CATHOLIC LABOR AND CATHOLIC ACTION: THE ITALIAN CONTEXT OF *QUADRAGESIMO ANNO*

BY

PAUL MISNER*

When Pope Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931, he anticipated the tradition of commemorating each ten-year anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 with another major papal statement on Catholic social teaching in the light of current developments. He thus reinforced, in a way his immediate predecessors had not, the contested claim of the Church to bring Christian influence to bear on economics and society.[1] To understand the intentions of the pontiff and the effects of his social teaching in church and society, it is of course necessary to place *Quadragesimo Anno* in the context of the travails of political and economic liberalism after World War I.[2] It would certainly also illuminate the text to consider the history of the Catholic labor movements in the countries where they were more or less influential, since *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* deal with social justice in the field of industrial relations, the "worker question."

There is also a more particular ecclesiastical context that conditioned the content and impact of the encyclical. I refer to the pope's championing of Catholic Action in Fascist Italy. This aspect may be easily overlooked. After all, the drafting of the encyclical took place mainly in northern Europe[3] and presupposed more democratic conditions. In Italy itself the encyclical was overshadowed by the post-concordat crisis of

*Dr. Misner is a professor emeritus of theology in Marquette University.

[1]See Andrea Riccardi, "Rerum novarum: il mito e l'avvenimento," in "*Rerum novarum*": *Écriture, contenu et réception d'une encyclique. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française de Rome et le Greco no 2 du CNRS (Rome, 18-20 avril 1991)* (Rome, 1997), pp. 11-27.

[2]Georges Jarlot, *Doctrine pontificale et histoire: Pie XI, doctrine et action (1922-1939)* (Rome, 1973); Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton, 1975).

[3]Johannes Schasching, *Zeitgerecht, zeitbedingt: Nell-Breuning und die Sozialenzyklika Quadragesimo anno nach dem Vatikanischen Geheimarchiv* (Bornheim, 1994).

1931 centering on issues of the education of the younger generation. Even after this crisis was surmounted, as we shall see, the social-justice issues of *Quadragesimo Anno* were confined to circumscribed church circles, for the most part removed from public view. Unlike other states of an authoritarian and Catholic stamp (particularly Austria's "*Quadragesimo-Anno-Staat*"), Mussolini's Italy made little pretense of drawing upon Catholic sources for its brand of state corporatism. Thus, while Italian historians are generally quite aware of the connections of *Quadragesimo Anno* with Pius XI's central program of Catholic Action and its relation to Catholic labor movements, students of the social encyclicals elsewhere may not fully realize its pertinence. The triangular tensions between Catholic Action in Italy, Catholic social activism, and Fascism are of direct significance in understanding the role Pius XI had in mind for *Quadragesimo Anno*. In what follows, the focus will be on these Italian contexts of church, society, and state.

After World War I, neither Benedict XV nor Pius XI favored any revival of the anti-union machinations of the prewar Catholic integralists. The status of labor unions qua Catholic, however, remained ambiguous. This was the case, for instance, in France until the publication in 1929 of the letter from the Vatican Congregation of the Council to the new bishop of Lille, Achille Liénart.[4] And it remained the case in the German situation until the publication of *Quadragesimo Anno* itself in 1931.[5] Until then, Catholic trade unionists had to settle for the only grudging toleration of "non-confessional" unions on the part of Pope Pius X, in *Singulari quadam* of 1912.[6]

Italian Catholicism and Labor

Since the taking of Rome to be the capital of Italy in 1870, the Holy See had not recognized the Italian state as rightfully constituted. The Catholic Church in Italy was not only faced with an anticlerical ("lib-

[4]Catherine Masson, *Le Cardinal Liénart, évêque de Lille, 1928-1968* (Paris, 2001), pp. 86-93. The letter's official publication followed in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXI (1929), 494-504 (in French). See also René Remond, *Les crises du catholicisme en France dans les années trente* (Paris, 1996), pp. 23-38.

[5]Oswald von Nell-Breuning recalled the satisfaction expressed in Catholic labor circles for the encyclical's clarity in this respect, in "50 jaar 'Quadragesimo anno'," *Christen-democratische Verkenningen*, 12 (1981), 559-606, here 600.

[6]For the previous history of Catholic labor movements in western European countries, see Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War* (New York, 1991); here, pp. 281-287.

eral") regime, as in many other Catholic countries, but one that was in open conflict with the papacy. One of the aims of Achille Ratti, when he became pope in 1922, was to come to a satisfactory solution of this "Roman Question." Meanwhile, the clergy and laity of Italy were not idle. In particular, social Catholicism made considerable progress in some parts of the country, notably in the North (Lombardy, the Veneto). The problems of the South, the Mezzogiorno, were also high on the concerns of Don Luigi Sturzo (1871-1959), whom Pope Benedict XV appointed to be secretary of the Popular Union, the guiding institution at the national level of Italian social Catholicism. The social changes and expectations induced by the war—the government promised to spread the fruits of "victory" democratically—called imperiously for the creation of a national labor federation and a political party for those mass elements that remained averse to socialism. Which is to say, those many Catholics of Italy, who were so poorly represented by the undemocratic ruling class of prewar years or by socialist candidates. On the political front, Sturzo succeeded in founding a political party, the Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI), by the end of 1918.[7] Earlier, in March, on the socioeconomic front, the existing labor unions led by Catholics got together to found the CIL (the Confederazione Italiana dei Lavoratori) and provisionally named Giovanni Battista Valente as its general secretary.[8]

Both bodies appealed explicitly to Christian principles, while at the same time declaring their autonomy from the church hierarchy. Neither wanted to speak for the Church or for all Catholics or only for Catholics. Both wanted room for initiatives or political choices that would not commit the hierarchy or the papacy, i.e., that would not require their backing or be liable to their veto.

By early 1919, the CIL had a million members. This breakthrough took place on the basis of a network of Catholic institutions for and of workers, concentrated in "white" parts of the country in the North. Comparative success in labor organizing was more notable in agriculture than in urban industry, apart from the textile union that Achille

[7]See John N. Molony, *The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy: Partito Popolare 1919-1926* (London, 1977); John Pollard, "Italy," *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, edd. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford, 1996), pp. 69-96.

[8]See the *Dizionario storico del movimento cattolico in Italia 1860-1980* (Casale Monferrato, 1981-1984), I/2, pp. 213-216 for the CIL, and III/2, p. 935 for Valente. I have made much use of the mine of information which is the *DSMCI*, consisting of three volumes in five tomes, edited by Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini. A supplementary volume, *Dizionario storico del movimento cattolico. Aggiornamento 1980-1995*, was published in Genoa by Marietti in 1997.

