ITALY UNDER MUSSOLINI

WILLIAM BOLITHO

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Under Mussolini

By

William Bolitho

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TO

HERBERT BAYARD SWOPE

The type of those newspapermen who are not allowed in Italy under Mussolini

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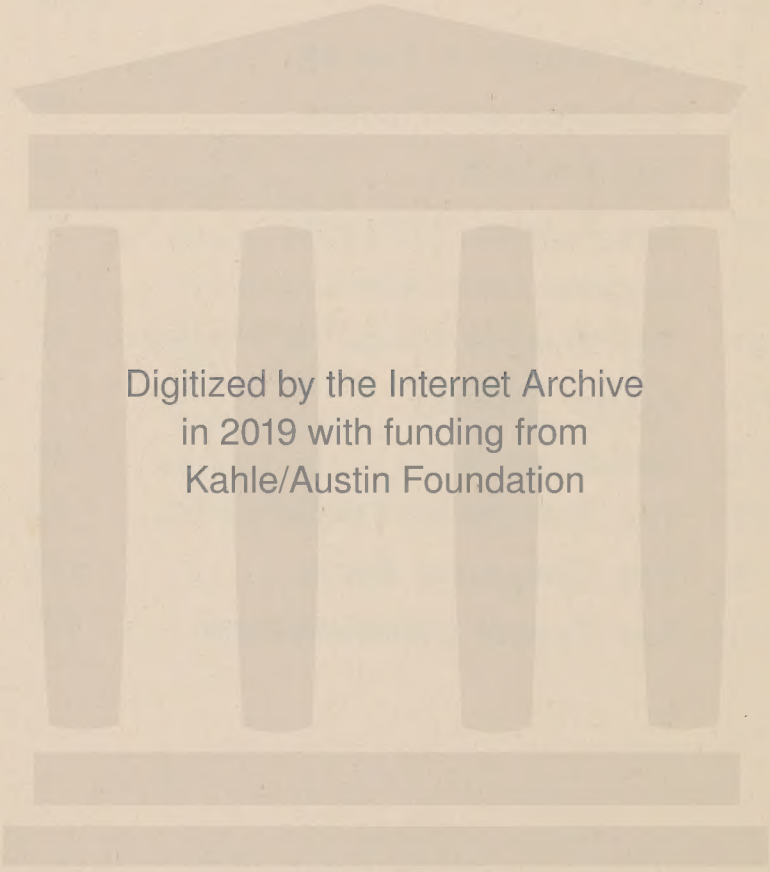

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF FASCISM

The frontage of Fascism is solid and high. They have built it specially to hide many things that are interesting to the world. And the main force of its makers is stretched to stop intruders or critics from finding what is behind. This they call the "defense of Italy's prestige abroad."

It is hard and a little dangerous to outwit them. First, it is forbidden, and Fascism has turned every tenth man and woman in the country into a spy in its interest. Second, with astonishing success, the Fascisti have not only cut off true contemporary record of their deeds but by a system of sequestration of books and imaginative propaganda they have succeeded in inventing a whole history of their past, which is gradually usurping the place of the suffocated truth.

In another five years every scrap of material evidence of the real history of Fascism will have disappeared as thoroughly as the dossier of Mussolini from the Swiss Police Bureau. It will be a pity, for instead of a perfectly logical and fascinating story of a human man and his ambition the historian will have to content himself

with the false epic of romantic heroism that is being served up in every language, with photographs, to-day.

Fascism is a disease of our economic system, to which all modern countries are liable in the future, a product of war and tariffs, of industrialism and trades unions, and not by any means an exploit of romantic boys. Its leader, at the same time its creator and creation, Benito Mussolini, is neither a Napoleon nor a Mohammed, but a variety of Socialist boss who will run to other editions.

He has robbed his own country of liberty and all that makes life in common worth while. Italy, in this third year of his rule, is a silent and shadowy world where men are afraid to be seen in the streets in the company of truth. But Mussolini must not be allowed to rob the world of the lessons of his real history.

It was possible for me, after a voyage from end to end of the country, to compose a long catalog of the misdeeds of Mussolini and his followers, details of thousands of beatings and brutalities of all sorts, from the tearing out of beards to the life-long ruin of health by the obscene torture of castor oil, of hundreds of murders and arbitrary imprisonments. But, so shortly after a war of 12,000,000 dead, atrocity revelations lack even the thrill, which was all the significance they ever had, even if the circumstances allowed of an unprejudiced inquiry, something

more than the frightened whispers behind watched doors, which was all that the situation allowed.

Lists of poor devils who died running from a hundred against one are not worth the trouble and risk of an inquiry into Fascism to-day. But the meaning of the movement, its secret beginnings, the course of its acts, which allow of some deductions as to its future; the motives of the leaders, and as clear a picture as possible of its deepest background; in short, an understanding of Fascism: this is what I attempt.

First, on the present condition of the dictatorship—Italy is efficiently quiet. There is no serious revolt hatching. The "totalizing" methods have Italy in hand; there is not even a general indignation, for the press censorship keeps each violence localized. In Palermo they had heard no details of the Florence massacres. Public opinion has had its eyes put out as well as its tongue slit.

I came across several small bodies of malcontents, hardly plotters. Small illicit clubs, which circulate forbidden news and books, and hate the régime together, under breath, over a common café table. There are youngsters who are hiding revolvers. Some of them may be trying to bring themselves to the pitch of regicide. But to any insurance company the life of Mussolini is as good a risk as that of the ex-Kaiser.

There are still groups of politicians and writ-

ers who will not yield, but cannot make any more active resistance. Orlando, Nitti and many others are abroad and correspond by hand with others who have stayed behind. The burden of their messages is more likely to be complaint than conspiracy.

Three simple means have brought this about. This age of tanks and electric telegraphs is easier governed than the middle ages. They are: press censorship, veto on associations, the organization of street violence. The success of these three is the first of the important lessons of Fascism to the world.

The thread of Fascism's secret, which is the mystery of Italy, is certainly Mussolini. You can put out of consideration all that Fascisti, foreign and native, have written about this man; all the masses of charming anecdote, faked afterward or arranged beforehand, as well as the thick matrix of prose-poetry in which they have been embedded. Mussolini's real history—I must commence with an outline of Mussolini, for he is the coherence in what otherwise is nothing but an episode in an anarchy—is not a romance.

As far as it concerns us, it begins in 1914. The youth that lay before, the young blacksmith, self-teaching, his struggles to leave the manual class; his exile in Switzerland, where he may or may not have fallen into that lapse of which, in 1924, when the press was still practically free. Senator Albertini of the *Corriere della Sera* was

supposed to possess the truth; his editorship of the Socialist newspaper *Avanti* and his pre-war leadership of the Left Socialists are all commonplace as twentieth century biographies go.

We can only see, out of the rule of all young labor leaders, an intensity of ambition, organizing power, a hoarse, far-carrying crowd voice; a naïveté which led him to become a fierce and sincere interventionist in the war. His much and uncritical reading of the Risorgimento literature was the psychological cause why he not only broke with most of his Red friends, but enlisted himself in a war to bring about the earthly paradise by the annexation of Trieste and Fiume.

He was wounded and allowed by the Government (the purpose of his example being served) to stay behind in Milan to bring out a little paper called *People of Italy*. This *Popolo d'Italia* received at its start a subvention from the funds for war propaganda. With Mussolini worked Cesare Rossi, an ex-printer, afterward one of the killers of Matteotti, and Bianchi and Finzi, both extreme Socialists who had followed him out of the orthodox party as interventionists. Its policy was naturally a combination of Mussolini's old principles with that nationalism to which his action as well as his funds pledged him.

He found place behind denunciation of Austrian atrocities to protest in the old manner against overbearing officers, bad cooking in the trenches, and the like. When the war ended, the huge

disillusionment of the victory struck Italy sooner than any other of the Allies. It swept away Mussolini's subsidy. No doubt this saved him from the miserable fate of a Gustave Hervé in France, whose road so far had curiously coincided with that of the Italian, but who now forked off into wretched survival as the paid editor of a small patriotic sheet.

Italy had entered the war, unforced, from "sacred national egotism," preached by Mussolini among the rest. When that egotism was not satisfied she fell into a mood of pitiable despair, in which the war and everything that could remind her about it—the Allies, the propagandists, and even the returned soldiers—were equally detested.

This was certainly the deepest moment of Mussolini's career. He was not only penniless; his career seemed irremediably gone. The rump of the party which he had left was triumphant, if indeed it even troubled now to think of Mussolini and his little band of time's fools.

Mussolini's writings at this time in the sheet, which still somehow survived through these months, show the man lacked at any rate one quality of the legend. He was discouraged to the bottom of his being. His little group, now swollen by other interventionist Socialists who had returned from the war, hung together glumly, sharing their scanty crusts, with bitterness against each other, against their old enemy, the

State, against their old friends, who were now beginning to call themselves Bolsheviks.

The formation of this coterie of duped and discarded leaders and underfed ex-soldiers that hung about smoking cigarettes in the untidy rooms of a journal without readers, as glum as a meeting of the victims of a confidence man, is called the heroic period of Fascism. To it belong most of the little tales of the hardships of Mussolini.

He himself fought only with lethargy, made several attempts to make his peace with the old party. But his place had been filled, and, even on conditions too hard for any shred of pride to remain, the Reds refused to take him back. "With a shocking absence of all psychology, they did not know that to fight war did not mean to fight those who had taken part in it," as one of them later mournfully remarked. (Ermanno Bartellini: La Rivoluzione in Atto.)

This no less shocking absence of prevision which kept out Mussolini and his friends from a return which would have altered the history of Italy, due to rancor as well as stupidity, was the factor that made his later astounding career possible. At the time it seemed the end of him.

But he could not sit down to starve. One party lost, he must begin to build another. Thus, at the beginning of 1919, half-heartedly begins Fascism. Mussolini seems to have filched the name from a group of conservative members of Parliament formed during the war to try to rem-

edy the undisciplined discussions into which the Italian Chamber drifted during the war years to the detriment of the expedition of current business. (Fascio Parlamentare di Difesa Nationale.)

At this stage Mussolini undoubtedly intended Fascism to be a union of those in his own situation—that is, returned soldiers whose employment had gone. His name in practice insured that these would be, in addition, working men and Socialists. It was not a great success. But in the course of the year a number of out of work ex-soldiers whose trade unions showed vexatious slowness in allowing them to return to their ranks joined him.

The first task was obviously to find these men work. Expelled or excluded from the syndicates, their attempts to force themselves into certain factories led to riots and minor disturbances, in which Mussolini had the chief role as organizer and inciter.

Fascism at this stage was so small a thing that there is little documentary record of it. It was a movement analogous in object with those bodies which in happier countries are called American Legions, British Legions, etc., a combatants' union that demanded work and pensions. It had to fight not only the trades unions but the State, now in the hands of those who had opposed the war and meanly sought to take it out of the men

who had suffered. Regarded in another light, it was the first skirmishing of a civil war, on a small but bitter scale, among the working class.

Mussolini's own explanation of this first Fascism is in his manifesto, published in the obscure, almost untraceable columns of the *Popolo d'Italia* in the beginning of 1920. "Down with the state in all its forms and incarnations—the state of yesterday, to-day and to-morrow; the bourgeois state and the Socialist state. To us, faithful to a dying individualism, nothing remains in the miserable present and for the gloomy future but the faith, absurd if you like but consoling, of Anarchy." (Quoted in Francesco Cambo: *Il Fascismo Italiano.*) I think that allows us to see the Mussolini of 1920.

It would be hard for an outsider to deny that there was a great deal of justice on his side. A just grievance is intoxicating to a man of his character. His bands, small but very bitter, existed in the principal towns of the industrial North. There is no evidence that they were a serious factor in the situation into which the Italian labor movement now plunged—the occupation of the factories of September, 1920, under Mussolini's ex-friends and supplanters, d'Aragona and Bruno Buozzi; the one muddle-headed, the other over-rash.

During the march upward to this cardinal

point—the decline of the heavy industry, the post-war slump in the automobile factories, the struggle between Nitti and Giolitti, and that of the Banca Commerciale with the Ansaldo concern—Mussolini's bands were on the flanks of their former associates, harrying, attacking, blacklegging at times, betraying union secrets wherever their intuition or information or pre-war knowledge of their men allowed it. But without money, their action was no more than part of the general uproar, like an additional cracker in an explosion. Then came the "Lock-in" strike.

The factories were occupied and then evacuated on the terms imposed by Giolitti—the establishment of factory councils. Now the industrialists in their federations began to prepare a return attack on apparently victorious Labor; at that time all possible weapons were being acquired for the counter-offensive, and so Mussolini found at last a generous employer. The occasion was as follows:

Among the many smaller exploits of the running fight these first Fascists had forced on their powerful opponents was their sensational wrecking of the offices of the *Avanti* at Rome. Good advertising, carried out by a thin, pale ex-officer, with a great growth of mustache, called de Vecchi, afterward Fascist Governor of Somaliland. This for the first time gave the Fascists general press notice and attracted the attention of the

great capitalist bodies, the Lega Industriale of Turin (Com. de Benedetti and Avv. Ugo Codogni to whom de Vecchi, himself a Torinese, was probably known as a likely man); the Associazione fra Industriali Metallurgici Meccanici ed Affini (Mazzini, afterward de Benedetti's successor as Chairman of the Lega Industriale, and the extreme reactionary Boella) and the Confederazione Generale dell'Industria (Benni and Gino Olivetti, who later was appointed member of the Grand Council of the Fascist Party). This latter body openly, the rest credibly, have continued to be the biggest subscribers to Fascist funds.

Mussolini, after the inconclusive end of the factory occupation, now had funds and even the outline of a policy: Law and Order. At the same prodigious speed as his destiny henceforward moved he also found recruits. The first of this "second wave," miscalled "first wave" by those who wish to forget Fascism's true and curious origin, were brought to him by the rector of Turin University, Prof. Vidari, who had formed a Liberal Monarchic Association among his students, to act as special constables in the capitalist interest during the Turin troubles. These now went over to the Mussolini leadership in a body. It is this first leavening of royalist students which gave one of the most puzzling and contradictory colorings to the party.

On their heels in a rush came another large

batch of new members, of yet another distinct complexion. D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume had been ended by Giolitti, who now succeeded the vacillating Nitti as Prime Minister. His disbanded Arditi, whose situation so nearly resembled the first beginnings of Fascism, discouraged and workless ex-soldiers, clustered around Mussolini.

They brought with them the "Latinism" of d'Annunzio, his "Boy-Scoutism," as it may be called, his system of medals, his strange fashions of salute, his fezzes and the mode of side whiskers and all the other stage furniture of Fascism, as well as tags of his hallucinatory vision of a new Roman Empire.

The Black Shirts seem to have been invented by Mussolini himself, perhaps as a sign of that anarchism to which we have seen he at one time seemed to turn. Behind these recruits into the movement, already rich and noisy, flocked the desperate elements of the growing reaction: rich men's sons of the city, ex-officers, small masters, professional men on the brink of their career and in search of a captain for their souls, and the rich landowners of all regions, especially the plains of the Po and Tuscany. Even from the South they came, where the enemy was not, however, the Communists but the Catholic peasants of Don Luigi Sturzo's People's Party, which was preaching seizure of the land.

Each of these elements left its clear trace on

the extraordinary confusion of Fascist theory later on, when the philosophically minded had time to try to compose a reason and a theory for the movement.

This last wave, in addition to recruits, brought a very considerable contribution of money to the coffers of the party. As Mussolini confesses in his cryptic way, "Fascism in origin is largely a rural phenomenon." The Junkers at once obtained a share in the inner councils of the party. The original outcast Socialists, however, continued to hold a majority there, that indeed they have never lost. For the moment all these violences and hates were bound solely by one object—to smash the Socialists of Turati and Serrati and Graziadei.

Later I will show how exaggerated is the Fascist part in the doing of this and how large the less rowdy, more terrible force of the employers themselves. Through the whole of 1921 the Fascists were the cavalry of a victorious system that harried the army of labor after the great bombardment of the lock-outs. In six months they ruled the streets.

Fascism had now become a party. Mussolini turned his attention from the routine of picketing and rioting to the serious question of a program. He had not yet noticed that not only the number but the nature of his followers had changed. This led to his extraordinary declarations of May, 1921.

He had now become a member of Parliament, with others of his group. In 1919 and in the following years Mussolini had held "national" conferences of his followers, in which there had been some semblance of a program drawn up.

This was naturally a distinctly Socialist document, even decidedly Republican. To this program he now attempted to hold the new Fascism. He imposed on the group of newly elected Fascist members abstention from the opening session of Parliament, on the grounds that his Republican principles forbade them to sit and listen to the King's speech from the throne. The great mass of his new followers, by now the majority, protested most bitterly. Not one of them on becoming a Fascist had made any inquiries about its program: the landowners and royalist students learned this first clause in it with the greatest astonishment and disgust.

