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THE FASCIST MOVEMENT IN ITALIAN LIFE

THE DECADENCE OF EUROPE

By Francesco Nitti
Former Premier of Italy

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BENITO MUSSOLINI.

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THE FASCIST MOVEMENT IN ITALIAN LIFE

By DOTT. PIETRO GORGOLINI

With Preface by S. E. BENITO MUSSOLINI

Translated and Edited with Introduction by

M. D. PETRE

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PREFACE

Fascism not only boasts a sanguinary and brilliant history, which has been crowned by victory, but it is also beginning to produce an abundant literature. Almost all Italian writers have endeavoured to treat of this complex and powerful movement, which is so intensely national and Italian, because it has no parallel in the history of other peoples. A good pamphlet on Fascism from the critical point of view has been written by Mario Missiroli. Amongst others, our friend Doctor Pietro Gorgolini has entered the field with this volume, which is, to our mind, the best publication on Fascism that has appeared in Italy since March 1919 until to-day.

Doctor Gorgolini is not only a student of Fascism, but has been a soldier of our cause from its beginning. Such qualities might have prejudiced his judgment and intuition and might have tainted his study of Fascism with a quality of subjective passion. But he has brilliantly overcome this difficulty, and in his book we find a perfect adjustment of the qualities of actor and spectator, soldier and critic. Elementary discretion prevents me from speaking of the first part of the book, which has been dedicated to a study of myself. In the following parts Gorgolini, after having given a rapid account of the history of Fascism, discloses its fundamental

ideas, finds their place in national policy, contrasts them with those of other parties, and, lastly, casts his eye on the future of the movement, which has now become a party. The book is of a character to tempt the reader; it is not heavy, nor pedantic, nor professorial; it is a journalistic book in the best sense of the word. It has a light and supple style, and it tempts the reader from the first page to the last.

It is superfluous to add that this book should have a vast and successful diffusion amongst the Fascist Public and amongst those who are interested in the vicissitudes of Italian policy.

MUSSOLINI.

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INTRODUCTION

By the Translator

Machiavelli—Mazzini—Mussolini—Italy has an extraordinary power of throwing up strong and original political types. It may seem an exaggeration to place the last of those three names alongside of the other two :

> E più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,
> Ch'essi mi fecer della loro schiera,
> Sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.

As a man of letters, and as a political philosopher, Mussolini is less than Niccolo Machiavelli ; as a great moral leader of the people, he is less than Giuseppe Mazzini ; but he is, like both of those men, an incarnate type of the Italian spirit, with its mingled practical shrewdness and intense idealism, its tendency to the highest and most exclusive forms of morality, and its capacity for a total detachment from moral issues in the field of political action.

The great name of Machiavelli has been made into a byword, to the sorrow of those who know that it is, in Mazzini's words, " a mean travesty of his doctrine " that now bears the popular name of Machiavellism.

Those who regard Machiavelli simply as the

founder of a brutal and conscienceless State philosophy are unaware that this man worked for the foundation of national armies, whose sole interest would be the defence of their country, in the place of a mercenary and professional soldiery who lived by and for war, and whose very existence, therefore, promoted war. War, for him, was not to be an art, because the true art of a ruler was to consist in "the government and defence of the people"; and they were only to know how "to make war because they loved peace."[1]

It was not the fashion of his day to entrust the citizens with arms; but he said that "if they were well governed, arms would be no danger in their hands."[2]

He would have his fellow-citizens "love one another; live without rivalries; care less for their private than for the public good."

He had an ascetic belief in poverty—that is to say, in the poverty that implies labour with sufficiency. He tells princes that they are to attribute the vices of the people to their own moral delinquencies.[3]

But he had also that ruthless Latin sense of fact; and for him war was war—not sport; and the public good had to be preserved even by the sacrifice of the individual.

Mazzini acted and wrote in other times, when it was no longer a question of getting the best that could be got for the people out of the tyrannical

[1] "Amar la pace, e saper far la guerra" ("Arte della guerra").

[2] *Idem.*

[3] "Discorsi sopra Tito Livio."

government of princes, but of establishing new and better forms of rule and government. As in Machiavelli we have shrewd political wisdom tinctured with idealism, so in Mazzini we have religion and idealism brought to bear on politics.

"Cæsar—that is, the temporal power, the civil government—is nothing but the mandatory, the executor, so far as its powers and the time allow, of God's design."

In Benito Mussolini we find another specimen of the same blend. He is of the level of his own age in religion—of an age in which there is a large average class that is incapable of religious faith in its true sense; but he has, in its place, the passion of patriotism. Italy is his ideal and his deity. In his political outlook he is more directly kin to Machiavelli than to Mazzini, though it is perhaps the latter that he most frequently quotes. He is Mazzinian in his ardent Nationalism; he is Machiavellian in his astute and uncompromising employment of the means that are needful to the end.

All three men have been conscious of a high descent: of descent from the great makers of Roman Jurisprudence; of descent from the race of Dante, with his unequalled political scheme, unequalled save by that of Plato. The sense of law, the sense of fact, the sense of the ideal—these are the three components of political science, as understood by its greatest Italian representatives.

To speak of Fascism is to speak of Mussolini, for the two are very literally in the relation to one another of creature and creator. D'Annunzio was

also a co-operating cause, in so far as he intensified the situation which called forth the Fascist movement, and gave a lead in the opposition to precedent and established power. But his action was combative only, whereas that of Mussolini has also been legal and constructive.

There is a vague notion amongst many people in England that Fascism is a kind of "Middle-class League," purely and simply an energetic reaction against Communism, or even Socialism. It would be much more true to say that it is a reaction against *theoreticalism*, against doctrines that take no count of facts, against illusive catchwords and parrot cries, against any attempt to run a country by the guidance either of precedent or of mere shibboleths. It is eminently anti-Faddist, in theory as in fact.

Mussolini was a Socialist, and had been expelled from Switzerland for his revolutionary doctrines. It was in the war and post-war conditions of Italy that his idealism received its check, and that he began to feel the weakness of mere theory in the direction of human affairs. Like many young men, especially of Latin race, he had enjoyed his period of social optimism and individual licence, when it seemed as though all the evils of the world sprang from its established and respected institutions, and not in any way from the perennial naughtiness of man's heart.

To many such Russia was an object-lesson, as it was to Mussolini. He saw a country in which an experiment had been imposed and carried out without check or opposition, without criticism, without regard for individuals or facts. For once

in the history of the world the ideas of a few men had been able to express themselves in the fate of a whole country; in the blood and flesh, and joys and sorrows, and life and death of millions. We often say—especially we Saxons and Teutons—that life and logic are not one; that life is wider and richer and more complex than logic and reason would make it. But in the Russian experiment life had to fit itself to logic, or so much the worse for life; the logic of a few minds controlled, limited, and compressed into an iron frame the abounding life of half a continent. Theory ruled supreme, and the result was Bolshevist Russia.

It was there to be seen; and though, like every stupendous event, legend gathered around it, and foolish tales were spread of outrageous and inconceivable doings, yet certain main facts were plain and visible, open to the inspection of Socialists as of others.

Those are the occasions on which the sincerity of thought is tested, and we learn whether men hold to a theory for the sake of that theory or for the sake of truth; whether they seek, in the first place, to prove themselves in the right, and only in the second place to be in the right, or whether they seek, above all, to do right; whether their creed is directed to the general welfare or to their own mental satisfaction; whether they would rather change the destiny of thousands than change their own minds; whether they would rather risk a tragedy than admit a fallacy.

It might even be that Bolshevism abounded in social wisdom and truth; and that what made it

wrong was just this exceptional and tragic fact, that it was able to impose itself regardless of life as a whole. However that may be, there was Bolshevist Russia, and it happened that Italian Socialism came into close relations with it.

Then it was that the true Machiavellism of Mussolini came to his rescue; that he looked constituted Socialism in the face and found that it, like *bourgeois* conservatism, was hide-bound by precedent and tradition; that it was running its theories without regard to their consequences; that it was risking universal death on the mere hope of a more ideal condition of life.

Our author points out to us, very truly, that if Bolshevism has wounded or ruined Russia, it would have killed Italy out and out; she could not have survived it. But Italian Socialists were unobservant of this trivial danger; their theory and system were, to them, more important than the country to which they were to be applied.

Then, too, there is a subversionism that finds joy in its own existence; the *gaminerie* of youth lasts on in some lives, and grown men rejoice in pulling something down to see what the empty place will look like, and what appearance a wall has when it is reduced to lumps of brick.

In sum, a state of things had arisen in Italy in which idealist doctrines were producing a very disastrous form of realism, and in which the fate of the country was at stake.

We have been told that our Western civilization is doomed; that, like every other growth, having reached a certain stage of maturity, the time of

decay and death has set in. This fatalism, whether facts eventually are to justify it or not, is probably contributory to the attitude of those who accept subversionist movements in the way that they would silently accept the hangman if they had been condemned to death. It was probably something of this sense of the inevitable, of a new "face at the door" and "a new foot on the floor," that could not be kept out whatever they might signify, that contributed to that Governmental weakness which prevailed in many places and which seems to have attained alarming proportions in Italy. This was the second inspiring motive of Mussolini's great movement of reaction: it was a lawless movement for the restoration of law.

Fascism is unique; there has never been anything quite like it, and there is not actually anything like it. It is an explosive movement, and other explosive movements have been both innovating and subversive, whereas Fascism is preservative. It is a popular movement, and other popular movements have been in favour of the weaker and oppressed classes, whereas Fascism has no special class interest. It is not reactionary, but it stands out for the maintenance of ancient values; it is not a labour movement, but it favours a highly progressive agricultural and industrial programme.

Its main aims and characteristics may be summed up as follows:—

1. It refuses to risk the life of a country, the welfare of a community, by the pursuit of any ideal, however beautiful theoretically, that is of immediate and pressing danger to existing society.

2. It will hear of no Socialism or Pacifism that has no place for patriotism in its system. Patriotism is a real factor of life, that cannot be obliterated by internationalism.

(Now, on this point it has undoubtedly struck the weak point of unconditional Pacifism, which is apt totally to overlook the fact that most men and women are as conscious of their nationality as they are of their human nature. Even if this be a condition of society which is eventually to be absorbed into a higher and wider sentiment, it is mad to ignore what exists, and think that to make men unpatriotic is to make them greater lovers of their kind. To do so may have the merely negative result of making them love nobody but themselves.)

3. It furiously defends the national interests of its country, and upholds the value to Italy of the late war.

4. It absolutely hates and repudiates class warfare; believes in a social inequality, or rather a social hierarchy, which results from natural inequality or difference of quality and value.

Its idea of class is at one with its idea of fitness: the intellect to its true work, the arms and legs to their true work; the able to direct, the strong, but less intelligent, to follow and co-operate; capital to be maintained as the only existing provision and security for labour and industry; labour to be progressively promoted, *in proportion to its intellectual and practical progress*, to a part in the administration of industry; land to be distributed into small proprietorships by a gradual and willing process.

5. It is a lawless believer in law—a rebel believer

in authority; but when law is not administered, when authority is weak-kneed, when the law-abiding get the worst of it because the law-breaker is immune, then it takes up the axe and rod and goes to work on its own account. Violence against violence, force in order to make a silence in which reason can be heard.

6. It does *not* believe, with Dr. Spengler, in the coming extinction of Western civilization, and is resolute to protect it from destruction. It is eminently anti-fatalistic. Hence the life-force of Fascism is intimately interwoven with the life-force of our existing civilization and social order.

7. As against vague idealism, it holds to the sense of limit—to the demarcating lines beyond which the most intense effort cannot reach.

8. Its sense of individualism is completed by its sense of property, as essential to the former; and it will defend both to the end.

9. It will have no hypnotizing shibboleths, no turning of the country's cheek to its enemy, no holocaust of its own land.

10. It is an adoption of the principle of "direct action," but not in the interests of any particular class. We shall undoubtedly see further developments of this social method: the seat of authority is not now always in the place where it apparently resides; the point of leverage has shifted. Fascism has had extraordinary success in the use of the method.

Now, whatever our sympathies may be, whether with Fascism or not, it is important to realize the circumstances which roused and, to some extent,

justified it—i.e. subversionary agitation fostered by the uncertainty and hesitating action of rulers. For one of two things: the prevailing Government was frankly Socialistic, and even revolutionary, in which case it should not only have tolerated Communistic outbreaks, but should have guided and reinforced them; or it was not Communistic, nor even Socialistic in character, in which case it proved itself not only weak, but dishonest.

It is patent that Fascism could not have arisen and prevailed unless this condition of slackness and indecision on the part of rulers had co-existed with the violence and restlessness of the masses that had come under the influence of Communism.

But now some of the dangers have been surmounted and the greatest one of all remains to be faced. Fascism is in power; Mussolini is Premier: will the movement keep its character; will the leader keep his disinterestedness? We do not ask the question because we doubt—we only ask it because it is vain to ignore the danger.

Benito Mussolini has to face, in fact, a greater moral probation than his two great predecessors, and that is the moral risks of achievement, power, and success. Machiavelli lived in poverty, for the most part, and probably did not guess that he bore a name that was to be immortal. Mazzini died in exile. Benito Mussolini is Premier of his country, and can now take an open and official share in working out the destiny of Italy and that of the world.

Power is a danger to such men, and not simply for the vulgar reason that it may turn their heads, but much more for the reason that such power

implies office, and that office implies routine, precedent, and the thraldom of custom. It is easier to break down the mechanism of a Government than to use that mechanism without becoming involved in its wheels and springs. Mussolini has succeeded in doing the first; we have to see if he can also do the last.

We often say that we need, in these troublous days, a great social builder—a brain capable of setting the world in a new direction. As one who both admires Fascism and disapproves of it, I wonder, as I have often done, whether, if such a social saviour ever appear, it may not be on the soil of Italy that he will arise. For that land has a marvellous power of throwing up new and original types, and though Fascism will not save us all, Fascism shows us how much can be done by strong will and direct thinking.

Fascism cannot save us all, because it is not wholly set in the way of moral and social advance. Its recoil against internationalism has its excuse and justification, but it is a recoil that has left an aftermath of bitterness. The social regenerators of the future must not ignore the claims of patriotism, but they must be less arrogant and aggressive in their nationalism.

Italy feels herself aggrieved, and with justice, on many points; but England has not deserved her violent Anglophobia, and she has the fault of the Latin race, the fault of France as of Italy, the lack of all power of self-criticism.

We Anglo-Saxons may be overbearing and arrogant, but our self-blame and self-criticism are deep-

rooted and constant factors of our national life. We are much more conscious of our inadequacies than are the French and Italians; nor could we rejoice, as does the author of the following work, in the mistakes and misfortunes of our neighbours.

Italy is conscious of noble descent, but our descent is what we make of it, and the spirit of the old Romans may sometimes be found more truly on our side of the Alps than on theirs.

Yet we must not drive our complaints too far—the ruling Powers at Versailles made but a sorry job of their task, and Italy has had to bear the results along with weaker neighbours.

Good fortune to Italy on her new course—good fortune to the Fascist Government and its leaders! and may they, by the maintenance of law and by the uplifting of their land, prepare it to bring forth a yet greater leader, who shall unite a high love of his country with a still higher love of humanity, who shall have the great and sublime conceptions of a Dante along with the charity and faith of a Francis of Assisi.

M. D. PETRE.

March 7th, 1923.

NOTE.—The following work has been somewhat abbreviated in the course of translation. It is, as S. E. Benito Mussolini remarks, journalistic in character; made up of chapters that were probably composed at different times. Hence there is a fair amount of repetition and a considerable redundancy. As the translator, however, has adhered strictly to the substance of the work, it has seemed much better not to indicate places where paragraphs or pages have been omitted as superfluous. The result is a *version*, rather than a strict translation; though it is, I trust, an *accurate* version.—TRANSLATOR.

THE FASCIST MOVEMENT IN ITALIAN LIFE

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS FASCISM? HOW AND WHY DID IT BEGIN?

WHAT is Fascism? What does it stand for in public life? What is its ethical, economic, and political meaning? What is its attitude to the State, to the Government, to Capitalism, to all other parties, to the Church? Is the programme of Fascism, that can be summed up in the Mazzinian motto, *Thought and Action*, capable of further and more ample elaboration? Have those principles and tendencies, whether theoretical or practical, that have, for two years, inspired the valiant legions that stood out against Bolshevism, borne the test of time? Are they capable of being adapted and amplified? Is Fascism made up of violent elements, or of conscientious, serene, thoughtful, and balanced minds? Is it restless and bellicose, or calm and intellectual? Will its activity in political and social movements always be marked by a character of violence, or is it, at bottom, persuasive, educative, and apostolic in its appeal to the crowd? Can Fascism, to use the words of Mussolini, work out a theory of life without which its fate is death or suicide? Is a pacific cohabita-

tion with antagonistic parties possible? Has it a power of orientation? Is it capable of begetting a philosophy, so that, as a party, it can form a speculative system begotten of the spirit and the brain of the Fascists of Italy? Finally, has Fascism in itself such concrete energies, ideas, and aspirations as will render it capable eventually, if fortune be favourable, of assuming the responsibility of the government of Italy? Has it really a vital programme of internal reconstitution? Is it capable of putting it into action?

These questions will all be answered in the following treatise. Meanwhile, we assert that the Fascistic phenomenon, which is a complex one, must be studied with the greatest detachment and attention. While civil war is still raging in the country,[1] a war in which the combatants are falling on either side in the defence of their conquests, their banners, their ideals, a psychological examination of Fascism is anything but superfluous.

We, actors, spectators, and observers of the historic tragedy which carries us right back into the midst of mediæval life, will endeavour to analyse calmly a movement which has already stamped its spiritual mark on the nation which was gasping under the blows of Communism. But before beginning to study Fascism in act, and impartially considering its various aspects and many phases, it will be opportune to cast a summary glance on its past.

. . . . . .

We can all remember the condition of Italy just after the war. Then it was that Leninist propa-

[1] 1921

gandists, under the toleration of Nitti and his policy, endeavoured by their savage class-hatred to embitter the soul of the people, who were discouraged and wearied by the sorrows and horrors of a war which had culminated in the diplomatic defeat of Versailles. The attitude of the various Nittian Ministries, as everyone can remember, produced an excited state in the public conscience, which was more and more losing confidence in the protection of the Government for the observance of the law. The moral insensibility of the Nittians effaced the spiritual values that were the fruit of our military victory. Nitti, whose posthumous apologies have manifested no demonstrative or convincing value, by his famous Mortara decree amnestied, under a pretext of social pacification, those very deserters that the public opinion regarded as the worst enemies of the nation. Nitti permitted that men adorned with the blue and silver signs of valour and heroism should be insulted, struck, wounded, even slain in the roads and streets of Italy without the authors of such outrages incurring due chastisement. Nitti permitted that the provinces of Italy, such as Emilia, Romagna, Tuscany, the Marches, Umbria, Lombardy, Venetia, Piedmont, and Apulia, should be reduced to Red provinces where the Communists could set a price, murder, ravage, boycott, burn, and steal at pleasure, without the action of the Government being manifested by the forces of the law to punish those responsible for such offences.

All this made reaction inevitable, whether sooner or later. And, in fact, public opinion at last

revolted with violence against the Bolshevistic tyranny, and formed itself, in a compact mass, around Benito Mussolini, who, guided by his fine political sense and his intense love for Italy, had constituted the first *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* (Fascist Fighting Groups) in March 1919.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the Nittian policy of negligence and intimidation, of compromise and cowardice, had inevitably prepared the way for the return to power of Giovanni Giolitti. Under his government occurred the armed occupation of the metallurgical factories by the employees. It is notorious that during that unhappy episode of violence and arbitrariness the Giolittian Government, excusing itself on the grounds of not possessing sufficient police and soldiers to interfere, allowed the workmen, in spite of those articles of the Penal Code which protect the right of private liberty and the right of private property, to lock themselves in and fortify themselves in the positions they had conquered. That was indeed the golden age of the Red guards, now succeeded by the so-called *Bold ones*[1] of the people, who organized and fortified themselves in full daylight, under the very nose and eyes of the terrified police. Just at that time Mario Sonzini, a Nationalist and Fascist, at Turin, and the prison guard Scimula, underwent their well-known martyrdom at the hands of the Leninist bands scattered through the city to hunt down all that were not Communists.

Was it then for this that the flower of Italian youth,

[1] Arditi.

the six hundred thousand killed in war, had sublimely sacrificed themselves on the altar of their country?

The assassination of Pietro Giordani, perpetrated in a hall belonging to the Municipal Council of Bologna, was the last drop that made the cup run over. That misdeed marked the beginning of the great Fascist era, for then it was that the Fascist groups, created, as has been said, in March 1919 by the lofty mind and the indomitable heart of Mussolini, to arrest the advance of Bolshevism, arose as one man, at the order of their leader, and threw themselves furiously on the followers of Lenin, in a hundred and more cities of Italy. Their offensive was opposed by the Bolshevist revolutionaries, and the country was overwhelmed by their violence. Then Fascism, which is the spontaneous growth of a victorious country, found its full opportunity. It met the situation by systematically opposing violence to violence, arbitrariness to arbitrariness, and, alas! assassination to assassination. The law of reprisals, barbarous and antagonistic and savage if you will, a relic of inhuman mediævalism, ruled in the peninsula by the will of the Fascists. The hour had struck; accounts had to be rendered; and we learnt it at our own cost.

Fascism succeeded in a few months in re-establishing the *statu quo ante* in all the places terrorised by Leninism. Many hundreds of Fascists fell during the various phases of this ferocious civil war. Many youths and ex-service men, martyrs of a new ideal and heroes of a new duty, fell in this sad warfare. Italy blessed their indispensable action, through which was accomplished a complete rout

of the Communists. These latter were now afraid to walk without the protection of the hated police, those same streets and places which, for a time, they had terrorized. To the Fascists then, as all citizens of Italy will allow, is to be ascribed the honour and the boast of having freed the country from the Mongolian scourge.

. . . . . .

The misgovernment of the Nitti government and the first phase of the Giolittian restoration had the effect, as we have seen, of subverting the spirit and conscience of a part of the nation. It seemed, for a moment, as though the country were staggering under the assault of the savage Bolshevist beast. Our financial, economic, political, social, and moral conditions had never been so critical. The Throne manifested a stupefied indifference, or impotence, in front of the grave national evils. The State was apparently non-existent. The Government was feeble and without authority. The Law was impotent and the magistrates dared not enforce it. State officials proved their subserviency to Bolshevist pretensions by municipal anarchy and neglect of the most important public services. The Army was insulted with impunity by the mob and the subversive Press; the police, despised and discontented, manifested a complete inertia; the middle class, as a whole, became more terrified with every day that passed, and looked anxiously around with the pitiful and ridiculous appearance of one who hopes for someone from outside to save his own life And on this deplorable foundation of material and moral ruin the Leninist

hordes, supreme and powerful, grinned and howled at their country. The only beacon lights in the midst of the intense spiritual darkness were Gabriele d'Annunzio and Benito Mussolini. The first, a sure interpreter of the hereditary sentiment of Rome, was brandishing the Italian flag at Fiume. The second watched over the national destinies in Red Milan, seeking a propitious occasion to attack the Bolshevist tiger and tear it in pieces or be torn by it.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the Fascists gained proselytes every day and cast vigorous offshoots into all the Italian districts, from the Alps to Sicily, from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic Sea. Their ranks were swelled with ex-soldiers, adventurers, generals of great fame, citizens weary of Red tyranny and State cowardice, students, bands of troops, officials in active service, employees, professors, and compact groups of labourers in factories and fields. All were the soldiers of a pure faith and ideal. In short, all the *élite* of the country felt the necessity of gathering around the Fasces, that symbol of Italy and of patriotism. The movement at last, like an impetuous river, burst its banks and drew into its stream thousands of new followers of every category, from the middle class, from the working class, and from those rural districts which had been overrun by the Red propaganda.

Persons of every party, confession and creed were drawn by the eloquence of the great Mussolini (who thundered daily in the columns of the *Popolo d'Italia*), and flowed in to swell the mass that was

being organized by an iron and intelligent discipline in the name of the country. Fascism had now become a political organism of the first importance, and although it was still in the full crisis of development and not yet completely organized and prepared for battle with internal enemies, it nevertheless knew how to answer with steel and lead to the excesses of the Communists in Bologna and Venetia and elsewhere. It answered by often assuming an offensive on its own side and carrying it through with determined resolution.

We will not turn over the bloody chronicles of the recent past to relate the deeds and the martyrdoms of the Fascists. It is a tale of yesterday, and all upright citizens remember well the cruel episodes of civil war that carried us back to the grim days of the Guelphs and Ghibellines at a time when the nation, exhausted by the wounds of war, most needed peace and reconstruction. The result of Fascist action was that the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country was checked and delayed *sine die*, and that the enemy was completely and decisively conquered on all the battle fronts from one end to the other of the martyred land.

CHAPTER II

BENITO MUSSOLINI

NOTE.—The following portrait is drawn by the somewhat exuberant hand of an intense admirer. The translator has been told, by one who has met Mussolini and talked with him, that it is impossible not to get a certain *stage* impression. The same remark may be applied to the following description. Yet it must be remembered that the dramatic instinct of an Italian is quite consistent with sincerity and reality; that he is an instinctive artist, and uses pose and gesture and phrases as we use the plainest language, and uses them for the same ends. In an old novel it is asked by one character of another whether she acts what she feels or feels what she acts. An Italian can well do both, and can be even consciously dramatic in his most earnest movements.

Mussolini has proved himself to be truly the "man of the hour," and those of us who are aching with sympathy for a stricken neighbour would wish that Ireland could also find her Mussolini.

WE cannot enter on an examination of this wide national movement without first describing the figure and personality of its creator and leader. Of his careless youth it is not necessary to speak. We will only say that Benito Mussolini was born at Predappio (Forli) in 1883, that he obtained the diploma of an elementary master when very young, and migrated, after some years of teaching passed in an obscure Italian village, to Switzerland, poor in money but rich in faith and enthusiasm. He was by temperament intolerant of all human injustice, and had been educated in the sane

Socialism of the paternal school. In the country of William Tell he learnt from daily realities, and from the serious works on social and economic sciences which he insatiably devoured, the significance and importance of social disputes and problems. Having obtained a degree in French letters and become editor of a stirring revolutionary paper, in which he advocated the doctrines of Marx, he was soon expelled, as undesirable, from Swiss territory. Having returned to his country he carried on the journalistic and socialistic campaign with his usual ardour, writing in a well-known paper of the Emilian province. Impelled rather by his own genius and fervour than by the good-will of his companions in faith, he became one of the greatest exponents of the Italian Socialist party. Having triumphed at the famous Congress of Ancona (where Italian Masonry received a hit in the face from official Socialism, thanks to Mussolini), he became director of *Avanti*, the chief journal of the party, and at the beginning of the world-war Mussolini, with Filippo Corridoni, became an ardent Interventionist, after having resigned all the charges that he bore in the Socialist party.

It was then that he created the *Popolo d'Italia*, a true miracle in journalism, whose voice was heard and respected by all Italian patriots. He enlisted as a Volunteer in the war against Austria, and performed all his duties as citizen and soldier. Being wounded he returned to Milan to fight, in the columns of his journal, a battle against that subversionism which was fed by Russian, and perhaps by German, gold.

Meanwhile took place the battle of Caporetto. This great disaster to the national arms, so far from intimidating, rather incited him to persevere in the noble course which would lead to a certain victory of Italy over her hereditary enemy.

From that time forth (October, November, and December 1917) the voice of the editor of the *Popolo d'Italia* thundered against the criminal folly of a people drunk with class-hatred, and inflamed with a mania for destruction. He opposed the anti-war party and the social subversionists, while endeavouring to renew the spirit and conscience of his country.

Benito Mussolini can, indisputably, boast that, in the black hour of defeat and doubt, he knew how to spur on Italians to believe in the destiny of their country and to overcome internal and external enemies by every means in their power.

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Mussolini possesses, in the highest degree, the special qualities of his race. He is a man of action, a logical and acute thinker, his intuitions are rapid, his temperament is exuberant, argumentative, passionate, wilful, and modern. On the political scene he stands out head and shoulders above all the most popular figures of that Fascism of which he is the soul, the heart, and the brain. He has the Italian spirit in its freest and strongest form, as we have said elsewhere. He is certainly, along with Giolitti, Salandra, Sonnino, Orlando, Meda, Luzzatti, De Nicola, Turati, Treves, Modigliani, Bonomi, Gasparotto, and a few others, the most representative of our political men. He has con-

siderable and well-assimilated knowledge. He is a powerful orator, an eloquent tribune, a resourceful agitator. He is the virile and supreme expression of national sentiment. He hates mere rhetoric, and dislikes chatterers, wiseacres, pessimists, braggarts, and people of bad faith. He detests the traitors of Italy, and punishes them when he can. His generosity is unbounded. He is taciturn, laborious, courageous, tenacious, and coherent in spite of his apparent incoherence. He fascinates crowds; he is terrible as an opponent, faithful as a friend. He is an inexorable avenger, and in good and evil he is all of one piece. He has never been intoxicated by triumph, never cast down by defeat. He is young in the most absolute sense of the word. He is indefatigable and of volcanic activity. He possesses in a high degree the sense of measure. He knows that there is no more valuable virtue than prudence, and that the sense of limitation can never be neglected with impunity. He knows also, to perfection, that it is stupid and vain to attempt to go beyond the limits of one's own possibility and to undertake or hope for more than one can legitimately hope to accomplish, and he therefore avoids every imprudence. In virtue of his mental superiority, he knows how to exercise a right control amidst the tumultuous movement of his actions and flood of his thoughts; furthermore, he is conscious that the field of human action is very restrained and limited, and that it is a supreme virtue to know how to keep to it, while to endeavour to go beyond it is a fault and a folly; he has thus known how to place limits to Fascistic aggressiveness in its hard

battle with its adversaries. In all the political and journalistic work of Mussolini he returns insistently to his advocacy of moderation as the virtue of virtues. It is, indeed, difficult to find an article of his in the *Popolo d'Italia* in which he has not sounded a recall to discipline, measure and order to the Fascistic forces that are scattered through the land. He has in mind the verse of Pindar: "It behoves rulers to be discreet in their wishes, mindful of the actual, and of the limits that are assigned to all mortals."

