support of Italian political life. The most important departments of the State *ham* been revised, and the State itself has been established

on an anti-liberal, anti-parliamentary foundation. In 1923 and 1924 Fascism had made no essential changes in the constitution of the State. Violence, though a common enough thing, was still illegal. Theoretically the liberal State was still in operation. The laws of the State existed side by side with the laws of the party which were in many cases the more effective and the more widely observed, in spite of the fact that they had not yet obtained official recognition. In 1925 Fascism and the State became one. The party has been gradually absorbed in the various organs of the State, and the organs and personnel of the State have either become Fascist or been wiped out. The revolution, which was but an abortive attempt in 1922 and carried on under difficulties throughout 1923-24, has actually come into effect in 1926. In this year Fascism has really become the master of Italy. The Camera dei Deputati, swept of all hostile elements except the Communists, is at last a Constituent Assembly, and passes one reform after another to which the Senate meekly consents and the King puts his signature. Farinacci, leader of the extremist Fascists, has been called upon by Mussolini to head the Party.

II—What induced Fascism to abandon its programme of normalization demanded by the public and by the Fascisti themselves in 1923, even favoured by the liberal parties on the right who had decided to give Mussolini their support ?

It is obvious that at the back of it was the Matteotti affair and the attitude of the opposition which **followed** that affair. The Matteotti murder roused a very **widespread moral agitation throughout Italy;**

but this agitation did not manifest itself in a furious reaction against Fascism, it took a political form clothed in a negative attitude—that is to say, a number of politicians belonging to parties hostile to Fascism resigned from Parliament. A purely negative action such as this appealed to public sentiment and aroused a wave of sympathy for the victim and his family, but it had no power against the party in power whose position was fortified by a belief, firmly implanted in the ruling classes, that the fall of this party would leave the way open to some very undesirable inroad, probably communistic.

Besides, the coalition against Fascism had all the weakness of a coalition—that is to say, its action was necessarily purely negative. As soon as it took up a positive line of action, it would be broken up by internal dissension, for Liberals of the Left, demi-Socialists, Republicans, moderate and extreme Socialists, together with the Popular element, which constitutes the democratic Catholics, could not be found unanimous on any positive line of action. Their divisions, which could not hold together for more than a day after a combined victory, drove the conservative powers of the State, from the Pope down, to giving their support to Fascism after the Matteotti affair.

But a greater danger than the negative policy of Parliament was the propaganda of the Press, which exercised a very powerful influence over the public.

However, in his speech in the Camera dei Deputati on 3rd January 1924, Mussolini announced his plans for a tactical change in dealing with the Press campaign. He proposed to put into force the ancient **article 3** of the provincial and communal laws, which

authorized the suspension of any publications issued by the opposition Press which should venture to attack the Government or allude to the lawsuit which had been brought forward in connection with the Matteotti affair. And the battle was won.

It practically amounted to this, that henceforth there was no opposition in Italy, for by voluntarily absenting itself from Parliament and being forced into silence by the Press restrictions, it lost all means of communication with the country, and the country heard only the voice of the Fascist press and knew only Fascist political action. There were no longer any parties either. Any signs of dissent, be it in the ruling party itself or in the organs of the State, were immediately silenced. Rebels were immediately expelled, and so lost all power.

III—The Fascist laws which were passed in 1925 and 1926 bear the imprint of the increase of the executive over the legislative power; they are designed to replace legal autonomy by the central power; to ensure the political supremacy of the Fascist party; to establish the position of the head of the Government; to modify the power of the workers' unions and to avoid strikes; to introduce the election of members of the Senate by recognized societies and under the direction of the executive Power.

The executive Power has the right to issue governmental by-laws, subject, officially, to the approval of Parliament (law 31, January 1926). The Prime Minister no longer depends for election and dismissal on Parliament, but on the King; and his place is first and foremost in the Cabinet; attempts on his life are punished by the gravest penalties, and any offence