Mussolini's first instinct was to force them to obedience. On May 24 he published an article entitled "Straight Talk to Recruits," in which he tried this: "The new recruits, those who have come in good or bad faith to put their egg in the warm nest of Italian Fascism, do not know, it is quite clear, the history of Fascism. They do not know anything of the three great regional assemblies in which Fascism gave itself (whatever idiots like to say), a character and an ideal program. I will not permit that the Fascism I founded should be falsified and adulterated, or

be made something quite different from what it is, and changed into Monarchism and even Dynasticism, from the firm Republicanism it was and which it must remain."

Two days later he has evidently been thinking. He writes (May 25, 1921, *Popolo d'Italia*): "Italy, that is the name, the great, the sacred name, the adorable name, in which all Fascisti ought to find themselves. No one can swear that the cause of Italy must necessarily be bound to the fate of the monarchy as the Nationalists pretend, or to the fate of a republic as the Republicans claim."

A few weeks later, after this astonishing, almost amusing, volte-face, Mussolini preached no more the old Fascism, but the new to which his followers had converted him.

In a later chapter this cardinal question of the creed of Fascism must be taken up again. For the present, this spot marks the full acceptance of his destiny by Mussolini; from it dates his triumphant march to where he is to-day, absolute master of the lives of 40,000,000 people.

With the money of Lombardy behind him he marched to Rome, where by secret agreement with Facta, he took the power. Naturally there was such agreement. Has any one ever heard of an usurper rewarding his beaten adversary? Yet the men of the Facta Government, who pretended to decree martial law against Mussolini,

sit now in the Italian Senate by his nomination and consent.

Mussolini's subsequent use of power must be dealt with in detail, but its rough outline is simple enough.

First, normalization, an attempt which lasted until January, 1925, to conciliate the old parties and the old possessors of power to admit him to their number peaceably, and acknowledge him as a chief, regular and legitimate like themselves and entitled to a peer's share of the spoils.

Second, the murder of Matteotti, which spoiled this plan.

Third, his "totalizing" oppression, by which he crushed out all organized opposition.

On the borders of this period—his fourth period—his struggle with the unruly ranks of his own party, Italy lives to-day in a silence which his professional propagandists call peace.

CHAPTER II

SOCIALISM AND FASCISM

Fascism asserts that it is to be admired and imitated by the rest of the world for its past, when it saved Italy and Europe from Bolshevism; for its present, sound finance and ideals; for its future, in which it will build a new civilization. Mainly by reason of its own shyness, these claims are difficult indeed to examine. A careful censorship has destroyed all ordinary sources of the history of the movement, which, although it is barely five years old, already is wrapped in a cloud of legends—all naturally with a Fascist moral. For example, the writings of Matteotti, so interesting for an understanding of the inner workings of Fascist finance, are not to be found in any book shop or public library of Italy.

All evidence against the claim of Mussolini and his followers to be pure-minded patriots whom the genius of the nation spontaneously threw up in 1921, has been carefully sequestered.

The past is not so easily to be wiped out and altered, however, even by a ruthless and omnipresent police system. As regards Fascism's first boast, did Mussolini and his organization save Italy? And from what?

Avoiding all detail, in 1920 Socialism was all powerful in the country; in 1925 it is banished and proscribed. We must examine whether between this development and Fascism there is a relation of cause and effect.

In 1920 Italian Socialism did not differ noticeably from that of the rest of the world. It was a loose alliance between persons with two ways of thinking, those who wanted the revolution at once by violence and those who preferred to achieve their program by gradual, peaceful processes. The first after the war called themselves Communists. They had the upper hand in the Socialist political party. Their chief was Graziadei. The others were called Reformists. They had an overwhelming majority in the confederation of labor, the Union of the Trades Unions, and were led by several men.

This dualism existed under other names before the war. Mussolini himself may be considered as a pre-Communist leader of the Left Wing revolutionary Socialists.

Owing to the cultural and economic conditions of Italy, the revolutionary Socialists, on the one hand, were rather more numerous and vigorous than in other European countries, while the trades unions were rather more backward in organization, more modest in claims, more hesitating in theory than elsewhere. Their joint force was almost exclusively confined to the industrial region of the North, in the cities of Turin, Genoa, Milan

and Bologna. So Italian Socialism had only an apparent unity. In reality the name covered two warring factions.

During the war an immense artificial industry was built up in these cities for the needs of the army. That economical paradox, a steel industry in a land that possesses neither coal nor iron ore, especially prospered. Vast capital was engaged in it, partly through the medium of the Banca Disconto, a war creation of the two brothers Perrone, whose ambitions and patriotism were boundless.

This bank, with a giant infant to nurse, also engaged directly in a colossal industrial affair, the Ansaldo works. Its enemy was principally a rival bank of Prussian creation, the Banca Commerciale, whose director, Signor Toeplitz, by birth a Polish Jew, exasperated the nationalist instincts of the Perrones by his origin and their ambition by the secure hold which his institution had upon the industry of the country, and, further, it is said, by certain personal affronts given and suffered.

One cannot go far into the political history of the last years in any country without feeling, helplessly, that most of the real secrets are locked in the private books of the great bankers, who as a class, without any one noticing it, more and more assume the principal role in the history of modern democracies. At every point of the struggle between labor and capital, and later that between

Fascism and Parliament, these names recur at the crossroads, Perrone, Toeplitz. Beyond that it is not safe to go.

The battle of the banks ended with the liquidation of the Perrones and their Banca Disconto, while the struggle between the workmen and their employers ended in the most complete defeat of the former in the history of the twentieth century. The parallel is not to be pushed farther, but any one who wishes to know the real history of the latter conflict, waged more or less in the light of day, must bear in mind that each event of it was certainly influenced by the intervention behind the scenes, often episodic and following a system of its own in which mere politics or social theory had no part, of these rival bankers.

In politics, Giolitti was on the side of the workers, and Toeplitz was undoubtedly an ally of Giolitti until the latter's fall, for certain private reasons. No great movement, involving the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, can be carried on without money—neither a march on Rome by 100,000 Fascists, nor a strike of all Lombardy. Fascism and Communism each had its cash box, which a generous anonymity kept well filled.

The economic result of the end of the war in Italy was the ruin of those industries which the war had created. The English with simple cynicism raised the price of their coal to an hitherto unattempted height; nothing more was needed in

a sudden slump of consumption, which arrived in Italy a year sooner than anywhere else, to wreck the "patriotic industries" of steel, and, through them, because all steel-using industries in the country were bound to them by protective tariffs, to shake the whole economic system of the country.

Italy in 1920 already was a welter of ruin in which industrial, financial and moral depression accumulated their effects. Victory had brought to the country this: the whole possessing class seemed for months to abandon itself to a paralysis of despair.

The only men in the country whom the peace had profited were naturally the Socialists, especially those of the Left political wing, who had been neutralists before the war and now, to their amazement, found themselves masters of the situation if they could get the only organization that remained on its feet, the trades unions, to follow their leadership to the conquest of another dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Mussolini schism, which a bare year previously had treated the party with contemptuous mockery, had suddenly sunk to a small group of gloomy, undernourished men in a fundless newspaper office. The vast mass of the returned workmen flocked to the red banner in the undefined hope of work and bread. But the trades union partner was by no means so happy as the theoretical Reds; factories everywhere were re-

ducing hands, a growing number of their members was out of work, and there seemed to be no prospect of warding off that violent change in the state which they were the last to wish.

At this moment appeared the "young men," among them d'Aragona, Buozzi, Giulietti, out of communion with Moscow, revolutionaries yet non-Communists, with modifications and adaptations of the Marxian theory of their own, with a project to take the mob with them to the "occupation of the factories." These men had some sort of an organization and remarkably healthy funds of campaign. The orthodox Reds detested them.

When they finally decided to carry this out the factory guards and the royal police alike melted away before them in a surprising manner, which made many ponder on the advantages that the new Giolitti Government would draw from a "factory council" installed in each big works, in the opening of the profit-and-loss books to other eyes than those of the bosses and their trusted head-clerks that would be one of the stipulated consequences. For Giolitti had formed a budget that could be successful only if the big manufacturers could be induced or forced to declare their true war-profits for special taxation.

Whether for this practical reason, or merely because of a surprising conversion to extreme democracy of this old party boss, Giolitti, the invading workmen found little resistance. For a week or two they amused themselves with string-

ing up a trifle of fancy barbed-wire work and a dilettante manufacture of home-made bombs.

I was privileged to enter the principal factories at the time and was struck with the unreality of the invading workmen's preparations for defense. In a few of the factories where the technical experts remained the work went on as usual. In some of the automobile factories in Turin the men sold finished machines to pay themselves, so long as the stock lasted; the buyers were assured mysteriously that no court would dare to question the reality of the transaction.

Such were the fruits of the "factory occupation" which ended suddenly by the personal intervention of Giolitti to impose those factory councils with rights to inquire into the internal finances of each industry.

During the beginning of this stage the intervention of the Fascists had amounted to little more than stone-throwing at a distance by a squad of small boys.

The Industrialists, on the other hand, had put up a hard fight. They had restored transport unaided, had brought out a newspaper of their own to beat the printers' strike, and had assured the feeding of the friendly population through a consortium. But for the intervention of the Government it is probable that they would have won. In eight days the men's demands came down from a new state, expropriation of banks and private enterprise, to a sober request for

"bread and work." Senator Agnelli, of the great Fiat automobile works, one of the chief sufferers and hitherto a fervent admirer of Giolitti, was so disgusted with the latter's intervention that he contemplated for a time retiring not only from politics but also from business.

But the revenge was not long in coming. The moment was particularly favorable. The Industrialists prepared for it with all their might, tightening up their organization, arranging a common policy, composing a chest of war. Almost without exception all were suffering from over-stocks, and since they would be forced by this sensibly to reduce the number of their workmen in any case, the method of a general lock-out would rather help than hurt their private interests.

As minor factors also in their favor must be counted the sudden drying up of the "Communist," i.e., d'Aragona and Buozzi, fund box, duly reported by spies to the LAGA, the capitalist fighting organization, which had followed sharply on the news of the general bad effect of their achievements on all Italian concerns abroad, financial as well as industrial, especially in America, as shown by a serious disorganization of Italian credit. And for the first time must here be reckoned the action of the Fascists, now hardy and numerous, ready to supply a batch of daring young men to wreck a labor-chieftain's flat and maltreat him, or to protect a batch of non-union blacklegs on their way to work.

In another way the hiring of Mussolini had proved to be worth while. As the outward token of the "rule of the workers," a crop of red flags had burst out over Italy, even in the depth of the country. Many village town-halls to be in fashion had baptized themselves Socialist and flown the symbol. This phenomenon, more psychological than of great import, inspiring the workmen with the idea that a fight hardly begun was already won, and correspondingly terrifying the small bourgeoisie into a mentality of surrender, was thoroughly dealt with by the Fascists. They pitilessly burned and sacked every building from town-hall to workers' club that dared to show the rebel color.

By a co-ordination of all these means great and small, open and secret, the ground was prepared for a sudden and promptly victorious counter-attack of the industrial leagues and consortiums on the disorganized forces of labor. It was begun by the Michelin Tire Company, one of the most over-stocked of all, which reckoned at the time that it had enough manufactured goods on hand to last it six months, and which also had the advantage of being directed by a foreigner, a Frenchman (Engineer Daubree) who had been spared from the defeatist wave of despair that had attacked most of his fellows.

In a vain attempt to strike back before the lock-out, of which they had had wind, was declared, the Michelin workmen allowed some

$15,000 worth of rubber to spoil in the boilers as an act of sabotage. On the following day, March 16, Daubree closed the doors of his factory; on March 30 his conditions were accepted and a submissive and reduced band went back to work.

Agnelli of the Fiat followed this lead, encouraged by the preliminary sortie. On April 6 he locked the doors on his 11,500 workmen and a notice was fixed on the great gates "Chiuso fino a nuovo ordine" ("Closed indefinitely"). Eleven thousand five hundred families lasted in unequal struggle with him until April 28; then they yielded.

Agnelli, with unusual generosity, paid to the men's relief funds an indemnity of 200 lira for each man not taken back—some 2500—and set the rest to work, disciplined, cowed, defeated.

These successes were enough. Throughout Lombardy and Tuscany the news went like wildfire, producing submission among the workers and hardly making such other lock-outs as followed, all with the same result, necessary.

Meanwhile, like irregular camp followers, the Fascists harried the retreat of the beaten workmen, burning their co-operatives, beating their leaders. It is in this period of street violence that they invented that myth of their unaided victory, and in cases where they met resistance, their martyr's role.

It is perfectly possible that this stage of their usefulness to the great employers' associations

hastened the collapse of the workers, both by creating the state of mind apt to accept defeat, in which the Fascist toughs placed the inevitable majority of timid persons; by their encouragement of deserters, by the confusion in which they placed the councils and communications of the leaders.

But the very length of the average resistance—two weeks, the workers' margin of hunger—showed that the lock-out would have been sufficient alone, unless opposed by a strong and united organization. This the workers of Italy never had even in the time of their apparent triumph. Hopelessly divided at its centre into two opposing factions, torn in every general offensive between the opposing parties of Reformists and Communists and National Revolutionaries, embarked on a stupid attempt to seize the factories at the bidding of financial and political personalities outside the movement, their cause was doomed in any conceivable circumstance to fail at the first reaction. Its prosperity was a surprise, its failure was a necessity.

In the South, the poor agricultural South where, parallel with revolt of the workers of Lombardy, the peasants had risen to seize small holdings under the leadership of the Popularist priests at the expense of the great owners of the latifundia, the part which Fascism played was much greater, in spite of the common belief to the contrary. The vigorous sons of the landlords of Sicily and Calabria hastened among the first to enrol them-

selves in the new organization, and, aided by judicious reinforcements sometimes sent from the towns as far north as Rome, they recovered their seized lands from the underfed, easily awed land-grabbers, whom indeed the mystical pacifism of their leaders, Don Sturzo and the rest, did not attempt to defend. The squire who had fled before an insurgent village, returned in a few months with dozens of fighting boys, armed with sticks, disciplined and brutal, to take back his own with ease.

Even quicker and more catastrophically than the affairs of their proletarian brethren of the North, the Southern peasant movement collapsed. Its repression left as its clearest mark the first beginnings of that Ras system, which is the very intimate rottenness of the present regime; that is, the administration of justice high and low by local lordlings endowed with the unlimited support of the party. Big Industry of the North, Big Property in the South—these are the real victors of the after-war period in Italy; and, what was at the first only their tool, and their thing, Fascism and its Mussolini.

CHAPTER III

THE TYRANNY

The Fascists are not ashamed of violence. It is an essence of the idea, avowed, professed. It is the very kernel of the "New Religion" which Mussolini now claims to have founded (*Gerarchia,* October, 1925).

In the same article he indeed makes some attempt to distinguish between "private" violence, lawless tyranny by individual members of his society—which he thinks misplaced, ill-advised, almost wrong—and his own exercise of an "undoubted Revolutionary Right." Thus: "Violence is moral, when it is sudden as a storm, surgical, knightly. When the Revolutionary Party has the power in its hands, violence ought to be exclusively in the hands of the instruments of state, and exclusively for state ends."

But this distinction was not heard of in the real history of the party. Fascism was born in a brawl with a club in its hands, and a club and a chopper have remained the insignia of its mystery. The first Fascists attracted the favor of the employers in a labor struggle by their skill and determination in street rioting.

It was the prospect of a nation-wide riot for their fathers' possessions that brought the best

blood of Fascism into the movement. It was an organized riot that brought Mussolini to Rome, and it has been a combination of every illegal menace with every illegal brutality that has kept him hitherto in power. Every Fascist pamphlet, every one of their newspapers, prints some image of violence on its cover—a mailed fist, a club, a provocative chin.

Under Fascism, brutality and the argument of force have become a dogma. It is that, more than the nature of its acts, that mainly distinguishes this new revolution from the Governments that went before it. "For, in Italy," a pre-war wit once said, "there are thirty million people, ruled by thirty men, in the interest of three hundred thousand families."

The instrument has changed, the class who reaps the benefit has remained much the same. Instead of Depretis, Crispi, Giolitti, secretive men who juggled with Parliaments and Administrations to accomplish their ends, there is Mussolini, differing from them essentially in that instead of using only corruption, persuasion and suggestion, he has added the revolver and the club.

It is one of the gravest misfortunes of Italy that those who have been superseded have no full right to criticise. Nitti imposed a censorship in peace time to kill the opposition: Mussolini did it with burnings of offices, smashings of presses, and he has opposition editors thrashed in the street.

Giolitti had the country Prefectures in his hands, and used them amorally to make election. So has and does Mussolini, but with the club. The tariffs Mussolini increased for his friends of the Heavy Industry were there before him. The system he inherited; only the violence is undeniably his own.

In the first period of Fascism's growth the Socialists count 3,000 victims, a fifth of them dead. It is a credible figure. Beyond that in the present difficulties of inquiry it would be presumptuous to go.

Among these first 3,000 victims hundreds were maltreated in more or less fair fight; hundreds waylaid and assaulted by cowardly gangs; hundreds the victims of private vendetta which a Fascist membership card was used to pay; hundreds who were punished for knowing too much about the business affairs of the local Fascist chieftain.

