

# FASCISM AS A EUROPEAN PHENOMENON



ADRIANO ROMUALDI

# **BERSERKER**

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## **BOOKS**

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#### THE AUTHOR

ADRIANO ROMUALDI, born in Forlì on 9 December 1940, who died prematurely in a road accident in August 1973, was one of the most gifted theorists of the Right. Professor of contemporary history at the University of Palermo, writer, essayist, journalist, he has tried with his work to provide the tools for an in-depth reconsideration of those strands and authors most representative of Right-wing culture. He conceived and directed the Europa Collection, is the author of the first monograph dedicated to Julius Evola, of an essay on Nietzsche, and one on the Indo-Europeans. For our types, the following have been published: *Plato* (1992), *The last hours of Europe* (2004), *Ideas for a right-wing culture* (3rd edition 2012), *Political and ideological currents of the German right from 1918 to 1932* (2012).

#### THE BOOK

This contribution by Adriano Romualdi proves to be of particular interest and depth for the historiographical slant with which the topic is approached, integrated, as it is, by a continuous attention to the ideological aspect, and in the specificity of the European perspective in which fascism is carefully inserted, capturing its cultural roots in the civilization of the old continent and in particular in nineteenth-century romanticism. The modernity of the fascist phenomenon, which is nourished by the spiritual and cultural humus of Europe, is clearly grasped by the scholar in his attempt to socialize traditional values, re-proposing them in the era of modernization and massification, in order to "reintegrate the disinherited in property, in the family, in the homeland".

ADRIANO ROMUALDI

FASCISM  
AS A  
EUROPEAN  
PHENOMENON

Foreword by Rodolfo Sideri

Introduction by Marcello Veneziani



Preface to the Third Edition

FASCISM, EUROPE, CIVILIZATION IN ADRIANO ROMUALDI

by Rodolfo Sideri

«Fascism now has the universality of all the doctrines in the world which, when realized, represent a moment in the history of the human spirit»<sup>1</sup>. Mussolini was very clear that Fascism, as a historical phenomenon and a realistic political doctrine, arose from national traditions which he could not ignore and had always warned of the impossibility of replicating the Fascist political experience slavishly and in any context. . The latter is a claim rather typical of the abstract rationalism of the French Revolution, which, by reducing man to a type, evicted him from history which is the dimension of the specific national character. And outside of history man is nothing.

Already in 1925, faced with the proliferation of political movements throughout Europe that referred to his movement, Mussolini had stated that Fascism could not be reproduced in other national contexts in which the historical, geographical, economic and moral conditions were different. The universality of Fascism therefore had to be interpreted on a level that was not merely political and historical, but ideological, even, in a certain sense, anthropological. «Like every solid political conception, fascism is practice and it is thought, an action to which a doctrine is immanent which, arising from a given system of historical forces, remains inserted and operates from within. It therefore has a form correlative to the contingencies of place and time, but at the same time it has an ideal content that elevates it to a formula of truth in the superior history of thought»<sup>2</sup>. This metapolitical and metahistorical conception of Fascism consists in a vision of man and life as a tension of spiritual forces, in an agonistic vision of both individual and national life. As

<sup>1</sup> Doctrine of Fascism, there. 13. - Op. cit., I, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., I, I.

spiritual action, "fascism is a religious conception"<sup>^</sup>, within which anyone who shares the faith can come together and recognize themselves in it. Universal, in fact, is the principle of the authority of the State and its ethics; universal is the rejection of individualistic atomism in favor of a conception of the person inserted within a community that substantiates it; universal is the idea of the rejection of the Marxist class struggle as well as the selfishness of the capitalist class, replaced by a collaboration that subordinates particular interests to the supreme good of the Nation. Mussolini, speaking about it with Primo de Rivera in 1923, defined universal principles in which all European fascist movements could recognize themselves, those relating to the love of discipline, the cult of beauty and strength, the courage of responsibility, the refusal of clichés, to the thirst for reality and to love for the people\ In this sense Mussolini could prophesy the advent of a "fascist or fascistized" Europe and speak of the 20th century as a "century of fascism", because the elements useful for the moral and political regeneration of the European peoples could only be found in the new word of Fascism. Liberal democracy and socialism had, in fact, revealed the limits of their one-sidedness, exhausting their historical path: only by returning to the founding values of Europe would it have been possible to trace a new itinerary of civilization.