Fearing a possible reaction and a revival of demagogism, Mussolini has always watched lest Fascism, after gaining a victory, by violent methods, over the violent, should forget its own programme and abandon itself, in the orgy of success, to the same horrible misdeeds as its adversaries. He has thus showed himself to be truly a statesman of measure and proportion, a man worthy to grasp the rudder of the State.

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It would seem, at first sight, as though there were a radical opposition between his passionate spiritual nature and his thoughtful and profound mentality —such an opposition as exists between the concrete and the abstract, fancy and reflection. But let us look more closely and we shall find that they are the opposite sides of the same curve, that they suppose and condition one another. Just because Mussolini has a sense of limitation and order, he never loses his head even in moments of intense emotion and indignation. Hence we never find him giving way to that passionate excitement and

sentimental abandonment that characterize the mediocre politician. The Chief Deputy of Milan has the habit of reflection and constructs a general law of conduct from particular occasions. He displays, in a marked manner, what is called the philosophic attitude. Of Mussolini, as of Crispi, it may be said that his unfailing political instinct is inspired by a complete and far-seeing mind.

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Italians now know Mussolini well in his character of tribune, speaker, and journalist. And Mussolini, on his side, knows how to read the heart of the crowd, whether that heart be hostile or friendly to himself. He feels with it, he loves it, and he does not oppose it without good reason. He has a predilection for popular organizations, syndicates, and all those co-operative undertakings of which the people are so proud because they represent a constant and continuous effort. He also appreciates such solid national and international federations as manifest true power of life and liberation and work for the clear and precise interests of the people. In short, Mussolini is not opposed to that Socialism which tends to the gradual and slow conquest of the highest rights and best forms of existence for the masses. His Socialism could be defined as that of Sorel. But he detests the insincere spirit of the demagogue and the filibuster.

Mussolini regards the syndical movement as of the greatest importance. He considers the political struggle as secondary, and opposes, with all his force, every hope and idea of a conquest of power on the part of the proletariat by means of revolution.

His true aim is the constitutional acquisition of power on the part of the labouring classes in direct and cordial collaboration with all other classes of society. He is a fervent patriot, and has always displayed a profound dislike for *doctrinaire* politics and *red* theorism.

Hence the violent diatribes and comparisons between the so-called "fervent" and other Socialist leaders, the former apparently more faithful to the principles and programme of the party, and incapable of any personal attitude or independent action. Mussolinian Socialism has always been in complete antithesis to the extreme or academic or parliamentarian forms of Socialism. For him Socialism is a failure unless it be a spontaneous movement of the proletariat that will have nothing to do with manœuvrers and demagogues. His socialism is individualist, voluntarist, idealist, but not Marxist. *Interventionism*, or a differing conception and estimate of war, divided and divides Mussolini from his former companions.

He intuitively divined the historic position of Italy in the future if she could forcibly liberate herself, by a victorious war, from an alliance that had lasted more than thirty years, that had been tolerated for reasons of European balance and dynastic motives, and that was entirely odious to the people. His mental crisis began, therefore, at the moment in which the best part of the nation declared itself for war, alongside of the Entente, against the assassins of Belgium, while the other part, led by official Socialists and Giolittians, remained openly averse to it. An irreconcilable

hatred broke out between the two factions. Even when the war was ended this hatred was not extinguished. Indeed, it took new impetus from the sanguinary violence of the Socialistic Communists, who were favoured by circumstances and by Nittian misgovernment. Mussolini, as we have said, was the first to rise against the diffusion of Leninism, and was the first to denounce it to the nation, for he was certain that violent revolution is never more than a regrettable episode in history. He, the offspring of a working class, believes still in Socialistic society and civilization, but thinks it can only be realized when international Socialism is in sufficiently favourable circumstances to be able to found a new and better form of civil association and sincere brotherhood amongst nations. It is ridiculous and stupid, nevertheless, to call him a reactionary, a traitor, or a defeated man. Men pass, but ideas remain. And those of the leader of Fascism, being nourished by faith and sound sense, can fearlessly defy the test of time and the insults of an angry adversary.

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Mussolini was never hostile to the proletariat. We need only quote from his comments, in the *Popolo d'Italia*, on the electoral discourse of Salandra at Bari :

As everyone can see, Salandra's ideas and my own entirely correspond. We have declared to the so-called bourgeoisie that there is no turning back, and that, in fact, what the working classes, whether industrial or rural, have achieved must not be touched. No one can think of pushing the working classes back

to the evil conditions that previously existed. We should be the first to oppose such an attempt. But, at the same time, we declare distinctly and clearly that the proletariat, with its imperfect and rudimentary organization and culture, cannot pretend to substitute itself, even in part, for that Capitalist organization which is the result of a long work of refinement and selection. . . .

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Without being analysts, like Bourget, we may say that Mussolinin psychology is simpler than it appears. Mussolini is a strong man, and that is all. He exercises on his followers, who are now legions, an extraordinary personal magnetism. He knows to perfection the art of drawing people to himself and holding them. When he is sitting, as editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, in his own office, which is a citadel of silence, order, and moral force, he knows infallibly how to persuade his visitor, to whatever race he may belong, to disclose his batteries, while he himself remains calm and impassible. Mussolini makes people wait a long time in his office before going out or admitting them to his presence, and when he appears, cold, haughty, and impressive, with flashing eyes, he looks his visitor fixedly in the eyes and then suddenly breaks silence simply to say, "I have understood," or else, "All right, you may go." He treats everyone in a militarist manner, as though he were offering them an ultimatum. He says, "I will do this," or "I will do that," and nothing more. Mussolini not only never asks advice, even of his collaborators, or of the Central Fascist Committee, but when he conceives a plan

he carries it right through, even though the world should come to an end; and his confidence in himself certainly inspires confidence in others.

The Fascist leader likewise possesses a sureness of judgment and keenness of perception that enable him to work along with a great number of collaborators while entirely dominating them by the fascination of personality. He is authoritative and to some extent egocentric; he knows the end for which he is making, however far off it may be, and though he be the only one to see it, he advances pitilessly until he attains it. Without making comparisons, this is the system of all great leaders and statesmen in history. Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Richelieu, Bismarck, Pitt, Cavour, Garibaldi, Crispi, and Cadorna acted thus. We may not love such men, but we cannot help admiring them. The cries of those who have been trampled under their feet may sound painfully in our ears and pain our feelings, but such are the methods of men who go far and accomplish great things.

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He has the temperament of a modern philosopher, and is a living example of that serene fatalism which characterizes men raised by unusual circumstances to become dominating figures in public life.

To realize this, one should have seen him in Milan, during the political elections of 1921, with his arms stretched towards the listening crowd, as he yelled out his feelings as a citizen and a soldier, and gave vent to sanguinary phrases with a disdain which sprang from the inmost fibres of his upright conscience. Every word and gesture expressed at

such times his ardent, passionate altruism; and his very violence was but the irresistible outcome of an indomitable will and a high political instinct.

And then, as even his adversaries have loyally confessed, his listeners became possessed with the desire to agree with him, to take his side and to help him in whatsoever audacious undertaking he had suddenly conceived, to follow him as you follow a tribune, an apostle, or a successful general. And all this was the result of an improvised speech.

His marvellous ascendency over crowds, his moral characteristics, and his complex personality furnish other interesting psychological considerations. For even in the midst of a political struggle, storm-beaten and pressed on every side by insistent material and personal necessities, even knowing that in a few days—a few hours—or a few minutes—his whole future might be wrecked in the battle in which he was engaged, he remained cold and impassive, without a sign of disturbance on his countenance. The onlooker was faced by an expression of iron impassivity.

Of this we are certain: Mussolini, even in the most supreme moments, would never act from desperation or yield to the dramatic instinct. As he has known how to triumph over his political adversaries, so he would know to-morrow how to die in silence, like a Spartan. His strength of soul is an example to all.

For all these reasons, he is the realization of all the sane elements of thought and mind in the nation.

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There exists, unfortunately, in Italian life a sharp contradiction between plain thought and politics. That is to say that the national conscience has remained, in politics, quite outside the living currents of modern thought. It is lacking in reality, devoid of originality, and tenaciously fixed in egotistic or verbal or humanitarian or ideological theories, which are but the ghosts of ideas which once lived. Mussolini has clearly gripped this contradiction in all its forms and contents, and has fought it mercilessly by his pitiless logic and his overmastering vigour. He has, in fact, the merit of having placed before our people a realizable goal in a possible distance, at a moment when they could think of nothing but the painful present; and he has thus revived the old Roman spirit in the hearts of Italians and rekindled the cult of national greatness, glory, power, and fortune. He was always Italian to the core. He has shown his ignorant fellow-citizens the immense and transcendental value of the awful tragedy which his country endured for nearly five years, and in spite of Bolshevist influence he has obstinately exalted and honoured the heroes of that tragedy by a continual celebration of their names in the columns of his journal, whether those heroes were known or unknown, simple or great, noticed or unnoticed.

While Nitti was ruling, while demagogues were clamouring, while Bombacci and Graziadei were predicting the near advent of Bolshevism, while the State was abandoning its powers, and the law was manifesting its impotence, and the upper and lower *bourgeoisie* was bowing its head to advancing Com-

munism, Mussolini, in despite of all pessimistic predictions, defied the moral difficulties of that awful hour and silently prepared for the awakening of the country. The Italians knew but little of this leader before the creation of the "Fasci di Combattimento,"[1] but directly the bugle sounded, throughout a country yet bleeding from the wounds of a four-years' conflict, he was the first at his post—at the post, that is to say, from which battles are guided and won, at the post from which the destiny of a people and the fortune of a country are created.

Such is Benito Mussolini, the powerful maker of a new Italian civilization. He is a man gifted with extraordinary energy and genius, who has followed his rugged path without asking for sympathy or counsel or help; a man who is greatly hated and feared, greatly loved and also calumniated. In short, he is a man who has lived his life and fought his battles to the extreme limit of his powers, always having in view the supreme good of his country. In this he is like two great living Italians, Luigi Cadorna and Gabriele d'Annunzio.

[1] Fascist Fighting Groups.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM[1]

THE fundamental idea of Fascism is that our victorious war is to be fruitful and productive of the corresponding good, whether moral, spiritual, or material. Its first aim is to bring about a state of internal peace, in which to meet and solve the inevitable evils caused by the huge conflict. For this end it has exercised a courageous and energetic action on the dominating classes to force them to meet the evils of Communism, disintegration, and destruction by a series of radical reforms adapted to new days and new popular demands. It seeks to renovate the political organism, to establish a new code of social ethics, and to bring about a complete transformation of minds that have been darkened by class hatred. Fascism gathers itself together and rises against such types as Lenin, with his myth of proletarian internationalism; Wilson, with his myth of comfortable middle-class internationalism; the triple combination of Millerand, Foch, and Clemenceau, with their myth of militarist internationalism; against, in fact, every imperialistic programme and tendency; and on this latter point it differentiates itself from the internationalism of

[1] Throughout this work let readers remember that the writer speaks of Fascism before it had attained to official power.

Corradini, which nevertheless shed such a light of idealism and patriotism on the country. It is uncompromisingly opposed to the dominating political class, and endeavours, so far as it can, to hasten its end. It is also opposed to the old democracy and to that moribund liberalism that, in spite of the lesson of facts, have never had a true sense of history, have never been able to fundamentally transform themselves, and have remained in a state of idiotic fidelity to the ends and ideas of '48. As the parliamentarian class has shown itself utterly inadequate to the chief needs of the political moment, Fascism has resolutely endeavoured to bar its way.

That caste which holds the powers of the State fondly imagined it might be saved, if not by its own virtue by that of others, and it looked cunningly into the eyes of the victorious force, hoping for an unnatural alliance. But Fascism disdained such contact and answered promptly, by the mouth of its leader, that its gigantic programme of renovation and national reconstruction could only be actuated when the beaten class handed over to the new force the direction of public life in Italy. The class in question declined, as might have been foreseen, to accept the condition, not realizing that, by its refusal, it was digging its own grave. No one can go contrary to history and the popular will.

Anyone who thought that Fascism, having performed its painful but necessary task, would fall as falls a ripe fruit from the tree to the ground, must now see that he was mistaken. Fascism is no mere reactionary conservatism. It was not and it never will be subservient to that *bourgeoisie* which,

in spite of spasmodic endeavours at improvement, has closed its cycle of life and domination. Fascistic energy will find the justification of its own existence in its mission for the regeneration of the forces of labour and reproduction. And for this end the old economic and social *régime* must disappear, to leave place for a new power that is advancing in the name of great principles and ideals.

Fascism will construct, renew, and purify, and will never destroy for the simple love of destruction. Under this new system class warfare will assume the character of a loyal dispute between loyal adversaries, who are not aiming at domination over one another, but at mutual co-operation and instigation with a view to fuller production and healthier forms of life. And the nation can certainly attain this end through the incontrovertible fact that the war was won.

This fact is not so evident when we read the chronicle of daily miseries, but it will be clear to-morrow, when the martyrdom of those who truly fought the war and suffered in the war is ended, when the greatest good succeed, to the greatest evil which Leninism has caused us, and when the fruits of the victory of Vittorio Veneto are at last reaped : that victory which will live for thousands of years in the conscience and memory of Italians as a witness to what we wrought and suffered.

The true meaning of Fascism is not to be found in its well-known bellicose character, but in doctrines which must be possessed of virtue since they are gradually conquering the soul of the country. There has been much said of Fascistic violence, and

with truth. Fascism will never be ashamed of such violence as is directed to ends of justice and reprisal. So soon as it has broken up the oligarchic caste, which cannot see that it is time to disappear, Fascism will direct all its energies to the creation of a new political organization that can work honestly without thought of personal interest and ambition, and whose sole aim will be to promote the good of the people and the greatness of the nation by means of strict moral and material discipline. The Fascists have been called the "guardians of Italy," and with good reason, for they will continue to act with brain, or with sword in extreme cases, independently of parties, sects, and the dominating classes, and regardless of demagogism. Harmony and human solidarity, liberty and discipline, right and duty, are to be the devices of the Italian people, which has to be redeemed from its actual servitude, and to work out its destiny by labour and peace.

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We will repeat once more that Fascism aims at a work of reconstruction in the highest sense of the term. As far from being reactionary as it is far from being revolutionary, it teaches the people, whether workers or ex-soldiers, that salvation and national restoration are only to be found in the honest determination to work. Fascism knows how to appreciate and acknowledge the virtues of the humblest and poorest classes. And Mussolini, who has the merit of having first discerned the true essence and characteristics of Leninism, and of

having fought it with his pen, his speeches, and his oral propaganda, spoke thus at the dawn of the last political election[1]:

We must not think that the fight was ended on May 15th; the Nation has to carry on a long work of adjustment. We are its guardians, and we will continue our task regardless of the so-called bourgeoisie *and the so-called* proletariat. *Our aim is reality. The* proletariat *has powers and qualities which must be defended and encouraged; and it is also necessary that the* bourgeoisie, *in whose hands is the directive power in business, should be able to continue its work in tranquillity. The whole people must undergo a training of instinct and will that might be described as Mazzinian. . . . The problem of reconstruction is that which is most urgent. Communism is grotesque and only worthy of uncivilized tribes. It is absurd to want to divide what has not been produced, to socialize misery, and to advocate Communism in a country of individualistic citizens. Lenin now admits the impotence of his own teaching, and Russia is being transformed into a country of small middle-class people. He is a diabolic artist, who has laboured for his own ends on the* corpore vili *of human nature. The experiment has failed, and now the rapacious vultures of Capitalism are descending in flocks upon the unfortunate land. For us it is not a question of entering the Socialist pact, because we are in it already, it is rather a case of coming out of it, and of stripping the State of duties for which it is unfitted and which it performs very badly. We are going to advance along this path of reconstruction. We shall have to*

[1] 1921.

act, to react, to be in turn revolutionaries or implacable reactionaries, so long as the people rush towards an abyss under the influence of the Russian myth.

Communism, which is a degenerate form of Marxism, has shown itself as a negative and dissolving force. It has misled the working classes and given them a spirit of indiscipline and anarchy, a dislike for work and a stubborn hatred of all other classes of society. The doctrine of hatred and of revolution, advocated by the Leninists, who wanted to make us taste of the delights and happiness of the Muscovite paradise by undermining our industry and commerce and compromising the production of national riches, has been counteracted by the influence of Fascism.

Has Fascism, then, by its intervention, turned aside the fatal course of history ? Is it through Fascism that the attempted dictatorship of the proletariat and establishment of the *new order* have come to nought ? Is it only through the veto of Mussolini that the Communistic system has not been set up in Italy ? We do not say as much as this, because we are not simplicists. We know well that no human force can check the fatal march of events that are destined to become history. But we do declare, with absolute knowledge of cause, that Fascism has, by its stormy intervention, prevented a handful of deluded politicians, in the pay of Lenin, from casting an exhausted nation into a sea of ruin in which its unity and existence would have been lost.

Indeed, the tragic Bolshevist experiment, confessed as such by Lenin himself, so far from opening

the eyes of the Italian Communists and making them reflect seriously on the possible disasters of an insurrectional movement in a country which is dependent on outside for everything in the way of credit, money, raw materials, corn, coal, and petrol, all that represents the life of a State and a people, has served, on the contrary, to harden their souls and make them yet more desirous to apply their Utopian philosophy to the bitter end.

We may get some idea of the immorality of our national Communists from the manner in which they honoured deserters, at the very close of a victorious war. Alas! that we should have had a Government which dared to amnesty the cowards and traitors of Caporetto, even before the six hundred thousand bodies of the heroes who had fallen for our country had become skeletons.

Therefore, against this Bolshevist aberration, Fascism gathered together all the sound forces of Italy, all those who recognize that in order, work, thrift, and progress are to be found the necessary conditions of social development and human co-operation. Fascism pitilessly denounces the ruthless doctrine that condemns the human race to a savage class warfare, in which the one half of society hates or oppresses the other half. It also condemns, as contrary to nature, a philosophy which would level individual differences and institute a dull social uniformity in which intelligence, liberty, conscience, and individuality would be sacrificed. To such an anti-human programme of subversion and constraint Fascism, which is the most exquisite interpreter of the spirit of the age, opposes a programme of justice

and fraternity, of peace and solidarity, by a gradual upraising of the people through a fruitful collaboration of persons and classes, in which the rights and aspirations of all can find their outlet, their salvation, and their satisfaction. It is, therefore, a stupid accusation to say that it attempts to rob the proletariat of their organization and gains.

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Fascism aims at the reconstruction of what the war has destroyed, and not at the destruction of what the war has spared. The following are the chief articles of its programme :

(1) To bring the people to a sense of reality, and to substitute a spirit of free collaboration in industry and commerce, which depend on them as they depend on it, for the system of hostile and pernicious compulsion. (2) To prepare the peasants, by a gradual process and through their own labour and thrift, without violent measures, for eventual possession of the land, and to encourage scientific cultivation to the fullest possible fruitfulness and utility. (3) In regard to the school, to force the State to a consciousness of the supreme importance of the instruction and education of infancy and youth, and induce it to carry out certain much-desired and opportune reforms without sectarian pre-conceptions or partiality, and without any lessening of authority and vigilance. (4) To terminate the scandalous neglect of the State of its own faithful servants, to whom it refuses a merited repose for the period of their old age. (5) To insist that the mutilated and ex-service men shall at last obtain

a just reward and honourable recognition of their valour and of the blood that they shed for an ungrateful nation in the war of liberation.

But this is not all that Fascism demands. Impressed by the need for the State to recover and consolidate its legal authority and its moral prestige, to place itself above parties and factions, and to support justice and re-establish the financial condition of its officers, Fascism directs its energies to these ends. At the same time it gives voice to a general desire by its demand that the State should strip itself of functions for which it is not fitted and should devote itself to a more satisfactory performance of those for which it is intended. It insists on the necessity of reducing the bureaucracy, which has become so enormously swollen, while at the same time stipulating that the army of State employees shall receive an economic and moral treatment worthy of the elevation and importance of their functions and of the difficulties of the times. And the *Fasci di Combattimento* exhort all Governments not to be unmindful of the greatness of that Rome of which Italy is the legitimate daughter, and to guard more carefully her rights and interests and dignity in regard to other Powers.

Fascism is, in fact, to be comprised in the words of one of its best sons, who disappeared too soon. We speak of Valentino Coda (formerly Deputy for Genoa), who, in his magnificent Roman oration of 1920, interpreting our deepest meaning, and referring to the rapid progress of Fascism in its struggle with Leninism, exclaimed in fervent accents: "Could

we permit that our country, loaded with glory, should become a land of the dead like Russia ?" In that cry of rebellion he summed up the spirit that animates Fascism, he voiced the ardour of its combatants, the will of its heroes.

Under the influence of Fascism the false ideals of the proletariat fell to pieces, and the more equable, temperate, and enlightened Socialism of men such as Turati, Treves, Prampolini, Modigliani, which seemed to have been finally submerged under Communism, rose again to the surface, while the Red agitators lost, at a stroke, the comfortable salaries that had permitted them to rest conveniently on the shoulders of the exhausted working class.

Fascism arose to regenerate the nation and to purify Italy from corruption and greedy speculation ; and the recent campaign undertaken by the Fascists for the lowering of prices in the whole country is the proof of what we say. It came to free a proud people from its slavery to an association of insincere demagogues.

We are a movement, as Mussolini once said ; *we are not a museum of dogmas and principles. We have a living and plastic programme of action, which we offer in place of the present fossilized policy ; and we mean to fight for it.*

The closely guarded political reserves of Giolitti and Nitti must be broken up, for they represent a superannuated and decrepit Italy, that obstinately refuses to die.

The Italian people, with its traditional good sense and unfailing judgment, demands a Government that is

not composed of men of straw, but of individuals with courage and energy to act for the maintenance of public discipline.

If we did not fear to be called heretics, or charged with exaggeration, we would simply declare that there is no great or substantial difference in ideas and programme between the Fascists and the *Sorelian* Socialists; and if, as is not a fact, there were an abyss between the two programmes, it would be easily filled in by virtue of the supreme law of balance and harmony and social opportunity that guides and directs all human things. For the rest, it would rather be a question of difference as regards the means of action than as regards the objects of the programme, and this difference would be in politics more than in economics, for in this latter field Fascism, by the boldness of its social reforms, is even in advance of Socialism.

Then how are we to explain the actual opposition to Fascism on the part of Socialists?

The question is easily answered, for that species of Socialism which denies, like Communism, the spiritual values of the love of country, and which pursues, along with Communism, an international ideal which is a mere Utopia, is a danger to the natural order of things in Italy. Herein, indeed, is the insurmountable difference between these two great political organisms. While Fascism maintains, above all, the cult of our immortal *Patria*, the Socialism of Marx, though not entirely repudiating the word *nation*, judges that ethnological and geographical barriers between peoples and civilizations are iniquitous. Therefore, wherever the vital

principles and tendencies of these two great movements, which both stand for an ethical principle, are manifested, the moral superiority of Fascism over Socialism becomes plain.

For although such a conception of humanity and universal brotherhood is high and noble, it is Utopian in character, so long as it ignores that living and divine patriotism, that sense of country, which has inspired the noblest sacrifices.

The Hon. Ubaldo Commandini, dissenting from many of his Republican friends in his judgment of Fascism, has called it a movement of liberation, and has added that it should be regarded with sympathy by Italians.

The Fascists, he says, *have given liberty to Italy, have saved the name of the country from insult and outrage, have defended the Tricolour, have restored the moral law by declaring that life is a mission and that there is no right without a duty. It has been, therefore, in virtue of the old and immortal Mazzinian doctrine that the young Fascists have abandoned their school benches to die fighting in the streets.*

He goes on to advise the Fascists not to fall into the errors committed by the Socialists—that is to say, not to allow themselves to be carried away by the drunkenness of victory to acts of unjustifiable violence, and he also advises them not to increase their numbers to excess, lest quantity should damage quality.

Fascism, according to the same speaker, must beware of *camarillas* and associations, and not allow them, under its protecting shadow, to recover an

existence which has been condemned by time and history.

He also raised this urgent objection during the elections :

What are the Fascists and their ardent young men doing in this " Bloc," alongside of antiquated parties, Agrarians, Monarchists, and dissident Anarchists and Republicans ?

The *Popolo d'Italia* promptly answered :

Let the illustrious orator, our sincere friend, allow us to ask him the following question : What were Ubaldo Commandini and other good Republicans doing in the trenches beside Agrarians, Monarchists, Socialists, and dissident Anarchists ? They were fighting for the salvation of Italy against the common enemy ; they were fighting to destroy the military Teutonic dictatorship. Your answer would be that you were at war. And now the state of war remains —a more painful and difficult war because it is a question of saving Italy from internal enemies and snatching it from the dictatorship of a determined party. Therefore, Fascism calls all good Italians together, and without asking them to what political party they belong, forms them into a single " Bloc " for national defence. Once the elections are gained, each one of us will take his own way and will honestly labour, not for the triumph of his own party but for the general good of the nation.

" And Benito Mussolini himself," asked Ubaldo Commandino, " Mussolini the agitator and innovator, what will he feel like in the Chamber of Deputies, when only yesterday he declared his dislike and aversion for Giolittian methods and systems ? " We

reply, though somewhat late: "Benito Mussolini and his Fascist collaborators have entered Parliament with the fervour of youth, and have inspired respect for all those who love Italy and desire its greatness and its happiness. Fascism honours ideas, and not men."

CHAPTER IV

THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM

Fascism has urgent and complicated problems to resolve. With its sense of national needs and facts, and of historic possibility, it has not attempted to impose a kind of dogmatic system on the entire peninsula. The national conditions are very different in Piedmont and Calabria, in Venetia and Sicily, etc., etc. It has faced the agrarian problem with a sense of reality, and with a knowledge of the varied necessities of rustic and industrial life caused by the action of geographical, ethnographical, social, economic, and financial conditions. It opposes a practical programme to Communistic Utopianism.

But its fundamental principle of a progressive proprietorship of land on the part of its cultivators, through a transitory stage of co-partnership, is possible of fulfilment in all the regions of the peninsula.

Fascism is profoundly opposed to State proprietorship, and holds that the administration and management of land should be left to those directly interested. It believes that neither salaried nor foreign labour is favourable to agricultural prosperity, and, with all regard to particular local conditions, it aims at raising the peasant to a right of proprietorship.

Fascism does not hold to agrarian Communism,

especially after the Russian experiment, which has converted the country of Lenin into small properties, and has at the same time constituted an agrarian democracy and *bourgeoisie* in place of the former large proprietors. For the rest, just after a war in which, as Salandra said, State Socialism was exercised on a gigantic scale, Fascism came forth to denounce the dangerous Bolshevist experiment of a division of land. And it has done so in the national interest, showing how, in the Leninist *régime*, agrarian administration becomes inactive, as that bitter Muscovite experiment has proved *ad nauseam*. What agriculture needs is people of technical and not of political experience; practical men and not bureaucrats. In Russia the troops of functionaries, like parasites, have invaded every branch of public administration and ruined, by their ineptitude, the enterprises of which they took possession. The mistake of State Socialism in land was demonstrated in Italy itself in the very first years of this century. Through Marxist influence nationalisation had occurred in some places, giving a foretaste of Socialism as realized under a democratic and bourgeois government. Naturally these experiments were a failure, and a return was made to the *statu quo ante*.

As in the great industries, so in agriculture, we are bound to recognize the useful function that has been exercised by a technical *élite* that really understood its work. For what happened was that when prosperous enterprises, that were giving a maximum of profit with a minimum of expense, were subdivided into a determined number of plots of land

and confided to people of limited capacity and inferior skill, the whole nation suffered a grievous loss and was touched in its vital interests.

Fascism understands the immense social importance of land, hence it condemns absentee and unproductive possession, which leaves vast tracts of land uncultivated that could be highly productive, and thus fails in its primary mission to society, which is to bring a substantial contribution of labour and production to the general good. According to Fascism, therefore, those landowners who fail in their first duty, which is that of cultivating their own properties, and produce no direct or indirect advantage to agriculture, lose their right of proprietorship, which, according to Roman and also Italian jurisprudence and legislation, presupposes categorically some social function on the part of the possessor.

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Fascistic principles are quite definite in the matter of agriculture. According to them, all agricultural labourers, who work for a daily salary, whether great or small, form a mass which is subject to continual disturbance and savage excitement. In fact, so long as the agricultural labourer works simply for pay and as a pure mercenary, he can have no love for the land, no taste for his own work, no ambition for the perfecting of the agricultural industry. Fascism condemns such a state of things and endeavours to meet it by the proper remedies. These are: (1) To give the peasant a lively affection for the land that supports him, so

that he may endeavour to make it more and more productive. (2) To give him a proper interest in his labour by means of a participation in its fruits. (3) To encourage systematically all the most enlightened measures that are the result of changed times, and of this participation on the part of the labourers in agricultural enterprise, so that there may be a strong solidarity between the workman and the proprietor, between the land and the fundamental interests of agriculture. (4) To educate the labourers of the soil by full and complete technical, administrative, economic, and financial instruction, so that they may realize their responsibility in relation to land proprietorship. (5) To show the masses that in Russia itself the doctrines of Lenin, far from begetting an agrarian Utopia, have created, as we have said, a new democracy and a rural *bourgeoisie* which are fiercely adverse to the Leninist *régime*, and extremely keen on the direct acquisition of property.

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This is, in sum, what Fascism seeks in regard to the complex problem of land. It knows that the year 1920 closed leaving agricultural economics in a condition that, if not desperate, was certainly extremely difficult. It knows also that there are signs which can justify some optimism. Our rural economic organism, although it has been affected by the war and by frequent social convulsions, as, for instance, dislocation of the country by the absence of those who were fighting, lack of chemical and agrarian machines, strikes, ravages,

obstructions, etc., remains, nevertheless, healthy and not less efficient than before the war.

The situation of provinces that were invaded by the enemy is more serious, but by degrees those provinces also will recover their primitive condition and their earlier productivity so long as there are no subversive movements. Fascism realizes that the rural population, who are substantially sound, first saved the country by their heroic conduct in the war, and then healed it of Bolshevism immediately after the war. Our rural population, which is rooted in the land and is sober, persevering, and energetic, preserves intact the virtues of our fathers and constitutes the backbone of the nation.

