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MUSSOLINI, PROPHET OF THE PRAGMATIC ERA IN POLITICS

THE public press, not only of this country but of England and of continental Europe as well, is full of current prophecies that the age of democratic liberalism is dead and done for. It is a phenomenon of curious portent, following as it does upon the heels of the late crusade to "make the world safe for democracy." The immediate aftermath of the war, which saw the expansion of the suffrage reach its apogee and extend even to the newly aroused Orient, saw also the imposition of the dogma of self-determination and of Wilsonian liberalism in international affairs. True, that doctrine underwent some curious metamorphoses in the actual peace settlements, but it none the less leavened the loaf. The League of Nations and the Permanent Court of International Justice stand as substantial witnesses to the power of this liberal spirit in international affairs.

At the same time, however, the unleashed powers of nationalism were beginning to feel their strength and, as Lloyd George put it, "to smash crockery" in international politics as well as in the international market of a *Weltœkonomie*. First it was tariff barriers; next it was exclusion or drastic regulation of immigration; then it was a series of incidents grouped about the oppression of racial or religious minorities in the new areas; finally, it was the old economic struggle for exploitation of "backward races", met, however, on their part by a new power of resistance to the domination of occidental control in finance and industry.

With some of these forces the League and the World Court can deal; with others they dare not interfere. But with the most profoundly deep-rooted cleavage of all, the explosive and disruptive forces of Communism, they cannot hope to cope. That is a struggle which must be fought out inside the nation, so long at least as Communism does not control enough nations to make a world crusade possible. And within the nation, Communism challenged the old machinery of constitutional settlement by proposing the dictatorship of a class-conscious minority in place of the older machinery of liberalism. Fascism, in combating it, has taken over its methods and its general philosophy of government.

The liberalism that fastened itself upon the parliamentary institutions of most of Europe was the outcome of that absolute faith in reason and logic which passed over into the nineteenth century from the age of prose and reason. The Philosophical Radicals, led by Bentham, were writing a new chapter in the history of government attuned to the first turning of wheels in the Great Industry. They were as convinced that the Utilitarian philosophy of government would assure men liberty through the reign of reason, as they were that the unrestricted march of economic laws made for a sort of divine working out of economic liberty. Give men freedom to elect representatives with limited terms, and the problem was solved. The end of government being the protection of the individual, representatives should be so hedged about with restrictions as to protect individual liberty to the greatest possible degree. Liberalism was an idealistic version of this faith. When Italy won its nationhood after the *Risorgimento*, it assumed as a matter of course the liberalistic parliamentary institutions that were in the very air nationalism breathed. Not Garibaldi, but Cavour shaped the dream of Mazzini into an actual form.

Now all that has passed into the discard in the new Italy which has sprung to life under Fascism. Fascism is a repudiation of the old logical Utilitarianism of the English Radicals of 1832 in favor of the older psychological pragmatism of Machiavelli. "Liberalism," says Mussolini, "is not the last word; it does not represent any final and decisive formula in the art

of government. In this difficult and delicate art which deals with the most refractory of materials, not stationary, but always in movement since it deals with the living and not with the dead; in this art of politics there is no Aristotelian unity of time, of place, and of action. Men have been governed, more or less fortunately, in a thousand different ways. Liberalism is the contribution, the method, of the nineteenth century. . . . It cannot be said that Liberalism, a method of government good for the nineteenth century, for a century, that is to say, dominated by two essential phenomena like the development of capitalism and the growth of nationality, should be necessarily good for the twentieth century, which already betrays characteristics differing considerably from those of its predecessor. Facts outweigh books; experience is worth more than theory. To-day the most striking of post-war experiences, those that are taking place before our eyes, are marked by the defeat of Liberalism. Events in Russia and in Italy demonstrate the possibility of governing altogether outside the ideology of liberalism and in a manner entirely opposed to it. Communism and Fascism have nothing to do with Liberalism."[1]

That is, of course, a far more complete break with Liberalism than that involved in the mere repudiation of a party. In England and in this country economic class distinctions may increasingly determine what is apparently to be the new party cleavage, yet there remains a willingness to work through the constitutional machinery that is so largely the fruit of Liberal doctrine. France, too, seems in no mood to give up its parliamentarism, despite the exhortations alike addressed to it by the Royalist Right and by the *Chemises Bleues*, and equally by the Syndicalist Left and by the Communists. But Italy and Russia have cast the die. Spain and the Balkans have followed their lead; while Germany and Central Europe waver on the verge. To parallel Lenin's "Democracy is a mere bourgeois superstition", Mussolini concluded the attack on Liberalism quoted above: "Know then, once and for all, that Fascism

[1] Fascism does accept the economic motivation of Liberalism—self-interest and gain, operating through privately owned industry.

recognizes no idols, adores no fetishes; it has already passed over the more or less decayed body of the goddess Liberty, and is quite prepared, if necessary, to do so once more." [1]

Is it merely the perversity of intellectualism to suggest that back of this rejection of Liberalism, parliamentarism, and the whole democratic machinery of representative government, lies a philosophic doctrine of a sort? It is the gospel of pragmatism, pushed to the same extremes which Papini, before he popularized the *Life of Christ*, gave to the radical empiricism of William James. The observers who have commented upon Fascism have agreed upon one thing at least—that its method is essentially pragmatic. Although they have not always so named it, and although only its protagonists attribute to the movement a profound underlying idea, Fascism has come to mean to the popular imagination just this application of pragmatism to politics. Mussolini attributes his own intellectual shaping to William James, on equal terms with three great pragmatists in politics: Machiavelli, Nietszche, and the syndicalist, Georges Sorel.

Now if it be mere vexation of spirit to try to establish any causal relations between ideas and events, we must yet recognize that there is this persistent attitude among those whose profession it is to think. Perhaps we may call it Hegelian, in a broad sense. It is expressed in the efforts that the human mind makes to find "ghostly essences" of reason operating in the world of history. "In each epoch of time there is current a certain type of philosophic doctrine," says, for instance, M. Leroy of the Collège de France, speaking for once with the authentic voice of this intellectualistic temper, "a philosophy deep-seated in each one of us, and observable clearly and consciously in the utterances of the day—alike in novels, news-

[1] Benito Mussolini, "*Forza e Consenso*," in *La Gerarchia*, March 1923. I use the translation given for this speech in the English edition of Odon Por's book on *Fascism* made by Mrs. E. Townshend. Fascism seems to have fastened upon the British Liberal Party as the enemy. After the general election of October 29, 1924, in which the Liberal Party was almost wiped out, the Fascist *Idea Nazionale* argued that liberalism all over the world was dead, and Mussolini said with satisfaction: "One section of the international anti-Fascist front has been smashed." (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, November 7, 1924.)

papers, and speeches, and equally in town and country, workshop and counting house." It is the business of historians of ideas, on this reading of history, to make clear the philosophy of an epoch.

One may, indeed, be more than doubtful whether any such philosophic singleness of mind ever characterized any period of the history of man, possessed as he is of a reason so essentially argumentative in its character. But if we permit ourselves the dangerous luxury of simplification, we can certainly speak of the *Zeitgeist* of our own day as an intellectualized distrust of the intellect in its effort to make programs of action. In the area of politics, where theory finds one of its most immediate contacts with the world of history, it is natural that theorists who must be men of action, too, should seize upon the philosophy of pragmatism to deal with affairs in which expedience and concrete solutions have always been desiderata. Statesmen have, apparently from the beginning of political experience, made their appeal to the idealistic nobility of a stand upon principle, most of all when they were unostentatiously pursuing a compromise in fact. The practice of politics has never been other than pragmatic. A stand on principle may be the nobler gesture, may even be a necessary sop to man's compensatory desire to idealize his pursuit of deeply rooted, instinctive interests. But rationalism too often serves only as a cloak for imperative and unreasoned desire. That, at least, is the way the matter looks to the political pragmatists of our own day.