Adriano Romualdi knew these values well, having dedicated a large part of his young life to the study of their origin in the Indo-European world, whose vision of the world is the source from which that Tradition, Mittelpunkt of Romualdian reflection, arises. His exceptional temperament as a scholar and acute analyst of cultural and metapolitical phenomena in general always led him to update the topics addressed and to observe against the light the possible indications that could be drawn from them to oppose the decline of the European continent. The discovery of European linguistic kinship is aimed, in fact, at raising awareness of contemporary Europe, in order to release a mythopoetic force that uses the "Aryan myth" to build a conservative and revolutionary. «Against the surging wave

<sup>^</sup> Op. cit., I, 5.

<sup>^</sup> N. Tripodi, *Fascism according to Mussolini*, Settimo Sigillo, Rome 1998, p. 95.

versive world that risks submerging our continent, the Aryan idea could represent a point of reference for the surviving European energies"<sup>^</sup>. The conscious acceptance of the values in which the spiritual unity of Europe takes shape allows, according to Romualdi, the creation of a new right of citizenship for a broader homeland and a deeper tradition. Nineteenth-century nationalism is now overtaken by the geopolitics of blocs and no European nation has the dimensions to allow it an autonomous strategy. The very idea of the Nation as a synthesis of the values of a people opposed to others, as it was elaborated by the romantic culture, «is also insufficient to counteract the internationalist myths of democracy and communism which are Russian and American imperialism shields us: only an ideology of European nationalism could do so." Adriano Romualdi invited the Italian Right to update its lexicon, to understand that only a European homeland could restore sovereignty and dignity to individual states, gaining military and therefore political weight, which allows young people to be given a destiny alternative to American and Soviet materialism. A task that only the political Right could complete, since only in it does the word homeland still echo, understood as belonging to a blood and a soil. A homeland denied by the revolutionary subversion of 1789 in the name of an abstract rationalism that demolishes all the traditional values of the European order: religion, military traditions, social, racial and individual differences are dismissed as lies, criminal acts, injustices of fate. Liberal democracy and Marxism were born from the French Revolution and therefore cannot be the driving forces of a recovery of European culture. Romanticism and nationalism were a reaction in defense of «the spiritual values handed down from the past and which materialism, industrialism and the indifference of the masses threatened to destroy»<sup>^</sup> managing to keep alive spiritual energies that otherwise would have disappeared . However, based on the assumption that history revolved around one's own nation, the nationalistic perspective "excludes

<sup>^</sup>A. Romualdi, *The Indo-Europeans: origins and migrations*, Ar, Padua 2004, p. 21. ' A. Romualdi, *The right and the crisis of nationalism*, Riscossa Europea, Cagliari 1965, p. 1. Now in: *A culture for Europe*, Seventh Seal, Rome 2012, pp. 27-28. The Author published the booklet in 1965.

\* Op. cit., p. 4.

Europe as a unity of race and culture", shattering its history into hostile blocks and therefore harboring the seeds of future, destructive, European civil wars. The reorganization of history on the basis of larger units could only open the crisis of the old patriotism which consumed its revolution in the Great War. As was evident in Italy, where the same minorities that pushed the country into the "storms of steel" were the ones that conquered and revolutionized the State. «Fascism, between the two wars, was a European phenomenon tending to institutionalize nationalism»<sup>11</sup>, understanding the danger represented by American and Soviet internationalism. 11 Fascism constituted «the instinctive reaction of the European peoples to the prospect of being ground into anonymous dust by the internationals of Moscow, Hollywood and Wall Street. It was a reaction and a European phenomenon, which fully triumphed in those countries - such as Italy and Germany - which had suffered on their flesh from the gangrene and deceptions of Wilsonianism, but present throughout Europe, from France to Scandinavia, from Romania to Spain". "Fascism as a European phenomenon presents itself, in Romuald's reading, as an attempt to internationalize nationalisms; a difficult and failed attempt due to the persistence of national egoisms. Nationalisms failed to understand that by remaining within their own borders - not only physical, but also and above all ideological - they would have emptied themselves and would have survived in larval form, as happened to Francoism. It was necessary for European nationalisms to give life "to an international that had the ideological, military, economic strength to block the way for other internationals" - Faced with the immense resources of Russia and America it was necessary for Europe to unite its own, from the iron of Lorraine and Noiwegia to Romanian oil, to steel industry of Belgium, the Ruhr, Bohemia and Upper Silesia. «This was Hitler's fundamental intuition... But Hitler

Op. cit., p. 5.