To the institution of these chieftains, for whom the cant term is "Ras" (a local princeling in Italian Abyssinia), is due an unreckonable quantity of private tyrannies. Some of the Ras are simple reactionaries, fanatically attached to the man who smashed the working class. But these are a minority. Many more were taken on, like the tariffs and Ministries from the old regime: municipal bosses, who trimmed their coat to the new wind and thereby gained a profit of power.

Some of them are converts from the first enemies of Fascism, ex-Communists as much at home in the dictatorship of one proletarian as in that of the proletariat. Organically the Fascist authority is based on these men from whom only absolute obedience is asked (another necessity turned into a doctrine under a high-sounding name: hierarchy), and whose authority over the police, the municipalities, the Magistrates, the district funds, the lives and fortunes of the majority of their fellow citizens within this limit is complete.

Some of them have "judicial pasts," records of offenses against the common law. When such first came into the movement there was a "moral revolt" of many of its middle-class enthusiasts. It was settled by Mussolini and Rossi, with a purification of the Order in which not the Ras but the squeamish were weeded out, for the practical reason that the latter's very protest showed that they gave the less promise of absolute obedience.

The most celebrated case of this operation was the expulsion of Alfredo Misuri, in favor of one Pighetti, Ras of Perugia, whom Misuri, an honest and romantic reactionary, had objected to because he learned that Pighetti had once been condemned for theft.

The process of this "purification" was almost invariably accompanied by another class of violence; each of the expelled of the "moral

revolt" were waylaid and beaten by Fascist squads acting under orders. Misuri was left for dead by a punitive squad outside the Chamber of Deputies. Capt. Cesare Forni, a much medalled man, had a similar punishment for forgetting his duty of unquestioning obedience, on the Milan railway station, March 12, 1923.

Massimo Rocca, in many ways the most talented of all these "honest" Fascists, was expelled in 1924 for an objective and detailed criticism of the first Fascist state budget and was kicked and thrashed in the streets of Genoa shortly afterward. There are many other cases. The murder of Matteotti, a Socialist critic, belongs essentially to the same class of the suppression of moral criticism by violence.

These Ras, secured in their power by the vigorous support of the Central Council, naturally profited by it. Italy always has suffered from the local boss. Under the Mussolini regime these, often the same as had held the fort for Giolitti, left all moderation out of their acts and ruled with the club. The days of the robber lord have returned in Italy, with the addition that he is nowadays not an isolated ruffian but the trusted servant of a Central Government on which he can always count for troops and support.

The Rasism is especially notorious in Perugia, Florence, Bologna, Ancona, Venice, Palermo. In normal times the Ras attends to his private affairs and profit. He settles his enemies, pro-

tects the interests of those who know how to be grateful. At election times he is required to pay attention to more national interests, to prevent opposition candidatures, or, if this is impossible through the courage and mobility of the hunted men, to press the voters into the right booth.

If, as at Reggio Emila at the last election, a candidate (a Moderate Socialist) has to be killed, the Ras will see that the jury acquit his assailant and arrange the torchlight parade of triumph.

He has also to take charge of punitive expeditions against newspapers, Free Masons' lodges and Catholic clubs, and apply the laws against associations and unauthorized meetings of citizens, either in clubs or in the street. He is held responsible that the tyranny of his rank and file does not get out of bounds—or (as in the recent affair at Florence) he is liable to be removed. In principle, the Government has withdrawn the right to private abuse of power and tyranny in the case of those beneath a Ras in rank.

In Florence a certain bravo, Luproni, Fascist squad-leader, in a quarrel with an old man, Bandinelli, struck him in the face, and was shot by one of Bandinelli's relatives. Both were beaten to death the next day by the squads who took possession of the town, plundering and burning and killing. Fifteen men, mostly lawyers and professional men of the opposition, or neutrals,

were massacred; several English tourists who tried to intervene were severely battered.

The incident drew the wrath of the Central Power, who sent down one Italo Balbo, himself with a notorious past of violence. Balbo suspended the Ras and set about a formal prosecution of the ringleaders of the raid.

This class of violence, local, private, exists to-day throughout the length and breadth of Italy. Its instigator and example is the dictatorship itself, which now shows signs (as at Florence, and in Mussolini's quoted declaration) of being scared of its pupil. The violence of the dictatorship is naturally on a more systematic scale. Leaving out of account the period before the seizure of power, in which the violence of the party and the violence of the subordinates were confounded in one active terror, the methods of the dictatorship may be divided into two phrases.

In the first, which extends up to the murder of Matteotti (June 12, 1924), Mussolini was in two minds. On the one hand, the attitude of the possessors of power he had supplanted, the old party chiefs—Giolitti, Orlando, Salandra—allowed him to hope that after a time there would be "normalization"; that is, that they would allow him peacefully to co-operate in the exploitations of power as one of themselves.

In this period, consequently, he desired to leave the opposition alone as much as they allowed him. His policy was to make the tyranny as

much as possible invisible. Naturally, the "purification" continued of all within the party whose obedience was not impeccable, Misuri and the rest. In this period the Ras were asked to limit their use of power as far as possible. But simultaneously, and by jerks, Mussolini would take fright at his own leniency, and at such moments he would wave his club violently in the eyes of all to show that he still had it under his coat.

In one of these moments of scare he threatened to suppress the press, especially the *Corriere della Sera,* the organ of the large conservative middle class of North Italy, because of that "moral criticism" which Mussolini cannot stand. No one seriously thought he would carry this out; a Fascist raid on the newspaper offices seemed much more probable.

Throughout the "normalization" period, Mussolini privately pursued the construction of a species of Cheka which, with the "purified" militia, was to be a last safeguard of his power and life. This Cheka never reached full growth. The Matteotti affair killed it while it was still small and only sketchily organized. It seems to have been under the command of that Cesare Rossi, the linotype operator, who had followed Mussolini's fortunes from the *Avanti,* and had now reaped a colossal reward in a share of the unlimited power of the Quadrumvirate.

Rossi is a curious figure, a sort of low-class Morny, sentimental at his moments, ready for

all risks, but with only the talents and energy of the professional gambler. His secret organization had two branches, political and executive. The political agents were only some half-dozen and were commanded by Joseph Volpi. Their task was to watch political personalities, within and outside the party, to intercept their letters, to spy on their friends, etc.

At the time of the formation of the Cheka Mussolini still feared the Communists, who accordingly received a large share of the political squad's attention. Volpi's men were responsible for the arrest of Prof. Bordiga and hundreds of Communists in 1922-23. The attempt to compromise Senator Albertini, editor of the *Corriere della Sera,* in "dealings with the foreigner" after his trip with his family to Switzerland, was esteemed another piece of work of this political Cheka.

The executive branch was more interesting than this political Cheka. It was made up of ex-Arditi, toughest of the tough, the very flower of the Fascist squads. They were numerous; the pick came from Turin, Milan, Genoa, Bologna, Trieste and Venice. They were responsible for the attack on Buozzi, the depressed neo-Communist, once famous for his share in the "lock-in" strikes, whom they severely injured in Turin.

The massacre of twelve persons in the same city in the Dresda-Prato affair, although it began (like so many Fascist exploits and reprisals) in

a question of women, is usually put down as a Cheka affair. Commandant Brandimarte, the leader in the Turin affair, was a known member of the Executive Police.

At the beginning of 1923, one Duminy was appointed Inspector General of this force; it was under his direction that the "moral revolters" were both purged and chastised. This Duminy was responsible to a long ladder of superior officers—too many officers is one of the strangest faults of the Fascist organization—among them Rossi, now chief of the private press office of the dictator; Luigi Freddi, head of the Fascist press propaganda office; Aldo Finzi, Under Secretary for State for Home Affairs; Francesco Giunta, General Secretary of the party.

Around this nucleus collected a circle of unscrupulous young men, journalists, stock-jobbers, concession hunters, all in trusted positions in the party, to make an inner circle of their own. They were in the habit of meeting in the restaurant Le Brecche, Via Firenze, at Rome, where they were known to the other customers as the Viminal band.

It was undoubtedly the revelations of the transactions of members of this group in the concession of Casino rights, April 25, 1924, by Matteotti that led to his murder, which Duminy and other members of the Cheka seem actually to have carried out.

The Matteotti affair in its fascinating and

innumerable ramifications, however, needs a length out of the scope of this book to treat fairly. It had the result of bringing the Cheka to light, and in spite of Mussolini's daring claim of "all the blame for himself" in his speech in the first days of January, 1925, of discrediting and dissolving the organization. In its place the dictator seems to have contented himself with a private guard of Pretorians, who accompany him wherever he goes; e.g., Locarno.

The political branch also seems to have been abandoned and the services of the regular detective force used in its stead. With these and a Black Cabinet for the letters of his principal enemies and a close surveillance of the telephones, by which any conversation likely to have political interest is automatically switched on to a special bureau of listeners, the present precautions of Mussolini against unpleasant surprise are complete.

Secret reports of the local Ras are centralized in a special bureau, with the reports of thousands of amateur and rewarded spies. In a dictatorship there is always a market for news, but the execution of reprisals is left to the unspecialized forces of the movement. They fall into the Secretary General's hands (Farinacci). He has a talent for this work.

For the rest, the two measures of state violence taken when the repercussions of the Matteotti affair convinced Mussolini that no such reconcilia-

tion as he hoped was possible were quite sufficient; Italy is now quieter than ever before during his usurpation. The suppression of the press and the right of association have proven themselves more of a bar to revolt than all the desultory clubbings and killings of three years. A modern state, Mussolini has shown us, can be kept dumb and helpless once the press is dead.

The decree against political organizations is equally easy to enforce; for a modern conspiracy cannot be hatched in a shed. These two measures, added to the constant surveillance of the streets by the Ras and the Squadists, do not indeed guarantee that the Dictator's life is safe. Mussolini himself, who is a sick man suffering from ulcer of the stomach on top of a constitutional disease and lives almost entirely on milk, is nervous that some fanatic for liberty will try to improve his country's history with a revolver.

Extraordinary precautions are taken against assassination. One of the most ingenious and repulsive means is to set armed squads of determined Fascists on the stairs and in the houses of those few opposition leaders, newspaper men and politicians who have the courage to stay in the country, on pretext of guarding them against attack.

Really, these night and day pickets make them hostages. They all know that in the case of any attempt on Mussolini's life, their own is in equal

peril; and so a considerable number of people, in the foremost ranks of the opposition, have an interest in the personal safety of Mussolini.

Mussolini, who has grown his astonishing fortune out of violence, who has sustained himself by violence, has no intention of dying quietly without a last explosion of the infernal forces which he has evoked.

CHAPTER IV

THE FASCIST DOCTRINE

Long before the Royalist students from Turin came into the young movement, Mussolini was trying irritably to find out what he meant by the faction which he had started against his former Socialist friends. In every line of these "Popolo" leaders of the time there is the feeling of an unphilosophical energy clawing out for a Doctrine. But beyond a range of full-blooded negatives Mussolini never got far. He proclaimed himself Republican, he announced his youth and right to life—on good days; his hatred of everything that was settled, when things went badly.

The original Fascists hated the King, the State, the Church, the aristocracy, all those who sat down to good meals and slept in soft beds, everything, in short, that was not like them—returned Socialist-soldiers aware that they had been tricked, but determined not to give up their medals or the rights of heroes they had won.

The first Fascism, then, reflects the situation of Mussolini. It is a variety of "combatantism," commoner in the records of the Church than of the State. Those who love historical parallels must look rather to a sect like Donatism in the fourth century, after the Diocletian persecution, in

which the "confessors," that is the martyrs who did not die, claimed for themselves the right (with the very same clubs as the Fascists) to all honors and the privileges of the Church.

Fascism, or Donatism of this sort, was common as a sentiment among all returned soldiers of all nations, but, lacking a Mussolini or favorable circumstances, elsewhere it is only a grumble, the grumble that one hears around the tomb of the Unknown Soldier from other unknown soldiers who have had the misfortune to survive.

With the entry of the students and other cultured strike-breakers, however, Fascism's doctrine developed. Mussolini, when he had time to examine the matter, was himself converted to the more positive theories that these recruits brought. He abandoned Republicanism with ludicrous suddenness; he discovered that returned soldiers have a political problem; he was fired with his first close view of the mentality and character of the great employers. But for the moment he contents himself with dropping all the negatives but one; at this date Fascism was simply anti-Communist. The Communists in defiance of the law had entered factories; therefore, Fascism was Law and Order. The new recruits were Civic Guards; Fascism, therefore, was a citizen police existing to impose by extra-legal means a full respect for the King's peace.

This phase could not last, for, after the victory, it implied that every one should go home; and

neither Mussolini nor the majority of his followers had any intention of going home. Those who hold the law-and-order theory resigned; the rest, by natural reaction, then declared that the essence of Fascism was Illegalism, complete, theoretical, mystical. These new theories exercised themselves in easy paradoxes on the "glory of violence for its own sake." In one of those "conversation speeches," which are a specialty of the Leader, we have clear declarations of this point of view:

"A chi Roma?" (Whose is Rome?)
The Squads: "Ours."
"Whose is Italy?"
The Squads: "Ours."
"Whose is the right of government?"
The Squads: "Ours."
"Would we do it all over again?"
Chorus: "Yes."

Then, with three lusty "Alalas," the band would strike up, "Youth, Youth, Springtime of Beauty" * * *

Such is the doctrine in whose sign, the rods and ax for ourselves, Fascism marched to the melodramatic conquest of Rome.

Naturally, beneath this simple creed of "sacred egotism" there was already an arcanum of faith, an inner doctrine which the leaders soon openly inculcated. Violence was sacred; yes, but it was

a privilege of the leaders. For the rest, the less inspiring duty of obedience was the diet.

In two months after the taking of power, every Fascist writer (they were countless) was busy explaining to the "sacredly selfish" boys that the eternal principle of Fascism was now Hierarchy, *Gerarchia.* Pale young thinkers of the lower middle class dedicated treatises to the Immortal Duce, proved that Fascism was a new aristocracy which knew no duties toward those beneath, only that of unquestioning obedience to those above: The Duce, his Grand Council, his Ras, his squad captains and his "corporals of honor."

This remains the official doctrine of Fascism to which all who wish to share the privileges and profits of membership must subscribe. Its creed was drawn up grandiloquently by de Vecchi himself, the man who gutted the *Avanti* offices in Rome in 1919. It has, however, a strange and unpleasant sound to those outside the movement who are reduced to the situation of mere raw material for the sacred violence of the New Aristocracy; and these, being the nation, have to be conciliated with a further Revelation.

Fascism, therefore, from its stock of old doctrines laid by, constructed a supplementary theory of itself; it is this which Fascist propaganda asserts has a meaning for the whole world.

At this point I may mention that I do not envy any one who has to read systematically through the Fascist doctrinaires. Fascism has

developed a new literary style in which the Master's memories of Napoleon's speeches to his soldiers is unhappily combined with the pseudo archaisms of d'Annunzio at Fiume. All is pretension, looseness, uncritical, desperately wordy.

In essence this last Fascist message is simple Toryism: the workmen must work, the employer must employ, etc., with a very characteristic exaltation of the Nationalist passion. Georges Sorel has been appealed to for a defense of violence; Joseph de Maistre and Leon Daudet are drawn from to explain how King and country are the only two rational motives of mankind. The tendency to an unmeasured jingoism that began rather sheepishly in the interventionist Mussolini was fanned by the Arditi recruits, whom he took over from d'Annunzio, was later tirelessly exploited by him in finding reason for his success to power, and is noticeable on every occasion when he desires to speak not only to the Fascists but to the whole of his countrymen. He knows their weakness.

In a later chapter the foreign policy of the Fascist Government that follows from this nationalism must be examined in detail. For the present it is enough to notice that seriously or with tongue in cheek Fascism's great message to the world, besides a suggestion that all should live in illegalism for the sake of those young enough to wield a club, is a disordered jingoism which leaves all

the paroxysms of the pre-war period, the Fashodas, the Mafekings, far behind.

All nationalism, like all other forms of selfishness, has an irresistible tendency to make myths for itself. Thus Fascism exaggerates the share of Italy in the war; it forgets Caporetto, the Allied reinforcements, to remember only Vittoria Veneto, "the greatest victory of all."

In the textbooks of history imposed under the Gentile reform, the Italian boy is taught that Italy, after winning the war for France and England and America, was cheated perfidiously of her just dues, the Dalmatian coast and most of the German colonies, by their spite and the "hypocritical Wilson." That legend is not enough for the provincial Fascists, who, in imitation of the old Pan-Germans, have composed a fantastic ethnical romance in which the Pelasgians and the "pre-Etrurians," who are the "blood-ancestors of the Italian stock," invented civilization and presumably were cheated out of the glory of it by just such a perfidy as the Treaty of Versailles.

Such talk is useful in estimating Fascism, although as yet it is shy and shuns the publicity of the capital.