Bolshevism has no influence on the peasantry, whose good sense and keen instincts rebel against those novel doctrines which would cast disorder and ruin where there have been order and prosperity for centuries.

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The land for those who work it. Here is another aspect of the agrarian problem which would certainly demand, by reason of its gravity, a period of serious study and experience in order to be integrally applied. Fascism condemns certainly, as we repeat, the proprietorship which exists in the South and still more in Sicily, but before proceeding to the breaking-up and subdivision of uncultivated lands, which are a seat of malaria and disease, and which are handicapped by complete and absolute dryness, need of roads, of canals, and of dwellings, Fascism considers that an expenditure of capital is needed,

along with the provision of agricultural implements of every kind, draining works, lakes, and other improvements. It further maintains that roads should be constructed, that there should be drinking water, buildings, properly developed public institutes, and solid financial organization in proportion to the credit and to the size of such institutes. As it is opposed to large landed proprietorship, so Fascism is opposed to the scattered possession of land. As was said by Gaetano Polverelli at the National Congress of the *Fasci di Combattimento* held at Florence in 1920:

It is not only large proprietorship that is injurious but also scattered properties. He who has to go into distant and scattered places loses his time. There should be a juridical limit of divisibility and the right of succession should be reformed so as to concentrate a property round a house and alienate lands that are dispersed round other centres.

The same writer, speaking of big enterprises, agrees with the principle that these are, on the whole, sound in character. Only ignorance, he adds, could confuse them with *latifondo*. A large enterprise, as Senise, a politician of the extreme Left, has said, demands less expense and gives more return. It could not be divided without increasing its expense or diminishing its profit, with great social loss. Furthermore, a large enterprise permits the cultivation of surrounding land by making use of a great number of old men, women, and children.

Here also, as in regard to factories, it is a question of maturity. We cannot improvise technical values.

A large agrarian industrialist enterprise might be taken up by a co-operative body, without agricultural or national loss, only in the case in which such an organism had sufficient technical and administrative ability and was not inferior to the directors whom it was supplanting. As Sansoni said in the *Opera Nazionale di Combattenti*, in the South many co-operative societies were started out of levity, without sufficient technical experience, from simple electoral and ephemeral demagogism. As we have spoken of the *Opera Nazionale* we must recognize that its action in the social field, especially in agriculture, has been, and is, meritorious. The accusations brought against it by several parties are, to our mind, altogether unfounded. This work has taken up several Crown estates and private properties, and has confided their care provisionally to ex-soldiers. Its capital, which is now more than 300,000,000 lire, allows it to begin everything *ab initio* and to perform a work of civil propaganda and moral education amongst the rural population. It has also provided against the lack of technical culture in the Italian people. Its aim is, above all, to provide for the gradual settlement of those who have come back from the war.

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Fascism has not confined itself to an examination of the vital agrarian problem, but has known how to render its intuitions practical by its understanding of what the human soul, and especially the Italian soul, needs. It has grasped the intimate relation that exists between individualism and proprietor-

ship, especially small proprietorship, and has said plainly and roundly to those who did not see it, or did not wish to see it, that the land has not been given us as a mere field for the egotistic disputes of man. Fascism has, furthermore, declared that property is the realization of true and sound individualism by means of which man can develop himself completely in his own interest and that of the community. For example, the bit of land that is granted to the labourer to break up may be small, so small as hardly to be enough for the one who cultivates it; but even if there only be a few rows of vine, ten trees, the suggestion of an orchard, a hedge of wild prunes or an enclosure of misshapen stones, it is enough to enable the humble peasant to realise the beneficence of his labour, and to feel, through the field that gives him with usury as much as he gives to it, the value of his personality as a man and a citizen. And this consciousness does not make him idle. The fruits that mature in his land, the golden harvests, the smiling green that rejoice his sight, stand for a new kind of life in his changed outlook, because he finds himself in a land that is fruitful by virtue of his care and his labour, and that he shapes with love as though it were his own child. In truth, putting aside the *doctrinaire* teaching of Russia, which, in fact, has seen the triumph of absolute individualism, making out of the old *moujiks* so many landed proprietors, history, which is the teacher of life, gives us abundant and luminous proof that it is not possible forcibly to suppress that which is the backbone of all human progress and the source of all civilization, viz. the

individual. We may remember American Mormonism, and, earlier still, that curious Anabaptist colony of Moravia, which, in the first half of the sixteenth century, under Gabriel, Hutter, and Scherting, realized for a very short time a true type of State on a collective basis, and which held together, for a certain time, thanks to the strong religious sentiment which united its citizens. But, as is known, reason and the insuppressible tendencies of the individualistic spirit of the masses very soon got the better of the fanaticism of the few *exaltés*, and the ephemeral Communistic kingdom perished pitifully. Against Bolshevism, which is a brutal and mechanical equalizer of human values, Fascism comes forth, in its spiritual and youthful energy, as the supporter of sane individualism. Such individualism is indeed the surest symptom of the vitality of a race, because only through the free development and progress of the individual can a nation shape its own existence in the world and give society its own particular contribution of work and thought and moral action. The land which belongs to its cultivator, and depends on his thrift, will be an incentive to individualistic effort and aspiration and a source of patriotism.

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Facts are stronger than the Leninist Utopianism. The latter has now made manifest its failure, and it would need utter intellectual blindness or moral dulness not to admit that the Bolshevist experiment has ended in tears and blood, even as regards its agrarian efforts. The armed Bolshevist expeditions

against the Russian peasants (whose only crime was that they would not allow the fruit of their labours to pass into the hands of the tyrants of Petrograd and Moscow), with all their tremendous reaction of savagery and bloodshed, attest the fearful results of the Communist *régime*. But the lesson goes further than the concrete case, because it shows that Collectivism is anti-social and anti-economic. Even in Russia the tragedy of the socialization of land and industry has assumed immense proportions. In other countries also, as, for example, in Italy, it is admitted that the railways, the post service, the food control, are demonstrations of the folly of this doctrine. The millions that other classes have to pay for the enterprises which are not administered by private people show what the result would be of such a socialization of land as is advocated by the Communists. It is not true to say that the old *bourgeois régime* had proved its inadequacy after the experience of war. On the contrary, it was the excessive intervention of the State, with its mania of putting its hands into every branch of industry and of national service and commerce, that ended by actually destroying organizations which represented long and persevering labour and much wealth. The impositions and requisitions, the attempt to cultivate lands in despite of agrarian, technical, and individual experience, the neglect of every liberal doctrine and of every democratic constitution, the Socialism which was an anticipation and preparation for the Communism advocated by false prophets—all this has been pernicious to the nation, which has been the

victim of this completely erroneous, uneconomic policy.

These truths are old indeed, as old as the truth so odious to Socialism, which tells us that man is jealous of his own possessions, is anxious to increase them by labour and thrift, and to leave them as a heritage to his children, who are a part of his life, and who, in turn, will not be able to keep them unless they develop them by fresh labour and thrift. But the incompetence of many politicians, their dread of appearing reactionary, the cowardice with which they indulged popular prejudices and yielded to the demands of a deceived and misled crowd, led to an economic legislation which favoured the unskilful, discouraged the experienced, cheated the consumer, and deceived the lower class.

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Fascism, in the person of its best representatives, advocates the legitimization of syndical organizations, which it favours with all its power, because only by harmonious collaboration between the mutually dependent workers by brain and hand can Italy once more enter on the path of civil progress and attain that peace to which she has a right after her long years of tribulation.

Fascism considers that it is indispensable to have a totally new agrarian legislation, founded on modern provident systems—a legislation which, besides being the fruit of the co-operation of the technician and the politician, is founded on a high sentiment of social justice and a practical understanding of national forces of production.

Anyone who has studied rural life during these last years needs no special example to convince him that the country had started on the quickest road to ruin by the *sabotage* of production. The peasant in many parts of Italy, as, for example, in Emilia and in Romagna, had lost all stimulus to work through the loss of all participation in its fruits, which was a result of the action of leagues; while, on the other side, being politically assured of a sufficient economic maintenance, even without working, he could calmly practise *sabotage*, as he has done. Thus arose a new theory, which was freely preached in our country places, the theory of the highest reward for the smallest production—a theory which would lead to the gradual destruction of property.

The natural and logical consequences of all this were what they ought to be, a notable diminution in production, which had already been greatly lessened by the limitation of the hours of work, and such restlessness in agricultural enterprise as to render probable its complete ruin in a short time. If the Social-Communistic tyrants had succeeded, throughout rural districts, in establishing their principle of changing all the labourers into mercenaries who were indifferent to the quantity and quality of the products of the earth, the nation would soon have become agriculturally bankrupt; but fortunately the abyss was seen in time and the saner forces of the nation arose and restored peace and liberty to the people of our rural districts.

Since it is clear that the problem of production is indissolubly united with that of the employment

of labour, it is also clear that we should endeavour to bind them firmly together, if we want to give a complete solution to the insistent problem of the land. Red tyranny, especially in the districts of Ferrara, etc., had reached such a point that the proprietors could not sell their land and those who wished to buy were prevented by local agitators. Landowners could neither let their own land nor cultivate it according to the exigencies of modern agriculture. A few years more and the most flourishing lands would have been ruined.

Fascism, in the face of the passivity of Government, claimed and completely recovered the legitimate rights of the proprietors, by means of a concrete and inexorable formula which can be expressed in the following words: *To oppose violence to violence, and tyranny to tyranny*; it succeeded, in short, by applying the law of reprisals even to its extreme consequences—a law which one had thought to be by now an historic anachronism.

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Italy now needs to imitate her Latin sister for the reinforcement of her existing system. There is no way of escape. In France Bolshevism has had no success, but in France there are more than ten millions of small landed proprietors; whereas in Italy, with only a slightly smaller population, there is not a million.

In Belgium, in Holland, in Denmark, the phenomenon is still more marked, for small properties are more numerous and social disputes have a more advanced character. We must therefore increase

the number of our proprietors and thus augment the number of those interested in the defence of property. We must, in fact, imitate France.

Fascism need do nothing extraordinarily original for this purpose, but simply encourage the prudence and thrift of the peasant, and raise him socially to such a condition as will fit him for the fulfilment of his innate ambition to possess some small share in the land.

No human power could root this desire out of the heart of our peasants; nor can their aspirations be neglected without eventually incurring a violent shock with reality.

Fascism has thoroughly grasped the problem, and understands the conflict that exists between capital and labour on this thorny question. And although it is essentially opposed to the policy of Giovanni Giolitti, it knows how to recognize the truth of a speech he made, thirty years ago, in the Chamber, uttering the following words:

If the Socialist propaganda extends to any great extent in our country places, there will be no law repressive enough to check it, and the State will find itself impotent in its resistance. To my mind, the only serious and efficacious remedy is to be found in the promotion and protection of small properties. It is our duty to see that, where they do exist, they may be protected and not destroyed.

And Fascism likewise remembers the declarations of the same speaker, ten years later, when he uttered the following words, for which much must be forgiven him:

I have been maintaining an advocacy of small pro-

perties for years, and on this point I am disposed to accept any methods that can assure small proprietorship from destruction, for in that system is the best guarantee of our social order.

What an irony of fate! Giolitti was the precursor of that anti-Communist policy which now inspires the redeeming action of the national Fascist party, especially in the matter of agriculture.

CHAPTER V

FASCIST POLICY

The public has heard a good deal about the " punitive expeditions," the beatings, shootings, and fierce encounters that have frequently taken place in the country, despite the treaty of peace that was signed by the Socialist and Fascist leaders. It has heard how some Red associations have passed over, with arms and baggage, to the Fascist party, in districts that had been the prey of savage revolution. It has read vivid descriptions of Fascist ceremonial, and of the inauguration of banners that symbolized the youth of Italy; it knows that Fascism counts on the intelligence, capacity, and courage of its followers to fashion and consolidate the positions it has gained.

It needs, indeed, a great measure of tact and moderation and prudence and discipline and genius to preserve what has been gained. Fascism has advanced with lightning speed; it has now to keep watchful guard against its disarmed enemy, Bolshevism, which still lays snares for even its own followers. But this, at least, has Fascism definitely gained, and that is that the tricolour flag is now saluted instead of being insulted.

The effects of Mussolinian action in politics are visible everywhere. The good nature and patience

of our citizens, who had encouraged Communistic innovations by their passivity, had at last been transformed, like all injured virtue, into the elements of rebellion. The Red organizations perished of dropsy. Wherever Communism had been most successful, there the catastrophe was the most spectacular. As the social Communists wanted to get possession of everybody, even of non-Socialists, these latter were the first to desert, directly the propitious moment arrived.

But even true Socialists now complain. Some of them say that they have paid in one year a tax of 250 francs to obtain work. And this blood-letting irritates the more because it does not go to the maintenance of vital institutions, but serves for the upkeep of officials, who simply attend national, interprovincial, and regional congresses; for the purchase of banners and arms; for the printing of manifestoes and circulars.

Other causes of the break-up of Socialism were its failure to realize the promised revolution a month after the elections of 1919 and the occupation of the factories. It was also unable to keep its promise of instituting employment offices for workmen, by means of which equality of pay and hours should be assured to all, as much to the idle bachelor as to the hard-working father of a numerous family. It had also given fallacious pledges to find work on the land for as many as need it, regardless of the actual proportion between the need of the land and the need of the workers, while emigration from an over- to an under-populated district was forbidden. Meanwhile the land was less productive, because

the labourers, who were sure of their wages, were indifferent to the results. The master could not dismiss them because such a prerogative was reserved to the Socialist leaders.

The Leagues at last found themselves reduced to confusion by the lack of syndical support and the indifference of their chiefs. Hence, the Fascist invitation was a Godsend, and even sincere Socialists regarded it in the light of an armistice after a prolonged fusillade. The leaders snatched at the truce in the hope of future recovery, and put a good face on their discomfiture. They proceeded to release the Leagues from their association with the general Confederation of Labour and hand them over to the Fascist Directories. By united vote in a general Assembly the Leagues altered their colour and title, and compiled a farewell which was sent to the Confederation. The sessions were brief and passionless, like funerals in which there is no love. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

The sense of relief, and of liberation, as it were, from a mortal struggle that was experienced by the country when the defeat of Bolshevism was shown in all its fulness under the advance of victorious Fascism, did not hide from Mussolini the exact vision of reality, and did not make him forget the Communistic peril which, though distant for the moment, had not by any means disappeared. Fully realizing the gravity of the moment, he warned the Italian Fascists to take lesson from the rout of the Communists. It was, for him, a matter of anxiety rather than joy to see the citizens thronging to inscribe their names in the Economic Syndi-

cates and the *Fasci di Combattimento* that were now constituted in all the towns of the peninsula.

It was then that Mussolini raised the first note of alarm, and stated plainly, in the *Popolo d'Italia*, that Fascism must now give these crowds a sense of reassurance, must make them feel that they had escaped from an insupportable yoke by their abandonment of the Socialist Leagues, and that they would find in Fascism a family of brothers who would know how to guard their interests with greater love and disinterestedness and sincerity than their former exploiters. He added that, if Fascism did not succeed in the speedy accomplishment of this work of moral penetration, it would have lost its opportunity and could never hope to regain it. He insisted that Fascists should not be flattered or fascinated by the resounding hymns of victory and redemption, but should dedicate themselves at once to the earnest solution of the most insistent problem that social conflicts had yet begotten.

To the many who looked with astonishment on the spectacle of the destruction of their old organizations, who eyed Fascism reverently but suspiciously, who said nothing but silently manifested their wonder and ignorance, he knew how to speak with brutal frankness, assuring them that their interests would be respected, and that all their gains would be strenuously defended under the shadow of that flag which had guided them in their struggle against an external enemy, which had been upheld in the hours of victory, and which, by its colour, signified life, hope, and safety.

It was unfortunate that the Fascists of Italy did not all attend to the words of their leader.

And now we will see by what methods Fascism can unfold its vital programme. In internal politics it must supplement the duty of the State by promoting a gradual transformation of proprietorship in industry and finance as a complement to the same process in agriculture, and thus liberate our industrial development from subjection to the foreigner. It must favour the creation of new institutes and new banks to finance our acquisitions, of new rural factories under Government assistance; it must forward the foundation of manure factories, which supply one of our greatest needs, and of the manufacture of tools and agricultural machines, for which we are greatly dependent on foreign industry. Fascism will also urge the various Governments, that succeed each other in the direction of the State, to develop our roads and our water transport, by modern methods in accordance with new needs. It will urge the Government to forward modern scientific developments by the application of electricity to agriculture, and to the draining and cultivation of land, and to assist Italian industry by the construction of local means of transport, and the cheapening of raw materials. It will specially advocate the formation and increase of local plant for the better elaboration of our principal product, which is hemp. Arrangements should be made whereby products that are now absorbed by foreign industry, for the profit of foreign labour and capital, should be entirely developed on our own soil.

These are some of the aims of Fascism, which remains solidly favourable to social progress and advance. Fascism maintains that, if Bolshevism is suppressed, and these plans of industrial development are fulfilled, the canker of unemployment will be cured, and the population, that now forms a dead-weight of discontent in our agricultural districts, will be able to find continuous and remunerative employment. Then we shall keep our gold at home instead of spending it on foreign products that merely hinder our own prosperity.

These are the problems which Fascism has in mind, and which should be considered in Parliament and solved, *quam primum*, in the interests of the community.

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSAGE OF THE RUBICON

The passing of the Rubicon by the former Red Bands occurred with tumult and hurry. The Leaguers hastened to the nearest Directories with bundles of badges, registers, and banners. The processions of disbanded were countless. The Directories had even to make certain reserves as regarded the manner and days of admission. The daily demands came ten at a time. In all the agricultural districts of Italy Socialistic Leagues were crumbling in consequence of the conflicts between the proprietors and the Labour Chambers. As the proprietors had everywhere recruited free workmen, with whom they had formed practical and conciliating contracts, the peasants approached them as soon as ever they had the assurance that the Fascists would protect their liberty of contract. The person then to be pitied was the former Leaguer who had not yet become a Fascist. He impatiently awaited permission, on the part of the Directories, to pass the Rubicon, or at least to get some protection for himself and his possessions; meanwhile, he wrote the most emphatic declarations of loyalty to the Fascist newspapers. The insurance policy had triumphed. The Socialists, when they read their papers, asked themselves if it was worth all the

trouble they took to preach, and even, to a certain point, to risk their own skins, and to spend so much money that belonged to other people for this result.

There is also a pile of documents regarding the mayors and assessors that resigned. Hundreds of municipalities are now ruled by commissionary prefects. Those who have given up their posts justify their retirement by the violence that they have suffered, and they also cite family motives or grave financial difficulties. They know well that any peasant who did not obey the League was punished by the slaying of his cattle, by the burning of his hay, by insults to his wife, blows to his children, by being forbidden to go into shops or to call the doctor even in cases of grave sickness. It has been proved by certain documents, which have been sequestrated by the Fascists, that people sometimes had to pay thousands of francs in order to obtain a cessation of ill-treatment. In one place a peasant who dared to forbid his sister to walk out with the chief of a League was bled.

These extortions, together with the flight of the Red leaders and the success of Fascism, signed the fate of the Red party. On its ruins the Fascists mean to raise a new world. As Italy is above all things agrarian, in many places Fascists have opened honorary columns in their newspapers, in which are given the names of those proprietors who are disposed to let, and eventually to sell, their lands to families of peasants, who have succeeded by labour and thrift in learning to cultivate them and have acquired the capital needed for their purchase. In many cities labouring families have already

taken advantage of this opportunity. The Fascist peasants receive technical guidance from the proprietor, also seed, cattle, and machines. They pay him a rent, partly in money, partly out of the proceeds of the harvest. They hope, in eight or ten years, to be able to purchase the property.

According to the Fascist programme, the proprietor, having received a sum equivalent in value to the land he has sold, will have an interest in employing this capital in agricultural enterprises, which the country greatly needs. The labourer, on the other hand, will be less tempted to frequent the public-house, and will invest his savings in small shares in these new enterprises.

Already tens of thousands of acres of land have been placed at the disposal of the Fascists, who intend to place at least one family in every plot of land that has been confided to them.

But they do not attempt this in regions where the Socialist policy has left them an inheritance of superfluous population. In such case a division of land would result in families working alone day and night, to save as much as they could, while many hands would remain idle. The Fascists, therefore, seek for a solution on the basis of the old agrarian contract which existed between proprietors and free labourers. They seek to remedy unemployment without damage to the local economic condition ; such interference had become a national calamity, especially when emigration was paralysed by the labour bureaus.

This problem of unemployment is doubly dangerous just now, in so far as it offers an easy excuse

for a counter-offensive to Socialism. "If you are unemployed, if you are hungry, it is the fault of the Fascists." And a hungry man does not reason. Hence Fascism, far from being inflated by its present good fortune, must look forward to and prepare for future battles.

The Fascists of Italy, including those of Romagna and Emilia, should seriously meditate on these words, and it is well to recall the untimely conduct of the great regional congress of Bologna, which, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace between the Socialists and the Fascists, dared to condemn Mussolini and his gigantic achievements.

But the recent National Congress of Rome, from which the National Fascist party came out armed like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, has happily healed all internal discord and eliminated all misunderstanding between the so-called Mussolinian section and that of Grandi and Marsich.

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For students of contemporary movements the young, as was recently stated in a Roman newspaper, are more interesting than adults, who belong already to the past or a dying present. Youth represents the immediate future—that is to say, the to-morrow of the nation. To study their tendencies and understand their spirit means to know coming history in anticipation.

It is a fact that, during the Golden Age of the Socialist party, young men hastened to join its battalions, urged by idealistic impulses and by a spiritual eagerness which was nauseated by hideous

reality; they longed for light, nobility, justice, and liberty. In those days young Italians became Socialists without distinction of class and without having to endure unjust ostracism. Those were the great days of Andrea Costa, Camillo Prampolini, Nicola Barbato, Filippo Turati, Claudio Treves, Enrico Ferri, Leonida Bissolati. Amongst their ranks were professional men, officials, small middle-class people, students, intellectual proletarians, who had already suffered from human injustice and were bleeding from their first contact with hard social realities. They were animated by a noble and sincere ardour, they were eager for action, battle and sacrifice. They were dreamers and sentimentalists, vaguely and obscurely romantic. They entered on the campaign of the people with generous faith and pure idealism; and they were prepared to attack egotism and meanness in every social rank. Their genius, their technical knowledge and their good-will raised them to the first posts of the party. One of such guides, rich in intellectual and moral energy, was precisely Benito Mussolini, a tribune in character, who was impelled even then, by his ardent idealism, to oppose the aberrations of middle-class foolishness and Socialistic materialism.

And now the conversion of the bold champions of the smaller middle class and the working proletariat to Socialism has entirely stopped. In fact, Socialism has shown itself to be simply a class movement, that has passed into a state of stagnation. This great democratic party is affected at its vital sources. For the future and the power of a party, as of a

people, depend entirely on an intellectual and moral *élite*; without that asset no prosperity, no greatness, and no progress can be realized, and general corruption sets in.

From this perversion of Socialism arose Communism. Until yesterday Communism violated right, suppressed free opinion, committed every violence, destroyed all property, apparently in the name of Lenin, but actually under the impulse of false prophets, who were greedy for domination and eager to apply in practice the theories that had come from the East in a crude and undigested state. All the struggle of the Social Communists in Italy has been directed to the fashioning of an adulterated mediævalism, a mediævalism without Pope or Emperor, and stripped of the historic conditions that could justify it and the religious passion that could animate it. It was, in fact, a mediævalism of the cinema, in which the great unnamed crowd served as a frame and surrounding to the principal figures, who had snatched the first places in virtue of the docility and ignorance of the masses. While these subversive leaders pretended to teach that Socialism was contrary to violent measures and that the political struggle should be carried on by constitutional means, the ungoverned masses committed unheard-of excesses in the name of arbitrary rights. For doctrine is one thing and practice is another. The first springs from the brain of studious theorists, who are calm by nature and habit; the second is (*pace* the Bolshevist leaders of Italy) the result of turning the prescription into a pill, nor is it by any means certain that the pharmacist is always faithful

to his directions, nor that he does not sometimes substitute cheaper remedies for those that are ordered.

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Fascism has its own programme and its own plan of work, and as soon as it was formed into a party this programme was diffused in millions throughout the peninsula ; thus no one can pretend to ignore it.

Its programme, as Mussolini well said, *is not like a gospel on which we swear. It is not ecclesiastical or hieratical. It is a kind of order of the day, the order of our own day, which may last for a year, for five years, or for a century. We intend to bring this programme, this plan of work, to a termination. It is not worth while to deny the assertion of those who say that it is a merely provisional programme. It is provisional, but not altogether so, considering that the external and internal policy of Fascism is complex, and will require a considerable time for its accomplishment. Meanwhile, to the confusion of the calumniators of Fascism, the movement spreads. All Italy has been taken in its nets, while Fascism guards it on its boundaries. In all our Mediterranean colonies there are already certain nuclei and " Fasci " in the process of formation. There is a Fascist combination in Tripoli ; others are being formed in the principal towns of Egypt. Wherever there are ten Italians there should be a Fascist nucleus.*

In America the work of preparation is already bringing forth its fruit. There is a group at New York. There will soon be one at Philadelphia, because the " Voce della Colonia " may be called a Fascist

newspaper. Before the end of the year there will be hundreds of Fascist combinations in the republics of the north, the centre, and the south of America. This is certain and inevitable.

With the constitution of these combinations on the other side of the Atlantic there is a programme in process of actuation. This programme is to enkindle, preserve, and upraise the Italian spirit amongst the thousands of our countrymen dispersed through the world; to bring them to live Italian life more intimately; to bind and intensify the relations between the colonies and the mother-country; to establish true and real Italian consulships for the legal and extra-legal protection of all Italians, especially those that are dependent on foreign employers; to uphold always and everywhere the name of our country. This is the weighty signification of the constitution of the Fasci di Combattimento amongst Italians abroad.

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Some say that Fascism simply signifies violence and a pitiless reaction of the *bourgeoisie* against the proletariat. They also say that it is in the pay of capitalists, and tell many other such foolish lies.

This is all untrue. The Fascists defend no privilege nor are they the champions of middle-class reaction. Fascism is an ideal. It is the ideal of the youth of Italy and it voices a rebellion of the spirit against a suffocating materialism. Fascism has preserved for the country its heart's most cherished glories. It has saved the tricolour flag, that had been carried by the martyrs and heroes of

past generations, from being insulted and defiled. Furthermore, it has manifested its faith in the Italian race and in the humane and ideal justification of the war of liberation.

Even before the accomplished fact of a war that had been gained by arms and lost by diplomacy, it advocated the duty of intervention, in the vital interests of Italian culture, and invited all parties that desired the real good of the nation to gather around its champions.

Besides this, Fascism has been able to manifest that its programme of internal reconstruction and foreign policy is not, *a priori*, contrary to any economic conception or any political reform, however audacious such may appear. On the contrary, it has boldly shown Italy the new ways that are to be followed in order to reach her new ends.

Fascists desire that Italy should have more light, whether spiritual, intellectual, or moral. Above all they desire *justice*, and in so far as Socialism still signifies what it signified ten years ago, a generous movement of fraternity, a profound sympathy with the suffering of the weak and the disinherited, and a longing for equality and liberty and social idealism Fascists will not oppose Socialism—such Socialism, in fact, as that of Andrea Costa—but on the contrary will forward it, with all their power, on its path to the fulfilment of its destiny.

Fascism is inspired by the truth, that the actual construction of society is evil, and that it must be reformed by means of a social hierarchy based on one solid foundation—that of spirit, genius, and

character. Fascism leaves the way free to every form of progress and initiative and to all aspirations towards a more just form of society. Hence it is proud that the best of Italian youth loyally accept its programme and co-operate with it against the criminal folly of those who would dissipate the small national patrimony and establish amongst us that dark proletarian dictatorship that has destroyed the colossal empire of Russia.

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Fascism is ever at its post, upright, responsible, strong, proud, and invincible. When Nitti was at the head of the Government, along with Modigliani, Fascism addressed him somewhat thus :

Tell us, whether there be or be not a State of Italy. Has this State got a Government capable, or not, of ruling? Does your Government know how to make citizens respect the law? If so, all is well. If not, since the Social Communists are the first to deny this fact, and to destroy the balance of law by their violence, it is perfectly just that, whether you will it or not, citizens of another kind and another stamp should endeavour to exercise authority, and restore the order that you, as governors, have destroyed by your cowardice, weakness, and complacency.

Fascism was for some time a fashionable word. But it could not have the force that is attributed to it, and which it actually possesses, if the country itself, by an enormous majority, had not been behind it and in agreement with it on one substantial principle, regardless of secondary questions. This principle was to save Italy for the Italians,

proletariat included. In response to this principle the nation blew the Nittian bubble, rose up against his demagogical policy, and, in spite of his apologies and those of his followers, still regards him as a dangerous man, subservient, by character or congenital weakness, to that social and illegal violence which his opportunist policy led him to tolerate. Had Nitti not been in power, the anarchical position of a great part of Italy would not have been conceivable; had Nitti not been Minister of the Interior the election, in 1919, of 156 Communist deputies, which so emboldened the Socialist party, could not have taken place. And the nation in casting him out fully intended to cast into forgetfulness and impotence, along with him, the entire policy of a Government that was responsible for having brought Italy to the edge of the abyss.

In spite of the accusations of hostile newspapers, Fascism is not a relic of war or as dangerous as the revolutionary movement itself. Nor should it even be confounded with the policy of Fiume, which phenomenon is to be explained, first, by the indignation of the brave youth of the country with the defeated diplomats, who were prepared to sacrifice Fiume, an Italian city, contrary to the sacred principle of nationality; secondly, by the chivalrous spirit of adventure which inspired the ex-combatants, who were furious because the Government of that time had turned the cheek of the nation to the blows of Jugo-Slavia, by complicity with the Allies. D'Annunzio, in a spirit of generous adventure, undertook the great enterprise that prevented Fiume from falling into Croatian hands at a time

when many Italians forgot that they were Italians. Taking a cemetery of 14,000 crosses as his point of departure, Gabriele d'Annunzio set forth to fulfil his great programme, after months of preparation and delay.