Even where idealism is genuinely disinterested it seems to be hardly able to survive in the inevitable test to which it is put by conflicting economic interests. There is little use in laboring the point while the ghosts of the Fourteen Points still linger in the air, their reality having vanished at Versailles with an imperceptible slowness, like the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, leaving behind nothing but a feline smile—this time " on the face of the Tiger". If Castlereagh, a century ago, could call Alexander the First's proclamation of the Holy Alliance " a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense," Lloyd George could be more delicately brutal by utilizing the idea of the League to cover his own opportunism. He rendered lip-service, all the

while acting prudently on the assumption that such a thing as a real and powerful agent of world opinion could not and would not exist. Metternich's dismissal of the Holy Alliance as "a sonorous nothing", too, found a match in Clemenceau's exclamation: "Fourteen Points! The good Lord himself had only Ten!"

Politics has never been characterized by too rigid a Platonism in the application, or even in the entertainment of "principles." Yet never before, perhaps, were principles in such disfavor as during the period immediately following the fall of President Wilson from the idolatry in which he had been held at the close of the war. He had seemed to sum up in a single personality the hope of the world in human reason and good will, in their combined power to restore a world "fit to live in" after the four years of nightmare. His failure to accomplish the impossible at the Paris Peace Conference seemed symbolic of the ineffectuality of idealistic principles in the face of conflicts of interest. He had spoken prophetically in his triumphal tour, the tragic prelude to Versailles: "Interests do not unite; interests can only divide men." And he had appealed to that higher community of purpose for which the Allies had professed to have made war as the unity on which they might build peace. But Versailles wrote a different history—and as its aftermath, Mr. Harding came into power in America upon a program that was tantamount to a signed promise to do nothing on principle and to do whatever else he had to, carefully; Mr. Coolidge holds our confidence on a program of thrift. M. Clemenceau went out of power in France largely because he was felt to be a man *d'une idée fixe*, and so did M. Poincaré. Mr. Lloyd George retained power in England by the most adroit political jugglery, and the most supple bending as the wind blew that even politically minded Britons had seen for some time; and at last even he went into his wilderness. Italy drifted through syndicalism to Fascism with the same facility as it changed front toward the "Fourteen Points." With Latin fervor it had worshipped Wilson; with Latin fervor it now branded him as the anti-Christ.

The spirit of these times, politically speaking, was voiced by

Mr. Harvey, American Ambassador to the Court of Saint James, in a speech to the Pilgrims at their dinner on May 19, 1921. Mr. Harvey took the occasion to make a statement of the "policy" of the Harding Administration; he declared that he was empowered to announce America's participation in the decision of the Supreme Council on the Silesian question then pending. America's position in foreign relations, as Mr. Harvey interpreted it, was one of opportunistic intervention whenever she conceived her rights or interests to be affected. She would enter into no "entangling alliances" nor would she commit herself to defined policies: "We shall get nowhere until we abruptly put aside academic discussion of theoretical proposals, and manfully face without wincing or mincing, the actual realities."[1] What these actual realities were, other than the ambassador's refusal to commit himself or his country to any lines of policy whatever, hardly appeared from the context. The British members of his audience may have suspected that they were debts and markets. Whatever they were, they were not to be found in the "*doctrinaire*" efforts of an idealism which attempted to put a curb on the play of interests. Those who had tried to interfere with the machinery of things as they were, had just met the rebuke of democracy, or were already in sight of political wildernesses. *Vox populi* had spoken: the Lord's face was turned against "points" and such abstractions. The political prophets preached a new gospel—pragmatism, the reasoned distrust of rationalized solutions.

The very Mahomet of this worship is Mussolini. Ideological programs and a superstitious reverence for the formal democracy of the ballot box had led his Italy to a state of anarchy approximating that before which the medieval republics of the cities had bowed. For the new Italy that had emerged from the Risorgimento, liberalism through its prophet, J. S. Mill, had laid down representative government with all the refinements of parliamentary institutions of which the gospel according to Mill was capable. And Italy had accepted liberalism with the enthusiasm of a new convert; even, eventu-

[1] London *Times*, May 20, 1921.

ally, she accepted proportional representation. But liberalism, to be workable, depends not alone upon a stable party system based in turn upon a national psychology that is at least the pale shadow of Mill's sweet reasonableness. It depends even more fundamentally upon the hypothesis that the unity of the nation is firm enough to support a constitutional state. After the war, an Italy badly divided, sabotaged by Communism, grew sicker and sicker under government by blocs, government by unreal coalitions, by log-rolling, and finally by "*decreti-leggi*." It all amounted to no government at all. Machiavelli's *Prince* was not more needed, when he wrote, to raise Italy from her divided weakness, than was a dictator, now —one strong enough to seize the reins of governmental power from the lax hands which refused to tighten them on syndicalistic violence. Under such conditions it was natural that Fascism, symbol of united power in a single hand, should gather strength until it swept the slate clean of timid parliamentary equations and inscribed in a bold hand the single word *Force!*

Parliamentary government—we have the high authority of Lloyd George for it—means "government by talk." But, as ex-Ambassador Child put it, "When a spirited people cannot stand it any longer, they act. Talk and party conferences and social theories and sentimentality are luxuries enjoyed by these people who do not face intolerable situations. . . . When a people face an intolerable situation the real ravenous hunger is not for a program, but for a man."[1] This apology for Fascism, broadcast through the columns of the *Saturday Evening Post*, is accurate enough. Yet it is perhaps worth noting that it is only these peoples who insist on the luxury of party systems and the sentimentality of social theories who arrive but rarely at "intolerable situations"; on the other hand nations who are forever in search of the man, not the program, seem to find almost all situations equally and chronically intolerable after a trial more or less brief.

As for programs, apparently Ambassador Child was suffi-

[1] *Saturday Evening Post*, June 28, 1924, pp. 157-158.

ciently interested in the meaning of Fascism to make some inquiries of Mussolini, even when the Black Shirt was still a bravado gesture. This is his report of the interview:

> "Well," I said, "what is the Fascisti program? It is easier to snatch the tiller than to steer the boat. . . ."
>
> "Program?" he said. "My program is work, discipline, unity." He shot another look at me and saw that I was doubtful about vague slogans. He said with tremenduous conviction, "Programs are endless. It is the organization—it is the men—it is action, not talk—it is men!"

There you are: the program of the politics of the period is *action*—not talk, not theory. The time, whether or not it be out of joint, is as impatient of theory as was Burke, who felt that a society was sick to the degree in which it attempted rational self-criticism. Political activity is only healthy, Burke held, so long as it is spontaneous. Hamlet is the bogey, as well of our politics as of our philosophy. It is to the Bismarcks, the Roosevelts, the Napoleons, the Mussolinis, that the imagination of politics is turned, away from dreamers and critics. It is a direction to which William James had already pointed in his essay on "Great Men and their Environment".