directed against him is punished by months of imprisonment (law 24, December 1925). A law provides for the legal dismissal of any official hostile to the Fascist regime (law 24, December 1925), and for the imprisonment at the discretion of his judges of any man who is deemed guilty of unpatriotic action, such as the journalist who refuses to join a Fascist corporation. The Press is subject to the most rigorous provisions, which include the suspension of a newspaper at will, the civil responsibility of the proprietor and printers, the dismissal of a director and the suspension of the paper until such time as his post shall have been filled at the discretion of a magistrate (law 31, December 1925). Societies and associations of every kind must submit statutes to the magistrate along with a list of their members ; and Government officials are forbidden to belong to any secret society, such as the Freemasons (law 25, November 1925). Municipalities with a population of less than 5000 are not allowed to elect a *Consiglio Comunale* or a *Sindaco*; in these cases the *Sindaco* is replaced by a *Podestà* appointed by the Crown (law 4, February 1926). Those who are judged to be practising unpatriotic activities abroad are liable to loss of citizenship as well as confiscation of personal property (law 31, January 1926). Finally, an important law regarding the syndicates states that only those workmen's syndicates are tolerated which are recognized by the State and whose activities are not considered of an unpatriotic nature ; they must comprise not more than 10 per cent, of the workers of the district; they have the function of representing all the other workers, and they must impose on their members a tax of at least 5 l a month. Syndicates not recognized by the

State have only the functions of societies, and may be dissolved at any time. At the moment of writing this chapter, it is not generally known what procedure is involved in the passing of a law; nor of what nature will be the reorganization of the Senate which is to involve not only the senators enjoying life nomination from the King, but also those elected for nine years out of the Fascist corporations and syndicates, also by the King. Strikes and lock-outs are prohibited, and there is a special magistrature which deals with the settlement of labour disputes.

Such is the rod with which Mussolini intends to rule Italian society. His Government regime is his most sweeping reform, as it is the biggest enigma of the future.

IV—It is a noteworthy fact that during 1925 and 1926 Mussolini's personality has proved itself greater than ever before, not only in the difficulties he has overcome, the courage of his decisions, his shrewd employment of many kinds of men to the best advantage, but, above all, in the fact that his activities have passed from purely Italian to the international significance they have to-day. Just as Lenin's Government was the ideal of the working classes, so Mussolini's has become the ideal of the capitalist and conservative classes, however disturbed they may have been as to the principle of his authority. The phrase, "What we want is a Mussolini," has become a world-wide saying. It may express praise of the man or it may merely be the cry of the desperate, but however that may be, it is significant, and hearing it repeated all over the world, and especially in countries whose governments seem to lack either the energy or the

initiative to save them from the social and financial difficulties which threaten them, cannot fail to have an effect. At any rate that phrase must convey the admiration which cannot fail to be felt for the man whose energy and sure action, sweeping prejudice and legal and traditional stumbling-blocks out of his way, has enabled him to lift a great burden from the shoulders of his country.¹

Mussolini is no longer the myth of Italy, but the myth of the whole world.

V—A notable feature of this period is the increased comfort and luxury enjoyed by the Italian citizen. Wherever renovations were needed in the communication services, public palaces or roads, be it in Rome, Florence or Milan, or in the lesser towns such as Ravenna, Bologna or Padua, or even in the still smaller towns, projects for embellishments and improvements and the necessary millions were always forthcoming. The motor road became the special care after Mussolini had opened the one between Milan and Varese. There is an idea of continuing it through Switzerland right into Bavaria. A society has been formed for an enterprise to connect Milan and Torino by a motor road; and there is another colossal scheme on hand for electrifying an express railway service between the three great industrial cities of the north—Milan, Turin and Genoa—so that an hour's journey would suffice between any one of them and another, and so that to

¹ There is a theory which finds favour with the democratic press that Mussolini is a puppet in the hands of the capitalists and generals. Such a theory is crude, and contrasts badly with the impression which Mussolini's personality has left on most men and on the masses; and what is more, it credits capitalists and generals with a far greater measure of intelligence than they have merited.

all intents and purposes they might constitute one enormous city on the Mediterranean. All the big cities have grown, taking in the neighbouring communes ; for instance, Milan has taken into her radius sixteen of her suburbs. Some of the lesser towns have joined forces, as in the case of San Remo and Oneglia, which now form the chief town of the Ligurian Riviera,

The old and new form a curious contrast in the cities which have come in for this great reconstructional work, so that we still have glimpses of the legacy of the second Napoleonic Empire and the Parisian transition period which dates back to that time. In Rome, Florence and Milan there has been bitter strife between the renovators and the aesthetes, witness the proposal to build a bridge in Venice to convey motor traffic into the Piazza San Marco, and again Pesto, whose tranquillity and pure skies have been threatened with the chimneys of a sugar factory; both these projects have been severely criticized.