Grandi headed from the Milan area since 1916. The white labor movement was committed to the Christian ideal of interclass solidarity for the common good. In practice, interclass solidarity had previously meant paternalism or at least initial domination of labor organizations "by wealthy Catholic notables and by the clergy." As for agriculture,

> Catholic trade union membership was chiefly found among sharecroppers, small tenant farmers and even small landowners, but there were significant pockets of support among the *braccianti* and other labourers in Cremona, the stronghold of the Catholic deputy and peasant leader Guido Miglioli, and in other provinces in the Lombard plain. The particular strength of the Catholic organisations in the agriculture sector may be attributed to a number of factors: the appeal of the Catholic ideal of the small peasant landowner to marginalised groups (as opposed to the Socialist aim of collectivisation); the idea of the 'co-management' of large farms adopted by Miglioli, and, possibly, the feeling that the Socialists were not fundamentally interested in the agrarian question.[9]

As the fascist violence grew, the white and the red rural unions reluctantly sought each other's help in 1921 and 1922, but it was too little too late.[10] As was the case also in urban unionism, the Christian unions came to exemplify the Italian proverb of the earthen vase caught between the stone jug and the iron drum. Before the red labor organizations and the allied socialist party leaders could see the white leagues and their representatives in the PPI as necessary partners rather than rivals for the allegiance of the masses, the Black Shirts and their "unions" had detached much of the higher clergy and monied elements in Catholic Italy from any ties to democratic social Catholicism.

The unions, red and white, suffered massive hemorrhages of membership in 1923–24 with the rise of the Fascist movement. With the coincident election in February of 1922 of the Milanese Achille Ratti as Pope Pius XI, it became apparent in due course that the autonomy and the freedom of unions to organize and bargain would no longer be possible. If any components of the Catholic labor movement in Italy were to be saved (e.g., cooperatives, credit unions, study circles), it would be under the shelter of the institutional church by way of "Catholic Action."

[9]Pollard, "Religion and the Formation of the Italian Working Class," in Rick Halpern and Jonathan Morris (eds.), *American Exceptionalism: US Working Class Formation in an International Context* (New York, 1997), p. 174.

[10]Pollard, *The Unknown Pope: Benedict XV (1914–1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London, 1999), pp. 177–186.

Catholic Action, Roman Model

The Antecedents of Catholic Action before Pius XI. The organizations of Catholics formed in nineteenth-century Italy observed the *non expedit* policy and hence concentrated on local rather than national politics. What was most significant was the network of self-help institutions, centered on the parishes, and stimulated and federated in the *Opera dei Congressi*. This was a predominantly lay organization, somewhat on the lines of the German Catholic *Vereine* that gathered once a year for a *Katholikentag*. The term, Catholic Action (Azione Cattolica) was applied loosely to the whole phenomenon of organized lay undertakings on behalf of religion. Pope Pius X dissolved the Opera dei Congressi in 1904, when its internal tensions between democrats and paternalists broke out into the open. He then appointed lay leaders whom he could trust over its reorganized parts, establishing hierarchical control over its activities. Beside the sections for propagating the Catholic social vision (the "Unione Popolare" under Giuseppe Toniolo) and for social and economic action such as credit unions and labor organizations (the "Unione Economico-Sociale"), Pius X set up an "Electoral Union" to guide partial Catholic participation in parliamentary elections, case by case. The days of the *non expedit* were fading. Other national Catholic lay organizations recognized as part of Catholic Action were the Catholic youth organization (male) and the Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana (FUCI) founded in 1896 for university students. The "Union among Catholic Women," was viewed as something of a women's auxiliary of Catholic Action.[11]

Benedict XV created a central office for all these organizations in December, 1915. The president of the Unione Popolare, since 1912 the young Giuseppe Dalla Torre, was named president also of the overall organization. The pope charged the Unione Popolare with devising a programmatic action plan for all the components of Catholic Action. These would henceforth be affiliates or subgroups under a joint board of directors, with the Unione Popolare as its brain trust. Luigi Sturzo was secretary, thus becoming a stable presence at the national level of the Italian church. Benedict XV gave Christian unionists a space in the UES (Unione Economico-Sociale) in which to develop and then let them

[11]On the Opera dei Congressi see *DSMCI*, I/2, 336-347, and Misner, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-261; on the FUCI and the women's Catholic Action, see *DSMCI*, I/2, 295-301 and Cecilia Dau Novelli, "L'associazionismo femminile cattolico (1908-1960)," *Bollettino dell'Archivio per la storia del movimento sociale cattolico in Italia*, 33 (1998), 112-137, here 114.

go their way independently. During the "red biennium," in March, 1920, he reproved the self-styled "extremist" tactics of the militant diocesan "labor office" in Catholic Bergamo under the short-lived leadership of Romano Cocchi,[12] but let the clergy co-operate with the rest of the lay leadership of Catholic labor. In 1918, Armida Barelli (1882-1952) founded the national female youth organization that was still lacking. Since 1915, she had had remarkable success in Milan, organizing women's groups into a branch of Catholic Action. The war brought about a sharp upward re-evaluation in the minds of many a churchman of the need for articulate and engaged Catholic women in Italian society.

The Stamp of Pius XI. Achille Ratti, Pope Pius XI, wanted to make Catholic Action the prime instrument in making the Church more influential and effective in modern Italy.[13] As the creaky mechanisms of the liberal state gave way to the strong-man rule of Mussolini, Pius XI issued new statutes for Catholic Action in October, 1923. They would transform it into a mass-mobilizing force that was headed for an uneasy coexistence with the rival pretensions of the Fascist state to mobilize Italian society for its own purposes. The Electoral Union had become redundant with the formation of the PPI and even more so with the coups of the coming dictatorship. The Economic-Social Union similarly disappeared from Catholic Action rolls. The labor unions it had fostered were now autonomous economic associations, not religious ones. They fit in poorly with the religious and clericalized focus now being emphasized in Catholic Action. Nor did this third reorganization in less than twenty years leave a place for the Unione Popolare. Count Dalla Torre welcomed these developments from his position as editor of the *Osservatore Romano*, to which he had moved in 1920. Luigi Colombo, the lawyer-activist and first president, before Achille Grandi, of the largest Catholic industrial union, for textile workers, became head of Italian Catholic Action (ACI). The pope knew Colombo from the latter's similar position in the huge Milanese archdiocese. He could rely on him and Ida Barelli to execute the new policy firmly and energetically.

[12]*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XII (1920), 109-112. See Pollard, "The Pope, Labour, and the Tango: Work, Rest, and Play in the Thought and Action of Benedict XV (1914-1922), in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The Use and Abuse of Time in Christian History* ("Studies in Church History," Vol. 37 [Rochester, New York, 2002]), pp. 369-384, here 380.

[13]Mario Casella, "Pio XI e l'Azione cattolica italiana," in *Achille Ratti, pape Pie XI. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Ecole française de Rome* (Rome, 1996), pp. 605-640; see also Jean-Dominique Durand in *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1990), XII, 349-402, here 362-363.