It may quite well be that the reason for this present distrust of reason is the same that led Burke to his later defense of instinctive conservatism. The reaction which swept the author of the *Speeches on Conciliation with the Colonies* into his half-mad hatred of Jacobinism, was inspired by the antics of Mother Guillotine in her Mob Cap, dancing the wild jig of the French Revolution. Theories had begot that monstrous orgy. They were feared with the same superstition that earlier smelled witchcraft in the simple-gathering and senile mumblings of village crones—and with more justice, no doubt. It was, in any case, with shouts of "no philosophers!" that the anti-Jacobin mob burned the house of Priestley over his head, on the unfounded suspicion of his having attended a Reform dinner; and it was the same fear that hounded harmless members of the London Corresponding Society until it had shipped them for treason to Botany Bay.[1]

[1] H. N. Brailsford, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle,* pp. 39-41.

Something of this distrust of "intellectuals" has been of late in the air. When the world's eyes were drawn toward the spectacle of Communism's red terror in Russia, they beheld theories again at their ghastly work. Liberal sentiment was as horrified by the pranks of Demos in its proper abandon as Burke and his contemporaries had been at Guillotine. The dress now was Marxian red, but the dance was the same. Even the garment's self had undergone no other change than in the shade of the dye.

Burke, whose defense of instinctive prejudice against the rationalistic lure of abstractions and pure logic finds a hearty modern echo in the pragmatism of William James, had led the stampede back to the toryism of his generation. There has been as great a crush, contemporarily, along the path "back to normalcy", and not all the signs say that the rush is past. People, at least up to the last campaign, were beginning to smile at the orators who inveighed against the mildest social reformers as Bolsheviks. But now the governments of the world seem to be shifting back to "Tranquillity", away from what Mr. Punch aptly called "Sidney-Webbicalism" as well as syndicalism. And Mussolini, though he has been sadly shaken in his saddle (since the "unfortunate jest" implied in the to-be-regretted disappearance and subsequent murder of one of the opposition leaders, Signor Matteotti), still retains an unrelaxed hold on Italy. He has driven most of the real leaders of the opposition into exile along with Salvemini and the Garibaldi's. He has a "Bill of Attainder" against them at his discretion. He has successfully suspended or muzzled all save the Fascist papers, and no man dare criticise Fascism or *il Duce* on pain of his life or health, as Amendola (had he not died of gangrened wounds) and Misuri could testify.

But how can such a movement have even a claim on pragmatic origins? Pragmatism, in the hands of William James, was a bracing and rather revolutionary refusal to take logic and the monistic Absolute too seriously. It has lent itself, however, to such apostles of political revolt as the apologist of syndicalistic violence, Mr. Georges Sorel, and the defender of "direct action" on the part of groups within the state, Mr.

H. J. Laski.[1] Both of them declare that they are the disciples of James, the pluralist in philosophy, in their attempts to pluralize authority, and discredit the State as a court of last resort. They will have none of the legalistic fiction of absolute sovereignty, any more than James would of the Absolute's self. On the other hand, pragmatism in the hands of Mr. Dewey, the foremost of its living exponents, has meant a philosophy of social synthesis, more and more tending to an absolute science of society and morals. If he calls himself a pluralist, it is by no means with James' meaning of pluralism—"the absence of any singly unifying relationship." Groups have a claim to their separate existence and rights only from the point of view of their functions in the organic context of social interdependence and solidarity. Indeed, without any conscious discipleship on either side, his own pragmatism has taken him straight along the road to the philosophy of "solidarism" of the French sociologists who follow Durkheim. Solidarism is a "functional" philosophy, one very closely akin to the "instrumentalism" of Mr. Dewey. In the hands of M. Duguit, the foremost of the jurists of this persuasion, it has become a defense before the fact of Mussolini's ends and of the methods actually put into practice by Fascism; for it holds fear and force to be the foundations of political order, and all means to be justified that assure the proper functioning of the public services.[2]

Is it only an accident that this pragmatic philosophy of law has turned syndicalism to its theoretical uses just as Fascism has done in practice? Not if there is a reciprocal connection between the development of ideas and the parallel development of facts. Instrumentalism is the same development away from the radical empiricism of James's doctrines which Fascism

[1] For an interpretation of this connection see the following articles by the writer: "The Pragmatic Politics of Mr. Laski", *The American Political Science Review*, vol. XVIII, No. 2, May, 1924; and "The Political Application of Romanticism," POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, vol. XXXIX, No. 2, June, 1924. Mr. Laski's *Grammar of Politics* is much more restrained in tone.

[2] See the writer's "The Metaphysics of M. Leon Duguit's Pragmatic Philosophy of the Law," POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, vol. XXXVII, No. 4, December, 1922; and "Sovereign State or Sovereign Group?", *The American Political Science Review*, vol. XIX, No. 3, August, 1925.

represents in relation to syndicalism. M. Duguit claims for his interpretation of law that it is syndicalistic; but his is a syndicalism profoundly conservative in its tendencies, one that aims at creating a more flexible system of law, based upon a contractual régime of group-made laws. The political structure of the future will be "professionalism", or the autonomy of occupational and professional groups. The only constraint upon group autonomy will be the duty of the rulers of the state to assure the functioning of the public services. This is, almost word for word, the Fascist program for the new "Fascist-Syndicalist State." The reservation of all control necessary to assure the public service, however, turns out to be a very important proviso. It means a syndicalism only of form. The real power rests with the rulers of the state. When the French *Confédération Générale du Travail* attempted to make its own law by launching a general strike, beginning with the famous May-Day railroad strike of 1920, the government in power used troops to assure social solidarity—to the vast delight of M. Duguit. In the same manner the Fascist militia smashed the Italian general strike of 1922. It turns out that the nation, through the government actually in power (that is in control of the actual force), is still to have the final decision as to what is law, and the duty of enforcing that law—whether it be the constitutional government or not. Unitary power seems to be a practical, a pragmatic necessity. Syndicalism is merely a convenient method of grouping citizens to assure their complete subjection to "Law and Order" even if that be attained along the lines laid down by Judge Lynch.

The development of the theory of Fascism has been in profound accord with this outcome of "solidarism". It, too, started from syndicalistic origins. It, too, followed a pragmatic progress toward the negation of its premises. Theories of any sort are forced to conform to historical conditions in their application, if they are to realize themselves in events. But there is something peculiarly inevitable about the result of the syndicalist attempt to integrate society by dividing it. The emphasis must be placed at one end or the other. And the result of placing it at pluralistic pole has been, historically, just

as sure a swing toward absolutism in fact, as the practice of absolutism has meant a revolutionary reaction toward a reign of feudalistic violence.