To this mistaken archaeology the wild Latinism of d'Annunzio, his overestimation of the Roman civilization, his erroneous ethnic theories of the descent of the present Italian, are an intoxicating addition.

Fascism, at bottom, is nothing but an elaborate system of rewards for those who hoisted Mussolini into power, as permission to take the power is his reward for services to the organized capitalists. License to the Ras and the Squadists after their grade, budgets for the rich; for the rest of the nation, patriotism and obedience.

In one other matter Fascism has developed a doctrine, which, like all the other tenets, sprang out of an attempt to justify an action which circumstances forced on Mussolini: the abolition of Parliaments. Immediately after the march on Rome there was no trace left of his original invincible repugnance for the system; his first steps were all directed to conquer its favor.

Disregarding his many invectives against the institution of Parliament before he rose to power (they were of the same motive and permanence as those he used to make against the Monarchy and the State) he had found an important place for it in his method of governing the party, shown by the discouragement of the Ras, or active leaders, from doubling that function with an electoral mandate. By this he hoped to create two classes of subordinate leaders: one in Parliament, without power; one outside, without legal prestige, in between whose jealousies the power of the inner clique at Milan found security. But when, after the death of Matteotti, the majority of the

Parliamentary opposition refused collaboration with him and his and retired to the Aventine, Mussolini revived his old scruples about democracy and promulgated the beginnings of his anti-Parliamentarism, which is now one of the chief rods of the Fasces. As he had appropriated all the literature in favor of violence, and all that has been written against the liberty of the working class, so now he easily discovered plausible reasons against the Italian Parliament. It was corrupt, it was inefficient, it did not suit the historical-economic conditions of the country.

But it was for precisely opposite reasons that Mussolini was in reality impelled to abolish Parliament. The Matteotti affair showed that it was not corrupt enough in any case to accept communion with a man who avowed his responsibility in that murder. Unrepresentative as it was, it was too important a critic of his regime to be left standing. So controversy for and against the institution *I parliamenti* with or against Mussolini, seems unnecessary. The attitude of Fascism toward the liberty of the press is equally a practical matter; the newspapers were suppressed first to stop their tongues, and the theory that the enlightenment of the public on the news of the day was too important a function to be left to private enterprise came afterward and is not worth discussion.

There is no serious doctrine in these things, nothing but bad faith and practical manoeuvres. The Fascist Syndicates, now alone allowed a legal existence, whose head had dared to appear at Geneva as the representative of the Italian working class, were the result of another practical necessity of Mussolini. With the unlimited funds at his disposal in the repression he had engaged many thousands of artisans, out of work or adventurous, and these as well as the blacklegs had to be provided for. So he constructed the first Fascist Syndicates, in which he drafted the mass of this sort of his followers. By arrangement with the employers, positions were found for these men, often displacing whole factories of those whose submission was uncertain.

As the movement prospered, interest as well as fear brought thousands more into these bodies until the Government was able to substitute them entirely for the independent unions. It is perhaps more than mere cant that is in Mussolini's mind when he declares that these Fascist unions are the future of the party, for although at present they are nothing but the ropes on the neck of labor, which their old leader has delivered into the hands of the capitalist class, it may well be that Mussolini has some premonition of a day in which his own and the employers' interests should not be quite the same, and on that day he hopes to use the Fascist Syndicates as a weapon. Mean-

while, we shall see what the advent of Fascism has done to the standard of life of the worker.

In short, the whole baggage of Fascist theory, its nationalism, its royalism, its gospel of violence, its anti-Parliamentarism and its denunciations of the liberty of the press, its hierarchy and its history of the Pelasgian stock, are not clauses in a social theory, but sophisticated word-spinning around the incidents of an energetic and unscrupulous man's march to power. The lessons of Fascism to the world are not in its poor and presumptuous theorizing, but in the deductions which we can draw from its objective existence: thus, that in our present economic system an industrial conflict is likely to turn into a coup d'etat, and that a modern state can be held up and exploited and kept quiet by a band of adventurers.

Fascism is a social disease, a fever of the body politic, brought on by disorganized industry and general depression. There is no more a doctrine of Fascism than a doctrine of smallpox.

There still remains to be examined the Gentile educational reform, which Mussolini has declared to be the "Fascissimist of our achievements." This Prof. Gentile is a respectable Hegelian, a sort of lesser Benedetto Croce, whom ambition or temperament led into the Fascist fold. He is the chief of the excessively few Italian intellectuals who not only have yielded to Fascism but actively supported it. His reward was a license

to remodel the schools of the peninsula to his heart's desire.

The detail of this reform is excessively technical. Properly to appreciate it the critic must have a large knowledge of the conditions previously in existence. In general it appears to be a centralization akin to that attempted by Napoleon. The rights of examination are taken from the faculties and put into the hands of the Government. Latin is restored in the middle curriculum and the functions of the universities are tampered with and specialized.

The kernel of the thought that animates the reform, however, is the decision that henceforth religious instruction and patriotism become compulsory in the elementary schools. "We will put back the portrait of the King and the crucifix on the walls of the village school." Religious instruction is no longer optional.

This throughout the Continent of Europe is by convention a sign of reaction. Gentile intends that no further free-thinking Socialist Mussolinis shall be formed in the elementary schools. It shows both that the regime intends to try for permanence by the tendentious education of the children, and that it has made a definite choice of conservatism. The bid for the favor of the Church in offering to make it the instrument of this policy, however, has not met with as much favor as was expected: "the Church

is no longer reactionary," as Guglielmo Ferrero says, "but legalitarian."

In such a program the history class and textbooks become of supreme importance. All textbooks are henceforth to be chosen from a list supplied by a central commission. One of those particularly recommended for schools is "Breve Storia d'Italia," by C. Rinaudo. It might also be commended to those who wish to understand the future Italian generation's attitude to the rest of the world. In this little book Italy's true glories, her painters and writers, are strung together in long lists of names and dates; their patriotism is the only side of their work which the author thinks worthy of comment. On the other hand, whole chapters are reserved to Masaniello, the Genovese street arab, who started a massacre of the Spaniards with the throwing of a stone; the Sicilian Vespers, which wiped out men, women and children of the French occupations, and the many other similar affairs and heroes in Italian history.

The somewhat provincial dynasty of Savoy and its fortunes form the thread of the book and the entirely false theory that the whole of the past is a development of Italy toward its natural frontiers is put forward throughout. A fifth of the book is devoted to a panegyric of the war, exploits of individual soldiers, etc., and, while no mention whatever is made of the League of Nations, the peace is summed up as follows:

"But the Serbs, whom we helped in the war, with the Croats and the Slovenes, rose up to balk us at Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia, assisted by our faithless allies."

Mussolini, in the end, who had "merited well of his country," succeeded in wresting Fiume from this conspiracy, restored order in the land and "sent Italy on the path of its great destiny."

CHAPTER V

MILITIA, ARMY, KING

The Voluntary Militia for National Safety is Mussolini's trump card. Like all other Fascist things, it was first made under pressure of practical necessity, and then philosophized upon. It was formed by royal decree, Jan. 14, 1923, out of a selection of the Black Shirts who had marched with the Duce to Rome—obviously with the intention of keeping them under arms for the defense of the coup d'etat, a permanent nucleus of club-men.

But in the deeds of a really practical man there is never one that only serves one purpose. In the militia, Mussolini was not only able to keep the pick of his bravos under his hand, but he could reward them for past services, and he could put a necessary discipline in what was always in danger of staying a mere mob.

Further, it set at his disposal a number of remunerative and showy jobs as officers with which to reward such of the minor leaders who had helped him who had no aptitude for politics, or for the enticing prospects of business which power enabled him to lay before the rest. At least as much as the pay, which was assimilated to that given in the army, was the attraction of a

uniform, which to certain types of mind and education is the most potent of all.

Almost the first step of Mussolini, before the organization of the new force had been settled, was to invent a uniform for it and its officers; a somewhat unsuccessful attempt to combine that of the most envied service in the army and the Black Shirts' romantic rig. Their fez of the Byronic Corsairs was changed for a small busby of fur, the black shirt was covered with a grey-green regular tunic and British Sam Browne belt, and the question of medals was thoroughly gone into.

The fanciful grades of Roman history revived by d'Annunzio were retained: centurion, senior, consul, etc.; and instead of private soldier, the rank and file were to be called "Black Shirts." For the rest, after an exciting period of marching and parade, the force slipped into the dreary and monotonous garrison life of ordinary regiments. Military discipline was installed, and still more, military routine. As soon as the organization was completed, detachments were installed as garrisons over the whole country, where they still vegetate in barracks.

To the whole-time, paid militia are attached squadrons and legions of occasional members and officers, who are employed in civil life and only appear to swell the numbers of the militia on feast days and riots. These latter receive no pay, but get reduced rates on the railways and other

administrative privileges at the expense of the taxpayer.

An important part of the force is that detailed for railway and port service, by which Mussolini insured that the communications should remain in his hands. The business of this railway militia is usually ticket collecting, espionage or "surveillance" of the non-Fascist personnel, the examination of passports and other police duties. Many unskilled workers who had followed Mussolini were rewarded with such positions, and those who obstinately refused to follow the "new religion," as the Duce pleasantly calls it, were dismissed to make room for them.

On most stations a detachment of these railway militia is housed. They are all armed and come under the general direction of the Commander General of the Force—through him under the hand of the Central Power. There are about 700 active officers of the whole militia, most of them ex-officers of the war army, and 7,000 of the militia reserve, which implies an effective force of about 200,000 men.

In September, 1923, a new use opened for the militia than that of passively waiting for the rebellion of the nation. The Royal Army was held to the home country by the war scare about Corfu. Troubles among the natives in the hinterland of Tripoli suggested to the authorities the creation of a Libyan Legion of the Militia, to which the more ambitious and noisy members of the

force, such as fretted under the inaction of the garrisons, could be transferred for active service. This rapidly developed into a colonizing scheme, under which farms and a small capital were offered to militia men after they had seen active service. It had little success, but made yet another item in the somewhat meagre list of advantages held out to the professional Fascist of the ranks.

Such, in the words of the official panegyrist, Gen. Vittorio Verne, is to-day the Voluntary Militia, "grandiose and original phenomenon." It is the principal arm in the hand of the dictatorship, both against the opposition to his rule and in the internal dissensions of his party.

The army proper, henceforward called the Royal Army, has its own attitude toward this new force. From the first the establishment and organization of the Fascist Militia were watched with silent jealousy, mixed with discreet contempt. The officers of the Regular Army by tradition are conservatives and royalists above all. As a body they doubtless followed with approval the violent persecution of the workers and their trades unions by the Fascists. But the creation of an army in the militia, potentially rival to theirs, under the absolute command, not of the King but of a politician, was displeasing to them. The new officers of the Fascist Army, though they had gained their rank in the war, were not regulars, but "civilian soldiers." The same mixture of dislike and a curious contempt toward them as regular "peace-

time" officers hold toward temporary officers created in the war in other countries is to be seen in Italy.

Fascism, to the regular officer, is a little "lower class," or at any rate, middle class. These officers of the Regular Army saw the high hand of Mussolini toward other vested interests, his ruthless extirpation of civil servants to make place for his own nominees. They feared an attempt on the almost hereditary offices of their class. To meet this feeling, a potential weapon for his adversaries—not the workers but the conservatives, who, especially after the Matteotti affair, showed avowed hostility to the Duce—Mussolini followed a policy of conciliation toward the Royal Army, which took the shape of reserving the highest employment in the militia to regular Generals, and, during the normalization period, of a promise to put the force more really under the King.

From the 4th of August, 1924, the oath of allegiance to His Majesty was imposed on all recruits to the Fascist Militia. This, in the words of Verne (*La Milizia Nazionale*), "removed the possibility of a doubt as to the constitutionality of the young organization."

But prudent measures were always taken by the Fascist Party that the regular officers chosen to command the militia were always those who had openly professed sympathy with Fascism. So

that the force remains pretty much as directly and entirely at the service of Mussolini as before.

This temper of the army is undoubtedly one of the few external checks on the ambitions and actions of Mussolini to-day. Inside his party, he has to reckon with the natural insubordination of the rank and file and lesser leaders. The tone, almost apologetic, of the proclamations of Italo Balbo to the wild Fascists of Florence, whom he was sent down by the Central Power to tame after the Florentine massacres, shows how delicate the authorities feel this problem to be. But outside the movement there is no independent force except the Royal Army. Even this is entirely a passive phenomenon; no opposition need be expected from it except in the improbable case of an open attempt to touch the Dynasty.

The Royal Army officers as a class are not pro- or anti-Fascist, simply pro-Dynastic. Mussolini's intention, shown by the "recommendations" of the last meeting of the Grand Council, to proclaim himself something more than Prime Minister, the logic of his situation pressing him to take in name as well as intention a life Dictatorship, has therefore to accommodate itself to the attitude of the army. It is a huge, inert obstacle in his way; his future history depends on the manner in which he circumvents it. At present he contents himself with making friends. As Minister of War the handling of promotion is in his hands. But to change an old esprit de

corps, founded on tradition and social feeling, is more difficult than to corrupt a mere class.

This logic of events is Mussolini's inner law, not mere pre-planned theory or ideals. He follows his luck, instantaneously adapts himself to events. To change from republicanism to a fervent royalism, we have seen, took him exactly two days; it appears that before the war his conversion from neutralism to interventionism was equally rapid. It is one of his fascinations that he plays life in the style of a great gambler, on a system that he composes as he goes along, just following his luck. Some obstacles he bends round. Some he absorbs. Some turn him at right angles to his course. But none slacken either his speed or his momentum. It is this clan vitale, which has something of Mother Nature herself in it, that raises him immeasurably above his rivals and his friends.

There are many in Italy who can move a crowd as well as Mussolini—d'Annunzio for one. Many who have at least as much energy and organizing talent, and an immense number who have the advantage of moral conviction which Mussolini entirely lacks. His education is that of an unpersevering audo-didact, and he has curious lapses of taste and common sense. Such was his extraordinary way of cultivating personality on his first access to power, in which, beginning with a perfectly impossible pair of Napoleonic riding boots and a horse for which nature never gave him

that long body to ride, he engaged in a diverting plan in which a determination never to be photographed without a scowl and a protruding of the eyes was grafted on just such another zoological scheme, as Battling Siki's manager thought of for his unfortunate protege—the public petting of lion cubs.

Whenever Mussolini descends to theoretical thinking he errs in this way. Theoretically his sudden elevation to supreme power high over the heads of a nation demanded that he should impress his personality on them in a simple memorable form; but the lion taming, the riding boots, the fur cap and the tragic scowl were mistakes. Without all this make-up no one who has once seen Mussolini can forget him. He is not a statesman, or it could be said that he is the only modern European statesman who could stand in the same room with a Napoleon Bonaparte and attract attention by his figure and face.

Not one of the ambitious mediocrities with which fate has surrounded him affords any interest for the eye; not Farinacci, whose masterful scowl is an imitation of his chief's worst manner; not the lean and puritanical Michele Bianchi, the gross and pharmaceutical Gentile, the too Bohemian Italo Balbo, or the swashbuckling mustaches of the stout de Vecchi.

I have seen Mussolini many times; on one occasion he was leaning out of a window whipping up a dispirited crowd of Fascists at a country town.

He was obviously a sick man. One of his eyelids droops, and he is short and stocky, but he sent out positive electrons of force far beyond the radius of his voice. It is this personality that any examination of Fascism must reckon with. Its history is nothing but the record of his decisions. Its theory painfully waddles after his acts. Its future is likely to stop when his private luck falls out.

Some of his enemies have complained to me that it is impossible to beat Mussolini, because (they believe) he changes his mind every day. Some of his acts, indeed, have no more apparent meaning or cohesion than a bad breakfast could explain. Certain of his major persecutions have started like that, as suddenly as an explosion of bad temper. But, nevertheless, there is a main current in his career, the constant search for power and popularity.

It does not in the least imply because the Grand Council has called on him to assume the title of Life Dictator, and that call was directly inspired by himself, that he will pursue the matter. Tomorrow some less dangerous honor may appeal to him; his eager acceptance of the Collar of the Annunciation that gives him almost royal rank and allows him to call the King "cousin" is one of many signs that his taste for ancient titles is as keen as that of any other Italian, as that of d'Annunzio himself.

It is true, but hard to believe, that he might

be sidetracked with some more aristocratic title. Naturally, he intends, and he must intend, to stay in power as long as he lives, which term, as I have said, it is more probable will be settled by his undermined constitution than by an assassin's bullet. His formally expressed intention of so doing would not alter the affair a jot; Mussolini to-day, however long he lasts, is a Life Dictator.

What does it matter if he rules with a mock Parliament, or none at all? It is out of the question that he should attempt to alter in any of his titles the position of the King; the question of the monarchy would not only find the army solidly arrayed against him and his down-at-heel militia but would split the Fascist movement itself, as it threatened to do in 1921, into two very unequal halves.