Fascism is ever giving proofs of its dual personality ; on the one hand, its respect of the past and of tradition, on the other, its concern for the convenience of contemporary Italian citizens, who must live, and cannot do so to advantage if they are kept hide-bound by antiquity.

The watchword of Fascism is speed, comfort and vital living. How can they live up to this ideal while condemned to a mediaeval setting ? Italy no longer wants to be the honeymoon land of romance; she wants to be a modern country. Fascism stands for the age of the Fiat as well as for the age of the bow of Titus. To Fascism the electrification of the railways is a greater pride than the pigeons of San Marco. That Fascism which has accepted Futurism bears

slight resemblance to the Fascism which has established Catholicism.

To the prestige which Fascism has gained for Italy in the world of engineering, of capitalist enterprise, of adventure, and, in short, of the heroic, in the American sense of the word, has been added the astounding enterprise of De Pinedo, who silently made his preparations for his flight from Italy to Australia and back to Italy via Japan in an ordinary hydroplane, and of Nobile, who arranged and piloted Amundsen's expedition to the North Pole. Both these men have contributed to Italy's pride and have dispelled the impression abroad of an Italy of serenades and the *dolce far niente*, not to mention the widespread belief that the South did not breed men capable of energy, organization and endurance.

VI—During 1925 and 1926 Fascism has preserved its same policy in its relations with the Vatican, but with unforeseen modifications. It has continued its policy of indulgence towards the Catholic Church outwardly and where it demanded active practice at any rate, with the object of securing a definite rift between it and the Popular party, and of obtaining its support both at home and abroad. This policy has culminated in a new ecclesiastical legislature which has met with the fullest satisfaction from the Church, short of complete temporal power in Italy.

Fascism may be said to have been fully successful in its first objective, for the Catholic Church has driven Don Sturzo out of Italy, ordered its priests to leave politics out of their activities, and from the very lips of the Pope himself has acknowledged the necessity for the Church to adapt itself to the new political

and syndical conditions imposed by Fascism. As much cannot be said with regard to foreign politics, for here Fascism has not yet been completely victorious.

There has been talk of an ambitious plan of Mussolini's, which is as yet far outside the realms of possibility, to concede certain temporal powers to the Pope in exchange for Vatican support of Italian political propaganda abroad. The realization of such a plan would have enabled Mussolini to move more freely in European affairs, giving him the backing of the Catholic nations and of the Catholic sections of others in the League of Nations, where such a backing is sorely needed.

As Prezzolini has truly said in his book, Fascism is the stag-beetle and the Vatican is the tortoise, and an alliance between the two is not easily realized. Fascism was too hasty in its advances to the Church, and in pressing the lady too closely stepped on her train ; whereupon the lady turned.

The honourable Farinacci was at the root of the unpleasantness which arose with the Church, in an unwarranted attack upon Cardinal Gasparri, whom, he asserted, the Pope had dismissed on the strength of his authorship of some anti-Fascist epigram, and of his one-time support of Don Sturzo and of the Popular party. The contention aroused bitter feeling in the Vatican, which replied to the attack through the medium of the Press, expressing its distaste of the action in no measured terms, while the Pope hastened to reinstate Cardinal Gasparri.

It was very probably for this very reason that the Hon. Farinacci lost his post as secretary of the Fascist party; and negotiations on the grounds of the foreign policy, in exchange for the temporal power of the

Pope, remained in the air. There is no doubt, however, that Fascism is already negotiating for a reconciliation with the Vatican, again on temporal grounds, an effort for which the ministers Rocco and Federzoni are chiefly responsible, and who, it is said, find greater favour with the Church than the anti-clerical Fascists whose chief spokesman was Farinacci, and amongst whom anti-clericalism may any day burst forth again.

This and other lesser episodes are illustrative of the two distinct tendencies of the Fascist party represented in Farinacci and Federzoni. The former finds favour with the extremist Fascists and those who would return in a moment to the life of the *squadre* and of reprisals, ready for any scrap, be it with the Church itself. Federzoni, on the other hand, found favour with the Nationalists and the whole of the middle classes who had accepted Fascism, in spite of their distaste for its more violent measures. Federzoni was certainly victorious in his first encounter with his enemy in having him dismissed from his position as secretary of the party. His own loyalist past promised to gain greater favour for him in Court circles. Owing to his old political connections with Nationalism (of which he was leader for many years) he would appear to have more in common with the industrial classes than with the bureaucracy, and would therefore be better fitted to re-establish a reactionary policy, so long as he kept within the bounds of the law. The accommodating and temporizing character of Federzoni made him, as it were, the Giolitti of the Fascist party, whose task it was to bring within the realms of the law the Fascist middle classes, just as Giolitti's had been to subdue the Socialist working classes.