The rebellion of Ronchi was directed, not only against the Government of Nitti and that of Trumbic, but against the whole international situation, and its end was a solution that was rather Garibaldian than diplomatic. The Commandant, in a word, was opposing all the so-called democratic and constitutional governments that had succeeded in obtaining new power, empire, and dominion from the great war.

In the first rank of these was the Imperial Government of England, which had hidden its face behind an atrocious mask of indifferentism, and which dared, later on, to congratulate Giolitti on his supposed proof of energy and authority, manifested by his opposition to d'Annunzio.

The legionaries of Ronchi, as they advanced on Fiume, sounded the bugle-call of liberty to all oppressed lands, to Nice, Savoy, Corsica, Malta, Gibraltar, Ireland, Egypt, Canada, Montenegro, Albania; to all the people, great and small, of Europe, Asia, and America; not forgetting the Arabs and Turks, who had been dismembered and enslaved by plutocratic and imperialistic nations.[1]

In fact, could the followers of d'Annunzio forget Ireland, that small but glorious country, which had only committed one wrong, that of fighting for

[1] We regret, here, the omission of any mention of Armenia—or of Tripoli.—TRANSLATOR.

the aggrandisement of England? Could they be insensible to the martyrdom of that small people, so tempered by sacrifice and so forward in all battles? Could they forget the slain of Dublin, the Mayor of Cork, the assassinated Egyptian youths, and the gibbets erected by the ruler of England in his dominions? Again, could they forget the ferociously selfish policy of France, our Latin sister? or could they forget her black ingratitude, so soon as the mortal danger was past, to Italy, who had saved her three times?

Therefore Gabriele d'Annunzio went forth from Ronchi, and in Fiume completed the first effort to preserve the fruits of victory and consecrate the sacrifice of those who died in the war of independence for the destruction of tyrants and despots.

But though all this was bold and Garibaldian, though it was the policy of d'Annunzio, it was not Fascism. For Fascism is another thing and might be identified, under certain aspects, with the Futurism of Marinetti, whose noble word of battle was *To march and not to rot.*[1]

It is false that Fascism does not aim at the reconstruction of our country after the terrible war. It is false that it endeavours to sharpen the hatred between capital and labour, thus facilitating a revolution.

Fascism, on the contrary, has been the most efficacious instrument for awakening the public conscience, as may be shown by the large band of youths that followed Benito Mussolini. It has certainly made use of exceptional remedies (of

[1] "Marciare e non marcire."

which we desire neither the continuation nor the abuse) in order to resist high-handedness and react against that weakness of soul and love of ease which would have destroyed society. Fascism has the perfume of life and youth, it has seized on the noblest minds and has infused into them its breath of life, drawing them, magnetically, into its vigorous course of action.

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The deceptive game had been going on for two years. For two years Socialists and Maximalists had terrorized the nation, exploiting the base instincts of the crowd, ordering insane strikes in the public services under the threat of terrible reprisals, imposing an inhuman boycot against those who were not with them, beating and shooting dissentient workmen, hunting wounded men and officials, occupying industrial establishments and arming them like fortresses, organizing Red Guards—and all this under the guardianship of Nitti and Giolitti.

Fascist violence, therefore, undertook, necessarily and logically, the defence of the country, by opposing strength to strength, since the governing authorities seemed to be struck by sudden paralysis and remained inert and passive in front of Bolshevist tyranny. But although it has been a party of violence, Fascism is not to be confounded with Communism; although it often goes beyond the law, it is not a "social danger," nor "the cry of a moribund *bourgeoisie*," nor a perennial cause of disturbance, anxiety, and distress. In no way does Fascism merit this severe judgment, which in any case

should be modified by the consideration of the undeniable fact that it was in the first place *a violent reaction against cold, systematic, and revolutionary violence.* It defended, by force, not only the national integrity, which was undermined by Bolshevism, but also the rights of work and association. Fascism represented, and still represents, the antidote and reaction against Leninism. Its advent to public life signalized the defeat of the tyrannical force of social Communism. Its victory against Leninism signified that the reign of subversive tyranny was at an end, that every citizen could henceforth freely take part in civil disputes without being exposed to the reprisals of the violent, that liberty of thought was not one-sided but effective, that liberty of action was only to be limited by social and civil duties. But these ends cannot be fulfilled save by prudence and moderation, and we deprecate the excesses to which certain Fascists have abandoned themselves in some parts of the country.

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Fascism has acted in the name of victory and for the good of the country, and it has done well. But now it is time for it to exercise a propaganda of reason and persuasion, and not of violence; it must convince the heart, and not break the head; it must renounce bombs and bayonets and devote itself to furthering a work of life and peace.

We would also wish Fascism to acquire a clearer vision of its political future. When it was obliged to employ force to oppose the ignoble capitulations of the State, it made a virtue of necessity, and

followed the axiom that extreme evils demand extreme remedies. But it must not persevere in this course a moment longer than necessary. If it did it would endanger the sacred cause of liberty, and would bring people to believe that might is right. If, therefore, interested factions should attempt to draw the Fascist movement into reactionary and militarist causes and to entangle it in petty scandals and inopportune devices, then we might doubt of the abiding destiny of Fascism, which would fail to maintain that better condition of things to which it has so powerfully contributed.

Therefore we repeat the words of Mussolini to the ardent Fascist youth of Italy, and we say once more that the work of the Fasci must be directed to the most genial and daring economic and political reforms, but not to the defence of parasitic private interests. If Fascism is to become guardian of the nation it must free itself from the particular conditions which gave it birth, and must realize that, if violence is a salutary medicine in certain social crises, it is not a normal one, and that its abuse becomes fatal soon or late.

CHAPTER VII

FASCISM IN ITS RELATION TO THE STATE AND SOCIALISM

We will pause in our examination of the Fascist phenomenon—an examination which we have endeavoured to carry out objectively and impartially, to disentangle the results, the historic bearing, and the personal factors from the confusion of the period through which we have passed.

The signs of moral recovery that are to be seen throughout our country, transcending the painful marks of civil disorder, denote a reawakening of the conscience of the nation and a revival of its indomitable force; they witness to the profound law of vital reaction after exhaustion and failure. The true source of this marvellously rapid recovery, in spite of all the grounds for discouragement, is to be found in the nation itself, which sowed the seeds of new strength by its efforts in the war. Those who have shared in this recovery must content themselves with considering its manifestations rather than its causes. The causes themselves are in the very soul of the nation.

We must therefore believe in the depth and health of this national rebirth and trust in its reality. We must give our people their due, because this recovery has been made at their own cost, it has

been, and is, the fruit of travail and sorrow, and gives the country a right to feel proud and confident.

The national rebirth has been accompanied and animated by the same ideal force that enabled the country to face and win the war. As the Treasury Minister of the last Giolittian Cabinet said :

A great achievement has diffused a sense of national union and discipline through all social strata. The war, with its long years of suffering and glory, with its survivors and its dead, has impressed itself indelibly on the heart of Italy. It is the dominant fact of new history, and those who think to wipe it out, as an inconvenient episode, have no right to govern a renovated nation.

The war has raised Italy and Italianism in the heart of the people, in spite of all passing disturbance and darkness. The war, in spite of the subsequent reaction of weariness and cowardice, is a vital element of the national consciousness ; for the fruits of courage, sacrifice, and victory are abiding. Italy was true to herself, when she entered on the war, and she will be faithful to the aims she had in view, of a higher justice and a nobler peace amongst people. Only adverse circumstances will hinder her from their fulfilment.

Bonomi, who was not then an adversary of the Fascists, said to the electors of Mantua before the last political elections :

Our fighters, our staunch and heroic companions in the trenches, could not all understand the great moral cause for which they were sacrificing their lives, but all felt that it was a higher will than their own that asked of them the subjection of their individuality

to a collective end and the obedience of each one to the command of the nation. They realized that the love of country and the silent virtues of discipline and sacrifice were higher than material goods and egotistic advantages. Patriotism and discipline must be the impelling forces of national reconstruction. By the light of these two ideas we can reinforce the authority of the State and yet leave an outlet for those disputes and rivalries which are essential to progress. Our Italian democracy, careless of caste and privilege, allows everyone the opportunity to rise from a humble to a high position by his own worth. But, nevertheless, the sense of order and discipline must be maintained, for it becomes even more essential in proportion to the diffusion of democratic principles. No one should consider himself exempt from submission to law. We must know how to command when we are above and to obey when we are below. In this way we shall establish the new authority and dignity of the State, which must, in order to fulfil its duties, be considered as the highest expression of the will of the whole country. The Fascists have raised the tricolour banner—that banner represents neither a party nor a cause. It is simply a symbol of spiritual resurrection after the storm, a symbol of the highest forces of the country. Let those who do not venerate it cleanse their own minds, and they will be ready to honour and follow it once more.

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The *bourgeoisie* as a class is accused of exploiting the labourers, but the imputation, as a general charge, is as unfounded as it is unjust. The unreal

doctrines that have disturbed the mind and soul of the working classes and caused the recent social convulsions are to be deplored. The suggested administrative control, on the part of the workmen, and the relative legal project, were not understood by some groups of industrialists. In fact, in the Council of Industry a great majority accepted the idea, with some modifications. The title roused more attention than the contents. By the word "control," interpreted according to its English signification, was understood a kind of substitution of workmen for the ordinary managers of the business. This was not the intention of the Government. The idea was rather to associate the labourers more closely with the industrialists and put them in a position to understand more clearly the difficulties of industry and production.

No one thinks of destroying the economic and social gains of the working class in the interests of another class. That would be in manifest opposition to the bold and renovating reforms which are proposed by the Government in its action for the restoration of the country. No one need fear for the future, under the protection of Fascism.

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Before the rise of Fascism the public services were in confusion from one end of the country to the other, while all enterprise that depended on them was collapsing. When we remember that strikes and disorders of every kind were frequent in a national administration that had once been the first in the world, and that these were the out-

come, in many cases, of political passion, comparison between our present and our former condition speaks eloquently of the great progress that has been made in the process of reconstruction.

Public opinion, supported by Fascism, never hesitated to condemn unreasonable agitation, especially such as culminated in the stopping of work; and only lately we have heard the severe condemnation of strikes in public services pronounced by members of the General Confederation of Labour, such as Baldesi, Buozzi, Bianchido. These results, for the obtaining of which Fascism has co-operated with public opinion, give us the hope that our public services will soon reach the perfection that the country has a right to expect, and that the servants of the State will recover from that unhappy habit of indiscipline which is one of the consequences of the war, and devote their energies, along with other workmen, to advancing the fortunes of the nation.

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We may now pass to another question. What is the attitude of the different parties in relation to the reconstruction of the country and its economic restoration?

The truth is that all parties, but above all the Communist party, are at present passing through a terrible crisis. All are equally conscious of the necessity of ending the internal troubles which are weakening and discrediting the country in the eyes of the world. All, that is to say, except the Leninists, who carry on their atrocious guerilla warfare, however sterile it may have become, and

who declare openly that they are indifferent to Italy and her fate. They matter little. Our external victory was obtained without the help of Bolshevists, and even in despite of them. Our internal victory will also be obtained regardless of them, which will be the more satisfactory.

But to go on. Someone said in the columns of the *Popolo d'Italia* that Fascism is a torrent which springs from the depths of our race. Like other torrents, this torrent also receives tributaries from every side, and gathers its share of refuse; and no party whatsoever can be composed entirely of the best elements. There is always some deleterious element, because we are men, and men are not perfect, nor are they perhaps entirely perfectible. Yet this torrent has, with all its impurities, burst some banks, and has swept away the Bolshevist monster, which terrified a part of the country and deserved to perish because of its violence. It has brought back, on its flood, treasures that seemed to be lost, treasures that had been gained by interventionism, by the national war and victory.

This torrent is becoming every day more swollen and impetuous. It has passed beyond the national bounds and given birth to Fascist combinations in France, in Lugano, in America, and in Tunis. There are 120,000 Italians in Tunis, whom we will not forget. There are Fascists at Bolzano, who, in a land which is wrongly called German, remind us of the implacable resolution expressed in the formula, *We are on the Brenner and we shall remain there.* Thus also, in spite of the manœuvres of the Slavs of our own country and of Zagabria, we are

at Nevoso and we shall remain there. Thus also, regardless of bastard diplomatic compromises, Fiume must and will be annexed to Italy sooner or later.

Every generation has its own tasks and fatigues. But in the midst of a thoughtless majority and a seething population we must have watchful and earnest guardians, who are not only concerned about the material welfare of Italy, but are still more concerned about its ideal existence. Fascism has one ideal, which is Italy.

The situation, then, has been changed by the influence of Fascism.

Twenty months ago, as the actual President of the Council said, *a storm was raging through the country. All the sorrows and rancours and miseries that were the aftermath of war had formed themselves into a block, and the people were being told that their sacrifices had been useless and their victory vain. But now the national banners are waving in places from which they seemed to have been cast out for ever, while those who cherished the vain hope of arousing a Russian revolution in Italy are defeated and divided.*

Whence comes this rapid, profound, and almost miraculous change?

After the elections of 1919 *the Socialist party, drunk with its unexpected victory and stimulated by post-war rancour, was master of a third of the Chamber, and prepared to carry out its Bolshevist dream of forming a Government from an uneducated class. But its policy displayed its hollowness under the touch of reality. Insurrectionary movements without co-ordination or heroism took place. There were even attempts at a general strike for the furtherance of*

revolutionary plans. A mischievous attempt was made to occupy the factories, which could not be worked without scientific and technical guidance. Italian Socialism was not able to draw any profit from its increased political force, and now it is passing through the crisis of its own doctrines, of which it is the slave.

The supposed dark plots against the improvement of the working classes are non-existent. It is Italy itself in all its soundest elements, Italy in the person of her strong, tenacious working population, that demands disciplined labour and distribution. It is Italy herself, with her own faith and ideals, that asserts the value of her victory and draws from her sacrifices her claim to renewed prosperity. It is Italy herself that arises to cast off the monstrous dream of Bolshevism, and to restore the notion of orderly progress.

Foreigners thought that a general catastrophe was impending, but Italy has recovered with a rapidity that is miraculous.

And Fascists must refrain from disputes and quarrels which might bring Italy back to the old factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines by sowing seeds of resentment. They must devote themselves to the accomplishment of a vast and enduring work, such as can only be effected by general collaboration in an atmosphere of peace.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SENSE OF LIMITATION

ITALY needs absolute quiet after her victorious war and her bitter factional disputes. She must return to her normal condition. And Fascism must now, in place of meeting violence with violence, proceed to a work of national pacification. As for that, Mussolini, who has a watchful mind and a vigilant heart, has averted the danger of a Fascist offensive carried beyond the bounds of what is just and reasonable. It was for this end that he seconded, with all his force, the work of the Fascist Parliamentarians, who initiated a proposition of peace, in the national interest, between Socialists and Fascists. And that proposition, as is well known, was carried to a sane and happy conclusion in spite of great and tedious difficulties. Thus peace was made, or at least an *official* peace, between the two powerful adversaries, although, unfortunately, the Treaty has not been universally observed. The Fascists, for example, of Emilia, Romagna, and Tuscany gave, for a moment, a disappointing example of indiscipline by their refusal to ratify the Treaty and their denunciation of Mussolini and all the Fascist officers who had co-operated in his work of pacification by signing the Treaty. Mussolini, therefore, resigned his post as a member of the Central Committee,

and remained a simple member in the ranks. But his resigination, although logical and opportune, was not accepted, and he gave a further example of discipline, by submitting to the general will and resuming his office. He remained therefore the loved, respected, and dreaded leader of Fascism.

He believed that in Fascism was heralded the dawn of a new spirit, but he feared its exaggeration and possible degeneration into a Frondist movement, by means of hidden and insincere manœuvres, and he foresaw the danger of indiscipline; hence, like a skilful surgeon, he put his finger directly on the wound. Then it was that he gave forth his famous appeal, and then it was that the deprecated crisis occurred in the Fascist camp, that crisis which had been so eagerly looked for by the Social Communists on the one hand and by the Nittians and Giolittians on the other.

Mussolini thundered against the delinquents, while he openly declared, in his paper, that Fascism was issuing from its trial defeated by internal discord and by the lawlessness of its rural battalions. Naturally the hostile press smiled in Mephistophelian guise at this sad spectacle of discord, and the Nittian press, in particular, undertook its offensive with fresh ardour.

All these misfortunes were surmounted, but Mussolini, being profoundly convinced of the necessity of a truce with Socialism in order to give a breath of relief to Italy, sounded a call to his followers in the *Popolo d'Italia* not to carry their victory too far, and to be content to remain, armed, on the positions that they had conquered. So far

facts have justified him, for public opinion, even the most indulgent and favourable to Fascism, would rebel against it should it follow the Communist example, and pursue, without justification, its punitive expeditions, its vengeance, and its violence. His words were clear and emphatic :

The daily papers are filled with accounts of episodes of violence in the struggle between Fascists and Socialists. We believe that this state of things will shortly end, for the simple reason that Fascism is everywhere victorious and that Bolshevism lies beaten in the sand. The consequences of this defeat, which, as Corridoni said, may be termed a real national revolution, will soon make themselves felt, and then it will be seen that Fascism has saved Italy from the ruin that threatened it. What is now needed, with a view to the continuation of the struggle or a possible attempt at reaction, is to give a distinct character to any exercise of violence, so that it may be typically Fascist and may not be perverted to other ends or coloured by other elements.

Above all, we repeat once more that Fascist violence is neither a whim nor a deliberate aim ; it is not art for art's sake. It is a surgical need and a sad necessity.

In the second place, Fascist violence must not be provocative. Not only must Fascists avoid irritating their adversaries, but they must only on rare occasions regard political manifestations on the part of their opponents as a provocation. The "pussists," however horrible, have a right to manifest their ideas and to urge their own propaganda until laws are changed. It is only when they abuse this right in order to defame

and insult our cause that Fascists have the right and duty to intervene.

Thirdly, we must choose the rightful objective of violence. It is not always possible, in the excitement of the moment, but we must try to strike only those who deserve to be struck, and not others. And also Fascist violence must be chivalrous. Absolutely so. It must leave to the "pussists" the ignoble privilege of rushing in their thousands on one. As in all human manifestations, so violence also has its proper measure, beyond which it damages those who exercise it rather than those against whom it is directed. You can never pass just limits with impunity. Violence is an exception, not a method or a system. It is not directed to personal vengeance, but to national defence. When it has reached its end it is a very grave error to urge it further. Violence must be that of intelligent people and not of brutes. . . . This is the true type of Fascist violence until the day in which it will be possible to discard its use because life will have resumed its peaceful rhythm.

In another place he wrote :

We must act as strong men, we must watch with pistol in hand, so that the enemy may not be tempted to return to his counter-offensive, and at the same time we must allow ourselves the luxury of being generous and chivalrous towards those who are puzzled or ignorant. The "pussists" can no longer venture to attack us. It is very probable that, learning from experience, they will no longer play their cards on a table that does not belong to them. Once the political organization of Socialism has become inoffensive, there is no more reason for violence against individuals or insti-

tutions. We must distinguish, in every case, the economic organization, which may be gained over to our side, from the political party which has to be opposed, and in the "Pus" we must distinguish the rascals from the honest men and the innocent from the sinners. We implore Fascists not to take the initiative in violence, especially during the time of election, except in case of necessary reaction against the violence of others. In this way we shall realize the true mission of Fascism, which is that of bringing back the nation to its political, economic, and spiritual basis.

Earlier still, Mussolini had penned the following cogent lines:

The Italian bourgeoisie, especially the political world represented by Nitti and the Social Radical Party, is now resigned to its destiny. It is the same bourgeoisie that, before the war, believed in the scientific truth of Socialism, and after the war believed in the sure advent of Socialism, and therefore had no power of even passive resistance. How many bourgeois stamped themselves with the Bolshevist mark after the elections of November? Tens of thousands. Taking advantage of an extraordinarily feeble Government, and of the discouragement of adverse political parties, the "Pus" became master, abused its force, and lost all reserve or shame. This is the story of yesterday. It should be remembered, especially by certain politicians who now assume an air of criticism and assurance in regard to Fascism, whereas, two years ago, when our party was fighting its first battles, even the existence of certain parties and certain politicians was ignored by the great public. If those

parties and politicians have now come to the surface, and found some credit and circulation, if Socialism has withdrawn itself in time from the terrible Russian experience towards which it was inclined, the merit belongs to Fascism and to Fascism alone.

One cannot read, without emotion, the Will of the young Fascist who fell the other day in Tunis in sacred reprisals against the Labour Chamber. Only when a mind is inflamed by a profound ideal can it meet death with this stoicism. Our martyrs may be counted by tens and hundreds. Their blood is the best answer to the disgraceful calumnies of open or masked enemies of Fascism.

And now it behoves Fascists not, in their turn, to lose the sense of limitation. To do so would be to risk the fruits of a great victory. When you have conquered it is dangerous to try to conquer still more. We must not become tyrants after having been oppressed. It is difficult enough, whether for peoples or for individuals, to stop at the right moment, and end the tragic alternations of war by a just synthesis. But the secret of victory is precisely in this moderation. Fascists are almost all young, and hence exuberant; but they are also intelligent, and they will understand the meaning of these words, which vulgarly signify that Fascism must not help on a reaction of the "Pus" as the brutality of the "Pus" helped on the growth of Fascism. Our victory must not only have a signification in regard to the "Pus," but it must also be fruitful in regard to the nation. We attacked the "Pus" because it was destroying the country. Having rendered it innocuous, we must not disturb the country, but help her to resume her strenuous march towards

internal and external peace. Our one warning is this: If Fascism loses its sense of limitation, it will lose its victory.

Thus spoke our leader, knowing the matter with which he was dealing. Unhappily his advice was not listened to, nor his directions followed always and by all. He foresaw this in an article that was truly prophetic:

The complaints of the national press in regard to some sporadic individual violence on the part of the Fascists deserve instant attention. Let us first say that to-morrow, or soon after, we will give abundant documentation, through the files of Avanti, of the unheard-of verbal and physical violence to which Socialists of all kinds and in every part of Italy abandoned themselves during the last electoral campaign, not excepting those who profited by the so-called Evangelic propaganda.

Those documents will demonstrate that our reaction was far from attaining the provocative excesses of that movement.

We add that certain violences on the part of individuals, if not justifiable, are nevertheless explainable. North of the Po we have not registered any such violence; Milan, for instance, has not witnessed any, and the reason is that, in those places, Socialists, though displaying their base tyrannical instincts, never carried on, as in some other places, a real course of brutal tyranny. Where the oppression was most violent there individual action occurred the most frequently. But now that those first days are past it is important for the Fascists not to continue, and not to encourage, individual violence. The course of the

electoral campaign has convinced us of this comforting fact, which may be envied us by old and new parties, and that is that our sense of discipline is remarkable. This is a privilege, a pride, a title to nobility, a guarantee of victory, and a potent manifestation of force. If we ask the Fascists to refrain from actions of a personal order, which might damage the Fascist cause, we are sure of being obeyed. The Fascist leaders are not made of the stuff of other leaders, who follow instead of going before, and who let themselves be guided instead of guiding. The Fascist Government, whose will is expressed in our Unions, has to be obeyed. We address ourselves to both leaders and followers, and we declare that Fascists must not disturb the electoral propaganda of other parties, and must not hinder, but rather guarantee, a free exercise of the vote ; while, except for legitimate reprisals, every form of violence must be condemned. It is absolutely necessary to follow this line of conduct in order to consolidate our victory and guarantee future developments. Our situation is extraordinarily brilliant. We have imposing numbers, greatly superior to those of all the other parties. There are a thousand Fasci and three or four hundred thousand regularly inscribed members, without counting groups in process of formation. The military organization, which is the kernel of the political one, is being constantly perfected. A great municipal and co-operative organization is arising as a consequence of Fascism. The former liberal and democratic parties are anchored in Fascism, and the elections of May 15th had a Fascist stamp on them. The Socialist party is defeated. Vast currents of public opinion turn towards

us. Ours is the greatest mobilization of spiritual forces that has ever taken place in Italy, and it is a spontaneous mobilization. The moral and material victory of Fascism is now an undeniable reality.

Facts justified Mussolini, and all happened according to his previsions. Italian Fascism, which had brilliantly *resolved its historic destiny in regard to Communism and restored to Italian Socialism the sense of limitation—that is to say, the sense of liberty and distance, of possibilities and impossibilities, of wisdom and folly*, having gained the electoral battle, fell into the errors and weaknesses with which it had charged its adversaries. Hence the unfortunate occurrences at Roccastrada, Treviso, Sarsana, Terni, and Perugia, when much Fascist blood was shed, and some of the best public opinion was alienated. The accusation that had already been brought against Fascism, of bringing a character of violence into Italian political life, and of employing force, not only from necessity but also from choice, was justified, and the patriotism of the movement was doubted.

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Mussolini, on one occasion, offered the Leninists a truce, and during the occupation of the factories he proclaimed a benevolent neutrality to the *Federation of Metallurgical Workers*, for he was convinced that Fascism should never, consciously or unconsciously, be a mere shelter for the *bourgeoisie* that was endangered by the expropriating tendency of Socialism. As we now behold him, resisting internal enemies, so we shall next see him opposing

the tyranny of classes, that are hoarding national riches and endeavouring to defend their old privileges and iniquitous conquests and to avoid their financial responsibilities in regard to the war. He has a fine ideal of justice and liberty for the proletariat, whether intellectual or manual workers. He has surrounded himself with fighters in the victorious war, men who suffered and bled in it; he has surrounded himself with men who love the country that is misunderstood and despised by international Communism; and that has been impoverished and weakened by Bolshevism. He has with him the youth of Italy, who thirst for a renewal of the national soul and for the redemption of the masses that have been exploited by tyrannical oligarchies. Nor are there wanting around him, as we have said, the thinkers, the proletariat of genius, who seek moral regeneration, but refuse to tie themselves, hand and foot, to subversive and tyrannical associations. Around him, in fact, are those who love their country and also love freedom.

Italy, which is a classic land of liberty, cannot allow the hatred of factions and parties to diffuse itself in the public places, and renew the miserable spectacle of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the Whites and the Blacks, the Orsini and the Colonna, the Geremei and Lambertazzi, the Palleschi and Piagnoni. Above all, the authority of the State must be re-established and, with it, the sovereignty of law. All principles and rights must be safeguarded, all violence and tyranny pitilessly repressed. Citizens, who were armed one against another, must be brought back to the observance of the law,

otherwise Italy is lost. The people must again be enabled to give free expression to their political views, and the power of the State must be restored by means of internal tranquillity and public peace. That hypersensibility of the populace, which is a result of the war, has profoundly disturbed the psychology of the Italian people, as, for the rest, has been seen in other countries also. It must now end. The elections of November 1919 and May 1921 took place at a moment of profound disturbance and exceptional popular nervousness. A general state of anger and rancour, of anxiety and uncertainty prevailed, and, indeed, the unjust division of honours and sacrifices, and the terrible contrast between the sufferings of our soldiers and the shameful gains of great and small speculators, exasperated the mass of the Italian people and rendered them the more susceptible to the propaganda of Trotsky. He promised them seas and mountains, an earthly Paradise, a new era of justice and prosperity, a new condition of well-being and universal peace and brotherhood. The masses, who had been disappointed by the length and horrors of the world-conflict, were deluded by the wonderful picture and temporarily seduced, but the awakening was violent. And now what is needed is that normal life should resume its rhythm. The family, the home and work must cure the many wounds and social sores produced by war and Communism. Over all the sorrows of the past must be stretched a veil of forgetfulness. The false conditions of national existence must be changed, so that the minds of all may become serene and peaceful, forgetful of past

sorrows and struggles. The people have opened their eyes to reality, the horrors of Russia have convinced the masses of the folly of a revolution which, even were it victorious, would cast Italy into an abyss of misery and hunger and anxiety and sorrow, for it would deprive her of what she most needs—of coal, of iron, of provisions, of oil, and of all the rest.

Repetita juvant! Italy is still sick. She is suffering from social, economic, and political neuritis. She has come out of the war diminished in strength and torn by partisan struggles. She emphatically needs peace and tranquillity and work. Her production must be increased to avert bankruptcy, to restore her exchange, and to enable her to purchase, at a reasonable price, the foreign goods that she needs. Mad and useless strikes must end, that industry and commerce may revive. The professorial empirism of the men, who for so many years succeeded each other in the Government, is not adequate to cure the wounds that the war has left. There must be a slow and gradual work of recovery and of reconstruction. The country is capable of recovery, but her convalescence will be long and tedious.

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After the split in the official Socialist party, which occurred at the Congress of Livorno, our national Bolshevists based all their hopes and plans on a civil war. Those unhappy tactics have greatly damaged Official Socialism and arrested its progress. The plethoric electoral victory of 1919 was almost

a misfortune, and Claude Treves used to remark tersely to his friends, "We are too many and too few."

Facts have proved his words. Certainly the result of the war was to hasten the evolution of the Italian Socialist party, in itself and in its relations to the world: in its scientific and Marxist methods of class warfare; in both the extension and the perfection of its organization, which attained the greatest possible development in certain sections of the working classes. In collaboration with the Government, and without failing in its own vital programme, it could have become a living, integral part of the country and guided it towards its highest destinies. But it became infected with the plague-spot of Leninism, and thus lost its faith and its strength, and entered on a process of degeneration. Instead of waving the banner of justice and humanity in the eyes of capitalist speculators, instead of propagating sound Socialism amongst Italian people who were longing for liberty, equality, and the brotherhood of peoples, instead of proclaiming the rights of man, that is to say, the immortal principles of '89, it servilely followed the dread Bolshevist apostles, and simply endeavoured to harness national life to a yet darker and more terrible imperialism by means of a proletarian dictatorship. Fascism unconsciously opened the eyes of the somnambulist. Turati, Treves, Modigliani, and others understood, though late, the profound abyss that separated the Socialism of Marx from the Communism of Lenin, and thus prepared the split that took place at the Congress of Livorno. Socialism thus caused, by

sheer force of inertia rather than by its own activity, one of the greatest and most memorable reactions of human civilization. Nor will Fascism, which has its own programme of national reconstruction, bar the way to its fatal course.