Let us point our moral, even though that may not adorn the tale. Signor Mussolini, in the days of his youthful adherence to the revolutionary wing of socialism, was one of the most intransigent of the revolutionary leaders of Italian Labor. His apostleship to the gospel of syndicalistic violence and the General Strike Myth cost him the editorship of the *Avanti* and an exile (more or less voluntary) from an Italy in which parliamentary socialism had won. He spent it in Switzerland, improving his mind by further reflections on violence. Then he was expelled from Switzerland by the government as a dangerous radical. The origin of Fascism is commonly admitted to lie in those "*Fasci* for Revolutionary Action" which he joined as a leader upon his return to Italy. They hastened the entry of Italy into the war on the forlorn hope that by so doing they were bringing about the reign of syndicalistic Socialism throughout the world. The gospel of violence preached by such followers of Sorel as Panunzio and Mantica was seized upon by d'Annunzio to bring Italy in upon the Latin (French) side. Mussolini and the other Revolutionary Socialists who had repudiated parliamentarism, by some twist of the imagination saw in the death-grips to which Europe had come a situation that meant Marxian world revolution.[1] They joined d'Annunzio and the Republicans and the Mazzinists (who were purely nationalistic in their hope) in bringing Italy into the struggle, staking their socialistic future upon the correctness of their own diagnosis of social tendencies. They lost—as socialists. Nationalism, not internationalism, the dice read when the war was over. But the syndicalistic group-

[1] The first vigor of Bolshevism was applied to the hope of world revolution, too, but it soon turned its attention perforce to consolidating its hold upon Russia. It has become, since the inauguration of Lenin's "New Economic Policy", primarily concerned with the government of Russia, as Mr. Michael Farbman has shown in his excellent studies, *Bolshevism in Retreat,* and *After Lenine.* Bolshevism, at the present time, has hardly more of an international program than has Fascism.

ings—the *Fasci*—still survived. Just as the nationalistic faith had absorbed the internationalistic hopes of their socialism, so it now swallowed up the leaders of the latter movement in the maw of Fascism. The form of "*fasces*", taken from the Roman symbol of lictor's power (the joined band of rods about an ax, borne before the consuls and magistrates, and signifying the union of all forces in one) likewise underwent a transformation in the direction of closer cohesion. In 1919 there came into existence the *Fasci di Combattimento*, a Latin version of the more strenuous mood of the American Legion, bent upon law and order of the 100 per cent Italian kind, and with a natural affinity for securing the fruits of victory which played once more into the hands of d'Annunzio. Significant traces of the old syndicalistic origins of the movement show in the Guild Constitution which that fantastic statesman gave his Fiume.[1]

After this comic-opera interlude, Fascism proper came into being out of the wreck of the forces that had enjoyed Fiume under d'Annunzio's occupation. Dino Grandi, a considerable Fascist apologist and protagonist, put it this way: "Fascism has been, and is, nothing but the continuation of the 'Interventionism' of 1914–15, just as the '*Fasci di Combattimento*' [bands of ex-combatants] are the representatives and glorious offspring of the '*Fasci d'Azione Revoluzionaria*' of 1915, to whom belongs the credit of propaganda of the war among the masses, not so much as a military necessity, but as the best hope for revolution, as a mystical re-birth for the nation and for humanity."[2] And Odon Por, who has in his book on

[1] The enormous literature on this subject may be found in Carleton Beals's *Black Revolution,* in Odon Por's *Fascism.* Perhaps as good treatments of origins as any are Umberto Foscanelli's *D'Annunzio e il Fascismo* (Milan, 1923) and ex-Premier Bonomi's *From Socialism to Fascism* (1924).

[2] Odon Por, *op. cit.,* p. 29, quoting from *Le Origini e la Missioni del Fascismo,* by Dino Grandi, *Biblioteca di Studi Sociali* (Bologna, 1922). Both Gorgolini, in a book officially sanctioned by Mussolini, *The Fascist Movement in Italian Life,* and Luigi Villari, in *The Awakening of Italy,* bear out this statement; and so do Ferrero's *Four Years of Fascism* and G. Prezzolini's *Il Fascismo.* See also J. Marschak, "Der korporative und der hierarchische Gedanke im Fascismus," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik,* Vols. 52-53 (1924 and 1925) for a profoundly philosophic analysis.

Fascism given one of the most authoritative statements of the origins of the movement, shows how Mussolini and the other backers of the Fiume venture came to look on Wilsonism and parliamentarism and all the intellectualistic forces aiming at political regeneration of the world as "renunciatory". Still smarting under the Treaty of Rapallo, they declared war on the milk-sop policies of a government that permitted Italy to be robbed from without and sabotaged from within. The race, from that time on, was between Communist and Fascist violence, as to which would first overthrow the shell of the state.

For a time it looked as if Red revolution had won against Black. The syndicalist program of the general strike, which Mussolini had abandoned for the nationalism created by the war, was actually put into effect. The Federation of Italian Metallurgical Operatives took possession of the factories and plants in which they were employed in northern Italy, but the latter days of 1920 saw the golden opportunity of Italian Bolshevism loom large and then fade away, from want of leaders like Lenin. Mussolini, like the government, was a passive, even a benevolent, spectator; he had encouraged the previous seizure of the Dalmine plants.[1] In the 1920 seizures of industrial units he had not gauged the true helplessness of Italian labor. Even he made "a dignified request to the Leninists for a truce and, during the occupation of the factories, proclaimed his 'benevolent neutrality' towards the F. I. O. M."[2] He was not yet willing to risk a direct trial of strength between Fascism and Communism. His own program was anti-bourgeois, anti-clerical, anti-royalist, and it called for a "decimation of wealth" by means of confiscation and a capital levy.

But with the fiasco of the occupation of the factories, and the complete failure of the proletariat to organize political con-

[1] Benito Mussolini, *Discorsi Politici* (Milan, 1921), p. 177. According to Por, he referred to the Dalmine seizures as "a creative stay-in strike . . . that does not interrupt but continues production," *op. cit.*, pp. 41-55. See the first program of Fascism which included factory operation by the workers, published in *Il Popolo d'Italia,* March 1919, outlined by James Murphy, *loc. cit., infra,* p. 176, note 1.

[2] Por, *loc. cit., supra.*

trol, the day of the new Fascism dawned. The Milanese group of Mussolini was subsidized, it is claimed, by the government.[1] Its full sun shone when it utterly broke the attempt at a general strike in 1922. The main criticism directed against the impotence of the old "parliamentary" government was equally applicable to the workers' control under the "Occupation" of 1920; trains failed to run, factories were idle, business of all sorts was tied up through the failure of the public services, including government. The national organism did not function. Economic stagnation and psychic disintegration——Italy knew both. The nation, having been led divided into the war, emerged physically untempered and spiritually divided against itself, into the period of reconstruction that everywhere tried nationalism upon a ruthless anvil. Fascism was a call to unity through the integration of groups of men who were desperate and well led. It had been schooled in violence from its syndicalistic origins and further instructed in the long course of war and by the occupation of Fiume. Men turned again to the myth of Machiavelli, after Sorel's syndicalistic myth of the General Strike had been exploded as a means of social reconstruction. Group action was still the core of their practice as well as their theory. But, like the juristic evolution of M. Duguit, it had become group action bound together by the ties

[1] A view, somewhat inaccurate in its details, but not controverted on this point, given by James Murphy, "The Parabola of Fascism", *Fortnightly Review,* December 25, 1925. According to this statement the Prefect of Milan, like some medieval prince hiring *condottieri,* brought in Mussolini's Milanese group of Fascists to smash the socialists who were trying to get control of the Milan Savings Bank through control of the municipal and communal councils. Mr. Murphy asserts that the Nationalist phase of Fascism dates from this period, say 1921, but that Fascism did not finally pass under the control of the Nationalists until it had to fall back upon the big banks for support of the new government, after the *coup d'état* that won Rome. It was consolidated by Volpi with the help of the J. P. Morgan Co. loan in 1925, after de Stefani's failure. See also Mr. Murphy's articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1924, and for December, 1925. Mr. Murphy is generally corroborated in his economic interpretation by the correspondents of the *Journal des Débats* and by the *Manchester Guardian,* but his figures on the budget are doubtful. William Bolitho's series of articles in the New York *World* during December, 1925 and January, 1926, are subject to the suspicion of some bias and much exaggeration.

of economic necessity, and a gospel of social solidarity summed up in terms of the nation. They clinched their claims to national consideration by running trains, and acting in some communes as a government in the second strike in 1922.