On one circumstance only could a higher title than Prime Minister be claimed and accorded to Mussolini—that of a successful war. The possibility of this must be seriously examined.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF FASCISM

The foreign affairs of Italy are inextricably mixed with the phenomenon of Fascism, from its beginnings. But for the enthusiasm of Mussolini for the war he would never have been ousted from the Socialist movement; but for the disillusionment of his countrymen over the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain he would have formed his ex-combatants' union on a different program and spirit.

But for the disgust on the evacuation of Dalmatia by Nitti and the bombardment of d'Annunzio in Fiume by Giolitti, Mussolini would never have captured the aid of the middle-class youth and the Arditi against the Socialists.

These are the most direct of the influences of foreign affairs on Fascism's fortunes. But, granted that economically Fascism is a large experiment in strike-breaking for the account of the big employers, psychologically, behind all its bemused theorizing, it is at heart a jingo, expansionist, imperialist movement.

Mussolini appealed to the interest, the snobbery, the romance of youth. They would never have followed him if he had not also known how to play on what is known as nationalism.

This form of human vanity, whether or no it was invented for Italy by Napoleon Bonaparte, is at the present day with gambling in the lotteries the strongest passion of the Italian nation.

Far more than the material loss of the barren Dalmatian coast and the mediocre seaport of Fiume, in its paralyzing effect on the whole of Italian life, was the horrified shock to their nationalist feelings of not being treated at the Conference of Paris as the superior or even the equal of the United States, England and France. The jokes of Clemenceau, the rebukes of Wilson, and the haughty silences of the English delegates brought tears of rage and shame to millions more than Orlando.

Unkind reminders of Caporetto, unkind silences over Vittoria Veneto in the French press, these prostrated the energies of the big Italian industrialists and the peaceful citizens of Milan and Turin more than fear of Buozzi, when they sat back and allowed an unorganized horde to raise the red flag over their town-halls. The fight of the possessors to master the situation pretty closely follows the turns of the d'Annunzio adventure in Fiume which alternately exalted and discouraged their minds.

Mussolini caught the middle classes before they had quite succumbed to the horror of the poet's final undignified retreat. His very first promises were not only to chase the red flag from the streets but by this means to begin a "forward

policy" of expansion which would do more than accomplish the poet's dreams of a new Roman Empire. He marched and raided, not to the tune of "God Bless the Squire," but to that more heady "Evviva l'Italia." Fascism is an industrial movement, but it is clothed in the raiment of jingoism.

Consequently, the Foreign Office, not the Home Office, was the first charge assumed by Mussolini. He made many promises; that made to the Nationalists really mattered.

To a foreigner this is one of the most curious aspects of modern Italy. In England patriotism is usually concealed under a deprecatory form and has certainly lessened, with experience of active service, among all but the aristocratic, General-Staff members of the nation. Kipling in his admirable Stalky has exactly explained the shyness with which even the middle-class English think of their flag.

In France, though more subject to spasmodic general outbreaks, patriotism is regarded as the possession of the conservative and reactionary parties, though a discreet quantity of it is considered respectable; and its most characteristic symptom, xenophobia, is general, showing that there are reserves beneath. But in Italy it is a devouring, a general passion, perhaps because it is not a hundred years old.

The majority of Italians, high and low, are allowed by the history they are taught in their schools to indulge the wildest theories on their

racial difference and superiority to foreigners. To them the modern history of Europe and the world centres around the rather depressing attempts of Mazzini and the liberals at the Court of Savoy to put Venice and Palermo under a Piedmont Government with its seat at Rome.

The mass of Englishmen were induced to enter the war, not because of the economic advantages falsely anticipated by their betters, but with a vague idea that this was the last war. The mass of Italians calmly and deliberately entered, against their alliance and a foe whom they dreaded, with the sole wish to attain "historical" frontiers, the mastery of the Adriatic Sea.

Hence, compared with Mussolini's foreign policy, all the incidents of his tyranny are secondary to the mind of most Italians who are not actually beaten, ruined or robbed. Hitherto he has satisfied them with uncommon cleverness. The first move on his accession was confidently expected to be the declaration of war against "that horde of half savage pig-herds"—the Serbs—as one Fascist writer (Fanelli) expresses it.

Instead Mussolini arranged a clever treaty which allowed him to offer Fiume to his nation peaceably. But extreme patriots are never satisfied with a peaceful arrangement. It is a mystical passion that demands something more than barren advantage. The smallest frontier skirmish would have pleased his countrymen more than the treaty he achieved. It was doubtless for that

reason that he conducted so violently the petty incident of Corfu. In this he not only offered them blood, but the feeling that they had defied the whole world.

This factor by itself would undoubtedly have led Italy into a war, probably with Greece, possibly with France, before Mussolini's seat was warm. But there is another. If the continuance of the fire of Fascism demands an expansionist policy, the circumstances of Italy do not permit of this being for the present attempted.

Mussolini and most Italians are perfectly aware after the experience of the last war that an attack on any of the greater dislikes of Italy, France, the United States, England, Jugo-Slavia is quite impossible. There is no coal, no iron in Italy, no gasoline, and she does not produce enough grain to feed herself.

Secretly, behind the doors of their squad meetings, a war is promised against France "when the time is ripe," and this sort of talk occasionally leads to orgies such as that recently by the Fascists of Ventimiglia, who paraded the streets for hours before the French Consulate, shouting for the annexation of unredeemed Corsica, Mentone and Nice. And on at least one occasion minor leaders have permitted themselves open menaces to the English for their continued stay at Malta. But the responsible men, with their arrival in power, have dropped such public talk.

Italian expansion at the expense of these formidable powers is indefinitely postponed.

The essentials of Mussolini's foreign policy for the present, therefore, are a constant watch over the prestige of his country. The important part of his share in the Lausanne conference to his own people was that he kept Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré waiting for two hours, and forced them to pay him the first call. Among the minor victories of this sort is the incident in which Afghanistan, whose Emir owns some seizable property at Rome, was forced to concede some thousands of dollars for the killing of an Italian workman in Kabul.

It is on the whole a policy of bang and bluff, though various commercial treaties have been advantageously, and without much publicity, put through by Mussolini's advisers in Big Industry since his advent. But it is not these on which Mussolini makes any claim to his countrymen. The vague promise of a war some time with some one and the vigorous assertion of the rights of Italy to be treated as a dangerous power are his principal holds on the admiration of his fellow-countrymen.

In one respect, and an important one, this policy seems to have led the country into a false position. It is a commonplace of Fascist writers that "We have 8,000,000 Italians abroad whom we must protect." The improvident breeding of families in Italy, particularly in the

South, far beyond the powers of the country's economy to support them, is indeed one of the gravest problems of Italy.

Every year before the war a number, variously estimated as between three and five hundred thousand persons, were forced to quit their country and emigrate, principally to America, North and South. Although this number, from external causes, has probably abated (if we do not count the two hundred thousand workmen, who fear and dislike the tyranny, sent into exile, most to France), the emigration problem is one very much to the fore in Italy. It is one in which the frenzied nationalism of the Fascists is peculiarly unhelpful.

These emigrant families, though of an admittedly low level of culture and of a standard of life inferior to most other Western European nations, were in the main energetic, law-abiding persons, of the greatest use to the States in which they were received, especially in the pioneer rough work.

A complaint frequently made against them, however, was the proportion of them who obstinately refused to be assimilated, sending all their earnings to the home country, to such an extent that this "emigrants' contribution" is one of the essential parts of the Italian national budget; and even transporting themselves, once they had acquired enough to live, back to their own country.

But never before Fascism had this trait been

officially approved and, indeed, enjoined as a duty. In the recent Congress of Fascist Unions from Italian "colonies" resident abroad, speeches were made and papers read to this purpose. One of them is worth quoting—it is from an interview with the Hon. Bastianini, one of the foremost Ras of the movement, in the official organ, *Popolo d'Italia.* He says:

"The army of our emigrants abroad is an unmeasurable force, if in spite of the necessity that makes it an exile from its fatherland, it can still keep with us in communion of spirit."

Around this text Giuseppe Rossi, in the official review of the Fascist movement, builds up a great plan in which Italian schools, clubs, propaganda of every sort serve to the end "of keeping for Italy all her children." Even those of the second generation, even those who have only one Italian parent.

Such a policy, which Fascism now toys with, on the brink of adopting it as official, is of obvious interest to those countries, the United States, Argentine and Brazil especially, and France, who have hitherto had the expectation that immigrants into their territory would, in a large proportion, become assimilated.

I would never willingly say a word that would add to the sorrows and difficulties of other exiles, but it is necessary to point out clearly that this illegitimate hope of keeping every one of Italian blood, wherever he may be, a citizen and an

outpost of the new Italian Empire, of dissuading him and his children by every means from merging in the life of his new country has semi-official approval by the present Government of Italy.

During the recent reception of the representatives of Fascist clubs in foreign countries, there was also talk of the duty of all Italians abroad to see that no business conducted by one of their number fell into foreign hands. In fact, a separatism, "to bind all the little Italys indissolubly to the Great Mother" which could only have as result special measures of precaution taken by other Governments wherever immigrant Italians in compact groups reside.

The fault in this case cannot be laid to the lack of logic or reasoning powers of Fascism. It is a *necessary* consequence of that raving nationalism which Mussolini built into its base.

There may be states so geographically, economically situated that they may indulge, without too immediate harm to themselves, in periodical orgies of racialism, as there may be men so physically strong that alcohol has no bad effect on them, or so rich that they can with impunity break all the social conventions. In plain fact, Italy is, of all the states in the world, the one which can least afford aggressive nationalism. The hundreds of thousands surplus population who are forced to emigrate into countries which not even the dream of a d'Annunzio could figure for one

moment would ever be united under the Government of Rome, is one of the reasons.

Italian nationalism, like all others, must tend in the final direction of war; but Italy of all countries is the least able to wage modern war, for she is all coast line and has no coal, iron or petrol. By these two natural disadvantages she of all nations has the most to gain from peace, the least from war; the most to gain from the weakening of national exclusion, the most to fear from a spirit of frontier. Yet it is exactly this country to whom Mussolini proposes a violent militaristic jingoism as its hope and destiny.

In almost every speech he and his Ministers hint at one of those aggrandizements of territory that would somehow enable Italy to share in the rapacious supremacy of 19th century Europe over the world. The obvious delicacy of the question does not allow any one of his listeners to ask him: "Where? Make war on whom?"

The nearest coal field is the north of France, the nearest organized petrol supply is Roumania, the nearest empty ground for colonization, if we except Tunis and Algeria, is British Central Africa. That these vague threats and promises are directed against France is the common opinion of the rank and file of the Fascists. But even a Fascist Ras knows that a war of spoliation against the strongest military power of Europe, across the cut-throat corridor of Ventimiglia, the worst front for an attack and the best for de-

fense in Europe, when the circumstances would almost inevitably put all the moral support on the side of the enemy, is an impossible enterprise.

Mussolini held back when he had the excuse to attack Jugo-Slavia in her mountains; how much more should he tremble to invade France, even if the now dim memory that this very Italy was only achieved by the bayonets of the French does not hold him back? As Guglielmo Ferrero acutely remarks, this blood-and-thunder nationalism is an anachronism horribly out of date. "The militarism of Europe of the 19th century lies prone, forever ruined."

The fortification of the Dodecanese Islands, the insistence on the navy rather than on the army as the nation's necessity, and the mysterious secret treaty with Russia, all seem to point in the direction either of Greece or Turkey as the designant victim of Mussolini's last throw. From Greece there would be little but glory to gain; but the long rich and defenseless coast of Asia Minor offers prospects of occupation, if the main of the Turkish Army were held up in the hills of the hinterland by a Soviet attack, much as the coast occupation of the less tempting Tripoli was achieved.

Smyrna would offer historic and romantic attraction to Italians and no interference from the other maritime powers of the Mediterranean need be feared or any coalition of European

opinion against the authors of the Christian expulsion and massacre.

To those who think any alliance with the Soviets and the Fascists incredible, it is only necessary to point out that a treaty, the clauses of which are not all known, already exists, and has aroused no more than a passing comment, either in Italy or abroad. The spectacle of Italy as the power on the most friendly terms of all others with Russia does not shock Fascists; it pleases them as a witness both of the originality and the self-confidence of the Fascist regime.

The terms of cleverly begrudging admiration of the personality and talents of Mussolini by Russian leaders are eagerly printed and read in Fascist organs. For at the base of their psychology is a terrible itch for admiration from foreigners, an unquenchable thirst for praise and appreciation, which is too coldly summed up in the word "Prestige."

If the Big Three had remembered that, the history of Italy would have followed a different course.

CHAPTER VII

FASCIST FINANCE

It is naturally in finance that Fascism will show what is deepest and most real of its nature. Also, in this matter, the boasts of Mussolini have been longest: "We have saved Italy from Bolshevism by our clubs, from bankruptcy by our ascetic brains."

This great work was at first intrusted to de Stefani, a man with a well-established reputation for dullness, which the quick imagination of the party press immediately transformed to one for the kindred virtue of honesty. The honesty of de Stefani became in a short while a by-word. The Philo-Fascists took an embarrassing habit of saying: "Well, at any rate no one can say anything against de Stefani. He is not even a convinced Fascist."

This hope lasted for some time. The periodic attacks on the Finance Minister by the extreme wing of the Fascist Party, rather reassured and confirmed his reputation to the man in the street, sickened with the leaders who killed Matteotti.

De Stefani had time to produce budgets, to claim a restoration of the balance, then in a sudden flurry of the exchanges, which refused to be cured by his "honest" attempt to shut the

stock exchanges, he disappeared. His place was taken by one of the regular men, Count Volpi, whom you have seen in America, a man with a flair and a lucky hand.

Leaving the study of de Stefani's most famous attribute, which in other countries we are rather apt to take for granted, not only in a Finance Minister, this trustee of the first Fascist budget was very much what he appeared to be—a man more silent than deep, a tool rather than a master of intrigue, who accomplished his work in the mediocre faith of a somewhat deficient science.

With the strong prejudice against Fascism of the majority of the intellectual classes, it was not necessarily by design that Mussolini was forced to ask a man to administer the finances whose economic and financial science was neither up to date nor extensive.

All the changes and lessons that the war had brought about in this field were unknown to de Stefani, whose economics stopped at Professor Gide and whose knowledge of finance had atrophied at Stanley Jevons. Like Helfferich, who ruined Germany without compunction or doubt, de Stefani was an advocate of *laissez faire*.

There is no better screen for men who know better. Firmly rooted in a theory, which had the invisible postulate of a pre-war manufacturing bourgeoisie, the financiers and industrialists

behind Fascism could work at their designs better with de Stefani than with a knowing fellow capable of understanding them.

This unconscious passivity of de Stefani could be matched, I think, in many other of the Fascist leaders, who from lack of education rather failed to understand the use that the men behind were making of them than consciously served their deep ends. Thus Farinacci, who has a confused belief in Syndicalism, always professed the greatest respect for de Stefani, who published confused attacks upon it; obviously neither understood the other, nor could make himself understood.

Massimo Rocca, who pursues de Stefani in his book "Fascismo e Finanza" as a full-grown weasel may a rabbit, thinks that if de Stefani had had the strength of mind to follow his own doctrine he would not have favored any one class and would have made Italy a free-trade country.

But there was a strain in his character, as so often in fellows of his sort, that hung on to power with an almost incredible faculty for concessions, so that Italy only in minor clauses has to suffer from his particular feebleness of doctrine.

In other words, the industrial and financial powers behind Fascism used him to the top of their bent and never found him disobedient until he became nervous with the approach of his fall. The protection of the heavy steel industry, a

war-born disease in the economy of Italy against which Giolitti measured his strength and fell, was revived or perpetuated. So also with the sugar duties.

To de Stefani's serviceability are due also those economic agreements with Germany that saved the Italian heavy industry, which Germans did not fear, at the cost of the fine mechanical production, which could hurt them in competition.

In the financial situation de Stefani was a mass of contradiction. He first attempted an unreal deflation, which looked well in the lay press and did not injure the interests of the exporter and active capitalist; he withdrew from circulation 860,000,000 of paper notes and paid for them with the same amount of Treasury bonds bearing interest, the reverse of the process which Caillaux in France struggled hard to be permitted to do. But as there are more than 20,000,000,000 lire of paper in circulation, the operation was not worth the long and fatiguing defense of it attempted by the Fascist press.

The previous year, in his budget of June 24, 1924, de Stefani had loudly praised himself for doing the exact contrary, calling in 1,387,000,000 of Treasury bonds and paying for them with 73,000,000 lire from the war damages budget and with 654,000,000 of paper money. With the best will in the world, one of these operations, both announced as proof of Fascist soundness in finance, must have been wrong.

In this 1923 budget also figures that cornerstone of Fascist social finance—the abolition of the legacy duties; against this, exclusively benefiting the possessing classes (reckoned as a gift to them of 200,000,000 lire yearly), there was set 188,000,000 of tax on agricultural profits, to come out of the pockets of the small farmers. This social bias is the clearest directive of all de Stefani's finance.