Italian Socialism now perceives that it was the aggressive and intemperate methods employed by the Red extremists after the Armistice, in certain regions of Italy, and especially tactics of which they made use on the occasion of the agrarian dispute in the provinces of Bologna, Ferrara, and Ravenna, such as boycotting, incendiarism, seizure of persons, etc., that produced the Fascist reaction.

The prospective revolution was not realized in Italy, and it has also been defeated in Hungary. The Soviet *régime* in Russia can only propagate itself by the use of the bayonet, by hanging its enemies on trees along the streets of the cities that it conquers by shell and steel, and by the help of Chinese and Letts. In all the countries of Europe and America, so soon as the veil is raised on what has happened in Russia, the Bolshevist sickness is cured, the fever drops, and a sense of greater reality resumes its dominion over mind and brain. Fascism therefore reasonably asks the following questions :

What is the true will of the country ? Is it really represented by those who call themselves its deputies and who furnish a daily spectacle of vexatious quarrels without any result ? What is the true will of our country, of a country that is essentially reasonable and has given proof of such great powers ? Is the country truly represented by these organizations that tend to her undoing ?

There was a moment, especially during the five days of Fiume, when the Government was near destroying the State by its faults and ineffectiveness. In fact, what could have been more subversive than a Government which encouraged anarchy by tolerating the armed occupation of the factories, which fed it with amnesties, and which protected it by leaving the assassins of Bologna unpunished? What could have been more subversive than the Government of Giolitti, which turned its artillery on the *élite* of Italy, as they were about to celebrate Christmas, unconscious of the death that awaited them at the gates of the city?

Obviously Fascism was for d'Annunzio and against Giolitti.

Fascism does not seek to gain the applause of the multitude, but to satisfy their highest needs. It refused to worship the antiquated idols of Italy, to whom shrines were raised at Custoza, Lissa, Abba-Garima, Caporetto, and Rapallo. Its idols are named d'Annunzio and Mussolini; and its shrines are Gorizia and Vittorio Veneto. Those Italians who deserved the name earnestly implored the poet to associate himself with Mussolini, and put himself at the head of half a million brave and disciplined Fascists, prepared to march to Rome against the internal enemies of the country.

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Those were sad times for Giolittian and Nittian demagogism. Fascism, in its sympathy with the sentiments and thoughts of Gabriele d'Annunzio, glorified his heroic patriotism and at the same

time raised hymns of honour to the indomitable will and action of Benito Mussolini. It knew that it had been called by history to renovate Italy and develop the fruits of her victory.

But d'Annunzio did not think that the hour had come, and he would not abandon his fruitful repose, by the lake of Garda, to display once more the banner of Randaccio and plant it on the hill of the Capitol and on the sacred shores of the Tiber. Perhaps because he knew the state of the country he was not ready to play the part of the pious Æneas, and transport the gods of Italy into all the lands that had been redeemed by his valour.

Those were the days of Giolitti, who, though he had refused to make war on Austria, made war against the State of Fiume, because she was too Italian; against Fiume, which asked Italy to take her, and was refused. The heroic city of Carnaro, which had been declared free and sovereign, but found herself crippled by sea and land, passionately demanded to be united to her true mother, and found herself besieged and attacked by those whom she invoked. On his side Giolitti, who had a few days before assured the Parliament that he would allow of no sanguinary conflict, cynically ordered the troops of Caviglia to advance against the city without clear motive or certain end, except the monstrous purpose of vengeance on the Soldier-Poet.

Fascism endeavoured to still the tumult. It directed its efforts to the solution of the question of Fiume, and urgently advised the Government, through the mouth of Mussolini, not to offer

further violence to the popular conscience under a pretext of acting in obedience to supreme reasons of internal and international order.

That drama of passion and popular aspiration still awaits the full light of history on its tragic events.

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Fascism arose when the country saw that nothing was to be hoped for from Government measures against Bolshevism, and that it must find in itself the necessary resources of defence and attack, independently of State authority and law. Fascism became the hope and refuge of all those who would no longer submit to the tyranny of a few.

Soldiers who had endured the labour of the trenches, and bore, on their minds and bodies, the ineffaceable traces of war; small tradesmen and members of the middle class, who had no wish to lose all their hardly earned savings; laborious workmen, desirous of peace for themselves and their families; officials and professional men, who knew their turn would come next; the intellectual class, who lived peacefully in their studies—all these saw salvation for themselves and their country in Fascism, and inscribed their names by the thousand.

The shock was tremendous; but victory smiled on the soldiers of duty. Communism, stricken and panic-stricken, revealed its true character, and showed itself to be bold in speech but weak in deeds. The people understood the case so well that the next municipal and political elections marked severe losses to the Socialist-Communist party in com-

parison with those of 1919. Communes such as Turin, which seemed hopelessly lost to Constitutionalism, were conquered once more by a civic combination under the protection of Fascism; and other places followed the same example.

And now Communists and Socialists, having taken note of the dispositions of the proletariat, have secretly (to do it openly would be a risk) resolved against any attempt at a united dictatorship. Gino Baldesi, a most influential Socialist leader, has declared that "a revolution of the Russian type was impracticable in Italy."

Thus vanished the Bolshevist phantom, and our brave people found its feet once more, and raised itself, strong and clean and refreshed, in response to the Fascist summons.

The aspect of the cities of Italy, great and small, was suddenly changed. They had no longer to bear the infliction of crowds of fanatics, nor to be deafened by obscene shouts of hatred and drunkenness. From that time other sounds have been heard and other banners have been waved in the streets of our Italian cities, which are now drunk with liberty. The picture is changed and the situation has been reversed; new songs now sound from the mouths of the multitudes.

The troops of young men, that formerly faced the Austrian guns, now parade the cities, though they have still to bear another form of attack, that of the so-called "arditi." But the spectacle is changed, and peaceful citizens ask themselves: "Whither is the horror fled? Where does the hideous Mongolian phantom now hide?"

The monster was but a bogey, and the multitudes that followed it are gone. The Bacchanalian dance of deserters, shirkers, criminals, vampires, is ended. The rats have gone back to their holes, for their eyes cannot stand the new and resplendent light.

Who are the young men that pass, in valiant troops, with banners waving in the wind ? What are they but the living forces of the land that calls them forth to her defence ? It is well that the crowd should applaud them as they pass, that women should cast them flowers and kisses, just as when they passed by to sacrifice and death in the former uniform of grey-green. Our eyes behold once more the exaltation of those first days of the war. The blood of Giulio Giordani, which was shed on a municipal bench, instead of in the trenches, the blood of Francesco Gozzi, and others, who fell like soldiers in an assault, are the sacred seed from which springs the salvation of Italy. Italy is safe, the incubus of revolution has disappeared. It has disappeared for ever.

The Peace of Rapallo secured the Collar of the Annunziata for Sforza and Bonomi, it sent Frassati as Minister to Berlin and Rolandi-Ricci to Washington. It brought us, also, other bitter fruits, such as the sanguinary Christmas of Fiume and the abandonment of Dalmatia to foreigners. Giolitti thus proved, after May 1915, through the complicity of almost all those who opposed him, and who had accused him of treachery after Caporetto, that his Government could only exist through anti-national violence.

Nitti, on his side, appeared satisfied by demonstrating that his methods had been followed by Giolitti, with the same submission to anti-national force, the same lies, the same corruption and deceiving of public opinion, the same subserviency to the Allies. Politics were reduced to the twofold game of Nitti, who cried out against the dictatorial omnipotence of Giolitti, and Giolitti, who, in order to remain in the Government, pointed out the danger of the return of Nitti. The disputes of these two clans filled the political scene, while both strove to obtain the collaboration of Socialism, which had obtained a settled position by the triumph of social democracy. In fact, the spectacle was one of a political parliamentary caste which speculated in national trouble, and which melted down our victory into a distribution of honours and embassies; while the false promise of internal peace at Rapallo ended with the shedding of Italian blood at Trattato!

Under such circumstances it was impossible to allay national anxiety, but the very desperateness of the case was the opportunity of Fascism. Thus in the midst of profound bitterness did the national will once more affirm itself; not weakened by suffering but sanctified by tragedy and death. Fascism arose, in this state of general national depression, as the great leader of warlike youth and the worthy interpreter of the new Italian soul.

Why could Italy not find her path after Vittorio Veneto—she who had been at one time a model of wise legislation to the whole world? Because she

was lost by the errors of her own rulers and citizens, and ruined by the victory which had been too great for her own feeble soul. The country was entangled in discord, oppressed by the greediness of the few and by the ignorance of the working classes, and the Government was such as the nation itself had chosen.

The country had abandoned its political life into the hands of Parliament without reserve or pride, and Parliament was such as a disorganized majority can produce. It was an assembly of contradictory elements of ambition and ignorance. Not once did the electors raise their voices to denounce the betrayal of their own mandate and the deception of the whole nation. Not a single thing did the country or the Government do in those sad years to restore peace and bring the State back to its normal course of production and economy. Only through Fascism was the country saved from Communism, only through its efforts did it escape from the fate of Russia. As to its internal policy, if the nation longed for peace, it is also true that, for many Italians who loved their country, d'Annunzio and Mussolini represented the antithesis of mercenariness, calculation, and baseness. Such as these asked themselves: Will d'Annunzio come to Italy? will he head the rebellion of conscience against treachery? Will he be seconded by Mussolini?

But whatever might be the course followed by her poet and her tribune, Italy could not forget that political decadence was the chief cause of her misfortunes. She could not forget that while it had been possible to find arms and soldiers to attack

other Italians, whose rebellion was the fruit of internal disorder, law itself had become a myth, not only through Social Communism, but also because the authority of the State did not know how to make itself respected. We had almost habituated ourselves to this impotence, and remained helpless amidst plots and outrages and calamities that would have raised a revolution in former days.

On one side we beheld the one who was the personification of war and victory, who was the purest and most ardent soldier of Italy, the finest leader of youth, the one who will ever remain the legendary leader of our times, the man who sacrificed himself to his country, and then remained silent and disdainful in his Florentine solitude.[1] On the other side, we beheld the Socialist mob, inspired by Nittian policy, busily engaged in scattering the fruits of victory, betraying the country, and opening the way to Bolshevism.

Then it was that Mussolini, in the *Popolo d'Italia*, proclaimed, in the name of Fascism, that the formulas of the Leninist doctrine were foolish and parricidal, that they responded in no way to the true feelings of the nation, and that it was cowardice and ingratitude to repudiate our sacred reasons for going to war, and to rob victory of its fruits by not acquiring from it the advantages to which Italy had a right. The followers of d'Annunzio and Mussolini alone showed the world that Italy, though

[1] We speak of Luigi Cadorna, victor at Gorizia and Bainsizzia, and the saviour of Italy in the Battle of Piave. He was the victim of official ingratitude and of the social Giolittian policy.

martyred and devastated, covered with ruins and insulted by her own children, remained calm and impassible, morally intact, resolved to face her misfortunes, to recover her tranquillity, peace, and glory.

CHAPTER IX

FASCISM AND THE STATE

FASCISM, which is above all a dynamic movement, finds its absolute antithesis in the present condition of the Italian State. In the official world of Italy we behold an inconsistent coalition of reactionary and belated forces, with a timid *bourgeoisie*. In this coalition we see the antiquated political parties advancing heavily, like those famous soldiers of the Pope, who were so loaded with arms and impedimenta that they could neither fight nor get sufficiently forward to occupy the positions that had been assigned them.

No party or class is fit to guide a great nation unless it can give proof of intellectual, moral, and administrative power. The Italian State of our days has no such gifts, or, if it has them, it does not know how to make use of them; while, on the other hand, Italians are not Hottentots, able to endure a dominion founded on oligarchical privileges without the least hint of progress or reconstruction. The ruling classes of Italy are passing into a state of liquidation, and they are unfortunately bringing the State to the same pass, through their incapacity and inability to solve the complex problems of the hour. They have not shoulders

capable of bearing the weight of a nation of forty million people; for ten years past they have not been able to bring forth a single new man and have been obliged to place the usual figure-heads in the Government. They have proved themselves utterly unable to fulfil the mandate of the national will, or to keep up with the movement of the labouring classes; while the base demagogical policy, that they have followed for years, has in it no fundamental power of reconstruction. The fact is that the ruling classes now stand in the dock, and that the majority of the people have good reason to be merciless in their judgment. We shall shortly witness a general national revolt against the oligarchy that persists in holding the reins of government. The *bourgeois débâcle* is inevitable. History is inexorable, and never forgives rulers who, through blindness and pride, leave the broad roads of sound government and follow the crossways that lead to the exploitation of the humble and oppressed. In such cases the crowd suddenly sees how it has been treated, and its revolutionary conscience is roused. It is overwhelmed by a wave of sudden fury and seeks to revenge the wrongs that have been endured for centuries.

Fascism knows that it has power to strengthen the trembling State and to restore prosperity to Italy after these long years of deviation.

It is likewise a fact that, in spite of its republican tendencies, Fascism has been the first to renew the power and dignity of the monarchy, which gave indubitable signs of weakness and collapse. For the monarchy is certainly, whatever may be said to

the contrary, the only Italian institution that represents national tradition and continuity.

Despite the attempts of its enemies, Fascism will be the true moral ruler of Italy. The truce with the Socialists which Mussolini accepted has not been fatal to it, as some anticipated. In virtue of this armistice, it was able to abandon the last traces of systematic violence, to become freer and more agile in its movements, and to get itself recognized as one of the great national parties. Nor does its force consist merely in its mediatorial capacity. It stands for the nation by the sincerity of its sentiments and convictions, and is stable, as natural things are stable, by virtue of its solid foundation and construction. In this sense Fascism is order. But it also signifies a radical transformation of the old *bourgeois* Conservatism, and has a government which is capable of opening out to the country a new era of organic reconstitution.

What, then, is its relation to the parties now actually existing in Italy ?

Liberalism has lost its Cavourian simplicity through its continual association with the radical reformists ; Communism has sold itself to Lenin ; the Socialism of the Triple Alliance has become collaborationist and watches the constitutional parliamentary forces in the hopes of supporting the tottering edifice of the *bourgeoisie* ; Nationalism, full of a kind of organic imperialism, assumes boastful attitudes ; the Popular party works silently and tenaciously in the shade to prepare for better destinies ; while Fascism shows that it has a more

tenacious coherence than mere identity of dogmas or repetition of principles.

Fascism can, as we have said, never be on the side of the *bourgeoisie*. On the contrary, it enters the lists in opposition to it. The reasons for this are endless, and arise from its political, social, moral, juridical, and national characteristics, all of which are assumed in the one great truth that: *Fascism, as advocate of the majority of those who fought in the trenches, cannot tolerate the domination of a purely conservative autocracy.* It demands that the political and economic power of the nation should pass into the hands of more worthy representatives and men more capable of giving order and stability to our tortured country.

Therefore, Fascism cannot be confounded with the former policy of other parties, as those of Popularism, Socialism, Democratic Socialism. For these have not understood the necessity of a fundamental reconstruction, and they did not see the damage that the complete realization of their programmes would bring to the unity of the State.

The enemy of Fascism is now, and always, in addition to Bolshevism, that dying Liberalism which is still so deeply attached to its political supremacy. Fascism, understanding the need for a new life, raises its voice against ancient forms of morality and constitutionalism, against old and brutal customs, old economy and worn-out finance. It invokes the rights and progress of the productive class, whether of mind or muscle, against the irresponsible autocracy of a worn-out capitalist *régime*. It is preparing itself to assume the responsibility of

power. Conscious of the peril of violent innovation, it does not wish to destroy by one stroke all forms of *bourgeois* action, nor all the acquisitions of liberal economy; but, placing itself at their point of view, it prepares better forms of government.

In fact, we behold this extraordinary fact: Fascism is forming a new *bourgeoisie* out of the dense mass of the proletariat, and it is precisely from this work of penetration and social justice that arise its ethical force and meaning. Whatever may be said, it is a fact that Fascism has begun in the proletariat, or at least among the small middle class; its ranks have been swollen by students, officials, professional and labouring men; all of whom belonged to a poor, or at least not to a rich class, while politically many amongst them held the most opposite opinions, whether anarchical, syndicalistic, socialistic, reformist, democratic, popular, or liberal. And hence, as the Mussolinian programme began gradually to reach to distant regions and places, new social groups gathered around the Milanese nucleus, which was so called because it had been formed in the Lombard capital, which is so sincerely national in spirit. Thus it was that Fascism became that imposing political and spiritual force which has now reached full maturity.

Fascism regards labour as an organic function of society. Being itself a political and social *élite*, it will soon give the go-by to the dominant oligarchy of the State, for it recognizes those new rights of the labouring classes that are arising out of the entangled system of *bourgeois* economy. It contemplates likewise,

through the active brain of Mussolini, a radical transformation of the State in response to the systematic and formidable pressure of the great popular masses.

It seriously contemplates certain opportune reforms for the improvement of national economy, for the organization of production and the distribution of wealth by means of large syndicates. Fascism is adverse to the *bourgeois* Government, that has created monopolies and roused capitalistic feuds, and aims at introducing popular and intellectual contingents. The State would thus acquire a national and Italian character, and recover from the decrepitude induced by a blood-sucking and unintelligent bureaucracy. Thus would arise reciprocal benefit to the State and the people, for the proletariat would be completely regenerated by Fascism and would become national and patriotic, while the State would be purified in the moral and in the material order. And thus a national Society of workers could be formed, capable of conciliating the needs and exigencies of capitalists with those of organized labour, whether manual or intellectual. Thus would arise the desired harmony between the supreme political necessities of the country and the urgent economic and humanitarian necessities of the people.

Fascism alone, as a young and vital party, is capable of this miracle. It alone can safely deal with the arduous problems of finance and public economy along with the complex problems of public order and international policy and the more special problems of spirit and reason. Thus will the

Government be freed from its subserviency to Capitalism, and put in a condition to further the productive forces of the country.

Fascism will confer on the State a renewed sense of stability and will restore amongst factions and parties and anti-Italian sects the old sentiment of national authority. When the State has been reformed and reconstituted to its very foundations it will pay its tribute of gratitude to the force that saved it. The State will be roused to a new consciousness; it will realize the historic fatality of the events that have occurred, and will learn that true national movement and progress can only come from the soul and will of the Italian people. At the same time it will also learn that this popular will can only be realized by a perfect alliance and peaceful fusion between the State and the people at their best.

Fascist Socialism has an agrarian tendency, though without Marxist or Leninist qualities. There does most truly exist a Socialistic Fascism or a Fascist Socialism which is true to its own principles, though it vigorously opposes the classic doctrinairism of Blanc and Lassalle. Fascist Socialism is, in fact, the purest, the simplest, and the holiest of Socialism —that of Christ.

Fascism is not sectarian. Only the other day Mussolini solemnly recognized the supreme power over souls that is possessed by the Church, as also its universality, its spiritual liberty, and the immense moral force that it exercises. Fascism justly sees that it is absurd, ridiculous, and perverse to overlook the spiritual greatness of a two-thousand-year-old

institution such as the Catholic Church, which has an incalculable influence on the destiny of the world through its power of civilization and its doctrine of love, brotherhood, justice, and humanity. Fascism, in fact, is not anti-clerical, and does not confound ecclesiastical with civil power. It does not take part in the attacks of other parties on Catholicism. Its own task is to sow and to reap in the fruitful fields of economics and sociology. It walks the path of national life, like a giant, upheld by a faith that has in it something of the supernatural.

All the various popular and classic forms of political life, that have till now lived in slavery to ideas not their own, find in Fascism the most perfect expression of their interests and duties. The many who were the prisoners of antiquated formulas and who are still, psychologically, in a primitive condition as regards education, culture, tradition, and custom, can and may find in Fascism an efficacious provision for their needs and aspirations, the synthesis of their unspoken wants. Fascism is constitutionally disposed to burst the bands that bind us to a dead past and to adopt the boldest forms of social co-operation.

In its programme of thought and action the people find their own words and therefore their own safeguards. Hence there will be a fierce competition between the three truly vital parties of our country—Fascism, Socialism, and Popularism—all endeavouring to win the sound labouring class. The battle will be fierce and the emulation keen, for the end is a worthy one, and the question is whether

the nation can best find its vital and final shape in the evolution of Fascism, in the universality of Catholicism, or in the dazzling theories of Socialism.

This is a problem which cannot be overlooked by following a kind of ostrich policy. And now that Italy, torn and wounded by the ferocious competition of classes and parties, seeks to find herself again and is not able to do so by reason of the impotence of the State, the solution can only come from Fascism, which is the *Deus ex machina* of the situation. In short, the Italian State is at the cross-roads, and must either be renewed or swallowed up in Bolshevism. It behoves Fascism to force the balance down on one side or the other; and its action on Italy will be Italian, and only Italian, in character.

As the State gradually approximates to a decisive turn in its own political history and social and economic development, the moral influence of Fascism grows enormously because it is, *par excellence*, the one political power capable of guiding the nation, of upholding and concentrating the forces of the country. Its function in national life has been determined by fate, and it is now the arbiter of the general destiny. Its character of moderation and detachment indicates its fitness to conciliate the proletarian and popular parties, to harmonize their respective exigencies, to control and check their excesses, and unite them for the accomplishment of its own particular programme.

Later on the aims of Fascism may be very much more ambitious; and it may be no longer a mere

arbiter in the conflicts and disputes between the State on the one side and parties and classes on the other, but it may have aims of its own, and bring the light of a new civilization and policy to bear on the whole nation.

Meanwhile, our meddling bureaucratic and parasitic Government is no longer able to hold classes and parties together, or to prevent them from tearing each other to pieces in sterile contests of rivalry and egotism, whereas Fascism, under the leadership of a clear brain and of a strong will, undertakes a more intimate and genuine national harmony. Under its shadow and protection new currents of opinion and of policy are making themselves felt in all parts of Italy, and out of these it will fashion a new unity which will form the political basis of the future State. The new order will not be that of the Turinese Communists, but it will be one that is capable of saving the nation. Fascism alone, we declare, is capable of working a miracle and giving back to the State the prestige of its true force, valour, and spiritual liberty. Fascism alone, by uniting its well-organized masses and inviting the co-operation of Socialists and the popular party —that is to say, the two great political forces of the country—for the supreme good of Italy, will secure and establish the new order of which we have spoken, and will base it on the solid foundation of the will of the people. It will favour true liberty, which is not to be confounded with anarchy. It will regulate the action of the State and that of the subject by promoting and developing individual activity and limiting the intervention of the State

to cases in which the activity of the individual is inadequate, as Marsich has said. Hence Fascism will respect that individualism which is needed for the development of the characteristic qualities of every citizen, such qualities as differentiate him from others without making him oppressive to them, and which contribute to the general good.

Individualism indeed, as Fascism understands it, is synonymous with youthfulness of body and soul. It is synonymous with originality, because originality implies differentiation, and our people are essentially youthful and original. They are instinctively intolerant of mere formulas and regulations and independent in spirit as in work.

Fascism will make use of this rich individual force which is the finest expression of our valiant race, and will reconquer to the nation its most precious treasures of energy. Thus the State will gradually regain that vitality which is necessary in order that it may face difficulties of the future without anxiety or trepidation.

CHAPTER X

THE POLITICAL ELECTIONS OF 1921

SETTIMELLI once said, *Young Italy has found its true leader, and this is what she most needed.* We reply, that his words are true, and Mussolini is the leader *par excellence*, the man whom the country needed, the true centre of the spiritual force of Italy. He is the symbol of her thought and action, while d'Annunzio is the prophet, the poet, the soldier, the light and the genius of the race. Their united energies can defy men, time and history. And the country expects much from both of them.

Fascism from its first origin declared loudly and clearly that its action was not to be confounded in any sense with reaction. It never resisted the legitimate ascension of the working classes towards a greater equality of life, but it revolted against all those who made use of the ingenuous confidence of the weak, and took advantage of their needs, in order to bring about the destruction of the nation. Such as these were preparing fresh pains and calamities for individuals as well as the community.

Our anarchic Communism was dispersed as by a powerful breeze. The *Fasci di Combattimento*, advancing in youth and vigour, burst through the ranks of anarchic Communism and opened out a green oasis of calm and security on the farther

side of the desert. The sorcery was dispelled, the savage beast was chased back into his lair. It is really astonishing how such a change could have taken place in the internal situation of the country. Entire Socialist leagues and municipal organizations passed over, with arms and baggage, to the Mussolinian Fasci. The secret forces of our calumniated race, of that race which is old only in glory and in history, and which knows, even in its most tragic hours, how to find in itself a perennial source of youth, soon got the better of the corruptive manifestations of Communistic epileptic folly. Fascism found its support in those Italian hearts whose intuitions and needs determined them to escape from the marsh in which they were plunged by Asiatic influence.

Fascism is still young and is turning to the Left, for it has too many young men in its ranks who are determined to fashion the destiny of the country according to immortal principles of justice, to find itself at home on the Right. The honesty of their intentions must be recognized, because they have put out the raging Bolshevist fire, and have opposed a salutary remedy to the violence of the sons of Lenin.

Fascism is a new phenomenon in that revolutionary process which developed in Italy during war and after the war. To the outside observer the *Fasci di Combattimento* are the instruments of reaction and of preservation. The trembling Italian *bourgeoisie* rejoices to behold those brave young Fascists proving their valour against the traitors of the country. They feel that their own

possessions are at last secure. But this is the outer side of Fascism, which has now passed out of the period of violence and subversive battle. Its fundamental reality is something other than violence and punitive expeditions, as its adversaries well know.

At first ignored, neglected, and despised, Fascism is now a new force with which we must count. Socialists see how formidable it is, and accuse it of being the guardian of the *bourgeoisie*, while the *bourgeoisie* hardly know whether to caress or fear it. They are grateful to it for the blows inflicted on Leninism, but they have a vague fear for the future.

For certainly Fascism, as it came from the brain and the soul of Mussolini, is not anti-proletarian and is not *bourgeois*. It has still to formulate its first principles, but those are greatly mistaken who think it is anti-proletarian or anti-socialist. Nationalists, also, are in error if they think to enslave it to their ends, as recent examples show us. Fascism is just Fascism—that is, a force springing from the very soul of the nation, and it is the creature of no party or faction.

It upholds that economic liberty which is a fruit of the war, in spite of all the errors, failures, and stupidity of governmental action; and it is convinced that, now more than ever, the salvation of Italy depends on the revival of her productive forces. Turati, himself, invoked the indispensable aid of capital, even of foreign capital, and demanded for it security of investment and large interests. But Fascism also realized that Socialist policy on the one side, and the incompetence and human respect of many so-called Liberal and *bourgeois* deputies on

the other, were jointly sacrificing all initiative and every productive enterprise by their oppressive vetoes and regulations. This was the policy that sharpened the labour crisis that had arisen from unemployment and high prices.

Another cause of the general crisis was the aggressive spirit that was a reaction from the severe discipline of the trenches, and that had been stimulated by the horrors of the most terrible and tragic event that human history records. After the Elections of 1919 it was thought that the Italian *bourgeoisie* was finally liquidated and could no longer exercise any directive functions. It was the end of government itself which seemed to be imminent. All that was needed was one last blow to destroy its last resistance. The restoration of society would have to be accomplished, but by new forces and with a new *régime*; no gradual and progressive transformation of institutes was to be hoped for; all that remained was to achieve an immediate and final political transformation.

But at this point Fascism intervened, and things were changed at once by its implacable action. It was the end of Nitti. For under the feet of the Fascist movement Nittianism was suddenly repudiated, because, as Mussolini wrote, it crushed and depreciated all that the country most valued, and the patriots of the war would have none of it.

The forces of Fascism were personal. Its members, who had endured life in the trenches, did not fear such adversaries as Nitti summoned together, profiteers and amnestied deserters.

The anti-patriotism of the Social Communists

was fatal to them. The country of Mazzini and Garibaldi could not be dealt with like an abandoned island in mid-ocean. Another error of the Social Communists was to despise and attack the intellectuals. It was essential, on the contrary, to establish collaboration and friendship between the intellectual workers and the labourers. This is just what was not done. And now Socialism is on the decline. Fascism has proved, against it, that everything is not rotten in actual society, that it was wrong to bury the living and to attempt to perform miracles that are impossible of fulfilment.

Neither should Socialism have attempted to destroy religion. It is absurd to say that religion is a mere creation of impostors. There are impostors in religion as there are impostors in Socialism, while everybody needs some kind of religion. Socialists, again, should not have been mean and provocative. Finally, their complicity with the Communists was fatal to their success ; the people, who were disillusioned, and weary, abandoned them to the invading forces of Fascism.

Who cannot remember the terrible time that we all passed in the midst of the horrors of revolution, with its base and raging passions and subversive attacks on morality ? Society, newspapers, theatres, even families themselves, gave awful examples of base and cynical language, of corrupt manners and unpunished violence. Nor could individual citizens mend matters and give a higher direction to life when, from the State itself, came the example of weakness and toleration, of the cult of hatred, of the suppression of the most elementary liberty of

speech, labour, and association, of a total disregard for the higher values of life, such as heroism, patriotism, loyalty, and national pride. Even in ethics the State should conform its own conduct to the highest principles. The State is not a simple administrator of common affairs, nor an astute policeman, but an ethical being and a teacher of civilization in so far as it interprets, defends, and upholds justice, which is the essence of morality.

From the law-givers to the officials, from legislative to civil institutions, the supreme rule of justice should reign unperturbed and venerated above all parties and sects and interests, above all seduction and errors.