Just such another conflict of purposes was to be seen in the struggle for syndical adjustments in which Rossoni, representative of Fascist syndicalism and mindful of the revolutionary fight at the time of Red syndicalism, was routed by Nationalism, so that the syndical movement was put under the authority of the State. In spite of all Rossoni's counter-efforts a Corporation Ministry was formed.

This undercurrent of dispeace has never come forth into the daylight, thanks to the prestige and the strength of Mussolini, who always deems it advisable to assume the personal direction of any body in which trouble occurs. Just in the same way as he found it necessary to become Minister of War and of the Navy in order to maintain the subjection of the army and navy, so he found he could best govern the corporations by instituting himself as their leader.

VII—The Fascist Government's greatest triumph from the point of view of the nation during 1925 and 1926 has been the stabilization of the lira, which has suffered little fluctuation from April 1924 on, and still less since October 1925. This satisfactory state of affairs is due principally to the agreements arrived at with England and America on the question of international debts. The cancelling of these debts was held by all concerned to be the wisest course, and it certainly exercised a most beneficial influence upon the exchanges, in which stability is essential for the carrying on of foreign trade in industry as well as in agriculture.

The success of the negotiations has been accounted for in various ways, all more or less malicious. Some have attributed it to Count Volpi, some to the in

fluence of the Italian population of the United States, some to mutual political understandings between Italy and England. But without in any way belittling the personal factors and political considerations which had a hand in the solution of the problem of debts, it seems to me a very possible explanation that the Anglo-Saxon delegates were well pleased to negotiate with a government which could furnish excellent guarantees of payment. Moral and political arguments have but little weight when it comes to a question of the capacity of a debtor to make payment. What better guarantee of payment could be given than the assurance that a country had done away with strikes, parties and internal disturbances? The very stability of the men in the Government, in itself a guarantee against parliamentary defection, should strike Anglo-Saxon capitalism as more reassuring than the instability of a parliament-ruled country.

The Fascist regime is, in short, the type of capitalist regime calculated to awaken the sympathies of the ruling capitalist groups in other systems and other parts of the world. This is not intended as a moral justification, but as an illustration of the importance of Italy's political life to-day, and as an explanation of the Fascist foreign policy. The internal politics of a country have no influence upon its relations with foreign countries if it be not in the practical guarantees which it offers.

Volpi is the new Minister of Finances, and the change of ministry which followed the crisis in the Treasury and in the Exchange has modelled its policy chiefly upon the lines of substituting an active conciliatory campaign for the old rigidly theoretical policy. De Stefani, the economist, saved the Budget

with his economies and expenditure restrictions ; but Volpi, who was no economist, but only a practical financier, went still further by settling the question of international debts and restoring world credit.

Industrial politics bring up another important question. Will the expansion and protection of industries and the rise in the cost of living assure the future of many of the Italian manufacturing industries ?

At the moment of my writing, Italians are complaining of an industrial crisis which looms on the horizon, a symptom of which is a slump in certain industrial products thrown on the market and not distributed. Statistics support the view that there is a tendency towards saving, and this cannot fail to reflect itself on this branch of Italian economic activity.

There was also a momentary crisis in the Exchange. But the State, true to Fascist doctrine, intervened in every one of these embarrassing situations.

VIII—A significant change came over the Italian foreign policy in 1926. Up till then Mussolini had tended towards a policy of pacific adjustment, except for one episode—the occupation of Corfu; but in 1926 his speeches have betrayed a desire to give Italy colonial expansion. His speeches were supported by a visit to Lybia, and by an active campaign of propaganda in the Fascist press, as well as the institution of a " Colonial day." This new attitude of Mussolini has been regarded with suspicion by France, who has chosen to look upon the move as a direct hit at her colonies and at her Mediterranean supremacy.

It is a generally well-known fact why Italy needs colonies; the reasons are the same as those of Germany and Japan. As the Nationalists and Fascists say, Italy is a country whose population increases beyond the resources of the country. Being poor in natural products, with grudgingly yielding soil and a lack of swift flowing rivers, for most of them are rocky, Italy has had to adopt the expedient of emigration to deal with the question of her overpopulation. The number of her emigrants before 1914 had already risen to close upon a million a year.