The "Roman model" of Catholic Action that emerged from the 1923 statutes would remain in force in Italy until 1946.[14] It approximated the stark simplicity of a fourfold organization of the faithful: one national association for the parish circles of each of the "natural" groupings: adult men, adult women, young men, young women. The actual four associations were those of Catholic men, of (male) youth, of university students (male: FUCI), and of women. The women's association was subdivided into university women (still a somewhat suspect group), adult women, and the dynamic female Catholic youth organization. They were joined (only) at the top, by a Giunta Centrale that brought their presidents together with a few other members ("assistants" from the clergy), all appointed by the pope.[15] Pius XI made no attempt to palliate the "top-down" character of his Catholic-Action approach. Although autonomy-minded members of the PPI and CIL did not find it congenial, there were plenty of conservative Catholics who did. For them as for the pope, democracy and autonomy were weak reeds on which to lean. Authoritarian leadership was deemed necessary. Nevertheless, until Fascist oppression made it impossible to engage in any other open organized activity, the membership of the Catholic organizations grouped together in Catholic Action slumped. The men's organization did not reach 100,000 until well after the concordat of 1929 was signed.

The attitudes of Catholics toward Fascism and its leader, Benito Mussolini, ran the gamut from wholehearted welcome to uncompromising rejection, but most were somewhere between these two poles and subject to change. Many preferred to regard the Fascist regime as a tolerable status quo, different from the conservative liberalism of the recent past but not necessarily worse on the whole. Those taking a neutral stance now dubbed "*afascismo*" could regard it as a passing phenomenon. They could dedicate themselves in Catholic Action, within the shell of Fascist Italy, to nurturing the seeds of a future Christian order.[16] Some leading Christian Democrats (in particular, Luigi Sturzo, Francesco Luigi Ferrari, and Giuseppe Donati) immediately and unwaveringly opposed the Fascist phenomenon as completely unacceptable; they had their followers in the ranks.

During the red biennium just after the war, Mussolini's movement looked like socialists, and so most Catholics had regarded them as a

[14]Renato Moro, "Azione cattolica, clero e laicato di fronte al fascismo," in Francesco Malgeri (ed.), *Storia del movimento cattolico in Italia* (Rome, 1980–81), IV, 87–377.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 119.

[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 232–233.

threat. Then, when he turned his squads on socialist agitators, people took another look but were largely in the dark as to the antisocial alliances that Mussolini was forming. Soon enough, he eschewed his anticlerical positions and promised a return to normalcy, law, and order. At this point, Pius XI became pope and retained Cardinal Gasparri as secretary of state. Both were attentive to the possibility of coming to terms with the strong man, to the benefit of the papacy and Church. Such an understanding had eluded Pius XI's predecessors. After all, the liberal politicians in charge were not interested in any arrangement that might enhance the ability of the Vatican to wield its influence. In fact, it came about that Pius XI and Mussolini succeeded in settling the Roman Question in the famous Lateran Pacts of 1929. Leading up to the years when secret talks were in progress between the Vatican and Fascist Italy (1926–1929), Pius XI wished to determine the Catholic line in state affairs without interference from below. The PPI, for all its vaunted aconfessional character, labored under the unfortunate birth defect of being led by a priest, Luigi Sturzo. The Vatican insisted that he quit his political post in early 1924 and go into exile in London in October.[17]

Catholic Action was to be strictly religious, but by no means merely "a private affair" (as Lenin would have it). The short formula used to describe Catholic Action, the "participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy," meant that its mass organizations could not be political parties or labor unions, since neither politics nor economic activities were the apostolic responsibility of the hierarchy. Instead of withdrawing into the spiritual realm, though, the lay "participants" in the hierarchically directed movement were to lay the moral and spiritual groundwork for nothing less than the "conquest" or re-Christianization of society, including the political and economic sectors as well as public culture. One must be clear that this "integralist" goal of Catholic Action was as yet untouched by pluralism. That is, neither the conservatives nor the progressives in Catholic circles, neither the authoritarians nor the democrats, acknowledged religious, cultural, or social pluralism as legitimate, much less desirable, except as a lesser evil. Moreover, Pius XI supposed that the secular state of nineteenth-century liberalism was on its last legs—hence his lack of appreciation for Sturzo's attempt to integrate into it the Catholic element. It was the moment for the Roman Catholic Church to step forward with its claims to provide the guidance

[17] Pollard, "Italy," pp. 79–82; see also Frank J. Coppa (ed.), *Controversial Concordats: The Vatican's Relations with Napoleon, Mussolini, and Hitler* (Washington, D.C., 1999), pp. 81–119.

that society sorely needed, in a state that would recognize its supreme authority in the moral sphere. When he spoke of the kingship of Christ, as he often did, he included a prominent role for the Vicar of Christ in its temporal realization.[18]

The outcomes of the papal approach were many, positive and negative. Certainly, in the context of Italy and other authoritarian or even totalitarian states, if the hierarchy were able to preserve a zone of freedom for Catholics to pursue their own cultural life and the formation of youth in particular, this could and did in fact serve as a nursery of forces capable of advancing human rights. In democratic states to be, the Catholic Action emphasis on spiritual formation and training of zealous elites reaped a harvest of articulate lay activists who provided indispensable leadership, also for political and economic values, when civil society reconstituted itself. Admittedly this did not take place in a new Christendom, as Pius XI projected, but in a more broadly democratic social state. It was short-sighted to suppose that in a modern society the plurality of basic world views could be reduced to one reigning "Christian" set of values without trampling on the personal dignity of human beings, itself a primary value of Catholic social teaching (e.g., QA #83).

Christian Labor and Catholic Action in Italy. The head of the textile workers union in northern Italy since 1916, Achille Grandi, was a proponent of a moderately militant non-socialist trade unionism, in tandem with the diocesan labor offices and the PPI. He was elected to parliament in 1919 and became secretary general of the CIL. As union numbers sank in 1923-1924 and Catholic cooperatives on the land were exposed to "the demolitions" by the large landowners and their Fascist paramilitaries, the white unions found ecclesiastical support more and more conditioned upon a separation from elective politics—and upon a diminution of their autonomy, that is, their freedom to defend the interests of workers through militant action. On the governmental side, Mussolini made no secret of his desire to eliminate the socialist and all other independent unions from the Italian scene. Step by step, as he consolidated his power, anti-union measures were taken. The agreement of October 2, 1924, between Confindustria (the national manufacturers' association) and the Fascist labor confederations, known as

[18]Pius XI instituted the feast of Christ the King in 1925, after having sounded the theme of the kingship of Christ in his inaugural encyclical and in his motto, *Pax Christi in regno Christi*. Cf. Francesco Traniello, "L'Italia cattolica nell'era fascista," in Gabriel De Rosa (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa, III. L'età contemporanea* (Bari, 1995), pp. 257-299, here pp. 264-268 with 277; Moro, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-104.

the Palazzo Vidoni pact, stipulated that they would bargain only with each other, thus effectively excluding the red and white unions from any meaningful role in labor negotiations. The Rocco law on trade unions, debated and passed in the first months of 1926, outlawed strikes in favor of compulsory arbitration.[19] The mere existence of unions (outside of the Fascist corporatist bodies) as "de facto associations," though without any standing or rights, was expressly permitted.