Once in the saddle, however, Fascism has utilized the syndicalist idea to strengthen its hold upon power. Even after the dramatic march on Rome that followed, it did not attempt to destroy unionism entirely, as the more misguided elements of English and American reaction have done. It followed the advice which M. Duguit had been offering all governments, and transformed revolutionary syndicalism into Fascist syndicalism. At Ferrara, in October, 1921, one year after the breakdown of revolutionary syndicalism in Italy through the attempt to follow the vague counsels of M. Sorel's Myth of the General Strike instead of the political action of a shrewder Bolshevism, syndicalism as a trade-union movement had already turned definitely away from circuses to a clamor for bread. *La Confederazione Nazionale delle Corporazione Sindacali*, formed in Bologna the following January, parallels in a most interesting way the break of the main wing of the French C. G. T. with the Moscow International. The National Confederation of the Syndical Corporations in Italy was controlled by the bourgeoisie who had found in Fascism their lost unity of front against the proletariat; but by the end of 1923 it had brought to its membership of over 2,000,000 not only about the entire membership of the "white" syndicates, but most of the beaten "reds" as well. A special convention called in Milan in August of that year renounced all socialistic connections, bent the knee to Mussolini, and accepted a program of national as opposed to class solidarity. Functionalism and solidarism (the program of Fascism) were thus translated, as Mr. James Murphy has shown, into a program of guild organization, deriving its inspiration from the old roman *collegia* (or control of all labor by the skilled "colleges"), and attempting to rescue from "the twilight of the Renaissance" the true guild spirit. Now, the Fascist trade unions are the only ones recognized by the new law imposing compulsory arbitration. At first they threatened to become a new democratic menace, as

every official and every laborer must be a Fascist in the state bureaucracy, and as the Socialists tried to capture the other syndicates by swamping them. Now, however, they are "purified" by vesting control only in tried Fascists, and by "supervising" their elections and their funds.[1]

It is not of course the medievalism of the guilds that has in fact been reconstructed, in spite of the efforts so to interpret it that are made by Fascist apologists. The entire structure is built about nationalism like a solid structure of reinforced concrete, with nothing of the Gothic except in ornamental architectural frippery. The essence of the guild spirit was decentralized localism, just as the inspiration of the Gothic was a many-spired marvel of detail.

By a decree of the government of February 6, 1924, under the practice of Fascism, all labor organizations had already been made subject to state supervision and control in a degree that goes far beyond any effort so far made by a modern state. The prefect had power not only to supervise the funds, but to order an inquiry into the activities of the association, "to overrule or set aside its acts, and in cases of a serious nature, to dissolve the administrative council".[2] But as that did not suffice, Fascism resorted to the same method that Communism attempted in Russia, of permitting representation of labor only by the disciplined élite. All unions recognized by law must be Fascist. Dues paid them are compulsory on members and non-members alike. Their officials must be acceptable to the prefect. In a word, Fascism has tightened its hold upon syndicalism, and has reduced labor in Italy to the organic rôle demanded by Fascist theory.

The National Corporations created by the Fascist Confede-

[1] Files of the New York *Times,* November and December, 1925. See also a partial summary of Fascism's system of labor control in the special articles of Mr. Wilbur Forrest, New York *Herald-Tribune,* Jan. 25-29, 1926. The text of the law is to be found in N. 624-A, *Documenti, Camera dei Deputati Legislatura* XXVII (1924-1925). An excellent summary of the new laws is to be found in the *Round Table,* March, 1926, "Fascist Reforms in Italy" and an able pro-Fascist exposition in *Il Carroccio* (New York, January, 1926) "The Fascist State" by James P. Roe.

[2] *Law and Labor,* August, 1924, p. 228.

ration have as their function the "expression of national solidarity", and they exist "as a means of developing production".[1] They are taken, in theory, from the lyrical constitution given by d'Annunzio to the Free State of Fiume (under the Constitution of Carnaro) and embrace agriculture, industry, commerce, transport and communication, public and private employees, liberal professions and art—a mystic seven in number. Under the practice of Fascism they include, in fact, "all forms and systems of production and labor", with a view toward taking their control out of the hands of trade unionism or employers' associations, and putting them, finally, under the control of the state. Against the "struggle of classes" they set up "struggle of capabilities". The governing organs of the Corporations are in theory constituted by a *Corporative Council* of representatives, nominated by the various provincial trade unions (one for each); by a *Directorate*, composed "of as many representatives as there are types of trades, arts, or professions interested in the great branch of industry or labour represented by the Corporation"; and by a *Secretariat* (to be elected by the Directorate). The actual control is completely in the hands of Fascist leaders of these unions who need number (legally) only ten per cent of the workers residing in the district. The leaders may exclude workers at will. "Capability" is imposed upon all workers. They must function for national production. No corporate rights exist when that is at stake. The employers, too, are federated, and must accept compulsory arbitration.

In a generation harassed by the incessant industrial warfare between trade unionism and employers, this solution is being eyed with increasing favor. Employers need not fear compulsory arbitration under this system: the result is a foregone conclusion, if any threat of a diminution of production is involved. It is pragmatic in the extreme, for it proposes no

[1] Extracts from the original *Statutes of the Confederation of Corporations* available in Por, *op. cit.*, Appendix III. These, of course, are modified and applied by the new law noted above, and by the proposed law which will reform the Senate so as to give equal representation in it to employers and to the Labor Corporations.

other tests than the palpable fruits of productivity. *Function, capability*, these are its watchwords—and its unit is the *Nation*, "an organism embracing an indefinite series of generations in which each individual is but a transient element," in the words of the Fascist program of December, 1921. It sums up the materialistic imperialism of the times by giving it a statement into which all the romantic elements of operatic revolution and patriotism are introduced. It speaks of "the battle of coal" and "the battle of wheat". But once it has caught its hare, it proceeds to skin him. Italian labor was so heartily sick of the "massimalists" (syndicalistic revolutionists and communists) who had nothing more creative than a general strike to offer, that it readily accepted the guild idea on which the Corporations were supposed to be founded. During 1925 some of the old unions organized "protest strikes" against Fascist control up to 80 per cent effective. But they dare do no more than protest. Non-Fascist associations now are outlaws, at the mercy of the prefect. From now on the struggle will be between the forces within Fascism which propose to give this guild system a fair trial, and those who are only interested in the suppression of the proletariat. The weight of the great bankers like Volpi is on the latter side, but the recent supplanting of Farinacci by the ex-socialist, Turati, as Secretary of the Fascist Party, may mean a triumph for the guild principle. Turati is credited with having sponsored the Fascist labor strikes last year which forced the metallurgical employers to act as a unit in dealing with the corporations.[1]

Mussolini, from his socialistic origins, might be expected to be sympathetic to the former element of Fascism, for that gives it a *point d'appui* with labor, in agriculture as well as industry. But the inspiration of the guild system is not nationalism. It is an altogether different community of feeling, interest and purpose. And the inspiration of Mussolini's Fascism *is* nationalism, and nothing else. Nationalism really made head only when the guild organization of industry of the middle ages

[1] See the New York *Times*, April 1, 1926.

was thoroughly weakened.[1] It had, indeed, no small part in breaking down the guild system of control that feudalism and the régime of mediate and immediate liege cities had fostered under the Holy Roman Empire. Causality, here as elsewhere, is too complex a matter to be lightly ventured upon. But it is certain that the notion of an all-absorptive nationalism is antithetical to the pluralistic spirit of the guild system that must be preserved if the latter is to function as a really creative force.