Op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit., p. 7.

Icleni. «But, while nationalisms are only political hypotheses that have not penetrated the popular conscience, ascisms instead obtain the consensus of the masses, that is, they are national-popular phenomena» (G. Tricoli, Introduction to A. Rominaldi, Fascism as a European phenomenon, editions of "L'italiano", st and sd, pp. XLIX-L).

he thought in large spaces in an era in which nationalism still reasoned in provinces. Hitler cut with his sword the Gordian knot of eternal European divisions and contradictions. Hitler stirred, with race, a myth that transcended nations and opened the ranks of the Waffen-SS not only to the Flemish, the Dutch, the Scandinavians but also to the Balts, the French, the Slavs. Whatever the limitations of his personal mentality, he created a new world of possibilities with action. Hitler was playing the Europe card...<sup>30</sup>. It was one of those moments in which History seems to hold its breath, as if waiting for a decisive outcome for the fate of a civilization. The ideological errors and the military defeat determined *l'ad finis Eiiropae*, the decline of the West prophesied by Spengler in 1917, closing «Europe's extreme struggle against political death»<sup>31</sup>. A struggle which, for Romualdi, could have been avoided if France and England had accepted the German peace proposals publicly pronounced by Hitler in the Reichstag in 1940, preserving their empires and keeping Europe at the center of world history. The battle of Berlin takes shape, in the eyes of some by Adriano Romualdi, as a sort of Ragnarök in which the last heralds of European civilization are predicted. Because the Second World War, the war of blood against gold, «was not only a world civil war but the historical tragedy which led to the dethronement of Europe and transferred the insignia of command of the territory of our continent to Russia and America»<sup>32</sup>. The last battle in which Europe still plays a leading role on the world geopolitical scene it is fought by the last defenders of the Reich Chancellery and among them «not only Germans but the Norwegians of the SS Nordland division and the French of Châtiemagne»<sup>33</sup>. Fascism confirmed its European character because already in 1940 «traditional nationalism found itself at a crossroads: either to wither and grow old in a corner, or to participate with Germany in the continental nationalist revolution and the reorganization of Europe»<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> ■ A. Romualdi, *The Last Hours of Europe*, Settimo Sigillo, Rome 2004, p.

30. The book, Adriano's last, was published posthumously in 1975 by his father Pino for Ciarrapico editions.

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit., p. 29. Op.

cit., p. 36.

A. Romualdi, *The clestra and the crisis of nationalism*, cit., p. 11.

What Italy lacked was ideological preparation, not military one, given that the propaganda haversack contained all the nineteenth-century nationalistic stereotypes, such as the claim of Savoy, Nice, Corsica, when the pa-lio was the geopolitical reordering of the world.

In this direction Romualdi reconnects his own reading of Fascism to that of his master, to that Evola who had interpreted Mussolini's movement as a powerful and effective barrier "in the face of a crisis which was essentially a crisis of the idea of the State, of the authority and of the central power in Italy"<sup>20</sup>, but which, in fact, had not proven capable of penetrating the ideological reasons of the international alignments. «From a certain "homeland history" of Masonic-liberal packaging and Risorgimento inspiration, the German... had been painted as a sort of secular enemy of the Italian people (the mystifications of this history are have not reached the point of absurdly attributing a "national" meaning to the revolt of the Municipalities against the Holy Roman Em-

but his representative, Federico In part, Fascism was in continuity with this conception of Italianness and this prevented the Rome-Berlin Assembly from having a «less contingent, deeper and more vocational character, on the level of ideals»<sup>21</sup>.

Fascism as a European phenomenon pushed Adriano Romualdi to a reading of the Mussolini movement that started from his ideas, from his historical reasons, as happens for every other moment in history. No one would think of avoiding a historical discussion and developing an emotional one on the French Revolution or Communism by justifying themselves with the ferocious crimes and actual genocides committed in their name, while this is precisely what happens with the fascist revolution, reduced "to a simple creature of violence." This «prevents us from understanding the consensual aspect of fascist regimes, that is, the passions, the hopes - the illusions, perhaps

- who animated the masses who followed them, making the phenomenon of fascism appear to us as an inexplicable parenthesis of brutality"<sup>22</sup>. A comprehensive historiography of Fascism is also prevented

J. Evola, *Fascism and Ferzo Reich*, Mediterranee, Rome 2001, p. 41.

a7., p. 101.