Let us give a glance backwards at the Russian revolution, to draw therefrom the necessary proof of our thesis. To quote a Turin journalist: *The Bolshevist policy was fatal to Russia because it ignored the most elementary principles of life.* Having obtained power in a moment of great danger for Russia, Bolshevists did not ask what were their responsibilities to their country, but abandoned themselves, without check, to their feverish dreams. The disorganization around them was great and the destruction terrible, therefore they should have paused, and should have compared their dreams with the reality. To continue to cast down, in order afterwards to build, was mere folly. If the Bolshevists had not let loose civil war, if they had contented themselves with the modest aims that the hour permitted, if, above all, they had not given vent to their vengeance, their hatred, and their passions, Russia would not now be the heap

of ruins that it is. It would not, perhaps, be an Eldorado, but as no country was in such favourable conditions for reconstruction as Russia, which abounded in provisions and in primary products, she would have recovered before any other. Certainly the *Entente* has failed grievously in its duty to Russia, but the Bolshevists have not failed less in their duty to European civilization, by their declaration of war on the *bourgeoisie* and their brutal extinction of it. They had, perhaps, an ideal of reconstruction after the great catastrophe, and a great ideal. But anyone can knock down, and the more ignorant and foolish men are, the quicker and the better they can do so; whereas, for rebuilding, time and labour, wisdom and strength, are needed. The Bolshevists had the necessary violence for destruction, but no virtue for reconstruction. And the Russian proletariat, the poor peasants and the workmen above all, now pay with their own skins for the madness of their Bolshevist *bourgeois* rulers.

The same thing and even worse would have happened in Italy if the revolutionary madness had succeeded even for a time. Italy has not got the primary riches of Russia, she has not got its corn, its oil, its wood, its iron, its coal, nor any of its immense agricultural and industrial resources. Italy has only the strength of her arms and the wisdom of her brains. If brain and arms are at war there is no hope for her. The revolution would have been short, the effects would have been instantaneous. The ports would have been abandoned, the railways would have shut down from want of coal, the

factories would have stopped work for want of materials and of coal, and no one would have had corn or bread. The peasants would have lived as they best could with the few goods that they managed to hide. The town-folk, whether middle class or workmen, would have starved unless manna had fallen from heaven. A Soviet, or a League of Soviets, might have been substituted for the municipal authorities, but no Soviet would have been able to give bread to eat nor materials for work. The General Council of Soviets might have supplanted the Parliament, but no General Council could have put the trains in motion or brought ships to the ports. Soviets are mere constitutional accidents; idleness, misery, and hunger are substantial. Bolshevism was ruin to Russia; it would have been death to Italy.

Hence the Fascist policy was, and is, rigorously logical. That same political vision and national patriotism which made Mussolini favourable to the war, and which made him call out against the dissolution of the country and of Europe, now leads him to maintain the necessity for immediate reconstruction and to oppose the continuous mania for destruction.

True Socialism is inspired by a twofold ideal, universal peace and universal brotherhood. Aristotle was once the representative of official knowledge; he dogmatized and said that slavery is a law of human life. History has proved him wrong, and slavery disappeared. But the proletarian cause has damaged itself by Communistic exaltation. It is not itself Communism. If Socialists

had had some political sense and a little boldness, they would have had the greater part of the Italian people with them. A little while ago they threatened the middle class, and told them their hour was come. It was a foolish threat, for live things cannot be buried. If they had not spoken so foolishly and displayed such grim spectacles, Socialism would have gained over all the working class, intellectual workers included. They would have been able to say to their adversaries, "Messieurs les bourgeois, let us work together." To the great industrial leaders they could have said, "Let us collaborate in these enterprises." The big landed proprietors were so alarmed that they attempted to get rid of their lands. Socialists could have said to them, "The community needs these lands to augment your riches and its own, but we will indemnify you."

But as to small proprietors, they cannot at present divide their properties, and socialization can only be achieved according to the laws of possibility. Do Socialists, for example, believe for a minute that there is any true Communism in Russia? What sort of Communism is it?

All the most unfortunate undertakings of Socialism in Italy are to be imputed to the leaders of Italian Communism. The occupation of the factories, which had such a disastrous effect on our internal and foreign credit, was the work of those men. It is they who would wish to organize so oppressive and pervasive a control of production as to destroy private initiative, or force it to hand over the factories to the workmen, who have not and never

will have any aptitude for working them, because only a few amongst millions are capable of directing and administering a great industry. It was the Communists who took the initiative in the battle against the augmentation of the price of bread, which finished in obstructionism. It was a monstrous dispute, and would have ruined the nation if it had not quickly come to an end. The immense increase of municipalities and of the officers in communes administered by the Socialists, with the enormous salaries that have to be paid by other classes, is likewise a result of Communism.

Leninism has not only carried on a disastrous propaganda, which has brought us to the brink of a precipice and to a series of sterile agitations that have called forth severe repression, but it is also responsible for economic aberrations which waste our savings, absorb our balance, lower our credit, and hinder our reconstruction. Communism does all this, in part by system and in part by opportunism. It will not risk its hold on the masses, even if it has to keep this hold by destroying the resources of the communes and the State, and by driving Italian money abroad and diverting foreign investments from Italy.

Filippo Turati, fearless of the indignation of the interested advocates of the Russian paradise, presented to Italians the work of two courageous Socialists, Gregorio Nofri and Fernando Pozzani, who published the impressions they had derived from a direct observation of Bolshevism.

Turati, who has an independent mind and is a Socialist, praised these youths for having the courage

to see and to speak. These are his eloquent concluding words:

In Italy, Socialist action and propaganda are tainted with an inquisitorial and tyrannical spirit that is a sad legacy of war, and that is capable of begetting the death and dishonour of the party. And his last words are: *Socialism must bring light and liberty—or it is worthless.*

We have said that Italian Fascists were at last taken seriously after wilful silence and persistent sarcasm. Public opinion began to notice them and even important newspapers granted them a little of their dignified attention. Their historic reality at last met with *persecution*, which is the most solemn and official recognition. Those who do not exist cannot be persecuted, and a little while ago many kept on declaring that Fascism did not exist, or at least did not exist as an efficient factor of national life.

This persecution became more evident every day. We may recall the numerous arrests of Trieste and Milan and the injurious anti-Fascist order of the day voted at Rome by the direction of the Republican party. But if Fascism was an historic reality with which the country must take account, as could not be doubted, it was a great mistake to adopt an attitude of pure criticism or of repression and tyranny in regard to it. It would have been better to respect the youthful force that had gathered together in its ranks to break down the old political caste, for in that youthful force was found the means of defeating Bolshevism.

And when we hear people talk of the excesses of

Fascism we answer by the following question : Who were the first slain in the civil war ? Were they not Sonzini, Scimula, and Giordani ? Who slew them ? Who created the Red Guards and the "bold ones" of the people ? Who committed the first violence ? Was it not the Communists ? Hence we say aloud that Fascism was a just reaction against Bolshevist violence. These words, which respond to our profound conviction, we repeat, and will ever repeat, in order that all may understand clearly how alien Fascism is to any spirit of reaction. It gathers, on the contrary, all its forces together to assure the triumph of that national concord which alone can save our country.

We implore the people to resist the deceit of those who hold out before their eyes the easy illusion of a quick fortune, and thus prepare certain ruin for those who find themselves deluded by unattainable promises. We, who truly love the people, and belong to the people, because we are of the working class, would wish that it should feel that only the union of all can prepare that slow and patient work of gradual progress, by means of which society can liberate itself from the snares of injustice and the evil of privilege, and attain general welfare through industry and labour. We protest against those who poison and contaminate the mind of the people, because in the people is the salvation of the nation and the treasure of its energies. Fascism, by saving the Italian people, has saved itself, and, in itself, the unity and strength of the country.

CHAPTER XI

FOREIGN POLICY

NOTE.—In the following chapter is expressed the bitterness of the Italian heart towards her quondam Allies—a bitterness of which those of us who have friends in Italy have been personally conscious.

Italy feels herself ill-used. "*Why*," a friend wrote to me a little while ago—an English friend, but married to an Italian—"*why* do English people ignore all that Italy has done in the war?"

With still more truth the question could be asked of the French people, of whose attitude to Italy, *during* the war, one has been a surprised spectator.

But now it is chiefly England that is the bugbear, for on certain points French and Italian policy are at one, though it will be a vast surprise if such an "entente" prove lasting.

However all that may be, Italians *have* legitimate grievances against us all; we used them and barely thanked them.

Yet, in the following pages, one becomes conscious of that lack of self-criticism of which I spoke earlier. How is it that the writer cannot see that the faults with which he charges us are those, alas! of us all; that the Adriatic is not more important to Italy than the Irish Channel to England; that in both cases it is mutual fairness that is needed, and not the satisfaction of only one party.

How is it he does not see that the call of Fiume to Italy is not unakin to the call of Ulster to England? and that England was faced by a poignant problem, even had she from the start possessed the most generous intentions?

How is it he does not think the feelings of a German population worth considering when, for geographical reasons, Italy considers their territory essential to her welfare?

The Fascists must show the power of sympathy in their attitude to subject races, if they would fulfil their international destiny.

We now pass on to the consideration of Italian foreign policy as conceived by Fascism. Let us first state our plain opinion that the grave world-troubles, that have arisen from the Peace of Versailles, are to be attributed chiefly to the following causes :

1. To the academic philosophic humanitarianism of the American professor Wilson, who yielded to the skilful manipulation of Lloyd George and Clemenceau in the subtle and formidable diplomatic duel of Versailles, on which duel depended the destinies of the world.

2. To the infernal cunning of the English Prime Minister, who found the way to play with the ingenuous Wilsonian doctrinairism, as incorporated in the fiction of the League of Nations, which, according to him, would open to the world an era of justice, freedom, and peace.

3. To the ferocious thirst of the feline Clemenceau for national vengeance, and the desired French *revanche* on the hated Germany.

4. To the feebleness and impotence of the German representatives.

5. Above all else to the hard human law which imposes on the vanquished, as on the weaker element, the cruel decree of the right of the strongest and most implacable.

It is certainly undeniable that, putting aside the social qualities of our delegates to the Conference of Peace, Italy's contribution would have been far more beneficent to the peace of the world and to justice amongst peoples, if influence had been

apportioned according to the force of reason and idealism of the men who were deciding the fate of nations, and not according to their material force in money, ships, or armies.

It is true, as Orlando said, that *Italy has suffered much and unjustly because it is the only one amongst the conquering lands where peace has been hindered by a formidable combination of difficulties and troubles. She is the only country that could not obtain internal peace, through the Conference that was gathered for that purpose, because her condition was complicated and aggravated by internal troubles after the war and by the persistent anxieties of a war that was not quite finished. But she has some compensation in so far as she has finally cast down her world-old enemy, the military State that had seated itself in the heart of Europe, and also because the peace, that she has so laboriously obtained, is free from the equivocal fate which weighs on the rest of the world. The agreement arrived at, as it was in great part due to the preponderating will of a people to whom the war had left the greatest relative force, that is the Republic of North America, so it was also dependent on the protection that this great people could contribute to the maintenance and execution of the treaties of peace; when, behold, it was proved that this necessary condition was fallacious, that the American people was not at one with the person who had seemed to represent it, and that the work accomplished by him was not approved by his people, who, therefore, would not endorse his action. From this tragic deceit most of the difficulties in which Europe finds itself have arisen, while the actual condition, though it is not*

one of warfare, cannot be called one of peace so long as armies are moving out to occupy the territory of other States.

These were the words of Orlando, pronounced before the last political elections (of 1921) to his electors at Palermo, in regard to our foreign policy, and they respond to the history of events that have happened since the closing of the Conference of Peace.

Fascism watches our foreign policy with sadness. For apart from the miserable manner in which we abandoned Valona, which Wilson himself had not refused us, it is a sacred truth that Montenegro was basely sacrificed by the Treaty of Rapallo; that Albania is disaffected and restless, and is the cause of violent disputes between Jugoslavia and Greece; that we are miserably bound, in the Adriatic, for strategical reasons, to a bare rock, Saseno; and even that our good Allies would like to take from us in response to the claims of Jugoslavs. As regards our relations with Jugoslavia itself, they are less cordial than they are supposed to be in Rome or in Italy, if we may judge from the ambiguous official policy of Belgrade. As to Fiume, since the exodus of d'Annunzio and his legionaries, the rival claims of the parties that claim dominion over the little State, "to which the Treaty of Rapallo has secured Italian autonomy," are such as to imperil its internal peace.

As an item of the programme of national regeneration, Fascism demands respectful and honourable treatment for all Italians who are labouring in other countries of the world, for the good of their family,

or the honour of Italy. It is a centre of national feeling in other countries, and knows how to maintain the Italian sentiment and welfare against the whole world. In foreign policy Fascism regards the nation as an organism that has existed for hundreds of centuries, and that has its own history and function in civilization and progress, through the will and the force, the intelligence and the energy, of the individuals that compose it. It knows that expansion is proper to every living organism and is the human and natural character of society as of the individual. It considers that the nation should collaborate in the civilization and progress of the human race, and fulfil its historic function by its action on each one and all. As our nation is to be, through its discipline and order and national harmony, a source of civilization and progress, Fascism endeavours to impress a spirit of patriotism on all Italians living outside their own country. Italians abroad should live together with discipline, order, and harmony, and the State, on her side, should occupy herself with their interests, and allow their voices to be heard on the political and social questions of the country.

Discipline, order, and harmony are necessary above all in order that Italians, living abroad, may be enabled, within the limits assigned them by the country in which they dwell, to prevent their fellow-citizens, who have left their land from rancour, prejudice, or other bad reasons, from damaging the moral and material integrity of their country by anti-patriotic plots or ideals, and thus lessening, in the eyes of the world, the worth, not only of their

own State but of all the individuals that belong to it.

Discipline, order, harmony, are further necessary in order that, while observing respectfully on our part the laws and duties of the country that gives us hospitality, we may, by brain and arm, contribute to the material and moral development of that same country, thus proving the value of Italian sentiment and patriotism. Expansion is necessary to every living organism, hence Italians in foreign countries should be fervent and constant advocates of all that is peculiarly Italian, of all that is proper to our history and our life; they must watch over the rights and conditions of emigration, and maintain brotherly relations with one another, regardless of class and party distinctions. He who remains foreign to this harmony remains outside his own country—that is to say, he is lost and he becomes a stranger to his own world and unwelcome in the world of others. All this we say in the words of a great Fascist journal, of which we believe ourselves to be veracious interpreters.

For Fascism history does not end at Rapallo, and history will prove those wrong who believe that a cordial co-operation with the Slavs was possible. Portions of the nation have been sacrificed to friendship with the enemy, and the enemy is more so than ever. He tramples on the remnants of the Roman race, he destroys the Venetian lions on the walls of Veglia and Curzola, and has imposed taxes of over a hundred million to found his navy. While Fascists desire a Roman peace in the Adriatic, the Sforza Ministry established the perennial menace of

a Jugoslav war. Fascism will not forget those of its people that have been left in the hands of the enemy, and looks to a future that will restore all its people to Italy. Italy's task is to re-establish a balance between herself and the other conquering nations, and to acquire her proper share of raw materials and of the world's markets. As to the colonial policy, by which only the Allies have gathered the fruits of their victory, giving Italy merely the husks, Fascism believes that this unhappy condition can be remedied by a wise and vigorous policy of emigration, which will not leave Italians, who have to live in other lands, to be forgotten by the Mother-country. Fascism, on the contrary, exalts the splendid patriotic qualities of the emigrants. Those far-away citizens must have the right of election and the emigration policy must be placed on a syndical basis, by means of which the Italian proletariat abroad will feel itself to be protected by the nation, even in economic questions, instead of being left at the mercy of foreign organizations.

The war has given to Italy, besides the redeemed lands, the great lines of navigation towards the extreme East and the Antipodes, which she did not possess before the war. Thus the country gains an outlet, which will be further increased in so far as processes of exchange and traffic with foreign countries are developed.

According to Fascism, the revision of the Treaty of Rapallo is a certain and inevitable fact, so soon as a favourable juncture presents itself.

That treaty is an unhappy page of our history, and

the people of to-morrow will certainly demand its cancellation. Those who were responsible for the murder of Fiume must also meet their judges. We do not know in what way that judgment will be carried out, given the complications of the procedure; but it is certain that the Government of Giolitti deserves to be condemned for the fratricidal attack on Fiume, as well as for its internal and external policy.

So much for the Adriatic.

As regards the question of the Upper Adige, Mussolini has already declared that, by force of facts, we are at Brenner and we shall stay there. He added that the Germans have no right to be in the Italian portion of the district of the Upper Adige, and that if there were a less pacific and a more capable Government the 180,000 Germans of the Upper Adige would be reduced to a more modest number. He also added that the Fascists would do their best to Italianize that region, adding that, if the German deputies who went to Montecitorio had dared to talk in their own language, the Fascists would have prevented them, because it should not be permitted to small groups of aliens to impose a foreign language on a great nation. *They will talk in Italian, because they know it perfectly, or they will not talk at all.*

Mussolini added that the Governments and the new political forces of to-morrow will manage, by means of schools, legislation, and garrisons, to Italianize the Upper Adige. As to Brenner, we repeat that Fascism, which is taxed with imperialist tendencies, and which is certainly expansionist in character, relies on the fact that it is already

peopled by thousands of dead and thousands of living Italians.

Mussolini also declared that Fascism is thoroughly optimistic in regard to the actual situation of Italy in Europe. When he considers the state of Europe in general, he sees that if Messena weeps, Sparta is not laughing.

We are not in a good condition in Italy; but look at England, opulent, swollen, overgrown, gripped by the throat, and involved in a social crisis of fierce intensity. She is in danger at home and on her borders, in danger of the revolt of all the people of the Mediterranean against her empire, a revolt which would justify the saying that the Mediterranean is for those who inhabit its coasts.

Look next at Germany, and see what a close escape she has had from an acute Communistic crisis. And as for France, is her health perfect? This is no time for the Panglossian creed that everything is going for the best in the best of possible worlds. France is undergoing a hidden crisis, and if she seems more settled, it is for the tragic reason that she is literally exhausted by her military efforts.

And if we look at Switzerland, where unemployment rages, at Spain, at Portugal, at the States that have emerged from the ruin of Austria, at Austria herself, we have reason to comfort ourselves as to our own condition. Evidently our convalescence will be slow, but there are abundant signs of recovery. The Fascist upheaval itself is one of them, for equilibrium must be restored. The Fascist movement has been a real and true revolution—that is to say, the destruction of a condition of things which seemed hopeless and perennial.

The Socialist party had the dominating position until yesterday; it directed the Government and public opinion, and made its tyrannical weight felt on all sides. Fascism has reduced this party to more modest proportions, and this not only by what it has done but by what it can yet do.

While civilization tends to shift its base from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and from that great ocean to the Pacific; while on the East there comes ever nearer and more inevitable the shock between the United States of America and Japan, for the dominion of the vastest ocean of the world, and for commercial supremacy and the right of expansion of the prolific yellow race, which looks greedily at the wealth of California; in Central Europe there are disturbing rivalries. European unity is far from being attained. Russia is tormented by a Communism which is not Communism, is prostrated by the scourge of need and hunger, is politically and economically exhausted. The problem of Upper Silesia was not well solved by the Council of the League of Nations. The Balkan States are permanently menaced with invasion by the bands of Trotsky. In Germany the inexorable political and economic, military and diplomatic pressure of the Entente increases the sufferings of that great nation; Hungary and Austria are quarrelling over the question of Burgenland; the conflict between England and Ireland still exists; the Greek and Turkish war is pursuing its course in the Mediterranean East; the discord between England and France threatens to become chronic; the chapter of Fiume is not definitely

closed; the Danubian nations are on the eve of a military folly. This is, in a few words, the picture of the world's situation.

Italian foreign policy has fallen for some time past into grave mistakes. It has over-exalted idealistic conceptions of right against violence, good against evil, and so on. Italy is the only country where all this has been taken seriously. Even Wilson, that false prophet, an instrument of Anglo-Saxon imperialism for the world-monopoly of maritime communications and raw materials, was believed.

The consequences of Wilson's intervention in Europe were fatal to Italy; our country has experienced the saddest consequences from his influence. Orlando and Sonnino were checkmated, because they were really faced by a world-coalition against Italy. Not one of the allied and associated Powers took any interest in the security and development of Italy. Only strong determination on the part of the whole nation could have conquered their hostility; but that was broken up in May 1919, and whatever was left of it was destroyed at the sanguinary Christmas of 1920 at Fiume.

But the worst results of the demagogical policy that followed the war were felt in our internal policy. There was little faith in after-war prospects, because the war itself had been conducted by electoral methods; the people were promised what could not be given, and paid in notes that could not be changed. The stupid propaganda of the Entente and of Lord Northcliffe contributed to all this.

And now the pressure of coming events demands a strong and enlightened will in contrast to the dissipating and anti-national forces of disaggregation. There must be a clear-sighted understanding, not only of contingent necessities, but of historic needs. It is to this that Fascism tends. It professes an unconquered faith in the greatness of Italy, and energetically opposes the pernicious hallucinations of anti-national humanitarianism. It holds that the only way for the Italians to co-operate in the development of human civilization is by being as Italian as possible. It can solve the crisis through which the country is passing because it upholds authority. There is an antithesis in Italy between the respect for true law and order and respect for the actual existing Governments, that have appreciated all that is of best worth in the nation.

The drama of Fascism was a perfect compendium of the tragic struggle between these two contradictory faiths. And now Fascism has dominated the antithesis by establishing a harmony of order amongst those who seek for a political transformation.

It is an essential character of Fascist policy to support the greatness and prestige of the nation abroad; and this tendency has been fortified by our great victory. Nor is it enough simply to desire such an end; the desire must be enforced by a programme of action and a line of policy. Fascism is yet in process of establishing its fundamental principles, but they will certainly stand for justice and goodness.

We are still ignorant whether it has been by the weakness, or the foolishness, or the ignorance of

rulers and parties, or through all these causes together, that the essential Italian claims of Italy in the Adriatic have failed of fulfilment since the war; but Fascism meanwhile makes every effort not to lose any benefit which may still be obtained, nor any attainable economic advantage. Fascism is, in fact, a movement of the strong, and is determined that the heroic city of Fiume shall not lose the fruits of its sacrifices and shall at length find peace in the arms of its mother.

Italy well understands her mission of direction and distributive justice between the great national interests and ports of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, for she is on the direct road between the Balkan States and the East.

Neither the tyranny of Zanello at Fiume nor her tragic condition of desertion can last, nor can her future maritime development be lost, neither could there be a more unhappy condition than that by which Trieste and Fiume should be obliged, against their own and our will, to enter on a process of rivalry, which would be economically and politically the ruin of both cities. Nor can Fascism allow Zara, whose coast is only at the distance of a shot from the Italian shore, to agonize under foreign rule, choked, repressed, deprived of railways, and of what she needs for peaceful development.

Not only should there be, according to Fascism, no rivalry between the ports of the Mediterranean and of the Adriatic, not only should Genoa and Trieste, Fiume and Venice, Ancona and Bari, each have its own proper *Hinterland*, but they require something more positive still, and Genoa, Trieste,

Fiume, Venice, and the others, and even Marseilles, need a policy of mutual union and defence.

Fascism, therefore, aims at the foundation of a League between the Italian ports whereby to oppose the rivalry of Northern ports. And as regards the problem of our commercial expansion in the East, Fascism aims at a navigation of the Adriatic, by perfected rapid maritime lines, along which our ships can carry in their holds the Italian products of our fertile and industrious country.

While guarding our national interests, Fascism therefore holds the war, and the victory which resulted from it, in honour, and insists that its fruits should be guarded by works of peace, and by assuring to the ports of the Adriatic the proper conditions of life and progress; because the fate of the Adriatic is the fate of Italy.

The problem of Zara is also before us. Mussolini specially recalls the fact that, two years ago, when Dalmatia was occupied by us, he advocated the necessity for an Italian Dalmatia in general, and an Italian Zara in particular; but the voices that reached us from there were not listened to. Now that those territories have been evacuated, Zara is reduced to the state of a small town, deprived of the *Hinterland* from which it drew the resources of its commercial and industrial life. Such are the consequences of political vicissitudes and of defective treaties. What, then, should be done? The Government has duties in regard to its pledges, but Italy has also duties to her children on the other side.

Fascism urges the whole country to raise its voice

against the fate of Zara, which is in danger of becoming a mere township. The Government should at least occupy itself with the economic condition of the town, if the prosperity of Zara is not to perish.

Fascism well understands the relations that exist between national economy and the history and diplomatic policy of peoples, and hence it realizes how melancholy are the conditions, created by international policy, on the further shores of the Adriatic. Fascists remember how, in the past, those beautiful Roman, Venetian, and Italian cities of Dalmatia arose one by one, grew into free communes under laws of Roman and Italian origin, and organized their own economic life throughout the Middle Ages.

Now, while France and England, and even the little States that are protected by them, are daily extending their possessions on lands that do not belong to them, we have lost, and are still losing, lands that were created by our civilization and even until lately fructified by the arms and efforts of our people. Those lands are still the only outlets, the only natural ports of our economic expansion in the East, and are necessary to us as they are indispensable to the peaceful navigation of the Adriatic.

It was only a totally false international policy that led us to the catastrophic abandonment of our lands and ports. And let us remember that Porto Sauro (Baros) is as much an Italian port as those of Dalmatia. There was an absurd notion that it was for the higher interests of our national policy to

make these sacrifices, as we might thus gain the good graces of the Jugoslavs.

The rights of Italy in Dalmatia are ignored by the Treaty of Rapallo; therefore, according to Fascism, the only remedy is to reinvoke our ancient pride and proclaim the rights of Italian civilization and of our country's past. Jugoslavia, which is a mere plethoric, anti-Italian device, will be swept away by the inevitable Macedonian and Balkan convulsions, while Italy, on the contrary, has set her feet firmly on the path of progress. This is what Fascism asks of her: to rise, by peace and order and labour, to the glory of former times, in which the cities of Dalmatia stood, with Rome and Venice, as one country, against their barbarous Transalpine neighbours.

By the Treaty of Rapallo we have lost the present in Dalmatia; we must now save the future.

To pursue the question of the Adriatic, if Fascism is preoccupied in regard to the port of Bari, it is not in order to form new claims, but to revive old projects. There was one such, as is known, for the port of Bari, which had been approved by the State and considered as a matter of national interest, the object of which was the formation of an extensive naval basin. The increased importance of Bari as a centre of attraction to the Balkan States, and as a centre of constantly developing industries, together with its deep Hinterland, which comprises Calabria, Le Puglie, Basilicata, and Abruzzo, puts Bari in a position to contribute largely to their development, and to render great services to the fortunes of the country. The same

may be said for the ports of Brindisi, for which reason there should be some action taken, especially on the part of the industrial *bourgeoisie*, for the return of this port to its former functions of communication with the East.

Furthermore, Fascism unweariedly declares the immense advantages that Albania would possess for us, especially having regard to the works that were carried out in it by the devotedness of our Italian soldiers, and that have been rendered futile by the weakness of a Government that bowed to the force of demagogism. Even now Albania could be of immense use to Italy if the Government acted with wise and enlightened prudence. We all know its natural resources and possibilities of exploitation. Italy, by her policy, and by works of Roman grandeur, marked the way for a future in Albania. She desired its independence even before Wilson uttered the word of national autonomy, and now Italian money and initiative would find a splendid outlet in that fertile region, which is so highly endowed with minerals, naphtha, coal, iron and copper. Thus would be reaped the fruits of Italy's military enterprise in Albania, of which the results are to be seen in the streets, aqueducts, hospitals and schools which she left behind her.

The Treaty of Rapallo certainly gave us no final peace. All treaties are not final, as Mussolini has already said, for they are not written on bronze tablets, and the Treaty of Rapallo is no exception to this rule. It is the bastard solution of dire necessity, and before condemning those who accepted it, we must remember the circumstances, such as

the open and indirect hostility of the Allies, the phenomenal stupidity of the American diplomatic world, the failure of the political ruling class of Italy, which has had no true history for fifty years. Therefore the Treaty of Rapallo must be revised along with all the treaties that resulted from the European War.

It is the Fascists, the legionaries of d'Annunzio, who will form a national conscience on the Dalmatian question by their assiduous and silent labours. It is a difficult task, but Fascism will certainly bring to its accomplishment that abnegation and enthusiasm that are its characteristics. And when the country once more faces the Dalmatian problem the Fascists will have the supreme privilege of saying that they were once more the nucleus of the heroic vanguard. They will declare with profound feeling : " The great soul of Gabriele d'Annunzio, ardent and noble citizen, soldier and poet, reminded those multitudes, that were for an instant carried away by an insane propaganda of hatred and resentment, that they must redeem, by their blood and sacrifices, the glorious Italy of Virgil and of Dante."

With the past legislature a period of Italian life was closed which may be described as " the policy of after the war." That policy may be classified as diplomatic, by reason of the conditions in which it was worked and the methods which it employed. But diplomacy has unfortunately obtained very poor results. The foreign policy of the Giolitti Cabinet neither gave Italy an ideal boundary nor created any possibility of good understanding with its neighbours. We might have turned to the East

and sought there for new paths of prosperity and means of economic exchange. This was the design that the policy of Count Sforza did not realize. Hence our position is not happy, and we have inherited a heavy incubus from the diplomacy and policy of the past.

Every ground of permanent discord with Jugoslavia should have been eliminated. Small misunderstandings, that are natural after a tempestuous period, can be and should be cleared up in time. On the contrary, nothing was done.

Italy should have a way open to the East and to the Black Sea through the Balkans. On this road she finds a great kindred state in Roumania, which, like Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, is united with us by the closest of bonds, that of mutual protection against a common peril. But this policy in regard to the East demanded a sympathetic attitude towards Turks and Arabs, which has been prevented by serious episodes, arising from the criminal foolishness of fanatic Turkish Nationalists and from the stupidity of our own diplomats.

Italy had also an advantageous position in the nations of Islam. Directly after the Armistice, while the other Allies were disembarking at Constantinople and shouting vengeance, Italy advanced like a friend prepared to forgive a fault. This policy should have brought forth its fruit, but, on the contrary, nothing was obtained.

Corresponding to our Turkish policy should be an attempt, in our own interests, to form exclusively economic agreements with Russia, as England has already done. There is no doubt that from the con-

dition in which that unfortunate country now finds herself, under the rule of Bolshevism, we could draw direct and immediate advantages for ourselves; but here, too, our plan should and could be precise and clear. We could, by the development of normal commerce with Southern Russia, which is not destroyed by hunger and epidemics, give our industrials and merchants the possibility of obtaining mine concessions on the Black Sea, which, later on, when Russia recovers, would be in our hands; but now, on the contrary, they will fall gradually into those of others, who are less timid or less scrupulous than ourselves.