While this was going on, the papal policy of gathering all lay Catholic organizations into the embrace of Catholic Action posed the question from the ecclesiastical side. Was continuation of the CIL unions under the aegis of Pius XI's Catholic Action a realistic alternative? After all, they could hardly survive without the financial support from diocesan labor offices. Could some relative autonomy be agreed upon that would permit them to act like unions? This was still not altogether precluded until Mussolini's dictatorship was solidified in 1926. The Social Week of 1924, held in Turin under the sponsorship of the reorganized Catholic Action, around the theme of "Social Authority in Catholic Teaching," was not promising.[20] Contrary to the custom of previous Social Weeks, no discussion was allowed or questions permitted after the speakers' thoroughly vetted presentations. Over the winter, Grandi and Giovanni Gronchi and no doubt other white union leaders had many a talk with their erstwhile colleague, Luigi Colombo. In the interval between the Palazzo Vidoni pact and the Rocco law, they tried to find a way to save what could be saved of the white labor movement.

Meanwhile, in deepest secrecy, moves were under way to open talks between the Vatican and the Italian state to resolve the Roman Question, this time seriously. The end result for social Catholics would be meager, the setting up of a sort of research office and co-ordinating headquarters for all the Catholic co-operatives and credit unions that remained. This was called ICAS, the Istituto Cattolico di Attività Sociale, headed by a priest, Giovanni Balduzzi, and directly subordinated to (and protected by) the central office of Catholic Action in Rome.[21] The main function of its studies wing was to prepare the annual Social Week of Italian Catholics. In this sense it carried on, within the framework of

[19]Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism, 1929-32: A Study in Conflict* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 33.

[20]Francesca Duchini, "Dal primo dopo-guerra all'interruzione degli anni trenta," in *Le Settimane sociali nell'esperienza della Chiesa italiana (1945-1970)* (Milan, 1990), pp. 49-87, here 63.

[21]Moro, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-168.

reorganized Catholic Action, one of the functions of the Old Unione Popolare. Ludovico Montini, the brother of Giambattista (Pope Paul VI), served in this capacity.

The nails were driven into the coffin of the CIL as of the PPI in the waning months of 1925. In September those who attended the Social Week in Naples heard Dalla Torre denounce the very idea of autonomy in political or economic positions for any body of organized Catholics. As individual citizens, they retained their freedom of choice, but all Catholic group undertakings had to be regimented under Catholic Action. Catholic Action, for its part, had to remain "apart from and above the political parties." Dissensions within Catholic Action, rife with regard to the proper attitude to be assumed in regard to the Fascist regime, had to cease, so as to arrive at the "supreme purpose of Christian restoration of society and state." Then in the following months, the central office of Catholic Action issued directives, in the tenuous hope of being able to work within the system for the better, that in effect gave up any opposition to joining the Fascist labor corporations.[22] Finally, the Christian labor leaders drew the consequences and shuttered their operation. Grandi's lamentation in a letter to a friend is understandable: "Catholic Action is taking on a great responsibility not only as to Catholic workers but all Italian workers. History will be the judge."[23]

The Concordat with Italy

Papal authority was never more effective in the Catholic world than in the pontificate of Pius XI. The keys to the Catholic response to Fascism lay in his hands. Pollard, in my view, does not overstate what was decisive:

> In the 1920s and 1930s, under the guidance of Pius XI and Cardinal Gasparri, the policy of the Holy See towards secular governments and secular society in general could be summed up as 'Concordats and Catholic Action'. Vatican diplomacy in the reign of Pius XI was directed towards securing cast-iron, juridical agreements—concordats—as a means of regulating relations between the Church and national governments.[24]

With a view, of course, to re-Christianizing society in a Catholic direction. In hindsight, it is apparent that Pius XI, at least until 1937, harbored illusions about how Fascism might serve the Church's purposes. True

[22]Quotes from Moro, *ibid.*, pp. 137–138; see also pp. 159–166.

[23]Mariangela Maraviglia, *Achille Grandi fra lotte operaie e testimonianza cristiana* (Brescia, 1994), p. 70.

[24]Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, pp. 4–5.

enough, he never thought that Mussolini had the interests of Christianity or the Catholic Church at heart. He hoped, however, that he might lay the groundwork for a future Christian society by taking advantage of Mussolini's suppression of Masonry, anticlericalism, and socialism, and by building up a strong Catholic sphere through Catholic Action. The concordat was to see to it that Catholic Action was protected as "religious, not political."

Cardinal Gasparri was able to negotiate a treaty that created the Vatican City State. In its first article it declared that Roman Catholicism was "the only State religion" of Italy. The treaty was accompanied by a concordat (the second of the three "Lateran Pacts" of 1929): it guaranteed the Church the freedom to carry out its religious mission. Given such concessions, the pope deemed it worth the sacrifices that the Catholic movement had had to make. Of particular note was Article 43, which would become a flashpoint of a major dispute in the very year of *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931. According to Article 43 of the concordat, Catholic Action was to be kept apolitical in the sense that all its organizations would "maintain their activity wholly apart from every political party and under the direct control of the hierarchy of the Church for the diffusion and practice of Catholic principles." Clergy were reminded to stay clear of political parties. In return, "the Italian State recognizes the organizations forming part of the Italian Catholic Action" thus constituted.[25] By virtue of Article 1 of both the treaty and the concordat, Italy guaranteed "the free exercise of the spiritual power" to the Catholic Church. By Article 43, the mass organizations sponsored by the Church were included under the guarantee of freedom. These pacts were signed by Mussolini and Gasparri on February 11, 1929, and then had to be ratified.

A one-choice "plebiscite" in March was the occasion of more or less favorable winks and nods in church circles, particularly on the part of Luigi Colombo (he would soon resign from the Catholic Action board). There followed a period of growth and renewal in Catholic Action cadres, closely tracked by the police. Mussolini had evidently not reckoned with this revival and cracked down on the Catholic press (much reduced already), on parish centers, and on Catholic Action groups that showed too much vigor or where ex-Popular Party members were active.[26]

The crisis between the two parties to the Lateran Pacts came over the education of children and youth. Who would get to influence the

[25]Text in Coppa, *op. cit.*, p. 204, and Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, p. 214.
[26]Pollard, *ibid.*, pp. 124–127; Moro, *op. cit.*, pp. 191–211.

coming generations? The Church considered this the right of the parents and then of the Church itself. The Fascist position exalted "the ethical state" and claimed totalitarian control of the education of youth as a top priority. Regardless of what the provisions of the concordat in this regard might say, Mussolini could not let the Catholics train "successors" with another world view "and present them to the masses as such. If he let them do that, he would open a breach in his own ranks."[27]

Labor issues also played a catalytic role in the crisis.[28] The central committee of Italian Catholic Action was planning a manifestation of social Catholicism in the form of an international congress in Rome to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. *Il Lavoro Fascista* led the charge against Catholic Action in March, 1931, for claiming to have a role in judging economic institutions through its *sezioni professionali*. Skirmishes followed on the part of "unauthorized" Fascist toughs. The Catholics in the labor contingent of Catholic Action forged ahead with their plans, co-ordinated with the expected issuance of another papal statement, which would be *Quadragesimo Anno*, on the reorganization of society in its economic dimensions. The Fascist press restrained itself as long as the 10,000 foreign Catholics, prominently including groups of Young Christian Workers from Belgium and France, were in Rome for the celebrations when *Quadragesimo Anno* was actually issued (May 15, 16, 17). At this point, to the surprise of both police and church circles, anti-fascist flyers suddenly appeared throughout central Rome. The "*manifestini*" denounced the Fascist regime as illegitimate and explained the absence of organized Italian Catholic workers from the Roman observances as due to repression.[29] This was an action of the underground Milanese anti-fascist group calling itself the Movimento Guelfo d'Azione; made up of Catholics, they nevertheless operated at a great distance from the pope's "Catholic Action." Its leaders were eventually the only Catholic militants ever found guilty of a crime against the regime by the Fascist Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State.