But the war has closed the doors of many countries, especially North America, which had been the dumping-ground of the vast majority of Italian emigrants, to an influx of alien populations. Another objection to the old scheme was the ever-growing pride of the Italian in his own country, and the fact of having to seek his bread in strange lands wounded that pride sorely.

The Italian Government has made every effort recently to increase the agricultural resources of the country, and thereby it has found employment for several million more men. But these efforts will soon have reached the limit of their capacity, and so Italy must have colonies of her own to cope with the never-ceasing increase ; and the urgency of the matter will demand their acquisition by force if pacific methods fail.

The Nationalists and Fascists, too, are ever mindful of the contrast between the fecund population of Italy and barren France, so that they can see nothing but international injustice in France's acquisition of additional colonies after the war, while **Italy** received none. Another cause for Italian

protest is France's efforts to naturalize her Italian population, especially that part of it which is to be found in Tunis. Italians have not yet forgotten the German taunts of 1914 in which they compared the healthy morality of one country with the immoral decadence of another.

Such is the problem of the Fascist ruling classes; and very naturally it does not tend to encourage confidence in Europe, but rather adds to the causes of the present somewhat equivocal situation.

This problem also explains the attitude of open or covert hostility towards the League of Nations in Italy. The fact is that in Italy the League of Nations is tolerated, but it is neither loved nor even favoured.

The Fascist political classes in Italy sum up the League of Nations somewhat in the following terms : The League of Nations is a conservative organization, all very nice for such countries as England or France, who have bitten a large slice out of the world and naturally want to sit down now and digest it in peace. They are countries, moreover, which have reached the summit of their power and are now on the decline. But those countries which are still going up the ladder of progress, and which have suffered cruel injustices, still need some rearrangement of the distribution of colonies and of the good things of the Earth. And therefore they have no use for a legal organization like the League of Nations designed to preserve the case of the satiated, and not to see that the hungry get their fair share.

The Democrats, however, put up a case against the theories of the Fascists. They hold that the problem of the heavy birth-rate in Italy could not be solved

by colonies without the capital to employ the people ; while a pacific policy and especially an effort to keep the old doors in the colonies open would help to develop the existing industry and agriculture, so that the demand for Italian labour would increase. As for the League of Nations, they say, if Italy would only show the way to the lesser nations who are apt to constitute the weakness of that assembly, she would very probably obtain the League's sympathy and would gain far more than threats and force will ever bring her.

But these are only theoretical criticisms, and we must restrict ourselves to the consideration of facts; and the facts are the problems as they concern the ruling Fascist classes and through them the Fascist Government.

What exactly are Italy's demands in the colonial line ?

The Government has been discreet enough not to specify; and the Press, controlled by the Government, has been very little more precise. Italy certainly has aspirations towards Anatolia (Turkey); and if the distribution made to the victorious nations after the war should be brought in question, a claim would certainly be entered for Togo, Camérún or Syria. Some would have a plea put in for expansion in East Africa, including the acquisition of Gibuti, Obok (French) and Somaliland (English), with a view to enclosing Abyssinia between Italian frontiers. Others hanker after Tunis, where there are already some 100,000 Italians. Then, to go outside the bounds of the colonies, there has been a great deal written about Corsica's Italian ownership up to 1800. In fact, it is a very large gamingtable, and Italy has laid her stakes on more than one of the numbers.

IX—And finally we come to the question which is perpetually being asked about Fascism. Has it come to stay in Italy ? As to that, the only answer I am authorized to give is this: *Granted that nothing unforeseen occurs*, Fascism is a lasting regime. It has gained complete supremacy in Italy; it can dissolve any society or group which has not its approval, it has enticed or forced beneath its rule all the political classes of the country, the highest authorities, the bureaucracy, the army, the Vatican and the Monarchy itself. Fascist power and durability are assured by the very fact that the fate of the ruling classes is inextricably bound up in the Fascist regime, and that its fall would involve the fall of the ruling classes.

This does not necessarily mean that the majority of the country and public opinion are in favour of Fascism. That could only be proved by a free election and a free Press ; and it is obvious that Fascism does not intend to put itself to such proofs.

Neither is it true, as some Italians abroad will tell you, that Italy is labouring under Fascist oppression. As a matter of fact, the majority of Italians do not bother with politics or take a very keen interest in constitutional liberty. Over this majority Fascism rules as with the guiding hand of a father, which, since it assures them work and some degree of comfort and justice, is tolerated, and in some cases even welcomed. Besides this, Mussolini's personality, quite apart from Fascism, still exercises a spell over the masses.