Fascism is misunderstood by many who do not see that it is inspired by lofty patriotic and social ideals, which are directed to the renovation of the political and economic life of Italy, to the furtherance of Italian interests throughout the world, to the diffusion of Italian thought, art, and science; to the exaltation of Italy herself. Fascism, in fact, wants to make of Italy an eminently modern, ordered, and wealthy country. Others think that its only object is to bar the way to Bolshevism, and it is even thought, abroad, that now that the Bolshevist peril has disappeared, Fascism also should go. For what do the Fasci now exist? In a little while they will be a mere survival. Fascism, according to such ideas, has now no meaning or sense. Even the Italian press, after ignoring Fascism, spoke only of its violent manifestations in opposition to Socialist violence. The foreign papers merely comment, and very laconically, on what they see in our great Italian papers, without giving themselves the trouble

to understand or to go to the bottom of the matter. Then, too, it is not an easy thing to understand Italy. We must know her history and have lived there for many years. Those few, who have pretended to understand, have only shown that they needed to know a little more.

Hence, we must make Italy known abroad. But the creation of foreign Fascist combinations must not make strangers think that the Fascists want to interfere in their internal policy. We must begin by making known the organization, the programme, and the spirit of Fascists amongst Italians, and then define its aims in other lands. We must, in fact, undertake a slow and discouraging labour of propaganda and persuasion in the Colonies and in foreign countries.

In foreign policy Fascism is neither imperialistic nor defeatist; it is simply Italian. As Mussolini said in his clear and learned speech to the first Fascist Congress of Florence:

(1) *Fascism does not believe in the vitality or principles of the so-called League of Nations. In this League the nations are not really on a footing of equality. It is a kind of Holy Alliance between the plutocratic nations of the Anglo-Saxon group, to guarantee for themselves the exploitation of the greater part of the world.*

(2) *Fascism does not believe in the Red Internationals, that die, reproduce themselves, multiply, and die once more. Such constructions are artificial and formal. They consist of mere minorities, insignificant compared with the vast populations in the midst of which they find themselves, and which by their life*

and movement, their progress or their retrogression, finally determine those questions of interest which international associations cannot touch.

(3) *Fascism does not believe in the immediate possibility of universal disarmament.*

(4) *Fascism holds that Italy should work for a European policy of balance and conciliation amongst the different Powers, and for this end the Fascists demand:*

(*a*) *That the treaties of peace should be revised and modified in those parts that are obviously inapplicable, or whose application might be a source of formidable hatreds and new wars.*

(*b*) *The economic annexation of Fiume to Italy and her guardianship of Italians residing in the Dalmatian countries.*

(*c*) *The gradual liberation of Italy from the group of plutocratic Western nations, by means of the development of our internal forces of production.*

(*d*) *The reconciliation of enemy nations, Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Hungary, but with an attitude of dignity and a firm maintenance of the supreme necessities of our Northern and Eastern boundaries.*

(*e*) *The creation and intensification of friendly relations with all the peoples of the East, not excluding those governed by Soviets, and with those of the South-East of Europe.*

(*f*) *The maintenance, in colonial questions, of the rights and necessities of the nation.*

(*g*) *A rejuvenation and renovation of our Diplomatic Corps by members of university standing and merit.*

(b) The exploitation of the Italian colonies of the Mediterranean, and beyond the Atlantic, by means of economic and agricultural institutions and by the establishment of rapid communications.

There is no doubt that the spirit of war and violence is still active in the foreign policy of nations. Many plots are being hatched under the shadow of secret diplomacy of the Metternichian mentality, which prepare and foment future international conflicts. For instance:

Hungary, with its love of punitive expeditions, is openly in the service of her Latin sister. Barrère, at Rome, interferes too much in our business. Russian propaganda in Italy is anything but extinct. Foreign intervention has an unhappy influence in many parts of the peninsula, and is productive of those civil disputes which are the supreme national calamity.

As to Germany, the French policy of strangulation tends to render it ever more and more impotent. Anglo-French claims are in part unpractical. The imprudent violation, on the part of the Germans, of the Treaty of Versailles provoked an occupation of new German territories in the interests of the Allies, nor could the Republic of Ebert oppose these extreme measures of coercion, nor did he do so. On the contrary, he supported with honour and dignity the heavy heel of the adversary and bore all the hardest sanctions of the Entente.

Against the right of peoples and without any legal justification, the Allies, moved by French influence, undertook military measures and seized territorial pledges to force Germany to yield. Such illegalities

cannot, even to-day, and at this distance of time from what happened, be disguised by juridical subtleties. The arbitrary action of the Powers, we repeat, appears so much the worse in so far as it was covered by the illustrious names of the Allied statesmen, and was directed against a people that was indeed guilty, and deserving of chastisement, for having loosed the European war, but that had been left unarmed and defenceless. Nor can these illegalities be excused by the fact that they had already been announced, as threats, at a time when the Entente, but in reality only France and England, formulated their sanctions during their famous deliberations in Paris. History will condemn the winning side for this grave act of tyranny. Nor do we wish by what we say to excuse the German Empire from its monstrous responsibilities.

There is also the question of the little rocky island of Saseno. On this matter Mussolini spoke in his usual brisk and precise manner. During the war Albania was a direct concern of Italian policy. We need not recall here all that the unhappy land of Skanderberg cost the Italian people in sacrifices, money, and suffering. Italy, with her usual generosity, offered to a race that was incapable of insuring its own free and civil existence her loyal co-operation and her fraternal, material, and spiritual concourse, in hopes of establishing prosperity and peace on the further side of the Adriatic. The result of these efforts and sacrifices was that we were obliged, all at once, to evacuate the inhospitable lands that we had watered with our blood, under pain of being thrown into the sea.

The abandonment of Valona was forced on us by Greek and Jugoslavian bribery, by the blindness of a Government that made sacrifices it should not have made, by our subversive internal condition, and by the bad will of England and France in our regard. The Balkan brigandage, that was thus organized and carried out at our cost by the various Essad Pashas and their like, had the result of depriving us, not only of the Albanian hinterland, but, what is much more important, of the shore which represented our real outlet on the Adriatic and which had been reconquered by our victorious arms. There remained, and there still remains, happily, the rock of Saseno, a little post of defence and a watch-tower on the farther shore. And yet, incredible as it seems, England and France, having filled themselves with foreign booty, dared suggest, as the *Temps* informed us, that we should abandon that humble and harmless rock. Fortunately Nitti and Giolitti were no longer in power, and this time Italy held good and saved Saseno. But Fascism will not forget this new demonstration of French and British friendship for Italy. A strange friendship indeed, that humbles and embitters us; molests us, as we might say, in our own domain. That domain lies on the shores of that unhappy sea, which is haunted by the shades of Italian soldiers who fell at Lissa and elsewhere.

The true interests of the Allies would be promoted by quite a contrary policy; for they depend on the economic reconstruction of Germany and on the total restoration of Italy, and not on the annihilation of the one and the prostration and

mutilation of the other. A country like Germany, which is a huge labour market and a great source of production, cannot perish without drawing the rest of Europe along with it and without impoverishing and injuring the whole of the world. Europe cannot be reconstructed by making a desert in its very middle. Is not the Russian disaster enough ? To save Germany from bankruptcy by leaving her sufficient means to live and to work, to buy and to sell, to reconstitute herself and co-operate in the task of European reconstruction, is the supreme interest of all the civilized world, and it is also the best economic policy for the Allies, and for France in particular, which lies closest to the conquered country.

England and France have invoked Italy in all their disputes, but have, nevertheless, always been in remarkable agreement whenever it was a question of humiliating her. They have been obsessed with the absurd idea of making her renounce, in their favour, her rank and prestige as a great Power. Thus it happened lately, when the respective ranks of each one in the League of Nations was in dispute. Thus it happened, a little time ago, when, as we have seen, they urged us to relieve Saseno from the inconvenience of our presence. This time they were ignominiously routed.

It must, however, be admitted that the Allies had the excuse of seeing Italy only in the person of her Government, and of having therefore inflicted on her the treatment that she undoubtedly merited from that point of view. Happily for Italy, that time is now past, and Italian Governments can no

longer renounce and abdicate her rights with joy and almost with pride.

And now we will allow ourselves a digression. It is England which we have so often found on our road, blocking the way to our rightful prosperity. It is England which, forgetting her ancient tradition of friendship and sympathy, is now joined with other nations to oppose us on all vital diplomatic questions. It is England which, in spite of the prophecies of her enemies and of so many of her great thinkers and politicians, such as Lord Morley and Goldwin Smith, has been anything but ruined by the general conflagration, but rather strengthened and consolidated. Yet, for all this, England would do well to think a little more about her own condition, and not poke her nose too much into our domestic affairs. For she has many preoccupations, and graver ones than ours, which should give her plenty to do on her own side.

[*Our author here complacently enumerates England's many causes for anxiety, which we will state more briefly:*

1. *The dependence of England on other countries for her food.*
2. *The rivalry of America on the seas.*
3. *The restlessness of her South African colonies.*
4. *Egyptian troubles, which involve the Suez Canal.*
5. *The great question of her Indian Empire.*
6. *Her entanglements in Persia and Mesopotamia.*
7. *The danger of Russian influence in the East.*]

Let us leave France aside, whose game it has ever been to oppose our aims and aspirations—an

aim which is rather strengthened than weakened by the fact of her kinship to us as a Latin race—and let us pass on to consider our relations with America. We have indeed no special problems to solve with the United States since the setting of the star of Wilson. A great diplomatic phase was bound up with the so-called Wilsonian phenomenon. The Ex-President of the Republic of the United States, as we know by history, behaved very badly to Italy at Versailles. He was determinedly and obstinately hostile. The peace negotiations were badly led, and the chief mistake was that of having confided those negotiations to the heads of the Allied Government. President Wilson was, at the same time, head of his Government and the head of his State. He came to Paris possessed of extraordinary prestige and was received as a liberator of the human race. He imposed his personal conception of the League of Nations on the Conference. Along with Lloyd George, he endeavoured to reduce as much as possible the French occupation of the Rhine country. He refused to France the frontiers that she demanded, and objected to casting the whole expenses of the war on Germany. He would not hear a word of the solidarity of Allied debts, but promised, on the other hand, being convinced of the support of the American Senate, the military assistance of the United States in case of German aggression. He absolutely denied the most vital rights of Italy in regard to the Adriatic, and supported almost all the military and geographical claims of Serbia.

In short, Wilson, with a pertinacity worthy of a

better cause, inflexibly opposed the sacred aspirations of Italy, who had come out victorious from an unprecedented conflict, and had saved, by her generous and timely intervention, the Entente, that would otherwise have succumbed. And thus the world was left with the so-called *Peace* of Versailles.

Then Wilson returned to his country and found everywhere increasing hostility. He endeavoured to hold his own, but was cast down by sickness and forced to disappear from the political scene. The Presidential campaign was opened, and turned on the question of the Treaty and the League of Nations. Republicans naturally criticized all that Wilson had done, and when Harding entered the White House, Europe asked itself what would become of the Treaty and of the League of Nations ? Those questions have not yet been fully answered. For the rest, as Mussolini said, Wilsonianism, before and after Versailles, was entirely at one with the indigenous phenomenon that sensible and brave Italians know under the sad name of Nittianism.

To sum up :

France deliberately neglects us and treats us *de haut en bas*. England is our rival in oriental questions. Our own convenience would therefore rather incline us to Germany if, unmindful of our experience before the war, we did not fear that we should be cast once more into the thousand difficulties created by the German industrial and commercial hegemony. If we look to the United States, we are met with the indifference of those who pretend not to know much about us. In fact, whatever way we look, we find that we have only

ourselves to look to, that we have "to paddle our own canoe," which is cheery and sporting, but a somewhat dangerous game, as the recent policy of Sforza has shown. In order that it should succeed, we need highly skilled boatmen. And on this point all agree with Fascism, that our diplomats are incompetent.

Therefore, in foreign matters we must be strong, calm, and united. This is the policy of Fascism. Nor is her vision in this matter narrow and limited, for she sees clearly that the oceanic Powers are destined to a more extensive dominion than the merely Mediterranean and Continental powers. This is, in fact, one of the results of the victory of the Entente, of which the United States and Japan were members, over the German, Austrian, Turkish, and Bulgarian coalition. The mere fact of being oceanic Powers gives to the United States, to Japan, and to the United Kingdom an absolute control of the policy of the world. Thus the English control of the seas, which was complete until 1914, and which supplanted the heavy maritime monopoly that had formerly been exercised by the Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Dutch, is now tempered to a certain extent by the rising power of the United States and of Japan, which with England are the greatest maritime Powers of the world since the disappearance of the German Fleet. There are, therefore, as we see, all the necessary conditions for a naval balance of power, whether in the West or in the East, between the oceanic Powers. Hence it is to be hoped, in the interests of humanity, which has been too greatly scourged by wars in the

last fifty years, that there will arise a true and loyal co-operation between the United States and the Anglo-Saxon world, which will not ignore the legitimate aspirations of Japan, which is a prolific, healthy, and exuberant empire.

The watchful eye of Fascism is also intent on the possible eventualities of other wars, which threaten to break out in Central Europe. There have never been so many wars in history as in the period from 1850 to our days, during which period there have been twenty-seven wars, only counting the most important. In 1855 the Crimean War; 1859, the Italian war with Austria; 1860, the expedition of the French and the English to China; 1861, the War of Secession in the United States; 1863, the expedition of the French to Mexico; 1864, the war of Prussia and Austria against Denmark; 1866, the war between Austria and Germany and the war between Italy and Austria; 1870, the war between France and Germany; 1876, the war between Russia and Turkey; 1880, the Chilian, Peruvian, and Bolivian War; 1880, the expedition of the French to Tunis; 1882, the expedition of the English to Egypt; 1883, the expedition of the French to Tonquin; 1883, the expedition of the English against the Mahdi; 1892, the expedition of the French to Dahomey; 1895, the war of the United States with Spain; 1895, the expedition of the French to Madagascar; 1896, the expedition of the Italians to Abyssinia; 1899, the expedition of the English to the Transvaal; 1900, the expedition of the European Powers against China; 1904, the Russian and Japanese War;

1911, the war of Italy with Turkey; 1912, the First Balkan War; 1913, the Second Balkan War; 1913, the expedition of the French to Morocco; 1914, the World War. That should be enough. And yet the possibility of another great national conflict, roused by the insatiable thirst for hegemony on the part of some Power, is by no means to be neglected. None of the Powers of the world would gain anything by such a suicidal war or by a conflict of races. The British Empire in particular should reflect on the terrible consequences to herself, with her 300,000,000 of coloured subjects, of such an event. Therefore, the complete disarmament of nations is an international necessity. It is a grave problem, but it must be solved if the peace of the world is to be secured.

For the rest this would be enormously facilitated if the future orientation of Germany, Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Austria, and Bulgaria—that is to say, of the nations that have been defeated and almost annihilated in the world conflict—could be decided. Fascism, through the mind of its leader and master, would wish that the oceanic States, which are undoubtedly the strongest on earth and the most favoured by fortune, should have a decisive vote, if they were willing to act as arbitrators and conciliators between the cruelly divided groups of Continental Powers. They could, by naval blockades or by financial and commercial restrictions, favour the side of the weaker group, and support a pacific and liberal policy as against the Chauvinism of the warlike nations.

The great world beyond the ocean could thus,

according to Fascism, powerfully contribute to set Europe on the path of that political and economic unity which was preached by Mazzini, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Fournier, Carlyle, Tommaseo, and Lassalle; but which it can no longer accomplish by its own energies in the state of weakness produced by the war of four years.

If Europe became, like the United States, Canada, and Australia, a single Continental State by means of a confederation of its peoples, it would be able to undertake a rational development of its resources by a united line of conduct in relation to the problem of transports and the multiplied systems of customs, finance, railways, and military and air forces. This, according to Fascism, should be the concrete and real basis of the new international order. In such an order, as directed by the oceanic States, with their long tradition of free discussion and public opinion, would be found, without doubt, every guarantee and security for future development.

The social and economic as well as the political preoccupations of Fascism are therefore inspired by a sense of reality. In the midst of the disorder in which Europe now finds herself, faced by the catastrophe of Bolshevism and of Maximalist Socialism, Fascism, thirsting for justice, liberty, and fraternity, shows like the first bit of blue in a calm sky after a tempest. Even an adversary who examined the doctrinal contents of Fascism in a fair manner, would note with interest how much its programme contains of the actual solutions proposed by the League of Nations. Mussolini is no reckless adventurer, endeavouring to shape a

political world on an arbitrary plan, through the columns of the *Popolo d'Italia ;* nor is he so bold as to undertake the entire reorganization of international life. But he was among the first to foresee, after the war, the revolutionary danger of Bolshevism in all its terrifying reality, and to incite Italy to defend herself from the danger. He found the people weary of insincere idealism, desiring freedom for itself and for others, and he helped and still helps it nobly in its slow and difficult task. His generous mind, in fraternal communion with that of d'Annunzio, has planned a completely new future for Italy after the world-war—a future conceived according to his altruistic passion and his iron sense of facts. The National Fascist party is the first result of those conceptions.

People only ask to be organized according to the first principles of justice and economic reality, but such an organization cannot be confided to the personal caprice of dictators of the type of Lenin, of warriors of the type of Trotsky, of legislators of the type of Zinovieff. Europe is weary of war, whether internal or external. Too many lives have been lost and too many resources have been wasted. We need international reconstruction. This is what Fascism seeks with its sublime idea of an association between peoples. It turns not only to individuals but to all suffering humanity.

Fascism thus finds itself in complete antithesis to the Nationalism of E. Corradini, with which some would wish to identify it. For while Nationalism, in this strict sense, regards only the nation, Fascism has an ideal for all. It seeks the liberation of all the

peoples of the world from the yoke of privileged and exclusive classes, as well as from that of demagogism and sectarianism. A sense of justice overrules its outlook in international questions. It feels in itself the power of giving lessons of law and economic policy, of morals and philosophy and history, whether to Marxists or to Leninists. And what better home could it have than the land of Dante, of Vico, of Mazzini, of Beccaria and of Garibaldi; amongst a chivalrous people capable of realizing that spirit of justice and liberty that its best sons have conceived?

It is for Italy, and Italy above all, that we work; yet it is not just that men should be dragged on to battlefields by the caprice or dreams of the ambitious; it is not just that a prosperity which has been obtained by great efforts should all at once be annihilated by the cataclysm of war; it is not just that a nation which lives by its own labour should all at once be forced to give up its goods to the conqueror; it is not just that, in a world where the first duty of man is to labour to produce and to help his kind, he should be forced, for trivial reasons, to the opposite work of deliberate destruction.

No one who understands Fascism, first as a movement and then as a party of reconstruction and regeneration, can deny its high ethical value, in virtue of which it influences peoples and nations, whether rich or poor, powerful or weak, oppressed or tyrannical.

The Dantesque ideal, taking concrete shape in the moral elevation of humanity to higher forms of

life, inspired by a spirit of justice, order, and mystical faith, is to a great extent the ideal also of Fascism.

Its aim is that Italy, magnified and elevated by her children, should, as the worthy heiress of Rome, assume her historical function of leading the world to the accomplishment of its destinies, by her faithful alliance with nations of high civilization and political capacity. For its doctrine is patriotic and international at the same time, and it realizes that the geographical situation of the country fixes and appoints its world-wide and universal mission.

But it is not enough to make empty professions of such a mission. It is idle simply to affirm the genius of the race; we must also give proof of it, otherwise those who would have believed in us will realize our moral weakness and will raise their altars elsewhere. Fascism cannot tolerate such a diminution of our prestige and moral authority, and endeavours, with all its force, to avert such a misfortune.

Fascism believes that, in the ancient lands of Europe, where so many millions of men, equal in civilization, suffer and struggle for their subsistence, a better social state could be formed than that which exists; it believes that the common forces and energies could be co-ordinated, without ignoring the sentiment of nationality and race; it believes that ambition and rivalry could be harmonized in a higher destiny. The world of labour would thus become a natural human society, a true and great society of nations, capable of wonderful results.

Thus rival policies and traditions would perish and the hatred and rancour that now poison the heart and darken the mind of man would be effaced.

It is the law of labour and the spirit of human brotherhood that men need. Without being optimistic, Fascism cherishes the dream of Giuseppe Mazzini, the dream of *Peace through labour and labour in peace*. In this double formula are comprised the spirit and aims of the creator and leader of Fascism, Benito Mussolini.

Fascism desires that the world should be better acquainted with Italy, which is not a land of Bolshevism, as foreigners believe. It seeks also to persuade our neighbours that our national health, whether moral or physical, is excellent. Mussolini thus expressed his thought on these matters :

Italy has a laborious, intelligent and prolific people, who carried on and gained the war through unspeakable sufferings, and who now, in spite of the troubles and difficulties that are inevitable after such a cataclysm, desire to win the peace ; to close the period of internal trouble ; to put every party back into its proper place ; to intensify production ; to make good all political and economic deficiencies ; to carry on a peaceful process of development beyond the mountains and the sea ; and to be one of the factors of equilibrium between the old and new nations of Europe.

Nor is this all : Fascism has an eye to the colonial problem ; it eagerly studies the question of the right use of Libya, the Roman Libya, land of lions, and seeks a radical Fascist solution of the problem of the colonization and exploitation of the lands of

Tripoli and ancient Cyrene. It would aim at developing those lands, not by rudimentary and primitive agricultural means, unadapted to full production, but by perfected technical instruments and modern scientific methods. Thus we could pour out, on our great African colony, large forces of emigrants.

To speak once more of Fiume. Fascism considers that this question is still open, or, rather, maintains that we have seen but the first act of a sad and bloody drama. Meanwhile, its influence is active at Fiume itself, to prevent the town from becoming a Slav municipality, enslaved to Croatia, as Zanella proposed. Fascists are there to defend Italian rights and uphold the irresistible justice of uniting Fiume to its Mother-country as soon as possible. For no one has a right to deny his own land.

Even the Russia of the Soviets has taught us that people who have the good fortune to possess a country should defend it without scruple and without begrudging money or lives. As Mussolini has said: *Taught by life and history, Fascism demands more ample outlets for Italians, who are the most proletarian of peoples.*

Fascism does not stand for capitalist interests. It stands only for the guardianship of the nation, and if anyone falsely hopes to profit by this national rebirth to seek his own convenience and regain lost power and privilege, it is Fascism itself that will check the attempt.

Fascism is too intent on the tragic international situation to exhaust itself in civil warfare, inevitable as that was for a time; to continue it needlessly

would be to give the impression that Italians now, as in the times of Dante, are more attracted to internal than external warfare. Fascism looks further, it guards Italy on her boundaries and on her seas; peacefully but firmly reminding Slavs and Germans that we have reached Nevoso and Brenner, and that we mean to stay there.

The Germans of the Upper Adige must therefore have patience and, *bon gré, mal gré*, must resign themselves to the inflexible Italian will; for in our case might is accompanied by right. Fascism is favourable to the local autonomy of native races, and encourages a loyal friendship with annexed populations, but it is ruthless to all those, whether Italians or strangers, who would abandon ancient boundaries, that are ours by right of geography, history, strategical reasons, and the force of arms.

As to the Adriatic question we will say two words more in all sincerity. Italy has accepted the Treaty of Rapallo, and Fascism has submitted, in virtue of national discipline, and to avoid arousing an insurrection against the Giolittian Government, but it does not thereby renounce the absolute claim of Italy to its place on the other shore, that has been consecrated by the political and literary genius of Niccolo Tommaseo, and the martyrdom of Nazario Sauro and Rismondo. Fascism demands that Italy should have her rightful boundaries by land and sea, that she may develop and prosper, and fulfil her mission, under the great shadow of Dante, the tutelary genius of the race, on the shores of the Mediterranean, which is our sea for ever.

The lesson of Saseno was not really a surprise, for Fascism has always condemned the fictions, ideology and arbitrary sophistications of Wilsonianism, and also the jealousies and extortions of French and English *Italophobia*; but the episode was a warning to Italy to watch more than ever over the fate of that poor solitary island rock, which is our one breathing-place. The responsibility for the disagreeable disputes that arose in regard to Saseno falls in great part upon our famous concessionists, who were forced, as Mussolini well said, "to eat the fruits of their stupid and cowardly doctrine." As to Valona and its abandonment, let us quote the words of Mussolini:

A year ago bands of Albanians, armed with Serbian and French guns, attacked Valona and drove Italy back into the sea. One cannot look back without profound melancholy on that inglorious page of our political and military history; nor can we say whether the moral responsibility rests chiefly with the statesmen who were not sufficiently far-seeing, or the officers who failed in the adequate fortification and defence of the city which even Wilson had assigned to us. However that may be, there was a sudden and cowardly popular cry for the evacuation of Valona. All that remained was to take a sad farewell, with a last regret for the young Italians who had left their lives in those lands, and for the wealth that the Italian people had squandered on a semi-savage population. Valona was evacuated; the tricolour that had waved there for five years was taken down. As in other nations, we found there, too, the professional comforters. Some denied that Valona had any strategical

maritime importance, others added that its forcible possession would have damaged our economic dealings with Albania. We say no more, because we cannot endure to recall those events.

To this sad picture we can add another, of the sacrifice, by Count Sforza, of Italian interests and honour in Asia Minor and Upper Silesia. But happily for the nation Fascism, which watches over her destinies, and which is in great part constituted of those Italians who, on the Isonzo, the Carso, the Grappa, and the Piave, swore to resist their enemy and to block his thoroughfare, is spreading now on every side, and casting out its defences beyond the seas and beyond our territorial frontiers.

One cannot read, without emotion, the words of our brethren who, far away and forgotten, live our life and dedicate themselves to the good and greatness of Italy. The Fascist movement has a particular signification beyond the seas, and is not weaker abroad than at home. Our distant brothers say to us: "We Italians, who know and understand better than you do what a country signifies, desire to be associated with you in your struggles for our greatness." They understand that, when Italy is great and feared, they themselves, living on the other side of the seas, will also be respected and feared. And Fascism knows what a help those millions of Italians, who are feared and respected abroad, will be to our country in international questions.

Not one of our acts since Vittorio Veneto can be considered worthy of the glorious victory that destroyed an empire and restored to the Mother-

country some of her noblest lands. Our Government put up with the injustice of the Allies, who defrauded us of a good part of the fruits of our victory in Europe, Asia, and Africa. It accepted the Peace of Rapallo, which implied a monstrous abandonment of Italian people to the violence and barbarity of Serbs, Croats and Slovakians. It failed to impress on the Allies the true part that Italy had taken in the world-conflict, and the importance of the strictly Italian victory which had been gained exclusively by Italian virtue and sacrifice. It was unable to show the Allies what was the true historic mission of Italy in the world; a mission which had been consecrated by the most tremendous trial that could be imagined—that is to say, by a long, bitter, and exhausting war. In short, our rulers did not know how to prove to the world our national qualities of civilization and the cultural, scientific, and traditional qualities of the race.

We must keep our promises. Fascism respects those that it has made. It knows how to give a great example of mature civilization and discipline, of strength of soul and dignity, whether in good or in evil fortune. Hence, it loyally observes all its agreements and conventions with whomsoever it may be, and under whatsoever circumstances it may be, on the condition that others do the same. For it remembers that the Latins were formerly the exponents of a lofty form of moral energy.

Those who have not lived the Fascist life, made up of continual struggles and dangers, cannot know what splendid proof of moral force has been given in a thousand circumstances by its soldiers and

followers, nor can they know what it was, for young men of courage, and used to an iron and more than military discipline, to feel behind them a protecting force, while they confronted death for their civic duties. Fascism does not ask of its followers mere audacity, but demands finer qualities of abnegation and sacrifice, and imposes the needful discipline to develop them. Hence, through tumults and furies such as carry away weak and slavish souls, Fascists waited, suffered, were silent, but steadily fulfilled their heroic task.

Fascism did not appeal to the various governments that succeeded one another, each one as incapable, weak and ignorant of actual problems as the last, but to that section of Italy in which vibrated the youthful ardours of a glorious past; as our Fascist poet said:

To the Italy of Alpine victory, of Mediterranean glory—to the Italy of the agricultural peoples of Latium and Etruria—to the Italy that descends from the industrial people of the Mediæval Communes; to the Italy that springs from the artistic world of the Renaissance.

CHAPTER XII

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF FASCISM

Claude Treves, one of the chief leaders of Italian Socialism, once said that Fascism arose from the economic, historical, and moral conditions of the nation. His words are true, for Fascism owed its direct origin to the conditions of violence that prevailed : it opposed violence to violence, and claimed " that violence was justifiable whenever its followers were calumniated, its thought misinterpreted, or its right of association resisted." It is idle to talk, as do Socialistic Communists, of the vanity of violence in itself, and its futility in a contest of ideas or thoughts. It is superfluous for the hostile press, from the *Ordine Nuovo* to the *Avanti*, to argue on this last point, and contrast Fascist violence with the convincing intellectual force of Socialism. To do so is to forget the past, to forget the violence and subversionism of Communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat that was exercised in virtue of brute numbers and superior force.

Nittianism cannot judge otherwise, though when it calls Fascism " a violent explosion of brutal passions," or " a monstrous survival of war," and when also it accuses it of being " chained to the service of the *bourgeoisie* " and " infected with imperialism," it knows that it is telling a lie. But

in so doing it is consistent with itself and may be excused. We, on the contrary, declare that Fascist violence does not and never has existed in itself and for itself. There are no such things as moral or immoral actions that can be catalogued; morality is in ourselves, in the will that moves us and in our own conscience. And if it is immoral to kill, it may also be more immoral, at times, *not* to do so.

Fascism itself is the first to desire an end to violence and the first to wish that the force and authority of the State be fully re-established. It is the first also to recognize that true Socialism—that of Christ—cannot be destroyed without destroying the social, ethical and economic conditions that have given birth to it, and that no human society can destroy true Socialism without destroying itself.

Fascist violence never aimed at the destruction of Socialism. On the contrary, it aimed at the destruction of all that is not true to genuine Italian Socialism; of all the brutal egotism and corruption that have been encouraged by *bourgeois* sympathies and governmental indifference. The object at which Fascism aims by its methods of violence is the renewal and transformation of Socialism, if it be yet possible. Fascists would make, out of Socialism, a strenuous and idealistic party, and not, what it has been, a mere collection of parasites, disinherited vagabonds and refugees from every other party, who exploit the ignorant masses and make them believe in a false future under the red banner.