Shortly thereafter newspapers carried denunciations of the unpatriotic complaints that former local activists were voicing to the Catholic Action heads about their life under Fascism. (The political police always had informers in these supposedly closed meetings.) At the end of May,

[27]Comment of Palmiro Togliatti, the Communist leader, in 1931, as quoted by Moro, *ibid.*, p. 234.

[28]As Pollard notes, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, pp. 134–145, 164, 173.

[29]Camillo Brezzi, in the *DSMCI*, II, 322; Richard A. Webster, *The Cross and the Fasces: Christian Democracy and Fascism in Italy* (Stanford, 1960), pp. 148–152.

Mussolini abruptly switched the campaign against Catholic Action to the governmental level. All over Italy, police raided and shut down Catholic youth clubs. In Rome on May 30, 1931, the future pope, Monsignor Montini, was present at the FUCI offices when the police descended, searched the premises, and carted away boxes of papers.[30] All these Catholic organizations remained closed until September.

In his June encyclical, *Non abbiamo bisogno*, Pius XI vigorously condemned the attacks on Catholic Action, while holding out an olive branch to the government. Although Mussolini could not afford to let a Catholic Action in any way politicized to pass unchallenged, he was also interested in an accord that would quiet the choleric pope and integrate Catholicism into the Fascist state. The pope, for his part, was willing to apply the brakes to the remaining democrats in Catholic Action, if the work of spiritual formation and influence on youth under the guidance of the hierarchy could continue or even, as he hoped not without reason, be extended. Thus, in the *Osservatore Romano* of September 2, 1931, an official accord between the government of Italy and the Holy See was published. Its three points offered further concessions to Mussolini: no politics, no labor union activity or training, no athletics for the young, just "occupations of a recreational or educational nature with a religious purpose."[31] The lay element was brought still more firmly under hierarchical responsibility by the provision that the critical level of control was to be diocesan rather than national—the local bishop was to be responsible for all its leaders.

The outcome of the 1931 September Accord is variously judged. In practice, the national offices went on as before, except that new people gradually replaced the directors who took seriously Pius XI's protestations that the Church had a duty to teach about the moral and religious elements in issues of labor and statecraft. The limitation of the youth clubs' activities did not seem to stunt their growth overall. Clause 2 forbidding trade union activities put the quietus on the *sezioni professionali* that ICAS had set up to foment Catholic influence within the regime's corporatist unions. Here is the text of the second clause (emphasis mine):

> The Azione Cattolica does not include in its program the constitution of professional associations and trade unions; consequently it does not set before itself any tasks of a trade union order. Its internal professional sections, already now existing and governed by the law of April 3, 1926 [the Rocco law], are formed for exclusively religious and spiritual purposes and *they propose fur-*

[30]Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* (New York, 1993), pp. 109–110.
[31]Text in Coppa, (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 111.

> *ther to contribute to the result that the trade unions juridically recognized* [the Fascist ones] *may respond ever better to the principle of collaboration between the classes and to the social and national ends which, in a Catholic country, the State with its existing organizations proposes to attain.*

Though the effectiveness of these "internal professional sections" in the 1930's was minimal, Clause 2 preserved the principle of a Catholic labor movement for more favorable times.

For the present, however, there would be hardly any room for issues of economic justice to be discussed, even in Catholic Action forums. Mussolini's blow of the end of May, shutting down all the youth organizations, had effectively muffled the reception of *Quadragesimo Anno* in Italy. Paradoxically, in the very year when Pius XI celebrated papal social teaching and elevated it into a tradition for the church at large, it was overshadowed by *Non abbiamo bisogno* and soft-pedaled in the concordatary Church of Italy. No Social Week was held in Italy in 1930, 1931, or 1932. Studium, FUCI's independently charted co-operative publishing house, which did not seem to be harried by the police, did put out an edition of the encyclical for study circles, as did the Catholic University press in Milan, Vita e Pensiero.

Quadragesimo Anno

When *Quadragesimo Anno* came out in the midst of the crackdown on Catholic Action in Fascist Italy, those who read it there as well as many in other countries scrutinized it first of all for what the pope would say about a corporatist social order. The encyclical indeed offered an authoritative pronouncement devoted to just that subject. In the section on the "Reconstruction of the Social Order" one reads the topic sentence (#81):

> First and foremost, the State and every good citizen ought to look to and strive toward this end: that the conflict between the hostile classes be abolished and harmonious cooperation of the Industries and Professions be encouraged and promoted.[32]

[32]See *The Papal Encyclicals*, compiled by Claudia Carlen (Wilmington, North Carolina, 1981), III, 428. A freer but clear Englishing of this passage is found in Bernard Dempsey's 1936 translation of Nell-Breuning's commentary, *Reorganization of Social Economy: The Social Encyclical Developed and Explained* (Milwaukee, 1936, p. 423): "Now this is the primary duty of the state and of all good citizens: to abolish conflict between *classes* with divergent interests, and thus foster and promote harmony between the various ranks of society. The aim of social legislation must therefore be the re-establishment of *vocational groups* . . ." (emphasis mine).

This was a sentence lifted from a speech given by Eugenio Pacelli to the German Katholikentag of 1929, when he was still nuncio to Berlin. Nevertheless, when Father Wladimir Ledóchowski, the Jesuit general or "black pope," read it in a draft, he pointedly asked, "How long do you think it will take to achieve this?" Oswald von Nell-Breuning, the young German Jesuit charged with preparing the text for the encyclical, replied, "It will never be achieved," making clear that the ideal was utopian in the sense of being a sound goal, one in accord with reason, even if never fully realizable.[33] Class antagonisms would remain. To lessen injustice in the prevailing conditions of a class society, a nonviolent class struggle (though long a concept anathematized by social Catholics in general) might well be required. But the conditional necessity of conflict along class lines was to be relativized by acknowledging a common good embracing all classes. According to the encyclical, the formation of "Industries and Professions" would promote this positive development (#82).

> The social policy of the State, therefore, must devote itself to the reestablishment of the *Industries and Professions*. In actual fact, human society now, for the reason that it is founded on *classes* with divergent aims and hence opposed to one another and therefore inclined to enmity and strife, continues to be in a violent condition and is unstable.