Counting up the announcements and decrees that preceded the budget of 1924, relating to new taxes and adjustments special to the Fascist regime, it will be found that of twenty-four, thirteen were to the unique interests of the rich, nine to the advantage of the middle classes, only two, and these doubtfully, to the interests of the working people.

This question of the effects of Fascism, both political and economic, on the lot of the workers is so big that it must be treated by itself. Returning to the question of paper money, on which Fascism has more than any other based its claim to have saved Italy from bankruptcy, the following figures put this in its true light:

Total emission, including state emissions in December, 1920 (when the maximum was reached), 22,000,000,000 lire.

Oct. 31, 1922 (date of Fascist seizure of power), this total emission had been reduced to 20,000,000,000 lire.

It had thus been reduced from its 1920 max-

imum at the rate of 70,000,000 lire a month without Fascism.

The Fascist Government continued this operation; in fourteen months they arrived at a reduction of 805,000,000 lire, thus 57,000,000 only per month.

December 31, 1923, it therefore stood at 19,675,000,000 lire.

In 1924 this process, without any more music, was stopped, and

June 30, 1924, it had returned to 19,942,000,000 lire, and October 31, 1924, to 20,533,000,000 lire.

That is, after two years of Fascist salvation, the amount of paper money in circulation was 53,000,000 more than where they found it. Alarmed at this, de Stefani reduced the circulation in a lump by 1,000,000,000; which intemperate action certainly had a share in the financial crisis that brought about his downfall. In April of 1925 there was another augmentation to 19,300,000,000 lire.

This was accompanied by a catastrophic descent of the lira that not only wiped out the boast of the Fascists that they had stabilized it, but neared or beat—I have not the exact figures—the worst days of preceding regimes. From this they were saved by a Morgan loan of $50,000,000, which brought the lira back to the present figure.

Before his fall de Stefani took the strange measures known as the "March and April de-

crees" against the Stock Exchange, in which there is a world of lessons about the Fascist mentality. These, in substance, deprived the agenti di cambio, those semi-official brokers who have bought the right to deal in Government stocks and who form the backbone of the stock market in France and Italy, of all their acquired rights, without appeal, thus perpetrating one of those retroactive measures that less vigorous legislators shun and casting the whole share business of Italy into a state of paralysis.

This measure, if it had been allowed to stand, would have utterly ruined a class who are supposed to represent the flower of the higher bourgeoisie; an intervention of the big banks induced Mussolini to reduce the sentence to only a nominal meaning, above the head of his Minister, whose fate was henceforward sealed.

On the monetary side of the budget, Fascism, which was to achieve the middle-class dream of a revalorization by deflation, appears then to have failed. They, like their predecessors, were reduced to that easy profit of inflation which was without hypocrisy pursued before them.

In the great question of the railways, one of the foremost on Fascism's list of reforms and one of the greatest of its claims to have merited well of the country, there are more criticisms and rectifications to make. When they took power the deficit on the State Railway was 1,300,000,000 lire. In 1923 de Stefani claimed to have

already reduced this to 906,000,000 lire. But in this figure was counted a saving of 600,000,000 in the price paid for coal, which had nothing to do with the Fascist Government. Therefore, in spite of the excessively severe treatment of the railway employees, the net result attributable to a year of Fascist Government was the bagatelle of 300,000,000—exactly the sum spent on the parade of Corfu.

During the period of 1923-1924, when the Fascist responsibility for the situation is fuller, the situation is apparently in their favor. The deficit, in fact, is reduced to 298 million lire. Here, it was said, is the proof that a strong hand with the workmen, a Government that is not afraid to dismiss tens of thousands of parasitical workmen in a good business spirit, proved itself successful when all other systems failed.

Examine the figures more closely; it is a method that pays with Fascist balance sheets. The employees of the railway system were reduced at a stroke from 209,672 to 175,200. There were 54,260 summary dismissals. The wage bill was thereby reduced by 56 million lire, only 1,032 lire annually for each man discharged. This obviously had little to do with the extraordinarily satisfactory saving effected of over a thousand millions. Can it be that the spectacular brutality of turning 54,260 men into the streets, with certainly illegal refusal of pension or compensation—one day to be re-examined when legal-

ity comes back into its own—had so little justification?

The progress from 906 to 208 millions in a year, that is, reckoning out the saving on the wage bill, a reduction of deficit by 552 million lire, is due in part to the increase of traffic natural to the economic situation, in which the Fascist Government's share is problematical, and to the simple device of vast and dangerous reductions in the provision for upkeep and contribution to reserves. Those who wish for a more detailed examination of the extent to which the Fascist finance resorted to this tricky bookkeeping to make out their advantage in the working of the railways are referred to an article by the expert Repaci, published in the *Stampa* December 25, 1924.

This vigorous method of dealing with "hidden" liabilities is typically Fascist; and whether under Fascist control of the railways, the increased politeness and hours of work of the railway employees to first-class passengers quite compensate for the breach of the law of 1908, which settled the margin of safety of sums to be spent on the upkeep of the line and the rolling stock—is a matter which travelers in the "renovated" Italy must decide for themselves.

At any rate, it is clear that for a man of rigid and old-fashioned principles de Stefani showed a remarkable knowledge of the arts of the company promoter in the composition of his budgets.

Thus he is criticised for not having openly included in the passive side of his accounts any proper provision for the definite liabilities of the state toward the reconstruction and reparation of public works caused by the war, or private war losses, or the ex-soldiers' mixed assurance policies, or the civil servants' pension fund, and of having by this, and the means examined before, put forward a statement of public finances showing far too optimistic a view of Italy's circumstances.

Massimo Rocca, accordingly, sums up the real situation when he writes: "A budget in equilibrium; yes, on condition some one pays ten billions of internal latent debts for which no provision is made and which figures nowhere in the balance stock."

In Count Volpi, who heads the debt negotiations for Italy in America, Italy has a man of an entirely different stamp. Volpi is first and foremost the man of the Banca Commerciale, and betokens that the long-standing coldness between Toeplitz and Mussolini has ended; the terms, the meaning of the reconciliation, are obviously matters on which we must not seek to know more.

From one important point of view the Banca Commerciale is negotiating the settlement of the American debt, supported by the Credito-Italiano. But the character of Volpi is worth studying in itself. All his life there is observable an

exquisite sense of timing—of which the favorable moment for the present trip, immediately on the heels of the disappointed French, when the American commission would be only human if they were rather more anxious than usual to come to an agreement, is the latest example.

Five months ago Volpi would have led a forlorn hope; now, one of Fascism's leading opponents observed to me moodily, "His usual luck looks like holding out to the end." Volpi is a brisk, confident financier, without a trace of the superannuated theorizing of de Stefani or his moral pose.

Italy will have a clever next budget; it will not alter one jot the present burdens of the under dog—what else is Fascism in power for but to uphold the hierarchy of possessor over lackpenny! And it is possible—for the real home of sound traditions in finance is in the great banks and not in the minor universities—that it will contain less tricky manoeuvres than the work of that honest dullness that went before.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SLAVE STATE

A movement that gained its footing in the violent quashing of the right to strike could not be expected to do much good to the workers. This is one of the promises that Fascism has fulfilled without shuffling or propaganda. In one obvious respect the Italian workman is worse off than any other west of the Vistula; he has neither the right to strike nor to combine in his own organizations for a minimum wage or a higher rate for overtime.

The Fascist rise was an incident in the class war, and the victors have had no hesitation about imposing indemnities and reparations. The Italian workman has to pay in full for the mistakes, the weakness, the quarrels of his leaders, for his own extravagant hopes, for his inconstancy and lack of education.

Lello Gangemi, official harpist for the Finance Department of the Fascist Government, in his monumental "Politica Economica e Finanziaria del Governo Fascita," notes with a dreadful irony that since the advent of Mussolini emigration has looked up. In France it is estimated that from two to three hundred thousand workmen took the small roads over the frontier to

escape the clubs of the victorious Fascists and the heaven for plutocrats they had started to make.

Those who remain must envy this unofficial emigration, though the censorship stops them from seeing any exact figures of comparison—which could only add to their misery. Instead, whenever another of the numerous jumps in the cost of living occurs in Italy, the governmental press compose imaginative tables of statistics in which the additional burden on their own proletariat is optimistically compared with a parallel situation abroad. All more objective statistics are rigidly barred from publication.

The following table, composed with none of the preoccupations of those made by the Fascist journals, is drawn from figures published by the Labor Bureau of the League of Nations. The first figure in each column is that of wholesale prices, the second, cost of living:

	1923	1924	1925
Czecho-Slovakia .	1024-921	1045-907	1009-914
ITALY	536-487	553-512	685-599
France	418-334	488-366	542-390
Germany	... ...	122-166	133-136
Austria	... ...	... ...	204-134
Russia	169-172	172-214	188-219
Spain	172-175	183-190	191-197
Switzerland	169-174	169-171	160-176
Sweden	163-174	162-171	161-176
England	158-171	166-171	157-173
United States...	154-170	150-169	157 ...
South Africa ...	126-131	128-133	129-131

In reckoning these prices in their relation to the depreciation of paper money in those countries where the phenomenon is present, this table in itself would place Italy low in the scale of the increase in the cost of living—reckoned in gold—with Sweden and Switzerland at the top as the countries where the gold cost of living is highest. But such a trick, common enough in propaganda three years ago, is now too shallow to be worth while, even in Italy. Not the gold cost of living, but its relation to the income of the individual, will show the real state of affairs.

	Prices for Italy		Wages
1922	Wholesale	Retail	in Italy
First six months	517	503	515
Second six months	542	498	505
(Fascist accession, Oct., 1922.)			
1923			
First six months	539	495	480
Second six months	531	493	476
1924			
First six months	545	517	474
Second six months	562	538	480
December	593	580	485

These figures are those of Mortara, the Italian authority. They show beautifully the effect of Fascism on the Italian worker, the sudden slump of wages and the sudden rise in wholesale prices, soon followed by a similar rise in retail prices, and a further drop in wages: as well as the slowly mounting cost of living, in spite of the "salvation of the lire," which was

during 1923-24 the loudest boast of the regime; and the slow and painful increase by pittances of the wages granted by the employers.

Such a table would be depressing if the pre-war wages of the Italian workman had been high. They were notoriously among the lowest in Europe, and even at a parity between the rise in prices and of that in wages he would still be only an inch or two above bare existence.

To see this it is only necessary to glance at another table prepared by the Labor Bureau of the League of the "real" wages of workmen in representative industrial cities of the world. Those of London have been taken as the norm—100. The figures in the first column reckon only foodstuffs, the second take into account the cost of lodging also.

Philadelphia	198	198
Sydney	151	151
Ottawa	165	148
London	100	100
Copenhagen	94	97
Amsterdam	86	86
Oslo	83	85
Stockholm	74	72
Paris	66	67
Brussels	66	60
Berlin	64	62
Madrid	55	..
Prague	59	54
Warsaw	47	50
Milan	46	49
Lisbon	34	46

This shows first, that the wages of the United States and Australian workers are almost double those of London. Western and Central Europe, including even the conquered countries, keep in a third group above 50, and only Portugal seems to touch Milan in the position of paying the lowest wages of the civilized world.

There is another less common index of the condition of the masses which I have been able to find, and which amply bears out the above figures—the amount of pledges in the State pawnshops (Monte di Pietà) the bankers of the poor. This stood at 174 million lire in October, 1922, when Fascism came into power. In April, 1924, it had risen to 224 millions, when almost every lira meant a missed meal among the poorest of the poor.

Taken again the figures of the savings banks. Six billions were saved in Italy between June 30, 1920, and June 30, 1921, when Fascism was "battling to save the country." Between June 30, 1922, and June 30, 1923, this suddenly descended to 4 billions, in spite of the new inflation.

With the conditions of the proletariat necessarily bound up with those of the small trader, the index of bankruptcies usually throws some light on the powers of the worker to buy meat, groceries and clothes. The monthly mean of failures in Italy was 589 before the war, in 1913-14, which were times of great business depression in Italy. Such figures almost always

represent the state of business of the preceding year, for obvious reasons. Thus that of 1923 represented not the state of small business under Fascism, but that of the last year of the Fascists' "ruinous" predecessors; and the monthly mean was 474. For the first year of full Fascism, 1923-24, this rose to the record figure of 611 monthly for the full year with a maximum of 700 for the month of May.

To end this summary examination of the economic situation of the working men and clerk class under Fascism, it should be recalled that very few get more than 20 lire a day. The least meal taken in a restaurant in which meat figures (other than horseflesh) would amount to 8 to 10 lire in the large cities. A room in a third-class hotel is difficult to find under 20 lire nightly, which sum may be taken as barely sufficient for bread and macaroni for a family of four. Italians have large families.

During all this period the class warfare of the workers against the capitalists had ceased. But that of the bourgeoisie against the workers had only just begun. Profits increased enormously (see the tables of stock values used for propaganda by the Fascists), but wages went down and hours increased. Full use was made of the regulation against the minimum wage and against the increased pay for overtime. In some regions sanitary regulations were dropped in factories, and the employment of minors, dangerous condi-

tions, etc., old evils that every one thought dead, were revived in the favorable climate of Fascism.

Those workers who had taken much part in the Red troubles, in many cases, were forced to flee, leaving everything, and to get over the French frontier on foot to avoid the Fascist Railway Militia officers at Ventimiglia. Their unions were dissolved or forbidden to meet, their reserves of strike pay and sometimes of mutual insurance against unemployment and sickness were seized or administered by a mock Fascist syndicate for the exclusive advantage of their conquerors. Nor are their lives and small belongings safe now except by tolerance. A different law rules in the working quarters and in the residential of the great Italian cities.

Taxation, we have seen in examination of the de Stefani's budget, followed the same policy. Taxes on articles of common consumption increased—those on sugar and coffee. But in the case of luxury articles, jewels notably, all taxes were abolished. The tax on wine, owing to pressure from the stalwart Fascist landowners of the South, was totally abolished, at a cost to the nation of 460,000,000 lire. But the price of the product remained the same.

Everywhere there is evidence of the merciless, exorbitant, perhaps rash exploitation of the power which they have in hand by the possessor classes. It is almost as if the great banks, the great landowners and the industrialists felt as if there was

something temporal in the situation, however solid and lasting it appears, and that they were in a hurry to suck the last drop of good for themselves in the shortest possible time.

It is possible that had the workers won there would have been similar remarks to make against them, at any rate for a time. But then, workers, we are always told, are uncouth creatures unfit to rule.

There is also that little matter of patriotism. These millions of Italians, now reduced to a slavery for which there is hardly a parallel in Europe since the beginning of the industrial era, have among them thousands of those whose devotion and abnegation are weekly praised by Mussolini and a spangled staff of officers in the unveiling of war monuments. To these slaves belonged the vast majority of those hundreds of thousands of war dead to whom Fascism in the intervals of helping itself often alludes. These toiling, frightened millions, kept by Mussolini in the bread line at the end of a club, have not even the old right recognized by the worst bandits to scream out their protest. . . . It is not a stable situation.

CHAPTER IX

THE ENEMIES OF FASCISM

The news of Zaniboni's plot against the life of Mussolini, the first one for almost a year, reminds one that not all Italians are tame.

The incident does not seem in itself of great importance. Whether it was a genuine plot we must wait for the court evidence, and afterward, to decide. All the reported facts, except those uncontrollable—that the man was found with a rifle pointed—are against this view.

The angle of the Dragon Hotel window and its distance is such that if Mussolini had followed his almost invariable custom and spoken to the crowd from the window of the Chigi on the Piazza Colonna and not from that which looks on the Corso, Zaniboni would have been unable to see him, much less shoot him, as there would be a corner in the way.

The tremendous rapidity with which the photographs of the room were circulated to foreign papers also is queer, given that these do not show a "gun in position," as was claimed, but only a broken shutter. The number of traitors and informers, for moral motives evidently, is also remarkable—though it will not astonish those who have lived under the Fascist regime. Quaglia,

the sister, one knows not who besides, all seem to have rushed to the police with the first details that unhappy Brutus confided to them.

Granted Zaniboni was badly served by his friends, there remains the extraordinary aptness of the moment for Mussolini, to whom it gave a long-awaited excuse for suppressing both the Free Masons and the Moderate Socialist Party,—two purely formal operations if you like, for months before both associations had been practically proscribed,—but nevertheless necessary to make a tidy end.

When Mussolini, some time ago, began for the first time to thunder at and menace these Free Masons, the first thought that came to every one conversant with European politics must have been: "What, is the Grand Orient still alive?"

For Continental or Atheistic Free Masonry has long grown very old and tame. In the days of Combes in France it had its last importance. It was from its ranks of country apothecaries and schoolmasters that he drew most of the organizing power of his attempt to separate the Church and the State. But even then it had grown to be a countrified thing to wear the apron of the Grand Orient, and its share in the mighty traditions of Danton and Clootz had grown very far away.

In Italy, as in France, by insensible degrees Masonry had become a debating society for the lesser state employees and radical middle classes,

in which doctrines were debated of theoretical rights of man as arid as anything in its great enemy, the Church. A social club with an unmatched ritual for the survivors of a very old-fashioned state of mind.