Mussolini and his Fascism are committed to nationalism with the utmost finality. Therefore they must treat the Corporations as James I treated his non-conformist subjects, *i. e.*, "make them conform themselves or harry them out of the land, or else do worse"—conform in this case to the state religion of maximum production. If there seem to be other matters, such as the free right of association to protect hours of labor and standards of living, which are just as important in the eyes of the members of the Corporations—so much the worse for them. As long as Fascism is firm in its saddle, it will make few concessions of a radical nature. When it begins to make them, one may reckon that it has ceased to be Fascism and become something else—perhaps Guild Socialism.

But the Guild Socialist element in Fascism is apt to get very short shrift from the Nationalist ministers who are now directing the economic policies of Mussolini's régime. One by one the old Black-Shirt ministers have dropped out under the program of a struggle of capabilities. Their places have been taken by the "Blue-Shirt" Nationalists who were incorporated into Fascism after its successful march on Rome. These Nationalists, whose four great leaders are now part of Mussolini's real inner council—Volpi, Corradini, Federzoni and Rocco—are what would be known in France as the Royalist Right. They stand for the precise antithesis of Fascism's earlier program, for they are ultra-royalist, ultra-clerical, ultra-bourgeois in financial policies. They agree with Fascism's

[1] See J. A. Penty, *Guildsman's Interpretation of History;* Renard's *Guilds in the Middle Ages;* and Austin P. Evans, "The Problem of Control in Medieval Industry," POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, vol. XXXV, pp. 603-616

earlier phase only in finding force handy for repression, and in being equally militaristic and imperialistic. And they have conquered Fascism, through the banks, which are now represented by a seat for the group on the Fascist Grand Council.

At first these Nationalists, through Deputy Benni, who is also President of the Italian Confederation of Industries, forbade the extension of compulsory arbitration to employers in industry; then they accepted Mussolini's assurance of December 11 that, "The workman's syndicates are Fascist . . . they must do nothing to diminish the productive efficiency of the nation." Let Signor Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, speak for them:

> . . . Briefly, the forces which I have referred to [the opposition to Fascism] and which are directed against the State, we would discipline and include in some way in the central authority we have established and under which this opposition must work.
>
> It is for this reason that I have refused to accord judicial represensation to Fascist syndicates, so that in the end a state within a state cannot be set up which would dictate to the central authority, and it is for this reason that I fight the opposition press.[1]

But he has had to accept the legal status of the Fascist syndicates. So far as the control of the guild spirit is concerned, the Nationalists feel that they have little to fear from a Fascism which controls every expression of opinion, and asks in return only *panem ac circenses*. They may be deceived in the event.

In the orientation of foreign policy, too, there can be no doubt about the necesity of nationalism to Fascism. Mussolini has declared his disbelief in the League of Nations by word and deed. Let Corfu be witness. Fascism represents the last stand of the theory of the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state. More than that, it represents a revival of Machiavelli in all his saturnine views on human, and especially Italian, nature. S. E., Benito Mussolini has recently submitted an appreciative

[1] Quoted from an interview given by Sig. Rocco while in Paris at a meeting of the Commission for Intellectual Cooperation, commenting upon Mussolini's declaration that the Aventine Opposition would never be permitted to sit again until they had sworn loyalty to Fascism. *New York Times,* Jan. 19, 1926, p. 4.

dissertation upon Machiavelli for the degree of Doctor of Laws.[1] "*Il Duce*," as he is called by Fascists, has set himself to the modern application of *Il Principe*, a pragmatic application of that essentially pragmatic document. Needless to say, he was enthusiastically awarded the degree. Like Machiavelli,[2] he holds no moral values above a united and Imperial Italy: "My ideas are clear," asserts *il Duce*, "my orders are precise. As in the well ordered and powerful days of the first Empire, Rome must again become the marvel of the world."[3] Like Machiavelli, he believes that it is necessary to expand in order to survive.

To this end, Fascism yokes the methods of the Ku Klux Klan to the service of national production. It can not see behind political obedience any farther than the "fact" of the fear of the weaker for the stronger, and that is an old trail, well enough worn by travelers upon it as far back as Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*. The end of it leads to a thoroughly Machiavellian *Politik*, spelled in any language you choose—a conclusion which Benito Mussolini has most heartily accepted so far as Italy is concerned. The youth of Italy, now regimented by Gentili's Fascist education, is singing "*Italia sopra tutto*" with as much lustihood as ever Prussian youth did when it goose-stepped to "*Deutschland iiber alles*."[4] And Mussolini keeps Fascist Italy scanning the horizon for new worlds to conquer.[5]

[1] *Living Age*, June 28, 1924, p. 1245, quoting from the *Avanti* (Milan), May 11, 1924. The *Avanti* is now practically ruined by Fascist suppression. All the great papers of Italy have been tamed or forced into the hands of Fascists by the simple expedient of putting it into the power of the prefect to hold up any issue he pleases, or as many issues as he pleases, and by various devices in the new law governing the press. The *Corriere della Sera*, property of the Albertini brothers, and the best of the Italian papers, was so forced into Fascist hands.

[2] See an interesting article, "Lenin and Mussolini", by H. J. Laski, *Foreign Affairs*, Sept., 1923.

[3] Quoted by Wilbur Forrest, New York *Herald-Tribune*, January 26, 1926.

[4] "Le Présent et l'Avenir du Fascisme", anonymous, *Le Correspondant*, Dec. 25, showing the incorporation of the youth of Italy in the *avvanguardia giovanili e balilla*.

[5] See his speech in Tripoli, April 11 (N. Y. *Times*, April 12, 1916).

Revolution and reaction, a cycle often enough remarked; in our time the moral is pointed by syndicalism that prepares the way for Fascism. Out of the refusal or the inability to order society by taking counsel together comes the repudiation of the slower methods of constitutionalism in favor of direct action. There are times, no doubt, when Jefferson's sometime favoritism for revolution by the violent methods of mobs—*piazza*, the Italians call it—may be necessary. But among a culturally and nationally homogeneous population it seems fairly safe to say that permanent results are not won in this fashion. The dead weight of an unconvinced majority is too heavy a drag to permit progress. Conviction won by force is more than apt to be lost in the same way.