20 Op. cit., p. 102.

21 A. Romualdi, *Fascism as a European phenomenon*, cit., pp. 2-3.



by the absence of a reference text, such as Capital for Communism or Mein Kampf for Nazism, capable of providing the coordinates for an interpretation without misunderstandings. Fascism was characterized more by its lifestyle, by its political activism, by the construction of a political aesthetic, than by a complete ideological system. If Fascism did not have an ideology elaborated on a table, there still existed a "fascist spiritual movement" which was able to direct men's restlessness towards new forms of socio-political expression. Unlike an ideology which always risks superimposing its schemes on reality - and if reality does not adapt, so much the worse for it - a spiritual movement is dynamic, because the spirit blows where it wants. «This is why Italian Fascism was able to be from time to time republican, syndicalist, monarchist and then again republican, syndicalist, corporatist and finally socialist without ceasing to always be the same thing...»<sup>22</sup>. However, Adriano Romualdi warns, insisting on mysticism leads to forgetting or underestimating the contents common to the various fascisms and which careful analysis can bring to light. «Nationalism, the authoritarian conception of the State, the idea of collaboration between classes within the framework of a "national socialism", the cult of certain values linked to military life and war (discipline, camaraderie, spirit of sacrifice) - together with a generic "anti-materialistic" and "anti-bourgeois" disposition - are constants found in all fascisms»<sup>23</sup> Fascism

è therefore read in an Evolian way by Romualdi as a conservative revolution<sup>24</sup> which has «among the intellectual precursors and supporters: a Gentile, a Volpe, an Evola in Italy; a Spengler, a Jünger, a Moeller van den Bruck in Germany; a Maurras and a Drieu La Rochelle in France»<sup>25</sup> A conservative European revolution

<sup>22</sup> A. Romualdi, Notes for history, in *Il Fascismo as a European phenomenon*, cit., pp. 116-117.

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> «That the fascist movements are conservative cannot be doubted. While Communism abolishes property, denies the nation, persecutes religion, rejects the past as the dark age of exploitation, fascisms cultivate patriotism, idealize the past, defend property and national traditions by relying on religion or, in any case, respecting it" (op. cit., p. 9).

<sup>25</sup> Op. cit., p. 5.

ropea unified by the form of the myth animating its politics and whose different articulations are an expression of the historical, geographical, cultural and political contingencies of the different contexts in which it occurs

è accomplished. 11 Fascism is therefore a European phenomenon by virtue of the universality and uniqueness of the spirit and differs at the moment in which the spirit becomes history. The phenomenological variety of common meta-historical and meta-political expressions has misled, when one can speak of good faith, Marxist historiography which has refused the definition of fascism as revolutionary phenomena, to interpret them as defensive instruments of the elites in power. Looking more closely, or more honestly, we see how the traditional power groups of the previous liberal democratic society were involved by Fascism in order to be transformed and resized. Even from a social point of view, the fascist regimes allowed a more accentuated and rapid social mobility than the pre-existing bourgeois regimes, when they did not openly clash with the old conservative oligarchies.

Adriano Romualdi begins a passionate and informed analysis of the interpretations of Fascism, settling accounts with the foolish Crocean theory of the "parenthesis", identifying its limits in the consideration of the so-called "religion of freedom" as the sole driving force of the 19th century, «while for the young writer of the Right, freedom is, in the nineteenth century, only a moment of the emancipation of the bourgeoisie... being instead the idea of the Nation... the common thread through which must understand the European historical process of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries»<sup>11</sup>. The overall judgment on the three faces of Nolte's fascism is harsh and, by defining Fascism as "resistance against transcendence" as it denies the "freedom towards the infinite" proper to the individual, he denies its character of conservative revolution. For Romualdi, those who defend traditional values, including religious ones, see in the resistance against transcendence nothing more than the defense of a heritage of differences that individualistic and homogenizing degeneration

For Italy, think of "quota 90" which, as now universally recognised, served the Duce to make it clear to the economic powers that politics, including and above all economic, was the exclusive competence of the fascist State and it had to bend to the needs of the nation's development and power.