What could there be in this to arouse the terrible hostility of Mussolini? First, and least, that he has some old private reasons for hating them, some story of his youth when he knocked at all doors and from this one was turned away. But though human enough to take all the amazing opportunities of revenging himself, and showing gratitude, which a dictatorship offers, Mussolini would hardly have touched a huge society for private spite alone. Naturally, as to his other reasons, the official statements of Fascism are of no practical interest.

These summed up are that the Grand Orient is a secret society, and Fascism, the New Italy, etc., cannot tolerate any such barbarous relics. The real occasion of the conflict was the jealousy of a sisterly or step-sisterly rite, of which most of the members in office were Fascists of high standing. But underlying this support of a powerful section of his own men, in an internecine wrangle between the so-called Scottish Rite and the Grand Orient, was a general fear that the old edifice might serve again, as it had served in the past in France, in Turkey, and not least in Italy, in the Risorgimento, as a Temple of Liberty. That is, that the Radical Deputies of

the Aventine might find the oaths and loyalty and the tradition of democracy and liberty still preserved there, a rallying point and a roof for their plans against the Government.

Lastly, one of the most important activities of Fascism, to make place for its zealots in safe jobs in the Administration, both as rewards for past services and as the promise of others, was seriously troubled by the existence of the Grand Orient lodges, in certain cases uniting all the members of a Ministerial office in what became a brotherly trade union. Mussolini's proteges complained that the brethren boycotted them and made their places socially and professionally unpleasant.

So Free Mason lodges, first attacked by insidious menaces and incitements to the Black Shirt gangs, then sacked, looted and their members maltreated—in Florence this went as far as mass murders—and now, on the pretext of this plot, formally closed. Their possessions will be dealt with afterward, as those of the trades unions were.

The whole object of Mussolini's strategy toward his political enemies is to keep them separate, to prevent them from meeting together or communicating in any way. They must never be allowed to count themselves. In a sense the abolition of the liberty of the press is only a clause in the general forbidding of the right to meet together. Mussolini learned to his cost in

December, 1924, what slackness in this precaution could mean to him.

Then it was touch-and-go that the comparative liberty of the press he had granted in order to wash out the impression of his own complicity in the Matteotti murder, by allowing a right of criticism, did not overwhelm him and his system. Mussolini acts as a warder who has to guard a prison full of captives. He does everything in his power to keep them separate.

He has to the best of his power isolated every man in Italy who does not agree with him, and to make the security double he has gagged them all. Those who still imagine, misled with the repeated reading about immense crowds at Fascist ceremonies, enormous receptions for the Duce wherever he goes, and the rest—all perfectly true—that Fascism, apart from the minority of numbers it admits, still holds a majority, or even a respectable minority, of the sympathies of the country, might work out this puzzle: Why, then, should Mussolini carefully, brutally remove every possible opportunity and occasion for this opinion to express itself, or even to find itself?

Systematically every association of more than ten persons in the country has been either suppressed or put under Government control. I have been told, with a bitter smile, that in certain villages of the South, a reading circle for self-improving home studies was brusquely or-

dered to appoint a Fascist named by the local Fascist Mayor as its Secretary or dissolve.

Wherever two or three are gathered together Mussolini sends a Fascist to take charge of the funds, the program and the discussion.

The war censorship was meticulous. I remember once the British press censorship at the front cut out the word "excellent" in a war correspondent's statement, "In the conquered trenches our boys seized a number of excellent German cigars." But the Fascist censorship is beyond anything in jealousy and suspicion that the war censors could imagine. They see harm in an account of a football match, in a dog show.

When it is a question of figures or statistics of almost any kind they take the safe course and blot them out. At the last moment, to settle some doubt, they often come in and seize a whole edition to make surer.

By every possible means of intimidation and falsification, Mussolini secured at the last elections an overwhelming majority. But less confident in this than his own propaganda, even with such a Chamber of nonentities, and paid hacks of the party, who, apart from the party that put them into their seats, are nothing whatever, Mussolini is distrustful of his Parliament. Every month we have hints that he intends to abolish it, as he has abolished the Syndicates, the Free Masons, the combatants' associations, as he cannot even leave to a gagged and hopelessly in-

timidated press their right to elect their own President of their professional association. This happened on October 25.

The Associazione della Stampa, which has its headquarters next door to the Palazzo Chigi itself, has a membership of over 1,000. One hundred and fifty-seven Fascist journalists demanded that one of their number be elected to the Presidency; the non-Fascist majority refused. The Prefect of Rome then sent three officers to take possession of the minutes and books and intimated that he himself would carry on the interim of the society.

It is in fact the press above all other factors which Mussolini fears—and which he is determined to keep stifled. This policy also extends to the correspondents of foreign papers at Rome, who find it impossible to perform their duties properly under the present regime, as if Mussolini were determined that even the press abroad shall feel his hand.

This anxiety about the foreign press which, in spite of all his powers on the spot, escapes him, is one of the most curious and significant preoccupations of the Fascist regime. Perhaps the only check, however nebulous, on his persecutions is the fear of what the foreign press will say.

One of Fascism's best lessons—which all are unintentional—is the enormous importance of the press and its liberty to the common interest. With the press censorship, the power of disasso-

ciation, the principal defense of the tyranny, is already almost complete, the rest of the dissolution, vetoes, assembly laws are comparatively details.

With a gagged press, Italy is helpless even to think of revolt. Even if she had leaders ten times as energetic and determined, without the press she could not rise against the tyranny. Ballot boxes, Constitution, all the other safeguards of liberty and law, are as useless as straws if the press is silenced.

The worst feature of this is that the suppression of the press in a modern country is appallingly easy. The huge presses, the elaborate services of reporting and circulation, the huge circulation itself, make the newspaper peculiarly defenseless against a tyrant. One hour's work at the *Corriere della Sera* by fifty ruffians would stun the paper into forced silence for a month, possibly forever.

No work of leaflets, limited editions of news sheets such as pass from hand to hand in certain circles of the Italian cities to-day, can make up for the shutting down or shutting up of a newspaper with a circulation of a million. Once in power, a Government by gag, such as we have under observation in Italy, can be certain of immunity against anything less than a general insurrection of the people, for the Government possesses the tanks and the machine guns.

The days of barricades are gone. And this universal rising is rendered completely impossible by the easy suppression of the great newspapers. That is a problem Fascism has shown us which interests the whole civilized world.

The titular opposition leaders here come into the question. Many of them, Orlando and Nitti among them, are already in exile, having fled in a well-founded fear of their lives. Mussolini and his Council are at present discussing means of wreaking their vengeance on the properties and possessions these fugitives have left behind.

The Garibaldi brothers, whose somewhat reckless attempt to create an organized opposition in the ex-soldiers failed last year, hover in and out of the frontiers according to circumstances. The rest of the opposition, including the old Giolitti, whose kit of instruments of government and power the Fascists have seized and are using, is decrepit, without a policy, without a following, without enough moral standing even if it had the means to call an oppressed nation to revolt.

Don Sturzo, the Gandhi of South Italy, is in London, but does not shrink from the empty gesture of a return into his enemies' power from time to time. Amendola remains in Rome, beaten within an inch of his life on several occasions, daily threatened with death; a stout, serious, unscareable man. Many other journalists emulate him in this passive, difficult, honorable, civilized courage: thinkers, writers accepting the martyr-

doms of a career that will give no corresponding triumphs.

The political opposition already has succumbed to Mussolini's measures and to its own lack of leaders and even a program. The old hands hardly dare to call a nation to a heroic rising. The weight of their own past weighs on them. How could a man die, or Giolitti dare to ask a man to die, for the restoration of his old comfortable, inglorious regime? A new leader must come with no need to blush and stammer when he speaks of liberty and justice. There are spies and informers and fanatics waiting at every street corner to kill him at his first speech.

Wherever one looks for opposition to Fascism in Italy one sees only passivity. A passive public opinion, frightened and ignorant. A passive and neutral Army, round a wary Court. A passive, paralyzed political opposition. A passive hostile press. A passive, utterly conquered working class.

To these must be added another passive institution in opposition, the Church. From time to time, even now, its semi-official newspaper, the *Osservatore Romano,* allows itself more open criticism than any other dares. But here, too, is observable the fundamental weakness of the whole opposition in Italy; the Church, too, suffers from the strategical drawbacks of a middle position.

Against Fascism the attack must come from a single-minded quarter. The Church cannot pro-

duce this. Indeed, the days in which the Church appeared to be the upholder of a simple reaction are passed. In politics she is neither royalist nor revolutionary, but simply "legalitarian."

When Mussolini began the Vatican helped him by discouraging the P. P. I., the Peasant-Christian Party of Don Sturzo, and thereby hamstrung the strongest part of the opposition. She did this because this Sicilian reformer's methods were illegal, because like all strivers for ideal justice he fell foul of human laws.

Mussolini has made great efforts to convert this first aid into an alliance. The Vatican will have none of it.

His Minister Gentile has restored the crucifix to the elementary schools. The Church would prefer its own liberty in education.

Mussolini has attacked and abolished the traditional enemy of the Church, the Free Masonry of the Grand Orient. The Church has disapproved of his illegal methods in so doing.

And now, when the Grand Council is beginning to lay a greedy hand on the numberless insititutions of thrift and benevolence which the movement of Don Sturzo grew like tempting fruits about itself, the village savings banks, the insurance funds, the Church's protest grows louder and more determined.

At certain points there are unavoidable intersections of the general policy of Mussolini to dissolve all other social nuclei than the Fascist

clubs with his desire to conciliate the Church. If there were really a theory of Fascism, the existence of the Church itself, international, legalitarian, rich and independent, would be a dangerous anomaly to be abolished.

Shrinking from that, Mussolini is still obliged to suppress and prosecute the Catholic clubs which, even when not tinged with the "dangerous" democracy of Sturzo, form too dangerous an exception to his policy of leaving no spot where men can talk freely together, to be tolerated. Catholic clubs have been broken up and sacked exactly as the Socialist clubs were, and at this, the Church uttered the most open protest that Italy has heard since the press was blanketed. Its dignitaries are forbidden to appear at Fascist ceremonies or to appear, in preaching, to give any support to the Government.

That perhaps is the furthest any body of men in Italy dares at present to oppose the actual regime, which, like a jailer with all the keys hanging at his belt and revolver in hand, paces unquestioned up and down Italy, as in the quiet and sullen corridors of a vast prison.

CHAPTER X

THE CONQUERED SOUTH

The grey, cold, uniform conquest of South by North—that is a true picture of the history of the last century in Italy as the intelligent Southerner of Naples and Palermo sees it. Successive Governments have had different mottoes: Cavour talked about Order, Giolitti about Democracy, Mussolini talks, loudest of all, about Fatherland. But they all went to work in the same way south of Rome, for the same end, the exploitation of the backward agricultural South by the vigorous organizers of the North.

Each had his promises. Cavour took the Southerners in by putting forward the fiery Republicanism of Garibaldi, which he suppressed as soon as it had served. Giolitti promised little but a whole skin; Mussolini has more imagination. But no one of these Northerners ever shrank from force when necessary, neither Cavour, nor Giolitti, at whose elections in the pre-war days it was unsafe for men of the opposition to go into the streets; nor, naturally, Mussolini. It would be strange if in the native land of propaganda and the Mafia the apostle of the club could not outdo all his predecessors.

No one certainly has ever found a different

plan for dealing with the problem of the South. It is a museum of all the abuses since the early middle ages, from feudalism to carpet-bagging, the land that has never recovered from the Saracens and the Norman raiders, the land which has no water and no roads. The population has a larger percentage of illiterates than Spain. They also supply more than half of those emigrants to America that Mussolini intends to turn into outposts of his new Roman Empire.

For this reason, and because Fascism's manner of dealing with this South, this gangrened, paralyzed foot of Italy, is the final touchstone of its pretensions, I went to find a part of the truth in Naples.

To the Southerner, then—before the March to Rome and to a great extent still at the present day—Fascism is one more manifestation of the Northern conquest. Until Fascism had grown fat, there were few Fascists south of Rome. On its own boasts it had nothing to do with the South; if it was anti-Communist, how should that concern them, where Communists were almost as rare as factories.

Until he took the power the thought of the South hardly entered Mussolini's head, except perhaps as one of those luscious perquisites of power and office that he promised himself. It is true that he had accepted subsidies from the great landowners of Calabria and Sicily as he had from those of the Bolognese plains. And,

in return, he had sent divers commissioners and squads of bravos to help them in their troubles with the peasantry.

But to show how far he regarded the South as out of his sphere he invited the Popularists of Don Sturzo to join him in the formation of his first Ministry. For the Popularists were the only idealistic movement in the South and the negation of all that Fascism stands for, from the subjection of the poor to the rich to the profession of holy violence itself.

It is not accidental that it is hard for foreigners to form a clear picture of the Popularists; there is something local about them and their leaders which has no counterpart in the rest of the modern world. Their leader is a priest, a Sicilian; he is an extraordinary mixture of the most absolute disinterestedness and the deepest political opportunism. Setting out to make Catholic Christianity a practical policy, he has both the wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove. His party was brought into being by the new attitude of the Pope to the State, which took away his temporal power; and it is essentially Southern.

The abstention of the Popes from Italian affairs played into the hands of their enemies. It almost disenfranchised the South. When the Church finally allowed its faithful to vote, to the surprise of all, even the high dignitaries of the Church themselves, they of the South chose this

Sicilian priest and his mixture of democracy and separatism to represent them.

Undeterred by the fate of other clericals who have tried to put the Sermon on the Mount in the statute book, Don Sturzo in a few years swept the South. When Fascism arrived in power, this was the man and the party Mussolini tried to capture into friendship—the white Bolshevik, the Home Ruler, the man who wished to restore social justice, peace and mercy in Italy.

The end of the incident and the beginning of a forward Fascist policy in the South was Sturzo's clever, disastrous manoeuvre at the Congress of the Popularists in Turin, which shattered all Mussolini's plans for settling down quietly at the banquet of power and, as it turned out, also Sturzo's political existence. In his rage the Dictator, from that hour, made Popularism his main enemy, and determined on its extermination, which led not only to Sturzo's disgrace, through Fascist pressure on the Vatican, and his exile, but the bringing of the cudgel to the South.

Mussolini, in this new conquest, drew his army from the Southern junkers, those who had old relations with him during the peasant seizures of land. His own militia and volunteer rowdies, he put under the command of one Aurelio Padovani, a war Captain, sprung from the working class, half educated, one of those Fascists who, finding no program or creed to believe in, contented

themselves with a fanatical following of the personality of their leader.

With Padovani's advent as the unofficial Viceroy of the Fascists in the South, Mussolini had once more run into one of those impossible contradictions of policy, due solely to lack of imagination and foresight, which are as frequent in his career as zigzags in the course of an intoxicated chauffeur and of which we have had many other examples.

Padovani was brutal enough, obedient enough, even for the tastes of the Grand Council. But he happened to believe that Fascism was somehow sincere, that it was a movement at any rate anxious to make a change, if only to dispossess all who were not sincere nationalists. This was destined to clash ludicrously with the other plans of Mussolini, which were simply to crush the Popularists, and later the adherents of Giolitti (after the Matteotti affair), and to exploit the South in the opportunist manner of his predecessors.

"The Fascist Party did not understand that Padovani interpreted for himself, perhaps consciously, perhaps without putting it into words, that the only reason for the existence of Fascism was an opposition to the transformism, opportunism of other Governments." Guido Dorso, *La Rivoluzione Meridionale*.

At the beginning the difficulty was not evident. Padovani brought the club into Naples, his sub-

ordinates took it to Palermo, to Brindisi, to every town and every large village in the South, and there, with all the usual accompaniments of killing, beating, assault, intimidation, childish fanfaronade, closed the mouths of the opposition, broke up all possible kernels of free thought and free association, terrorized the press, installed Ras over the whole region.

At the close of this period, to his astonishment Padovani found himself in the position of many of very different education and society, whom he himself had no doubt helped to drub and suppress, the Fascists of the Moral Revolt. The fate of Forni, Misuri and the rest menaced him, when he, like they, began to see the moral corruption of the place-seekers, office jobbers, speculators and crooks of various sorts, with a conviction behind them or not, that Fascism left on the beach after its first tide had passed. He was rash enough to try to push them out of the situations they had found for themselves. Padovani's purifications led to the most extraordinary confusion, for it added for months yet another faction to the civil commotion. This ended, quite inevitably, by Padovani's expulsion from the party "because his intransigeance was 'against the spirit of the party.'" (Guido Dorso, *La Riv. Merid.*) After his fall the partition of the spoils went on peaceably, as in every other region.

The consequence of this vast operation was summed up by Don Sturzo: "The proconsulism

of Giolitti famous for the names of de Belli and Peppuccio Romano, Cirmeni and Corradini, is only a shadow compared with the overlordship of these beardless Fascist Ras, who have found the help, the guidance, the direction of the rotten old men who have redeemed their past with a black shirt."