What were these "Industries and Professions" or vocational groups? In the official Latin of the encyclical they were called *ordines* (for the German *Stände*); in Italian *le varie professioni*; in French *des 'ordres' ou des 'professions.'*[34] They were organizations of those engaged in "the same industry or profession," irrespective of their position in the labor market as employers or employees (QA #83). The idea was to bring to the fore the contributions of everyone engaged in a given economic endeavor. One's job can very well be one's primary identity in society. To cast this identity in public law in terms of sector (such as "education" or "the construction business") rather than class (laborer, executive) opened the possibility of distributing the burdens and benefits of a common economic activity by consultation rather than by mutual exploitation or oppression. This could deprive the class struggle of its all-or-nothing edge.

Paragraphs 91–96 followed shortly thereafter; they constitute Pius XI's very own comments on the Italian system of corporatism instituted by

[33]Oswald von Nell-Breuning, "The Drafting of *Quadragesimo Anno*," in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 5: Official Catholic Social Teaching*, edd. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick (New York, 1986), pp. 60–68, here 64.

[34]Nell-Breuning, *Die soziale Enzyklika: Erläuterungen zum Weltrundschreiben Papst Pius' XI. über die gesellschaftliche Ordnung* (Cologne, 1932), p. 148.

the Fascist regime. Nell-Breuning received these paragraphs in the pope's handwriting along with the request to find the appropriate place for them in the draft.[35] Readers' interest centered with reason on what it had to say about the corporatist "reconstruction of the social order" (subtitle of the encyclical). Whence arose the regrettable association of Catholic social doctrine with authoritarian or Fascist corporatism. The practical effect of the latter was to neutralize labor union activity by yoking labor organizations to employers' associations and both to the totalitarian government of Mussolini. When one reads the pope's paragraphs today, it is quite disconcerting to find Papa Ratti giving Fascist state corporatism credit for "obvious advantages" (QA #95): "The various classes work together peacefully, socialist organizations and their activities are repressed, and a special magistracy exercises a governing authority" to settle conflicts. He was "compelled," however, as he hastened to say, to lodge an objection, though muted in tone. "The State . . . is substituting itself for free activity." The new order seems overly regimented from above. Might it not be designed to serve particular (viz. Fascist Party or upper-class) interests, rather than leading to the reconstruction and promotion of a better social order? Mussolini did not take kindly to this paternal observation. It only aggravated the tensions that led to the suppression of all Catholic Action youth groups from the end of May until September, as we have seen.

With the September Accord, however, church-state relations were patched up and entered a period of "consensus" (roughly 1932–1938). Pius XI and much of the Vatican looked about and saw the framework of a "Latin bloc" of Catholic authoritarian states (Italy, Portugal, Spain, but also corporatist Austria with Engelbert Dollfuss and Hungary with Miklós Horthy). This seemed to them the direction to encourage.[36] After all, one could hardly expect anticlericals, or democratic socialists, or Protestants, much less Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, to attend to the guidance that only the Church (the pope) could provide to society. Perhaps the "Catholic states" would be amenable to the "Catholic solution" of the Depression-era social question. Thus many observers under-

[35]Starting in 1968, Nell-Breuning finally revealed his role in the preparation of the encyclical. Several such essays are reprinted in Nell-Breuning, *Wie sozial ist die Kirche? Leistung und Versagen der katholischen Soziallehre* (Düsseldorf, 1972). Cf. Paul Droulers, *Politique sociale et Christianisme. Le Père Desbuquois et l'Action Populaire: Dans la gestation d'un monde nouveau (1919–1946)* (Paris, 1981), pp. 152–157.

[36]See Renato Moro, *La formazione della classe dirigente cattolica* (Bologna, 1979), pp. 503–508; Marc Agostino, *Le Pape Pie XI et l'opinion (1922–1939)* (Rome, 1991), p. 547; and Francesco Traniello, "L'Italia cattolica nell'era fascista," in De Rosa (ed.), *Storia dell'Italia Religiosa*, p. 295.

standably if mistakenly identified the "vocational order" of *Quadragesimo Anno* with the policies of Fascist and authoritarian states.

The principles of solidarity and subsidiarity received an impressive formulation in *Quadragesimo Anno* and have remained an integral part of Catholic social ethics. The use made of Pius XI's encyclical, and his own authoritarian mindset, ran counter to the contribution it might have made at the time. As Eamon Duffy remarks, "by sacrificing the Catholic political parties [and labor organizations] Pius assisted in the destruction of mediating institutions capable of acting as restraints and protections against totalitarianism."[37] In the form of promoting the function of self-governing intermediary bodies between the individual person and the central government of a state, the "principle of subsidiarity" (QA #79–80) found certain positive applications in the 1930's and more so since. Even as third-way ambitions[38] have lost their place in Catholic social teaching, subsidiarity has become one of its most prominent features.

In the optic of Pius XI himself, Catholic social doctrine implied the only kind of society he considered fully viable, one in which the Roman Catholic Church had a recognized position as *the* representative of true religion and morality (cf. encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of 1928 and QA #129). He counted on an activated laity, including militant and pro-democratic varieties such as the Belgian and French Young Christian Workers movement (JOC, Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne). The conquest of the modern world for Christ the King and for Christ's church, i.e., the Catholic Church under the pope, was the explicit aim of his pontificate. To the extent possible, and with the adaptations necessary, he saw to it that the Catholic Action model was extended to all countries and all walks of life. This definitely included the apostolate among the working masses. The "apostles to the workers ought to be workers" themselves (QA #141).

Where did this leave militant Catholic labor activists, then? Were they under a doctrinal cloud again, contrary to the vindication they had received from the Vatican in the letter to Bishop Liénart? No, this was not the case, despite appearances of inconsistency. The first part of the encyclical, recalling the achievements of Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*, presented him as a defender of the right of workers to organize

[37]Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven, 1997), p. 259.

[38]Misner, "Christian Democratic Social Policy: Precedents for Third-Way Thinking," in Thomas Kselman and Joseph A. Buttigieg (eds.), *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2003), pp. 68–92.

(QA #30), against the repressive stance of the liberal governments of the time. The right to engage in conflict with their employers, when needful, was also clearly stated, if *con sordino*. The task of labor unions was "the defense of the rights and legitimate interests of their members in the labor market" (QA #34). When taken together with the acknowledgment that prevailing conditions reflected "the errors of individualistic economic teaching" rather than the Church's sound solidarist tradition (QA #88), the existence of a class-based labor movement was approved, so long as it was open to acknowledging the rights of the other economic actors as well.