G. Tricoli, Introduction to A. Romualdi, *op. cit.*, p. X.



threat. Also unacceptable is the interpretative attempt of the Catholic philosopher Augusto del Noce, for whom Fascism and Communism are two moments of the same contemporary heresy that wants to replace the religion of history - and therefore of the State, of the Nation and of the Race - to religious transcendence. Above all, within the Romuladian definition of Fascism as a conservative revolution, the difference posed by Del Noce between nationalism - interpreter of a historical tradition whose legacy he wants to perpetuate - and Fascism, which sees in the Nation a continuous creation, a potential becoming. «To argue that Fascism and Nazism - due to their activist physiognomy - refute the tradition they claim to affirm, means abstracting from the ideas, feelings, and perhaps illusions, which fueled these movements»<sup>27</sup>. Romualdi instead reads with respect the interpretation of Renzo De Felice, with whom he had discussed his thesis on the German right-wing youth movements, showing that he appreciates it precisely for that aspect which is criticized in radical right circles, i.e. his ability as a professional historian to look at Fascism as a historical fact and not as a philosophical category<sup>28</sup>. According to Romualdi, who as well as being a coherent ideologist proves himself to be a capable historian, «studying Fascism is not going around concepts... but reconstructing the political, social, cultural background from which the movements detach themselves fascists»<sup>29</sup>. De Felice has the merit of having demonstrated the role of the middle class in the genesis and development of Fascism<sup>30</sup> and its real basis of consensus. However, considering the negative judgment on Fascism as immutable, De Felice commits the anti-historical mistake of putting personal prejudice before research and of invariably evaluating the judgment on a phenomenon which, he himself recognises, cannot be defined monolithically.

For Adriano Romualdi, Fascism was also a generational fact, the son of young people who returned from the war with a mention

A. Romualdi, *Fascism as a European phenomenon*, cit., p. 19.

When Adriano Romualdi wrote, the first three volumes of De Felice's biography of Mussolini had been published: *Mussolini the revolutionary*; *Mussolini the fascist I and II*.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., p. 22.

Although Fascism still remains, underlines Romualdi, an interclass phenomenon. An essential condition, moreover, to read it from the perspective of the conservative revolution.

stronger personality and character and who were obviously not willing to rigidify themselves into the narrow patterns of bourgeois society. «You cannot understand the phenomenon of fascism if you do not remember that it was also a revolt of the young against the old»<sup>11</sup> revolt that united the feelings of young Europeans. Adriano argues not so much with the left-wing intelligentsia, but rather with the neo-fascist right-wing circles who claimed the Italian character of Fascism, almost as if they wanted to defend it from mixing with National Socialism and from the errors and horrors it committed. Romualdi rightly believes that the responsibilities are individual and that regarding the national pride of claiming for Fascism its Italian character, he believes that in this case «one does not realize that by recognizing a European dimension to Fascism, not only does one take away anything from Italy, but rather the merit of having given life to the strongest and most original political conception of our century is highlighted»<sup>12</sup>. For Romualdi, in fact, Fascism is the third great Italian idea that has gone around the world, after Roman times and Catholicism.

The conception of Fascism as a conservative European revolution leads Romualdi to place movements such as Salazar's Stado Novo in Portugal or Francoism in Spain in a sort of gray area, stuck at a conservative stage and devoid of revolutionary elements consisting in the opening up of popularly based conservative values to the masses. Fascism differs from authoritarian, merely conservative and paternalistic movements, precisely because of this activist character of propaganda, for social reforms, for the permanent political mobilization of the masses. With the defeat of fascism, Romualdi laments, the historical possibilities of updating ancient values have been exhausted which, if they were not fully reflected in them - just think of Croce's opposition to Fascism and of acting against Nazism - only in this new in their historical guise they could survive. History, in fact, returns

Op. cit., p. 30. Indeed, all European fascist leaders were young, much younger than their political opponents and Mussolini still holds today, at 39 years old, the record of youngest prime minister in the history of Italy. They were also young in their lifestyle, sporting and often reckless, which distances them greatly from the still current model of the young man in the system.