Characteristic details are that de Carnazza, ex-Liberal, now Fascist Governor of Sicily, took into his service the celebrated Mafia, and the hardly less redoubtable Squadra del Baltico, for whom he found much employment in the elections.

"To the Mafia Police, the Camorra Police he added one thing more—the Club. Oh, Sacred Liberty of the Big Stick, that made all those breathe again at ease who live on the petty abuse of local power and suddenly become invulnerable as if they had found the magic ring, or met that magician who used to give an infallible sword to his favorite paladins." (Sturzo on the elections of April 6, 1924.)

This brief survey must be accompanied by some account of the economic side of the event. Those shrewd fellows of the Confederazione dell'Industria, the factory-owners' organization in Milan, whose generosity is visible, though discreet, at every stage of Fascism's progress, through Benni and Olivetti, managed to induce Mussolini and the Grand Council to accept 25,000,000 lire for the purpose of the Party in its conquest of the South.

Evidently this is no small sum; it may be supposed that in the Government of this South the old-established economic interests of the North were not in return forgotten. The characteristic of these economic interests is that in the two regions they are completely opposed. The South needs free trade to enable it to buy machinery as well as the manufactured necessities of life; the North, whether it needs it or not, has, and intends to have, a rigorous system of protection, by which all foreign price cutting for the trade of the South is barred. Fascism, by which the Northern industrialists conquered their own workmen, serves them in the simpler enterprises of keeping the South in its profitable misery.

It is clear that Fascism cannot do anything but harm to the South. Fascism is essentially an arm of the possessing classes; the South is the fief of the great landowner. Fascism is protection; the South must have free trade. Fascism is centralization; the South requires home rule.

But these incompatibles do not stop Mussolini from posing as the willing and only possible saviour of the South. He has promised her everything except the three essentials: Reform of land tenure, free trade, decentralization. Forgetting in the heat of such moments that one of his principal engagements to his employers of the North is that he should reduce taxation and public expenditure, by taking for himself the credit for public works which his predecessors began, made

provision for, and pledged the country, he has bravely made a show of benefaction to the South.

Thus the great aqueduct of Pugliesi, begun before the war, which he was bound to continue by the only contract that he recognizes—one with the banks and the manufacturers—is hardily boasted as a first fruit of the Fascist regime. "Honest" de Stefani, his Minister of Finance, in one of those curious exaggerations he allowed himself at times, claimed the Fascist Government, "unlike its predecessors," was going to be generous. He approved no less than 15 billion lire for railways, water supplies, agricultural banks, etc.

But this "decree of the 15 billions" not only spreads the spending of it over ten years but conceals that more than half of this sum is a mere consolidation of sums already allotted by former Governments.

"To present such a decree as a new Fascist generosity toward the South is therefore a real and certain bluff" (Massimo Rocca. *Fascismo e Finanza*).

Like the Fascist trade unions, like their militia, like their expansionism, like their budget reforms, and all the rest of their schemes and boasts, it is a first-class bluff. One of the most sympathetic traits of the Dictator is that he never takes it for granted that any statement of his will be believed, but hastens to add to it as soon as it is uttered, as a street auctioneer adds to the

"gold" watch he is offering a lovely solid chain, and a fountain pen and a china ornament.

So Mussolini, if you do not believe the Fascist Government made the aqueduct of Pugliesi and found 15 billions of lire out of their marvelously balanced budget, adds that the problem of the South is largely a question of energy and will, of which the party has much to spare.

As a first instalment of this greater gift to the South, he has appointed, not ordinary directors of public works, but "provveditori," supermen from the inexhaustible treasury Fascism claims to possess, granted special dictatorial powers over everything in their district: laws, municipalities, man power, finances, with rigid instructions by any means to drain the malarial marshes of Maremma, to build railways, restore roads and bring water to every farm.

In practice this means promotion for the already established Ras, those "beardless chieftains under the influence of the corrupt old local politicians," of which Don Sturzo complained. Their new quasi-divine powers and attributes will be taken as a sinister pleasantry in the Duce's most-to-be-feared manner, rather than a radical change in the situation.

CHAPTER XI

THE FASCIST INTERNATIONALE

Propositions for a Fascist Internationale have often figured on the agenda of the Supreme Council within the last year. The chief himself possibly dislikes the subject, but his youngest, most trusted followers are boldly in earnest about it. Complacent cables from London, Paris, Berlin have convinced them that their movement is appreciated and admired abroad. In this they see the first opportunity of that world mission which is as integral a part of Mussolini's promises as world empire, and both as attractive and as difficult. The days when Marsich and Grandi, with poor Professor Gentile, hoped to discover a plausible theory of Fascism for exportation have indeed passed. But many foreigners, without waiting for full enlightenment, have in various countries made for themselves a Fascist creed and converted themselves to it. This faith, though it by no means comprehends all that Fascism in the home of its birth means, has the missionary merit of simplicity, and it satisfies the thinkers and doctors in Italy as a rough and sufficient statement of their fundamental idea: that the middle-class youth should tame the working class for their employers. Such a gospel might well rival the

extension of Communism, to which in its simplest form, that the workers should kill out the employers and their allies of the middle class, it forms a pure antithesis. But its severe simplicity, in practice, is too narrow to combine the generous youth of fifty nations: no foreign Fascist movement can confine itself to its limits, any more than the Mother Church of Mussolini does. A creed, however, simple and attractive, whose founders are its first heretics, cannot really suffice to a world religion. How indeed are we to understand "middle-class youth," if Mussolini, the self-educated day-labourer, is to be its archetype, or Farinacci, the railway-porter, who is not "educated," even by himself, whose illiteracy is one of the few humours of the regime? Or how can the miscellaneous society of ex-lawyers, line-journalists, speculators, whose advantage from a pure Fascist regime is more public if not more real than that of the factory owners of Milan, be reckoned as "employers," even by act of faith? Obviously all the classes named in the creed must be extended; it must be understood in the form: all middle-class youth (of the right sort) helped by workers (of the right sort) must help employers (of the right sort) to tame workers (of the wrong sort). This inevitable importation of a criterion, social, political, almost moral, above the pristine simplicity of the distinction of class, has, if not ruined, made extremely difficult the reality of a Fascist Inter-

nationale. For the only possible common interpretation of "the right sort" among the Fascistible youth of the world is Nationalism . . . which indeed as we have seen was from the beginning that of Mussolini himself. No more inherently disintegrating idea could have been selected. It is not that Patriotism as understood by most Europeans has not several features on which there could be communion. For example anti-semitism in Germany, Hungary, France, and to a lesser degree in England, is a prominent symbol of love of country. But unfortunately on this which might have been an invaluable symbol for the whole movement, the Italians are indifferent. It is strange if you like but none the less creditably true that through all the history of Italian Fascism there is no trace of the easy sport of Jew baiting. With this and a few other less simple agreements, Patriotism has exhausted its common ground on which the brethren in an Internationale could meet; for the rest it is essentially of course, anti-internationalist, Xenophobe. To attempt even for a moment to make anti-internationalism the ground of an internationalism is a paradox which could only have occurred to men whose pride it is to be doers rather than thinkers. Patriotism is not, in fact, a communion but a general excommunication.

But still there are bodies of young men, not afraid of miserable logic, who call themselves Fascists, in most countries of Europe. These are

on terms, ranging from correspondence to expressed admiration, with the Italian party. Many of them—the English—imitate the uniform, and system of medals. That with advocacy of the coup d'etat in politics and personal violence against communists, trades unions, strikers of all sorts is the extent of the Fascist Internationale. It is probable that this will never have any more definite organization. Already only a certain tact in reading the newspapers keeps, for example, the admiration of the English Fascists fresh toward the Mother movement which aims, at any rate verbally, at the annexation of Malta. Or that of the French toward the pretenders to Nice and the Riviera Littoral, not to speak of the difficulties, unsuccessfully surmounted, of the French again with the brother Fascists of Awakening Hungary, who recently were caught at the business of wholesale coinage of French bank notes. In one recent case this acrobacy of love failed: when the German Racists or Fascists were confronted with the forced Italianization of the Tyrolese. Such incidents are obviously likely to become more and worse if Fascism increases; they are not "unfortunate incidents," but necessary consequences of the doctrine. However tempting to enthusiastic youth the spoils that Mussolini showed how to win for his followers, the loot of power, the treasure of office, however material and sane to the great employers of other countries appears the possibility he showed of an un-

limited reign of the rich over the poor, for which the name of Fascism stands, there is no bond in these things. Instead, if the wishes of all Fascist spirits over the world were realized, and their system established as a universal rule, they could look for in assured logic not a comradely Internationale of all jealousies, greeds and vanities, but an exterminatory war, which this time might exterminate even the munitioneers, which would amount to putting an end to our civilization.

But so far ahead no Fascists look; nor need we. Temporarily, in spite of the untoward friction that necessarily occurs when two Fascisms meet, there is a *spiritual* Internationale which looks to Italy; whose apologetics and propaganda play on those twin phenomena of the post-war: fear of Communism, and the discredit of Parliaments. We have examined the real share of Fascism in the "saving of Italy"; nevertheless the myth of the Red Dragon and the Black Shirt exists and must be reckoned with. Wherever the timorous burgher padlocks his shutters at night, there is a superstitious sympathy with the legend of Mussolini. The contempt for parliaments is at least as widespread in Europe. This last is sufficiently notorious to inspire half the political reviews of the continent with half their dissertations nowadays; it is the most important political phenomenon of the times. Of all explanations for it that of the Fascists themselves is perhaps the most obviously untrue. It is not cer-

tainly because of the weakness in leadership that democracies showed in the war that the institution of parliamentary government has lost the affection of nations such as the French; for after all it was the coalition of parliamentary states that won. Nor can it be that it is because government by the people is the least likely to withstand Bolshevism; for it can hardly have escaped the reflexion of anyone that the only Communist country is precisely that which was ruled by a Czar. The real meaning of the feeling is less likely to offer a text to a Fascist propagandist: this disaffection is not primarily and really against parliaments but against the State itself. It is not anti-democratic, but unconsciously anarchical. Indeed it has no deep philosophical implications; I mean simply that the European is sick of taxes and even more sick of tax-gatherers. Those who have followed the history of Europe for the last generation will have noticed an evolution through the natural workings of the parliamentary system in relation to the growing complexity of social life, toward the re-emergence of the State as a separate entity. In spite of the vote, the average citizen has insensibly come to regard the State, in which nominally he has a full share, exactly as the voteless serf thought of the government of his king: a high powerful, fixed interfering and somewhat hostile personality, which grips from cradle to grave. This remarkable reversion from the enthusiasms of self-gov-

ernment is partly due to the combined effects of universal suffrage and the general growth of population which has made each voter's share in the representative of his constitutency almost trifling and unreal. It is still more the consequence of the slow unabated growth of that vast body of specialized employees of the State, the fixed civil servants, named by a universal malapropism *bureaucrats;* forming veritable castes within the body of citizens. In some countries, for instance France, the number of these men (and women) amounts to over a million. In Italy there are more than 500,000. Naturally they are drawn from the mass of the nation, and most families of the middle class at any rate have some relative among them, but the fixity of their tenure, which is usually for life, their conditions of work, which rumour has it are agreeable, and the expectation they all have of a pension, relieving them from the chances and risks of the normal man's life, so difference them from him, that it is almost inevitable that they should come to be considered to form a separate caste, and to personify to him the State. The common man, before the war, in many countries had come to think of these *bureaucrats* respectfully indeed one by one as men who held desirable posts, but in the mass with a mixture of envy and resentment, as people living at his expense and on his back. He noticed that whatever the measure proposed in parliament by the deputies in whose creation he

had an infinitesimal share, it invariably resulted —sometimes its only obvious result—in some addition to the number of these *bureaucrats*. So with such further aggravations as the individual politics of each country added, the man in the street and in the field came to think of deputies and civil servants as twin manifestations of an organization apart from and above him: the State. After the war naturally this feeling became acute. The enormous load of taxes, in most countries without precedent even under the worst tyranny in their history, makes both the parliaments who vote the budget, and the men who have the collection and administration of it, as unpopular as any older regime. Angrily the merchant who would have, even taxless, a shocking difficulty in keeping his feet, counts the proportion of the levy he must pay to the State that is to be spent on the salaries of the unproductive *bureaucrats* and deputies, exempt from his own uncertainties and struggles for life, and curses them. But when it happens further that these *bureaucrats* are sensible enough to realize the force of their combined voting power, and by use of that power bring their own representatives into power, as in France to-day (1926) and in Italy before Fascism, the opposition is complete between "State" and "Private Person"; and we have the phenomenon under consideration. In claiming this "anti-parliamentarism" as support for their own theories, Fascists are therefore

rather more than usually mistaken. What the taxpayers hate most in the parliamentary system, they are certain to find doubled under a dictatorship, to whom is necessary not only a vast and well-paid civil service in order to reward its friends with places, but judging from precedent, an additional budget for a private army besides. Those who have more confidence than the Fascists in the public's reasoning powers may believe that if all this undiscriminating anarchism is to influence the regime under which we live, it is not in the direction of more dictatorships but rather in that of a vast shrinkage of state activities that our evolution lies: likely to be more noticeable in the budget for education and public health, naturally, than in that of armaments.

Both these factors of sentiment abroad, however, have been of little practical service either to the Italian Fascist Party, or Mussolini, or to his foreign policy of expansion. All the British Fascists of Hyde Park, or the Camelots du Roi, or the Hackenkreutzer, or the Awakened Magyars together could not influence a jot the veto of Europe on his Corfu expedition.

By a practical exploitation of more real resources Mussolini has succeeded in more than recuperating his losses in that affair. Particularly is this shown by the success of his representative Volpi in the debt negotiations with America and England. The latter was the most surprising and interesting. To be absolved by the British Treas-

ury for a sum out of all proportion less than that demanded from the French, less even than that offered by Russia and refused disdainfully, is more than good business; it is significant politics. It is a settlement that concerns nations that are not in any way directly interested in Italian or English finance, but who *are* intimately concerned with the foreign policies of both countries. On the face of it, the London agreement was a reconciliation between the British Conservatives and Mussolini after the quarrel which their predecessors the ministry of Ramsay Macdonald had with him over Corfu; at the expense of the British. But to both Turks and Greeks (who by coincidence have just submitted to a Fascist regime imposed by General Pangalos) the news of it must have been still more suggestive. Since the newspaper publication of the preceding chapter in which I referred to the ambitions of Mussolini in Asia Minor and the rudiments of a possible plan for realizing them, the position has developed in a way that well accounts for the increasing anxiety of the Turks. Almost fortnightly Mussolini has published a bellicose mysterious warning of great, Napoleonic plans for the coming year; though without an address, the Western Powers have listened to this with a complacency that shows that they have some reason to know the butt is not themselves. The Turks on their side hastened to sign a new agreement with the Soviets, in Paris during Chicherin's visit,

which may or may not assure the neutrality of the most enigmatic power in Europe in a struggle of which the foreboding grows general. Still more curious is the statement of Mussolini at the height of the wrangle between Britain and Turkey over Mosul: "that the matter could not leave Italy indifferent." No European chancellery troubled to ask the obvious "why?" Then followed the visit of Sir Austen Chamberlain to Italy. From this time those who know more about politics than finance were certain that the settlement of Italy's debt to England would be completely satisfactory to the Italians. Contemporaneously the attitude of the Turks, which was truculent in the extreme not only to the impotent giant on their southern borders but to the League and the opinion of the world, strangely changed to one of almost obsequious accommodation. These are facts, like the repeated denials of the Italian Press Bureau that large secret increases in the Navy are in progress. From them to construct a prophecy that the inhabitants of Smyrna and the Isles are threatened with yet another change of citizenship within a measured length of time would be as rash as all prophecy: even if the central factor were anything else but the essentially indeterminate quantity that is Mussolini. God be thanked not every war that was schemed and prepared for in Europe these last fifty years came to gun-fire. Sooner or later if you like (it is the lesson of history) Mussolini

like all dictators will be forced to make a war, and the only possible victim is Turkey—also Fascist after its fashion. For the moment the spectacle is simply informative and instructive: a typical manifestation of the foreign policy of a Fascist regime, its unexpected advantages and opportunities, as well as its quite simple tendencies—toward war. Such regimes to-day enjoy, in a homely metaphor, the advantages of the only Christian in a strict Jewish community. On a Saturday only he dare work. So in Europe to-day, only Fascist governments dare talk war; it brings them smugglers' friendships, and numerous discreet rewards.

This, then, as far as lines can express a phenomenon that is in much of its nature essentially fluid and mobile, is an outline of Fascism. Without Fascism our epoch of disillusion and decadence would be incomplete. If sometimes this sketch seems to point a moral or risk a judgment, out of step with the rigid impartiality I intended and which alone makes such studies worth while, it must be taken into account that any calm narrative of human affairs tends by its nature to have a flavour of condemnation. Whether Fascism has exceeded the allowance which all should give to a young movement, born of the deepness of a nation's despair and has become a danger and a scandal to mankind, is firmly left to the reader to decide.