The pragmatic desire for progress that is impatient with representative government in any form, that demands facts, not theories, and action, not programs, is quite as lop-sided a view of politics as its intellectualistic antithesis. There is something almost Hegelian in its practical fulfilment, too; for it embraces the actual enthronement of a dictator in the same fashion which it so condemned in rationalistic idealism. It becomes "its own other", its antithesis through the synthesis of force. And now Fascism, like Revolutionary Communism in Russia, is in the hands of the *doctrinaires*. Gentili and the seventeen Solons associated with him are grinding out the new "organic state" philosophy, by imperial decree. Step by step they follow the progress of Leninism to the imposition of an economic dogma by an uncriticizable dictatorship. This time, however, the industrialists and financiers are well pleased, for it is Volpi's brand of capitalism that is enforced. Consequently there is as hearty a welcome for Fascist dictatorship as there was recently hysterical condemnation for Bolshevist dictatorship.[1]

Germany had no monopoly on the worship of force. The Hohenzollerns throve upon the same popular inability to act and think politically that Fascism lives upon. They, too, offered action and imaginative magnificence; they, too, placed their control of the state upon the basis that they made it func-

[1] See the writer's "The Case against Fascism", *The Forum*, April, 1926.

tion with an organic smoothness which tolerated no social waste or lost motion. Word for word, the philosophy of social solidarity through organizing and safeguarding the public services that M. Duguit offers might have served the All-Highest of the German Empire quite as handily as it does Signor Mussolini. One need not quarrel with a people that prefers this organic solidarity as the basis of its law. It has certain compensations which are obvious enough, as well as certain dangers.

Liberalism still has a word to say, a protest though feeble. "The way to good government does not lie by any such short-cut as Fascism," it holds. "Direct action may cut the Gordian knot, but it forges chains that are even more galling to those who like to have at least a free effort to convince others of the justice of their own views. Representative government under a generally accepted constitution is on trial the world over. The necessity of more independent expert administration and advice is obvious. But to throw constitutional government and all idea of representation overboard the ship of our state will not rid us of Jonah, nor will it propitiate Leviathan for long. Such a Jonah must out; and in the meantime, it is apt to be the pilot we are most in need of whom we thus sacrifice to still the waves that, by the very nature of political seas, are bound to try timbers in any vessel of state."

Very edifying, no doubt, especially when spoken with the Asquithian accent. However it may quite well be that self-government cannot be imposed upon a people whom it does not fit—as the nineteenth century seems to have thought it could be. The test of that fitness is surely the success with which representative machinery is worked, and the morality practiced in observing and changing the constitutional forms.

In the case of Italy, though, as well as in the case of many other European countries, the fact seems not to have been so much the failure of all representative government as the failure of one type of parliamentary government—the breakdown of a coalition bloc system rendered doubly inevitable by an unworkable system of proportional representation. In any case, making due allowance for the political development and psychology of the Italian people, a modified presidential system seems to

be much more nearly in line with their needs, although there is much to be said in favor of a parliamentary system like that of England, in view of the strength of the traditional attachment of the people to their monarch. If the present law governing the premiership (with Articles Six and Nine struck out) were actually adhered to, it might offer a very workable compromise for attaining what is practically presidential government in the future. Under it the premier holds office as the leader of the party with a parliamentary majority. He depends for his tenure of office, on the other hand, not upon a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies but upon the confidence of the King. Of course the law has no application to the present state of affairs in which Mussolini frankly rules without the least pretence of observing any constitutional limitations that irk him. He still goes before his Parliament to harangue them and to be cheered by the Fascists, or to hurl panegyrics at the tamed Opposition—of which, naturally the Communists are suffered to be present. The Communists afford a never-failing source of comparison through a retrospect of four years, and an equally stimulating and unresisting object for Mussolini's unrestrained flagellation. They are, as it were, on display.

Under the proposed reform of the legislature, the Chamber of Deputies is to become representative of non-political groups, and the Senate is to made up of an unlimited number of senators appointed for life by the King from non-unionists, along with an equal number for the unions of labor and the unions of employers, appointed for terms of nine years, by the King on the recommendation of the unions. As this gives the most real political power to the unions, the Grand Council of Fascism has announced "the necessity of a central governmental organism, which on the basis of Fascist doctrine and experience, shall control, coordinate and harmonize the forms of activity of the great labor unions in order to bring about progress in the augmentation of the material and moral power of the nation."[1] This is obviously intended to prevent the democratic tendencies of the unions from getting out of hand.

[1] New York *Times*, April 1, 1926.

Mussolini is not yet prepared to constitutionalize even the question of his successor. It is *lèse-majesté* in Italy to suggest that Mussolini is a sick man or even a man worn out by his superhuman labors, but it is apparently a fact. Apparently, too, he has contemplated as successor a triumvirate made up of Farinacci, the "terrorist" of Fascism; of Federzoni, a bigger man, but not so popular; and of General Badoglio, a very capable militarist.[1] That suggests the usual difficulties that beset the ultimate division of the mantle of dictatorship. In any case, it does not suggest that Mussolini has any tenderer feelings for democracy than he has shown so far, although he could easily constitutionalize his position if he chose to do so. He looks far enough ahead only to avoid the revival of criticism which this would mean. Now he rules like a Caesar. He does not propose to rest government upon consent, for that would be to repudiate Fascism. His face is still set toward that "hierarchy and discipline" that offer to his critics only the old "dilemma" he proposed for them in the beginning:

> I declare that my desire is to govern if possible with the consent of the majority; but, in order to obtain, to foster and to strengthen that consent, I will use all the force at my disposal. . . .
>
> For it may happen that force may bring about consent, and, if that fails, there is always force. With regard to all the requirements of government, even the most severe, we shall offer this dilemma: accept in the spirit of patriotism, or submit.
>
> This is my conception of the state and of the art of governing the nation.[2]

[1] Wilbur Forrest, *loc. cit.* On March 31, 1926, Farinacci resigned his post as Secretary-General of the Fascist Party. He was succeeded by Turati. But Farinacci is not politically dead. He is to have a cabinet post.

[2] "Speech to the Department of Finance," March 7, 1921 (Por, *op. cit.*, p. 148). Mussolini has promised to leave Parliament, as long as it is made up of loyal Fascists, to act as a cheering corps. "Representative government," he wrote in the dissertation on Machiavelli mentioned above, "belongs to the domain of mechanics, not of morals." And again, out of the fullness of his experience, "To speak of a sovereign people is to utter a tragic jest." The proper mechanics of representation is "deputed functional authority", which is a way of translating *La Gerarchia,* the official organ of Fascism. See Mrs. Townsend's note to Por, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

Certainly he is right in thinking that governing, especially in Italy, is more an art than a science. But even in an art there are certain principles relating to the scheme of arrangement. It was Rousseau who put one of these most finally in the first book of *The Social Contract:* "The strongest is never strong enough to remain forever master unless he transforms force into law, and obedience into duty." The whole history of unconstitutional government bears him out, even though much of the scheme he devoted to eliciting a "general will" has passed into limbo, and the "general will" itself is under suspicion. But there is about "the consent of the governed" in real democracies an element of moral obligation that force can never compel.