In the ruling classes alone there is a small minority composed chiefly of intellectuals and members of the larger states and of the disbanded parties, who openly oppose Fascism.

So that Fascism is perfectly justified in saying that it has a majority in Italy, because, by a majority is meant a majority in the political classes and not a majority in the country.

Fascism dominates the whole country except in two branches whose direction cannot be regulated even by Fascist measures: that is to say, political economy, which is subject to abiding laws, and foreign politics. In both cases the issue is dependent upon other uncontrollable issues, and if the last word lies with anyone, it is with Italy rather than with Fascism.

On the whole, however, it cannot be denied that Fascism has brought assistance to Italy in her foreign relations, as well as in her economic and international life, for it has removed a very real menace which the perpetual struggle between labour and capital and perpetual political strife kept to the fore. The removal of the former has ensured industry and agriculture being carried on at a profit, whereas formerly the variability of labour made all manufactured goods more difficult and more costly to obtain. Freedom from political strife gave the foreigner a guarantee of the stability of the Italian Government, which is bound to make negotiations between countries easier. It is much pleasanter to confer with the head of a government whom you are likely to find still at the head of that government a few years hence, and a head, moreover, who has unrestricted authority to make what pledges he will.

But in a case like this the good, which is of the first importance in a stormy time like the present, must be taken with the undeniable bad, which will be seen in the future, and which will probably take the form of a moral and intellectual evil.

But there is no denying the fact that the Fascist party has made immoderate use of rhetoric, of incitement, of public celebrations, of wholesale dissolution of existing organizations and of keeping the country in a perpetual state of unrest both with regard to the situation at home and abroad, which has been undesirable. The internal outbreaks, which have usually culminated so tragically in assassinations at Turin (1922), Pisa (1924), and Florence (1925), may occur to-morrow in foreign relations, with the direst of dire results to the nation.

Local and communal tyrannies, and the family and party feuds which were perpetrated in the name of Fascism in many towns and villages throughout Italy, have given rise to much ill-feeling and talk of reprisals should Fascist power fall. Should like measures be turned against other nations, the consequences might well be very serious.

The lack of freedom in the Press and of political opposition in the country is very apt to weaken the capacity of the Italian people for self-government, which at no time was a strong point with them. Side by side with the love of supremacy in the political classes, there is a noticeable avoidance and fear of their enemies. The very freedom of speech has become cramped from the fear of consequences, now that not only the servants of the State but even the liberal professions—lawyers and journalists, for instance—are no longer allowed to be practised except in the service of Fascism.

Newspapers are less widely read than of yore, because the Fascist press, which comprises nearly all of them, is merely the instrument of Rome, while the few non-Fascist ones which remain (the *Stampa* and

the *Mondo*, both Liberal; *l'Avanti*, Socialist; *l'Uniti*, Communist; the *Voce Repubblicana*, Republican) are not free to say what they would, and for fear of suspension are forced to avoid news items and devote themselves to literature, foreign correspondence or sweeping statements of their principles.

The absence of criticism must be harmful to a country, especially when it is carried to the lengths of ceasing to be necessary, as has been the case with the German people, who are now struggling to rise to the occasion when they have things in their own hands.

There is one more point which still seems dubious, and that is the question of justice. Most people who have been prepared to accept all the other activities of Fascism, given the existing conditions in Italy and in Europe in general, would find it difficult to swallow the dependence of the magistrature on the executive power. Italian magistracy has, for political reasons, been put through a process of expurgation which must surely have weakened the powers of justice. And besides this, there have been several political cases where the judgment pronounced by the jury has been more than influenced by intimidation and such-like corrupt practices.

We can only hope that such corruption as has been mentioned is confined to isolated cases, and that in time Italy will be in a position to add freedom of the Press and unbiased Justice to her ideal of the perfect State.

SOME ADDITIONAL NOTES

PAGE 71.—The *Cremona Nuova* is now the *Regime Fascist a* (1926).

PAGE 97.—M. ROCCA has abandoned Fascism.

PAGE 172.—The *Fascist Review* referred to on this page is the *Gerarchia*.

N.B.—A very good book on Fascism, especially considered as a movement of centralisation of Italian Life is: OLIVIERO ZUCCARINI, *EspeHenze e Soluztoni*, Roma, Lib. Pop Moderna, 1926.

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