Planning under the Protective Wing of Catholic Action

In Mussolini's Italy, little was left of the pre-Fascist social Catholic organizations by 1931. Christian democrats were out of action and silent. The same went for activists in the CIL unions. Only a few PPI exiles kept the flame burning, but it could not be seen or felt in Italy. Some internal exiles in the Vatican (Guido Gonella, Alcide De Gasperi) could occasionally reach Catholics in Italy through the columns of the *Osservatore Romano* or the *Illustrazione Vaticana* (1933–1938). Ex-Popolari were more numerous in the ranks of Italian Catholic Action than the pope thought, but they went along with the church-state consensus that prevailed until 1938.[39] One Italian Catholic there was who could command an audience: the pope. But Pius XI saw no alternative to dealing with the Fascist regime, which was by now firmly in charge of Italy and which after all did not set out to destroy Catholicism, as Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia were doing. Religious education was an exception to the Fascist educational monopoly that Mussolini conceded—reluctantly—to the Catholic Church of Italy in the concordat of 1929. Pius XI would make great counter-concessions to preserve and if possible increase the chances of influencing the youth of Fascist Italy.

The organization of Catholic university students, FUCI, in the first years of Fascism, harbored a critical tendency, open to the thinking of progressive French Catholic intellectuals. In 1933, however, as a consequence of the September Accord of 1931 on the permissible limits of the freedom of Catholic Action organizations, Monsignor Montini was replaced by a priest with no sympathy for the modernizing line.[40] FUCI's lay president, Igino Righetti, had to shift to another position in

[39]Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism*, pp. 158–163.

[40]Richard J. Wolff, *Between Pope and Duce: Catholic Students in Fascist Italy* (New York, 1990), pp. 114, 146, and 167–168.

Catholic Action in 1934, but even before he did, the pages of the *Azione fucina* were opened to new clerical writers who evinced a markedly friendly tone to the regime and its corporatism.

There were some philo-fascists prominent in Catholic Action, part of the clerico-fascists who abandoned the PPI for Mussolini in 1923–24. Agostino Gemelli was the founding president of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan and of the associated publishing house, Vita e Pensiero. While opposing the quasi-Hegelian philosophy favored by Fascists, he and the academic and church circles he influenced saw the Fascist attempts at reorganization of society as potentially in line with the "third way" between individualism and collectivism that social Catholics so ardently desired. "The Fascist conception of the State, as the Nation organized, [has] led to corporativism. . . . The new doctrine and the new system rest, more than might appear at first sight, upon a conception of the world particularly dear to us, and true, according to our way of seeing things: the primacy of the spiritual" (Gemelli in 1933).[41] Fascist propagandists did not accept this thesis, and with reason. Gemelli, however, was a power in Catholicism and was treated with the respect due to useful allies.

Pius XI kept juggling supporters and critics of the regime. He appreciated old Milanese friends like Gemelli and the clerico-fascists. Through most of the two Fascist decades, they could project the Catholic presence publicly in the intellectual and financial sectors, and gradually also in the bureaucracy of the state like the IRI (the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction). He encouraged the apolitical, devotional, and moralizing successes of the Catholic Youth as a mass organization. Not only the pope but broad ecclesiastical fronts looked with favor on these developments and contrasted them with the struggle of Catholics under an incomparably more hostile regime in Nazi Germany.

It is also a fact that Pius XI protected and encouraged the Montini-Righetti line of Catholic Action after it had been equivalently disavowed by the accord of September, 1931. To quote Richard Webster's early but excellent study once more: "Given the totalitarian conditions of Italy in the 1930's, lay autonomy was out of the question. Indeed, Righetti and Montini succeeded in rearing a new generation of Catholic political leaders only because they had the backing of Pius XI himself."[42] Being limited to an educated elite of university students and graduates, FUCI obviously had a different audience from that of general Catholic Action.

[41] Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 158. Cf. Maria Bocci, *Oltre lo stato liberale: ipotesi su politica e società nel dibattito cattolico tra fascismo e democrazia* (Rome, 1999), p. 287.

[42] Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

Laying the Intellectual Foundations. With the annual Social Weeks suspended again after 1935, Igino Righetti, who would die young in 1939, sought another avenue. With Pius XI's approval, he created the *Movimento Laureati di Azione Cattolica* and its "weeks of religious culture" held at Camaldoli. After Pope Pius XII turned his attention and that of the Catholic world to postwar institutions in his Christmas radio messages of 1941 and especially 1942, on "the internal order of nations,"[43] the small band of Laureati directly addressed the economic and social order in what would be its last annual gathering in 1943. Although the leading economists from the Catholic University in Milan did not attend this meeting, the pope's message stimulated former fairly authoritarian corporatists there, like Amintore Fanfani, to think hard about assuring social justice in a future democratic society.

In the same months, two further groups concerned about the future role of Catholics, some formerly engaged in the PPI, some younger, drafted programmatic manifestoes for a Christian Democratic party. One met in Rome around Alcide De Gasperi and one in Milan, with the participation of Achille Grandi.[44] Mussolini fell on July 25, 1943; on September 3, Marshal Pietro Badoglio came to an armistice agreement with the Allies, whereupon German forces occupied Rome and the northern half of Italy. De Gasperi, of course, had unparalleled political experience from the days of the Popular Party (and even before, when his native province of Trent belonged to Austria). He was eager to learn what he could about modern economic policy from a young Catholic, Sergio Paronetto, who was active in the main Roman circle of the Movimento Laureati and had a responsible position in IRI, the economic development agency. In fact, after the head office of the IRI was moved to the North in the face of the Allied invasion, Paronetto remained in charge of the Roman office.[45] His house became a center for discussions on the future of Italy. A group around De Gasperi drafted the influential *Idee ricostruttive della Democrazia cristiana* of 1943, which was circulated under cover and presaged the new party which he would head.[46] In it the importance of social justice, (almost) equal to that of democratic

[43] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXV (1943), 9–24.

[44] See Nicola Antonetti, "La Democrazia Cristiana negli anni di De Gasperi," in Malgeri (ed.), *Storia del movimento cattolico in Italia*, V, 141–292, here 163–175.

[45] See Luisa Maria Paronetto Valier, *Sergio Paronetto: Libertà d'iniziativa e giustizia sociale* (Rome, 1991).

[46] *Idee ricostruttive della Democrazia cristiana* is reproduced most recently in *I cattolici democratici e la costituzione*, edd. Nicola Antonetti, Ugo De Siervo, and Francesco Malgeri (Bologna, 1998), I, 232–240; see the parallel Milan Program, *ibid.*, pp. 241–243.

political rights, clearly reflects Paronetto's framing of the issue and the priority he accorded to equality of opportunity in the economic realm. Without government policies in place to foster *Christian* democracy, he held, the liberal civil rights that De Gasperi championed would be undermined by the privileges that wealth and social status conferred.

In the history of the reception of *Quadragesimo Anno*, one can note that democracy was here being presented for the baptism that took place in Pius XII's radio message of Christmas 1944, a step not contemplated in the magisterium of Pius XI. A development was under way as well in *Quadragesimo Anno*'s emphasis on social justice, as implying the democratic ideal of equality. Paronetto represents a type of Catholic professional in the special Catholic Action of the Movimento Laureati who came up under Fascism and considered it normal—or at any rate not inferior to the previous liberal regime or a socialist alternative. But now he stepped in to organize the work left hanging after the 1943 Camaldoli study week dedicated to Catholic thought on "the social order." The result was entitled *For the Christian Community* when it finally could appear in 1945.[47] Most often one referred to it as "the Code of Camaldoli."