Fascism, warned by the Russian example, is

opposed to Collectivism and the dictatorship of the proletariat; its fundamental principle is that of conciliation between individual liberty and development and the necessities of an ordered and flourishing society. The State, according to its doctrine, should be a supreme arbitrator and moderator. Fascism, being itself composed of a moral and intellectual *élite*, puts thought above action, holds, that is to say, that the intellect must rank higher than physical ability in civil life. Fascism is not against the labouring class, but is against the anti-patriotic and infamous propaganda of hatred and social poison. It is Mazzinian in its aim at association and co-operation between the different classes, and opposes, with all its force, the Marxist theory of class warfare and opposition of capital and labour. It has a programme that it shares with Nationalism, but it looks for further developments. Nationalism is Protectionist, while Fascism is for Free Trade. It is for free international markets, and it encourages agriculture as the true and sole source of the wealth of Italy, which is essentially a rural nation. It opposes the institution of customs barriers, which serve to maintain those parasitical industries that are injurious to a country without iron or coal or raw materials; whereas Nationalism defends this policy. Furthermore, while Nationalism is international, monarchical and conservative, Fascism, though respecting the monarchy, which at present stands for Italian unity, is republican in tendency.

Lastly, while Nationalism pursues a political policy of absolute imperialism, Fascism is for commercial expansion. Nationalism, while exalting

patriotic Italian sentiments, cherishes vain dreams of impossible hegemony. Fascism, on the contrary, with its sense of historic reality, or rather of the brutal reality of the state of the world, understands that, under actual international conditions, it is folly to resist the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxons, the United States and England, and the continental supremacy of France in Europe. In opposition to that Nationalism which looks only to Italy and is in perennial opposition to other countries, Fascism, while not upholding any international Utopianism, seeks cordial relations with all the nations of the world, including proletarian Russia.

Fascism has now entered resolutely on the second period of its action, which is one of reconstruction. It understands the need and duty of reorganizing the working masses, which have been so misled, and of bringing them back to the right path. It takes into just consideration the aspirations of the workmen and endeavours to support, with all its force, the economic movement of the Syndicates, operating with the Fascist Labour Chambers.

In regard to the professorial class, which Fascism regards as one of the most important to the State, though also the most forgotten, it has promised to favour intellectual and economic progress and has supported the just demands of the teachers by means of conferences and the Press in order that they may be in a position to form the next generation to a higher physical, civil, and moral standard.

Fascism has seen the danger of employers taking advantage of the disorganization of the labouring classes, and of the break-up of the Red party, to

impose unfair conditions, and has directed its full attention to this evil. Furthermore, it sees that it was arbitrary and abusive to inflict a diminution of wages or an increase of working hours on the working class at a moment when prices tended to increase, and it exercises both persuasion and coercion to induce proprietors to respect former contracts in the interests of national order.

As regards its treaty of peace with its adversaries, which, as we have said, has been denounced by Fascists themselves on account of the bad faith of its adversaries, Fascism declares, by the mouth of Mussolini, that it is a pledge of honour and must be fulfilled. Fascism arose to oppose all those who would have sacrificed the fruits of victory, and the internal enemies of Italy who were emboldened by the lack of authority of the State; but, on its part, it is determined to be magnanimous, and it accepted the truce for the greater good of the nation, as Fascism always looks first to the good of the country. It is but too true that the desire for this truce was not to be found in all hearts, nor did the Communist party understand the fraternal appeal. On the contrary, it prepared a revolutionary army by the creation of the *Arditi* of Mingrino. But Fascism swore to remain armed and watchful, prepared to break the force of all enemies of the country.

Nor does the Fascist leader care about popularity or sympathy. His anti-demagogic spirit enables him to face a crowd firmly and oppose it resolutely. In his republican policy, in his " sense of limitation," in his impetuous advocacy of the treaty of peace

with Socialism, Mussolini has never been false to himself and has always been true to his own character. He is wilful, impulsive, loyal and aggressive, ready for self-sacrifice, averse to all dishonest transactions, generous to the point of heroism, often inconsistent and contradictory, but always burning with the sacred fire of patriotism; austere, upright, exacting in his demands on his followers, ready to sacrifice even them to the triumph of truth and justice through Fascism. He is not only a vigorous adversary of Bolshevism and Communism, but he is a practical statesman, with the ability to forward the prosperity of his country.

The internal crisis of Fascism broke out on the occasion of the treaty of peace with the Socialists. The rebellion of the Fascists of Romagna and Emilia against this treaty, and against Mussolini himself, was the result of the difficult position in which the Fascists of those regions found themselves. But Fascism had all the resources necessary for the carrying out of its true programme, for its action tends to the advance and creation not only of a juridical, but also of an ethical State. Hence from the Fascist Congress, as was to be foreseen, although it was as agitated and tumultuous as all congresses, Fascism came forth united and compact and consolidated into a party.

While its political status was being established and its municipal organization developed, in imitation of the old classic corporations, Fascism gathered the masses of the Italian youth into great gymnastic and sporting associations. The Roman *Fascio* created the first of these associations, and the Fascists

of Romagna and Emilia, on the occurrence of the Dantesque centenary, organized feasts at Ravenna and a procession to that town in honour of the great poet. As we read in the *Gazzetta del Popolo* :

The Dantesque celebration was enhanced by the impressive Fascist gathering, which drew thousands of the Black Shirts to Ravenna, around their many-coloured banners.

The Hon. Giunta, a great leader, led the Fascists of Trieste to honour Dante on Monte Nevoso, in a ceremony which had a double signification :

First, to consecrate the frontier that Dante assigned to Italy, and then to cry to all the peoples, beyond the plains of Croatia, that Italy, which is a laborious land and one that respects the rights of all, intends to remain on the Julian Alps, as she intends to remain on the Brenner.

This association of Fascist youth for sport, alongside of the political organizations, signifies the creation of a new Italy. It shows that Fascism has a decisive voice in national political life, and that its work is a disinterested and fruitful enterprise for the vital good of the country.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

We believe that Communism represents a perpetual menace to modern society, and we believe that it will be so while man is man, and until we beget a species as superior to ourselves as we, for instance, are superior to the negro of the Congo or of the Soudan. The Communistic Utopia, which is neither a philosophic nor a psychological interpretation of primitive Christianity, implies a war-to-knife against society, simply because society is not adapted to the reception or the application of Leninist theories. Its failure is manifest in all the unhappy countries where it has been attempted. Italy knows something about it, and even too much.

Amongst many sections of the people Italian Communism is simply an expression of resentment against the so-called ruling class, and of justifiable resentment. This resentment has been skilfully exploited. The treaty of peace between Socialism and Fascism has been, to a great extent, unfulfilled by Socialists through the fear of Communism. Complete pacification is only possible if authority becomes truly such and, insisting on respect in all contingencies, ceases to tremble before the columns of the *Avanti* or the *Ordine Nuovo*.

The Bonomi Ministry showed itself, first secretly

and then openly, friendly to the Social Communists, and after the disastrous events in Tuscany declared itself hostile to Fascism. Nor could this be otherwise, if we think of the political origins of Bonomi, and of his relations with Turati and Treves, even after his exit from the Socialist party along with Bissolati and Cabrini.

And what happened in Italy after that treaty which should have put an end to the daily conflicts? There occurred a sudden emboldenment on the part of subversive elements, which issued in traitorous assassinations of Fascists and in attacks on the offices of the *Fasci di Combattimento*. This was only what all had foreseen. The government of Bonomi was impotent to ensure respect for the truce, and manifested its partisanship with the Socialism of Turati. After its many empty declarations it showed its weakness and partiality in the slaughters of Sarzana and Modena. It exercised the force of the law pitilessly on certain young men, who had acted indeed against the letter of the law, but not against Italy; whereas it never exercised it with the same rigour against the crimes that were sheltered by Communist circles, and by the bands of the so-called *Arditi*, of whom it cannot be said whence they draw their arms and their pay. The country waited for the necessary display of energy to put an end to these continual and furious conflicts. The insolence of subversive and unpunished factions increased, and it is now clear to the entire nation that the so-called agreement was nothing but a dupery, directed to the advantage of the demagogic anti-nationalist parties.

Let us pass to other considerations. Fascism has also an æsthetic ideal and its political manifestations are dramatic and imposing. Its black-shirted soldiers, with their poles and streamers, have an impressive appearance. The processions excite general admiration, and the troops, with their martial step, recall the memory of the old Roman legions. They are composed, for the most part, of old soldiers, hard, strong men, who gained the victory at Passo Buole, Gorizia, Bainsizzia, and Vittorio Veneto, and many of them are decorated.

It is the glory of Fascism to have raised citizens to a sense of dignity and given them a new will and conscience manifested in a new way. Fascism has made its promise to the soldiers, a new, just, and true promise, and will keep it. Nor does it take any account of dishonest journalism, professional grumblers, and badly informed and unreal philosophers, such as George Sorel, who denounced and calumniated it. Let him visit Rome, or Bologna, or Milan, and he will see what is true. Fascism upholds national truth and has the future with it. This is the conviction of all those who compose the Fasci, from the highest to the lowest. The future will prove its cause. *The declaration of the rights of the soldiers, made by Mussolini through the Constitution of the Fasci, is an historic event*, wrote Polverelli, contrasting therewith the General States of France. There is something solemn and formidable in process, which will go on till the nation realizes the triumph that it needs for its internal consolidation and its international position.

We must defend the honour and the traditions of

Italy. No one can prevent Fascists from speaking what they think. Fascism arose on the fields of battle, and does not represent a mere political programme. It is not and it cannot be a mere party. It has not and it cannot have any idol. To call oneself a Fascist is to call oneself a soldier of the country, and one of its best soldiers. It is to call oneself the ideal citizen and hero. Our reigning politicians are mere comedy players. Their policy is base and fallacious. Fascism alone remains stoically encamped in those ideal trenches that have already been defended and held by its impulse and courage, and wherein it stands firm against all cowards, whether at home or abroad. Fascism has created an atmosphere in which the country can breathe.

Its parliamentary activity is also tuned to the national necessities and realities. By its violent expulsion of the deputy, Misiano, from the Chamber, the Fascist group, under the able direction of its leader, warned the enemies of Italy, in and out of Parliament, that the period of anti-national provocation was now definitely terminated, and that there existed, in the Chamber, a group of men who were determined to oppose violence to violence, or, if necessary, to anticipate it.

The group at once assumed *a determined position on the benches of the National Right, between the representatives of those groups and parties which, setting aside their differences in the estimate of particular economic and social problems, which were secondary to the huge problem of national reconstruction, were at one with the ideas of Fascism on the necessity of a true restoration of the authority of the*

State, and of the safeguarding of the fruits of victory. In agreement with the Nationalist and Liberal groups it led its first great parliamentary battle against the prevailing foreign policy, drawing the majority of the Chamber to condemn the weak policy of the Minister, Sforza (which was in fact a synthesis of Italian foreign policy since the war), and to declare explicitly that the interests of Italy in foreign policy were henceforth to be energetically defended, as accords with the dignity of a great Power. Its understanding with these two like-minded groups was further defined, during the crisis which followed the resignations of the Giolitti Ministry, by the redaction of certain principles, into a clearly constituted political programme, of a sincerity which was generally admitted. Those principles or demands which are connected with the whole story of the Fascist movement may be thus resumed :

(*a*) *A change of direction in Adriatic policy, in accordance with national interests.*

(*b*) *The restoration of the moral and political authority of the State, without its nevertheless passing to extreme measures of repression of national movements.*

(*c*) *A political and economic reconstruction, widely differing from any form of fiscal demagogism.*

(*d*) *A proper estimate of the value of the victory and of those who won it.*

The group protested energetically against the horrible ruin of Saseno, the responsibility for which could not but fall on the executive power. It advocated active measures for the interests and rights of soldiers, of invalids, and of the children of those who had fallen, and it sanctioned the

sacred right of the ex-soldiers to the full gratitude of the State, under the form of legislative provisions for their welfare.

It was the Fascist group that first protested against the complicity of the Italian Government in the destruction of Montenegro, thus initiating one of the most generous parliamentary battles ever fought for the rights of a people.

It protested against the fiscal demagogism, which had been imposed by factious and extreme groups, and which had inflicted a formidable blow on national economy. The Fascist group took up its task with the sole preoccupation of defending, not the interests of particular groups and clientèles, but those of the whole community. Hence it asked, amongst other things, for a reform in the application of the law on war profits.

In regard to the relations between the State and its dependents, this group, resisting the double seduction of demagogic magnanimity and electoral temptation, resolutely announced, in one of its first meetings, the need of iron discipline amongst those employed in public services, and hence it voted with full deliberation against the proposal for an amnesty of the functionaries who had been dismissed during the strike of the previous month of June. This, however, did not hinder it from cordially supporting all proposals for the juridical and financial improvement of the condition of the various categories of functionaries, and in this it differed from the action of the purely demagogic groups, who, at the last moment, from motives of parliamentary calculation, often forgot their electoral promises to army officials, elementary teachers, pensioners, etc.

On many other important problems, which have not yet been dealt with in a parliamentary discussion, the group, whether from the parliamentary tribune, or in committees, or by means of orders of the day, has often clearly expressed its opinion in such matters as the recognition and equal representation of syndical groups, reorganization of the army in proportion to the necessities of national defence, freedom of teaching, defence of the lay traditions of the State as against the designs of traditional sectarianism, the necessity for an administrative decentralization, which should not, however, touch the central unity of the nation, etc.

The parliamentary group of the Fascist party knew how to represent fitfully the proud youth that constituted its strength during this first period of its parliamentary labours in the midst of hostile and mistrustful surroundings.

Without embroiling itself in equivocal plots for parliamentary success, the Fascist group, by its serene activity, has undoubtedly given the impression that a new force has finally entered into the political life of the country, a force that is the vanguard of a movement of renovation which, sooner or later, must impose itself on the world of the past to secure the new fortunes of Italy.

The robust intellectual forces of Fascism have also been able to create a truly organic and vital programme of internal reconstruction without denying its first postulates. In opposition to Leninist negations, to the commonplace teaching of a liberalizing democracy or a democratic liberalism, to the false idealism of Wilson and to Marxist Utopianism, Fascism has advocated a sound and

truly liberal conception of individual initiative, and this is the only principle that other Liberals did not abandon.

At the same time it has accepted the fundamental axioms of Socialist democracy, which may be summed up in one principle that can never die, which is the principle of the organization of the productive labouring classes. It has not subordinated the social to the national problem, but has, in a certain manner, harmonized the two. While constituting economic organizations, syndicates, co-operations, etc., it has taken care that these should bear a clear and unmistakable Italian character, and should not be in opposition to its national principles.

It recognizes the need of a social hierarchy; it denounces all subversive doctrines that deny or weaken the authority of the State; it combats the Jacobin conception of the so-called sovereignty of the people; and, lastly, it opposes with all its force that movement called State Socialism which attained its fullest dimensions during the war, and which has since proved itself so pernicious.

It is at the same time revolutionary and conservative—revolutionary, in so far as it fights for the gradual and just suppression of privilege, wherever it may be concealed; conservative in so far as it performs a work of sound and enlightened national conservation, especially in opposition to the new doctrines of Bolshevism.

The Fascist programme, whether political or economic, differs substantially from that of other parties, from which nevertheless many Fascists have

been drawn. Hence certain individuals, who constitute the usual ballast that is to be found in all political movements of any extension, have by their own wish separated themselves from the National Fascist party, as, for instance, a few proprietors, who had been mistaken in regard to the true meaning and aims of Fascism, or who were not willing to recognize the social responsibilities of property. These gave open demonstration of their inability to contribute as private citizens to the welfare of their own enterprises, whether agrarian, industrial, or commercial.

Another kind of purge also took place in the Fascist party, but this was carried out by the initiative of the leaders of the assemblies, who proceeded to expel all those who had been proved, for various reasons, unworthy of belonging to the noble bands of this new militia.

Fascism at the present day, together with the Socialist and Popular party, is the most numerous, organic, vital and homogeneous party of Italy. Its importance cannot be unrecognized. First of all Giolitti, and then Colajanni, Corradini, Pareto, Capello, Salandra, Orlando, Labriola, Missiroli, Leone, Bonomi, etc., guided by their political instincts, recognized its vitality and force ; and then Enrico Ferri, who certainly cannot be accused of tenderness in our regard, proceeded to judge Fascism with perfect scientific serenity.

The reasons for my judgment, he said, *are many, but one of the principal ones consists in the abnormal conditions in which certain provinces of Italy now find themselves, amongst which my own is to be counted.*

I allude to the action of Fascism, and I shall speak of it with a kind of scientific detachment, because Fascism, as I explained yesterday at length, is a very complex political and social phenomenon and one that has succeeded in entangling all the political life of Italy in its course. Naturally, I deplore profoundly the personal violences to which too many Fascists have yielded, but this is in the nature of episodes—noisy and deplorable, but which have nevertheless some social and political justification. Fascism must be studied in despite of these occurrences, and while we hope that they will soon end, we cannot deny that they have been committed also by the other side. Fascism, in my opinion, is a spiritual movement, that has arisen chiefly in the souls of young men and students, and it is, in its political character, a defensive reaction of the bourgeois class. The capitalist class naturally defends itself against the Socialist party.

He then goes on to recall the decree of Crispi in 1894, which dissolved the Socialist party, and the events of 1898, which began with the famous revolt in Puglia and ended at Milan, and the reactionary laws of Pelloux, over which, however, the obstructionist campaign initiated by the Socialists triumphed.

Then the bourgeoisie, he continues, *thought of other means of defence, less primitive and violent. They sent their sons to the schools of priests, and also to those of the Government, giving to these a patriotic and spiritual character. The souls of the young Fascists, who are often sincere idealists, are the result of the schools of* 1900 *and afterwards, and it was a fruit of these same schools that was to be found in the*

undeniable enthusiasm with which many young men went to the war and died or risked their lives in it. I, myself, was opposed to the war, but I respect those who paid for it in their own persons, and I admire those who gave proof of sacrifice and heroism. I cannot forget that one of my best-loved pupils, Giacomo Venezian, a Professor of the University of Bologna, enrolled himself at the age of fifty years and died. Nor can I deny that Cesare Battisti called himself my pupil and wished to receive me as a guest in his house at Trento, where, as in Trieste, I held Socialistic conferences some years ago. I am an Internationalist, but I have always said, and publicly, even in the pages of Avanti, *that you cannot suppress the history of a nation because you are internationalist. We need national civilization for the begetting of international civilization. We were born in Italy, and therefore we love Italy, although we think that we must pass on to a union of European States and an international civilization. The difference between us and nationalists, putting aside the onesided exaggerations of these latter, is to be found in that we love our country, not against, but along with all other countries.*

And after having said that Mussolini understood at once that Fascism cannot pretend to extinguish Socialism, which is destined to a final triumph, he adds :

I am profoundly convinced on this matter. The realization of Socialism, which can only be gradual, must endure certain delays, but it is the eventual issue of a capitalistic civilization, as this was the issue of a feudal civilization. Nor can Fascism imagine that revolver-shootings, beatings and force are a political

programme. It finds itself, therefore, confronted by a decisive dilemma, either to continue these manifestations of violence, in the interests of agrarians and capitalists, and thus to antagonize public opinion, or to live and become a political force in the domain of law and legality and civil life, in which case it must give itself a political and social programme. Thus would Mussolini and his followers be saved, and this is the task of the present hour for Fascists who are in good faith.

Now, excepting certain affirmations, contrary to the truth, which we must at once deny, such as those which refer to the supposed systematic Fascist violence, which, according to Ferri, has been encouraged, sustained and inspired for mere agrarian capitalistic interests, it is a fact that the declarations of Enrico Ferri, who is a pioneer of Italian Socialism, are strong and wise and such as to free the political arena from the calumnies of adversaries who are in bad faith and who, for reasons that they would not care to profess, are always attacking the finality and idealism of Fascism, without caring in the least to know its true economic meaning and its political worth.

The unity of Fascism is now a fact. The rapid solution of the crisis, which was caused by the anti-pacifist and anti-Mussolinian attitude of the Fascists of Romagna and Emilia, at the famous inter-regional congress at Bologna, and by the consequent resignation of Mussolini, proves this unity. After the necessary clearing-up of the various tendencies that existed in the party, which took place at the National Congress in Rome, Fascism,

stronger than ever, proceeded boldly on its way, abandoning its overbearing manner to its adversaries, whether Communists, Socialists, Conservatives, or Republicans. And, for the rest, the Fascist crisis was one of growth and resulted from inherent weaknesses and inefficiencies which had to be eliminated.

As to its process of pacification, Mussolini was entirely right. If they wanted to reconstitute the social order, Fascists were bound to respond to propositions of peace. There might be discussions, and there were, on the manner in which the treaty could be made, but this could not alter the need for the attempt. It demanded all the courage of Mussolini to denounce to the country whatever was weak and wrong in Fascism itself. He put things in in their true place by declaring, in the first instance, that it was not a question of personal discipline, but that it was the vote of the National Council that had to be respected, and nothing else. He added that there was no need to be afraid, because every transformation implies a crisis. In this crisis urban Fascism found itself in opposition to rural Fascism. Urban Fascism accepted the treaty, rural Fascism refused. As to the party, he had to admit that Fascism was already a party and this for the reason that it already had a distinct form, and had taken the bad party habit of making of the parliamentary group the rock of offence. The only question, according to Mussolini, was how to call it, whether a National Party of Labour or a National Fascist Party. All this was discussed at Rome, and issued in the National Fascist Party. Besides this,

Mussolini implored his followers not to be misled by the fetishism of numbers, because, as has already been seen, a mass is quickly disbanded by opposition ; and he declared that he would not accept Syndicalism, because we know where and why it begins, but not where it will end.

The transformation of Fascism from a movement into a party was inevitable, if it was not prepared to deny its historical right to live, and if it did not wish to become a sect or faction, destined eventually to be dissolved in the mist of dissolution. And, in truth, in its daily practice Fascism had already assumed the worth and character and also the appearance of a political party. For it was as such that it always acted, whether in Parliament or in regard to the Government, whether in its action of general propaganda or in its multiform manifestations of struggle and thought.

. . . . . .

To resume, we declare with Farinacci that the fundamental basis of Fascism is the idea of the *Patria*, of its safety and its future. Every element and every force of the nation are subordinated to this idea, as well as every class of society.

In the matter of a Government, Fascism prefers the republican form, but it looks to it as a distant and more evolved conception than that of the monarchy.

In regard to capital and labour, Fascism has the Socialistic conception of class as of something self-contained. But it recognizes that the relations of capitalists and labourers are not just and equitable.

It was not in the past, and it will not be in the future, the guardian of any privilege. It directs its practical action to the raising of the proletariat by forms, methods, and actions that reconcile the true interests of the workmen with those of the country, and are to the interest of the individual as well as of the social community.

As regards commercial and industrial expansion, Fascism is the enemy of every form of imperialism, in so far as such signifies the hegemony of one State over another, or of one people over another, while it upholds such imperialism as is implied by agricultural and industrial colonization and emigration.

As regards internal order, Fascism does not renounce but rather upholds its military character, by retaining its regiments and commanders. By its organization it is ready for works of peace or for works of war, and is always prepared to take the place of the Government when any type of Nitti attempts secret agreements and understandings with the enemies of the nation.

It is at once a necessity and a duty to contribute to the greatness of our own nation, to uphold this greatness actively and tenaciously and to defend it against all. These are the words of Michele Bianchi, a fervent spirit and a subtle mind. It is useful to repeat once more that the Fascist counter-offensive of 1919, as directed by Benito Mussolini, saved Italy from the most formidable Bolshevist danger. The feebleness of our subversive revolutionaries, who were not capable of a true *coup d'état*, gave Fascism its opportunity, and it did not measure its blows in

attacking its enemy. The ruling classes ought not to forget all this, if they possess a little intelligence or at least some good faith.

Everyone in Italy recognized the political entity of Fascism before the great movement had been transformed into a party. Nor was it without an elaborate doctrine shaped by the most solid minds of its adepts, nor without a philosophy, nor without a true, clear, and definite programme of social economy. It was simply suffering from the fact that in its ranks were individuals who, in inscribing themselves in the Fasci, had obeyed a sudden and collective impulse, and who came from different social strata, beliefs, parties, and political bodies—individuals, in fact, who had been urged by their own consciences and spiritual motives to gather around the Black Troops, and whose only end was to defend, with all the force they could command, that which was most sacred for all patriots, the Italian victory.

Hence the natural issue and field of action of Fascism was bound to be one of a party capable of renovating a nation sick of Giolittism, Nittism, and Leninism. It was once more the problem of Hamlet, " To be, or not to be."

It answered the Shakespearean problem at once, and to its own advantage, by constituting the National Fascist Party. It had already passed from the life of journalism on to the vast scene of Italian politics, and it then began to advance on the greater scene of the public life of European peoples. The nation drew a breath of relief—it was saved. The anti-Italian parties trembled.

The historic function of Fascism was thus turned towards new and fuller horizons. Fascists learned to know each other better and to know better the spirit that animated them. They realized the fundamental principles of their programme of reconstruction and their supreme reasons of life and action.

. . . . . .

And now, having examined the general situation of Fascism in Italy, as faithful soldiers and true citizens, we must remember that never was it more necessary for hearts to beat together and for souls to open themselves to a future which Fascism will assure them, if they submit to her bonds of discipline. We must keep faith with our constitution, we must have complete confidence in Mussolini and in his programme for the greatness of Italy, we must trust that the leader will always remain at his post to imprint on Fascism for ever, as he has already done, that faith and pride and dignity in virtue of which its ranks can win the victory and conquer the enemies of the country. We must not forget that Mussolini is the man who gave himself entirely to the great cause, animating it by his intelligence and his robust military temperament. Fascism does not make an idol of him, but it admires him for his political correctness, for the clearness of his outlook, and for his wisdom in action. Above all, it knows that, without Mussolini, it would be like an orphan or a crippled child, and that, without his vivifying inspiration, it would eventually fall under the blows of a victorious enemy.

Fascism therefore, having arisen from the wrecks of a social order, represents the dynamic ascension of the nation towards its legitimate destinies, and towards the victory of peace and labour. In its impetuous but secure course it casts down all the old political castes, and the plutocratic and democratic parties that have shown themselves to be useless. It represents, as ever, a just reaction against subversionism, and a return to the sanctity of the law. The wonderful spiritual and mental activity of Mussolini, who is the magnetic force of Fascism, and one of the most significant factors in the victory that was obtained against the anti-national parties, supports our hope that this truly Mazzinian party—Mazzinian, that is to say, by thought, action and purity of idealism—will at last triumph, by its Garibaldian instinct, over the dogmatism and the militarism of the past, over the hypertrophy of our bureaucratic condition, over the worn-out organizations of old syndicates and decrepit parties, over the subversive fanaticism of anarchic troops, and over the cold hypocrisy of the party that signs with one hand a treaty of peace with victorious Fascism, but with the other gives it a blow in the back.

Before closing these pages we will quote the words of Francesco Meriano, one of the first great Fascists, in the *Popolo d'Italia* :

Italy will never again suffer from an anti-national revolution. Henceforth Fascist propaganda, or, to put it more widely, national propaganda, must be directed to gathering into our ranks those labouring masses which the State and the anti-State have depressed to

the point of suffocating their political conscience. The ruling bourgeoisie *displays ever more and more its ineptitude in the art of government; those who rule the State are no better than those who rule the parties, including Communists. The ruling class is exhausted, as it has shown by the fratricidal union of plutocracy with anarchy. And how can the proletariat undertake an effective and fruitful collaboration if we leave it to its humble resignation? What we have got to do is, not so much to claim economic rights by a rhetorical preaching of duty, as to pass over the old democratic conceptions and give to the people a sense of historic reality, with its antithesis of will and of power. If it had continued in its course of violence, Fascism would have fallen out of the true political campaign, which is, at bottom, a competition of economic interests, organized into parties, social classes, and nations. By its acceptance of concurrence with other parties it will reconquer to the country hundreds and thousands of its best sons, and will choose amongst them the governors of to-morrow. What we have to do is to substitute national for class spirit, and to show, by practical results, that the labourer is himself interested in renouncing a rude class-egotism in favour of true national consciousness. This is the first end of Fascist Syndicalism. Its next is, obviously, to produce a State that is more in correspondence with the Nation, a State that shall foster our enviable wealth of individual energy. At the present day the proletariat would form a worse Government than the* bourgeoisie. *What we have to do and to create—if indeed education can create men—is the type of individual who belongs to the proletariat, to a class which is still young in political*

life, but who does not act simply in the name of the working class but of all the forces of production. Socialism has deceived the masses by the mirage of collective property and universal peace, whereas a doctrine that is really based on the principles of true production cannot ignore inequality of force and talent, nor the principles of national rivalry, whether pacific or not, for the conquest of the markets of the world. Fascism must take count of facts and not of theories. It must teach the individual to improve himself, and humanity through himself, before thinking of another humanity, which is a metaphysical hallucination. It must develop that sane individualism which has rebelled against the tyranny of an old order, and which has shown, by its power of sacrifice, that the consciousness of self and of the country are the same thing.

Our country is immortal in its vital human harmony, as its great son Dante is immortal. For the salvation of Italy we look forward to a Government which shall wisely direct the nation on its upward course, by sympathy with the people and respect for the law, and which shall give shape to all those improvements which raise the culture of society, without sacrificing the vital and fundamental notion of the *Patria*. As to Fascism, we consider that it is yet too soon to estimate the historic consequences of its decisive action against internal enemies, as it is also too soon to estimate the effect of its two years of life on what regards the national destiny. Fascists have certainly deserved well of the country by their support of a noble though sanguinary war, and it is certain that, by dedicating themselves to the work of national and social

reconstruction, they will be of yet further use to their country. And Benito Mussolini, that magnanimous national hero, may be called with good right, along with Luigi Cadorna and Gabriele d'Annunzio, a noble and worthy son of the Fourth Italy.

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