To secure this element of moral obligation Fascism hopes, however, to use the technique of myths, advocated by Plato to keep the lower order of his Republic content with their lot, and by Mussolini's old revolutionary master, Georges Sorel, to stir them up. For pragmatism, a myth is true so long as it works. Mussolini offers himself as the new Caesar, to lead Italy once more to the day when Rome will become "the center of the world." If he once can capture the imagination of Italians and inflame them with his dream, he feels that he can govern with consent. In the meantime, "The second foundation stone of Fascismo is represented by anti-demagogism and pragmatism. We have no preconceived notions, no fixed ideas . . . "[1] and again, "Fascism seizes individuals by their necks and tells them: 'you must be what you are. If you are a bourgeois, you must remain such. You must be proud of your class!'"[2]

Let him be rendered his due. He has had the courage and the consistency to say flatly that he did not himself know what the word *normalization* means, even though it used to be the chief stock in trade of Fascist oratory—a frankness to be recommended to the apostles of "normalcy" elsewhere. "All

[1] *Mussolini as Revealed in his Political Speeches (Nov. 1914-Aug. 1923)*, by Barone B. Q. di San Severino, p. 114.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 317.

governments," he pronounces, "are for normalization, even those arising from the most violent of revolutions, if that means preserving the form of government which they represent."[1] He has to his credit a veritable slaughter of the bureaucracy, and a stout effort to balance Italy's budget through turning over all possible public services to private capital and through increasing taxation by the tariff,—even to a tax on salt—and other unremarked means.[2] Of course the cost of living has soared, but wages have kept fair pace. Over against his budget one may set the reign of terror kept up in some of the Italian provinces, of which the case of the rule of the Fascist "*ras*", Regazzi, over Molinella in the Province of Bologna is typical. For over a year after a warrant was out for the arrest on clearly substantiated charges of premeditated murder—to say nothing of pranks like that of leading his Black Shirts in a modernized version of the Sabine Women by assaulting peasant women and then blacking their faces with a mixture of soot and vitriol—for over a year this Fascist lieutenant, in high favor in Rome, could not be found, officially, by the police, although he dined and wined almost nightly in the company of the Chief Commissioner of Police in Bologna![3]

It was no doubt as much to control the lawlessness of these local *ducini*, and to curb their feudal independence of any control, that Federzoni, with the approval of *il Duce*, brought out the institution of the *podestà* from that period of Italian medievalism when the cities were beginning their long struggle to curb feudal anarchy. The *podestà* appointed by the central government now rules without any administrative interference from the representative council in every Italian commune of under 5000 in Italy. That means about four-fifths of the entire number.[4] And Rome has its "Governor" after the same model. Any municipality may have a *podestà* imposed upon it if for any

[1] *Manchester Guardian Weekly,* Oct. 24, 1924, p. 351.

[2] It is exceedingly difficult to get the truth about the budget. The slain Matteoti, in *One Year of Fascist Misrule* (London, Labor Press, 1924), produces some interesting figures.

[3] *Supra,* note 1.

[4] See the articles of Murphy, Forrest, and the *Round Table,* cited above.

reason its council shall have been twice dissolved in two years. That of course is centralization with a vengeance. If it destroys all freedom of local government, the answer is that that freedom had never existed in fact since the dawn of syndicalist and later Fascist violence after the war. On the other hand, in spite of the obvious abuses of a rigidly centralized rule, it is better than the rule of local bullies. There are signs from such press information as is possible to get, that the authority of the *podestà* is not yet strongly enough established to rule the local Fascist bosses, but that it is well on its way in that direction with the support of the public, so far as the public dares do anything except remain passive. Unhappily the "old Fascists" seem to be claiming these *podestats* as the reward of the faithful in most instances.

In short the Fascist dictatorship in its recapitulation of the cycle of government in Latin countries has now reached the point of consolidation. There are many people who feel that Mussolini, having accomplished so much as he has already, may go on with the help of the Fascists to give Italy the same sort of government that Diaz and his *rurales* gave to Mexico—a government capable of satisfying the national pride of his country and a government that will not be ungrateful enough to bite the hand that has fed it. They point to the degree of confidence shown in it quite lately by some well known international financiers.[1] They urge that it is only under such a government that we can hope to have the Italians pay any substantial part of their debts. If the Italians are satisfied, they say, we ought to be.

The apologists of this realistic stamp go on to show that it is idle to expect the Italian people—even less than the Spanish under Primo de Rivera—to rise and demand parliamentarism again. For not only has Fascism brought a tolerable prosperity: it has restored to an opera-loving people all the fine flavor of medievalism, so far as spectacles and drama go:

[1] See the remarks of Mr. Thomas W. Lamont and of Mr. Otto H. Kahn in reply to the writer's speech before the Foreign Policy Association in New York, January 23, quoted in the New York *Times*, Jan. 24, 1926.

Mussolini poses in the lion's den; Mussolini evokes "the grandeur that was Rome"; Mussolini metes out a little discipline. No one can deny the necessity of fitting government to the psychology of the governed. Why should other nations venture criticisms on the "domestic concerns" of Italy? Will anyone offer to rule Italy better—outside of the handful of deputies who made a great play of absenting themselves from Parliament as it is run by Mussolini?[1] Even English memory holds a Cromwell and may hold another soon.[2] After all, can anyone be sure of what Edith Cavell meant when she said "Patriotism is not enough"? To pragmatism, the only test of sufficiency is "prosperity"; the only demand on patriotism is that it must "work."

There are several difficulties with this sort of reasoning. Obviously Italy will have to work out her own destiny. But the destiny of a government in these days is affected by world opinions. And now Italy's destiny has become momentous for many countries where democratic and representative government had won a slender foothold, at least. In its imperialistic program and in its avowed disbelief in the settlement of international disputes through any possible machinery of international justice, Fascism has international implications. It represents a complete denial of the existence as well as of the availability of any principles of morality applicable to the conduct of states—except the law of the survival of the fittest.

Has Fascism received then, even the pragmatic sanction of working? For the moment, undoubtedly. By creating a myth of patriotism and embodying that myth in the figure of Mussolini, Fascism may succeed for a time in imposing what Plato would have called "a noble lie" upon Italy. But the actual operation of a dictatorship can be tested only when the Italian

[1] For Mussolini's declaration that the Aventine deputies should never return to Parliament without retracting, apologizing, and swearing allegiance to Fascism, and for the subsequent ejection of several of their number who returned for the ceremonies at the Queen Mother's funeral rites, see the *New York Times,* Jan. 18-January 20, 1926. They have returned—on his conditions.

[2] British Fascists are clamoring for a dictator to deal with the General Strike, as this goes to press.

peasant and worker have had a little longer to gauge the real nature of "grandeur that was Rome." Even if the worker bears his load philosophically, the test of the dictatorship can hardly be said to have been made. It will come when Mussolini, a tragic and not a comic Pooh-Bah, has to lay down the burden of his ministries, of his imperialism, and of his dictatorship. The claim of the supporters of Fascism is that the "Party" will prove to be self-perpetuating in the same way that Bolshevism has done in Russia. Perhaps that may be possible, although the state of political development in the two countries is very different, and even Bolshevism has not held power long enough as yet for a test. Or the test will come earlier, when the imperative need of the imperial, the operatic gesture which Fascism demands, can not be met except by war.

Leaving out of account those liberties that some people still hold to be essential to the development of any real moral values in human life, a Fascism that denies the rights of national minorities even to their own tongue,[1] that talks in official organs of reclaiming all territories that were ever Italian, that provokes suspicion and the other forerunners of war, a Fascism that repudiates the World Court in favor of the old diplomacy of the balance of power, a Fascism that boasts of 3,000,000 effective soldiers in reserve, and a Fascism that strives to control all men of Italian descent abroad "even," as Mussolini says, "to the seventh generation", is following the old road down which Germany went to ruin. It may prove to be very *un*economical, *in the long run.*

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[1] Mussolini's characteristic "Brenner Pass" speech aimed at Germany, and his avowed efforts to form a Latin-Slav bloc, as well as the Italian delegate's abstention from expressing regret at Germany's failure to gain a Council seat at the recent special session of the League Assembly at Geneva, all point to Italy as a chronic danger-spot in modern Europe.