Its most notable feature in the present context was that government intervention for the sake of social justice would be the rule rather than the exception in many cases (summarized in #86)—not to discourage private initiative or eliminate competition, but to assure the free participation of workers and unions in modern economic life. Perhaps by reason of the party-political abstinence of the document, the papal inhibition against joining forces with socialists could be and was ignored. And of course, the promotion of democracy in politics as a necessary expression of human dignity in the current age was a value that Pius XII endorsed in the 1944 Christmas message[48] that was only broadcast in the interval between the drafting and the publication of the Camaldoli document. The middle principles that would connect Catholic social teaching and the postwar mixed economy took as their basis some of the elements in *Quadragesimo Anno* that did not necessarily imply a vocational order. Such were the greater equality, participation, and transparency in the economy that Paronetto's stress on "social justice" called for.

[47] *Per la comunità cristiana, princìpi dell'ordinamento sociale, a cura di un gruppo di studiosi amici di Camaldoli* (Rome, 1945); rpt. as special number of *Civitas*, 39 (1998), *Il Codice di Camaldoli*, ed. Mario Falciatore, pp. 27–122; its first two chapters can also be found in *I cattolici democratici e la costituzione*, I, 261–274.

[48] *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXVII (1945), 10–23.

The Organization of the Working Class. In parallel with the formation of the Christian Democratic party, former and prospective labor leaders from the CIL experience also made contact with one another. They did not consult only among themselves, but entered into planning with some leading socialist and communist union representatives (Bruno Buozzi and Giuseppe Di Vittorio). When Mussolini fell (July 25, 1943), the post-fascist government of Marshal Badoglio called on the pre-fascist labor leaders to reorganize what we might call the Department of Labor. With the direct Nazi takeover of September 8, however, further meetings had to be clandestine. The three parties with a labor constituency (Communist, Socialist, Christian Democratic) delegated "the organizers" of a possible new unitary labor movement; thus the Christian Democrats authorized Giovanni Gronchi and Achille Grandi to enter into further talks on the subject. They had fairly definite ideas on how the union federation of the future should look. It should present a united front to employers, to be sure. It should renounce working-class supremacy for the co-operation of classes in the interests of the common good. The political and religious views of each "current" within the unitary union would have to be respected, particularly the rights of minorities within the movement. Propagation of the respective religious and political convictions of the various groupings should be the province of parallel workers' organization (communist, socialist, Catholic, and possibly others), but should be kept out of trade union activities proper, which would have to do with the defense of workers' economic interests and workplace rights.[49] One social-Catholic proposal was that the unitary trade union federation would be recognized in law as the designated agency to conduct negotiations with Confindustria on wages and working conditions; however, this provision, reminiscent though it was of corporatism, did not find approval in all Catholic quarters and was not insisted upon.[50]

What made the Catholic unionists think that a labor federation of this nature would be acceptable to their Marxist comrades? The experience of the 1920's was as vivid to the latter as it was to the CIL leaders, when division in the labor ranks made it easier for Fascist goons to break strikes and when the unions could not put up a united opposition to Mussolini's consolidation of power. Buozzi, who had met with Grandi in

[49]See Vincenzo Saba, editor's introduction, *Il Patto di Roma. Dichiarazione sulla realizzazione dell'unità sindacale, 3 Giugno 1944: il movimento sociale cattolico alla ricerca della terza via* (Rome, 1994), pp. 24–27 and pp. 27–53 for what follows.

[50]See Giuseppe Acocella, "Il sindacalismo cristiano nel secondo dopoguerra," in Malgeri (ed.), *Storia del movimento cattolico*, V, 293–297, here 298–300.

Turin as early as 1942, and others had signified that they did not simply want to co-opt the Catholic labor movement but to enter into a collaborative arrangement, respecting each other's convictions. The anti-fascist coalition of the Resistance promised an enduring change of attitude. In a series of meetings at the end of 1943 and the first months of 1944 in occupied Rome, Gronchi sounded out Di Vittorio and ascertained that the Catholic labor body would be represented by its leader on a tripartite general secretariat and that measures would not be taken by simple majority vote if it meant that the Catholic faction would be overridden. The leader of the Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti, also eschewed an anti-Catholic animus to work within the constitutional system he would help to craft.

Given the fact that Catholic trade unionists had never wanted the separatism that was forced upon them by socialist anticlericalism, or better, by the antireligious propaganda that was part and parcel of the socialist subculture, it seemed impossible for them to decline this outstretched hand, even though many issues remained up in the air. While Rome was still on the verge of liberation, Grandi signed "the Pact of Rome" on June 3, 1944, committing the three labor movements to form a single union federation.[51] This despite the strictures of *Quadragesimo Anno* (e.g., #117), obviously considered in this case outdated or not applicable. Grandi also hastened to set up the religious arm of the Catholic labor movement, the ACLI (Associazioni cattoliche lavoratori italiani), in the framework of Catholic Action. This was the parallel organization of Catholic workers' groups which would form their members in Catholic social teaching and world view, endeavors which would not fall to the "Catholic current" within the unitary labor federation as such.

The CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) got up and running on the basis sketched in the Pact of Rome, but without sufficient agreement in the rank and file as to the purposes and limits of labor unions. Buozzi died in a massacre after being captured by the Germans in the last days of the occupation. Di Vittorio and Grandi strove to realize the promise of labor unity, but Grandi's health was failing and he would die on September 28, 1946. He was very concerned to maintain clear distinctions between union work as co-head of CGIL, political engagement as a leader of the labor wing in the Christian Democrats, and Catholic Action as president of the ACLI. After moving the Catholic labor affairs office from the party to the ACLI, he resigned from

[51]Text in Saba (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 11–13.

this position in 1946, accentuating his stress on the mutual autonomy of all three activities in their own respective realms.[52]

With the eventual departure of the communists and socialists from De Gasperi's coalition government and the onset of the Cold War, the position of Catholic trade unionists in the CGIL became untenable and they withdrew—which is another story.[53] They adopted the position of a robust non-corporatist association, not seeking official recognition on the part of state or Church, but animated by a vision of a just society nourished through Catholic Action formation in the ACLI. To view the fortunes of *Quadragesimo Anno* in its Italian setting is to see, among other things, how doctrines in Catholic social ethics get buffered and sifted in the process of putting them into practice, with repercussions on their subsequent formulation.

[52]Luigi Bellotti, *Achille Grandi e il movimento sindacale cristiano* (Rome, 1977), p. 199.

[53]See, e.g., Don Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy: Economy, Society and Politics since 1945* (London and New York, 1997), pp. 132–142, or Andrea Ciampani, *Lo statuto del sindacato nuovo (1944–1951): identità sociale e sindacalismo confederale alle origini della Cisl* (Rome, 1991).