A. Romualdi, Notes for history, in // Fascism as a European phenomenon, cit., p. 119.

often to previous formulas, always developed with new paradigms. Thus, Nazism was not Prussianism, but the latter could only survive and win in it; Fascism was not the patriotic nineteenth-century Right, but the latter showed how much aliveness it still contained only in Fascism. With Nazism and Fascism militarily defeated, Prussianism and patriotism also disappeared. Due to this legacy, which makes it a son of the European *Kiiltur*, Fascism is not an interpretative scheme suitable for all latitudes and much less is it comparable to a "development dictatorship", on the model of the African, Asian and South American<sup>11</sup>. For this reason the economic interpretation of Fascism, typical, albeit with many nuances, of communist historiography - Fascism as a defense of capital, if not actually a subsidiary of it - is largely incorrect, as recognized by Croce and certainly not suspected by Nolte of fascist sympathies.<sup>11</sup> Fascism had adherents and gained sympathies in all social classes who saw it as the bulwark, not of their classist interests, but of those values and ideals with which they identified. This does not mean that in Fascism a prevalence of the lower and middle class component cannot be identified, that is, of the class that forcefully emerged in the aftermath of the Great War and which in the trenches represented those officers who, in command, with - they shared the dangers of the soldiers. «It is a phenomenon that takes communists by surprise (Marxist dogma taught that the bourgeoisie

<sup>11</sup> È the thesis of the volume edited by Bardèche, according to which, for example, Nasser, «as an Arab nationalist, quite often assumes the positions of what can be called an Arab fascism» (M. Bardèche, *I fascismi sconosciuti*, Ciarrapico, Rome sd, p. 186). Adriano believes that only "Nasserism" in Egypt can, albeit with some forcing, be defined as fascist for having tried «to graft a national mystique of ancient Arab culture onto a revolutionary political discipline» (A. Romualdi, *Le roots of fascism in Il Fascism as a European phenomenon*, cit., p. 132). The 11th volume takes on a position close, although not identical, to that of Romualdi in the evaluation of fascism as a reactive phenomenon, as a "public health regime" against Bolshevism, with the addition of "political humanism on which they relied in that occasion, what constitutes the cultural message that these regimes have transmitted to all men" (op. cit., pp. 9-10). For Adriano Romualdi, the cultural message of Fascism reacts to the decadence of Civilization and if it opposes Bolshevism it does so precisely because of the denial that it represents of traditional European values and not in the name of class interests.

was now old, decadent). This explains the spite, the envy that exudes from their judgments"^^\ However, it is not possible to assimilate Fascism to a simple defensive device of the small bourgeoisie and its desire for social emergence and the conquest of well-being. Fascism rather aimed to bourgeoisize the proletariat, to assimilate it in its lifestyle, material conquests and values to the bourgeoisie, through the guided economy, social reforms and the opening of patriotic values to the popular bases. In this sense, Romualdi believes, Fascism could legitimately claim to have overcome the concept of class in the name of national solidarity.

It is easy for Adriano Romualdi to also dismantle the moralistic and psychologistic interpretations of Fascism that today no serious historiography takes seriously anymore, but which forty years ago still held sway in the discussions of the neo-illuminist and progressive intelligentsia. The theories, always on the limit between joke and madness, of a Reich for example, are themselves an expression of that moral crisis that is attributed to Fascism, in the consideration that the ethics of struggle, discipline and sacrifice are  $\neg$  no forms of neurosis, when they rather constitute the medicine for European decadence. As a demonstration, however, of the seriousness and objectivity of Romualdi's approach to the problem faced, he nevertheless recognizes, in these positions, the merit of having removed Fascism from the hackneyed economic formula of the Marxists, to insert it into the framework of the «profound restlessness devouring the entire European society»^^ at the end of the First World War. Likewise, the formalistic interpretation of Fascism, or the tendency to observe it under the guise of totalitarianism or developmental dictatorship, has the merit of understanding its modern and progressive character, as opposed to the simplifications of those who would like to reduce it to mere reaction and repression. However, by basing the interpretation on political techniques and forms, that is, on the externality of the models, there is a risk of "not seeing the political, cultural, moral processes which are the most intimate substance of historical life"^^ ^^ . Processes that concern, as mentioned several times, the global crisis of European society

A. Romualdi, // *Fascismo come with a European phenomenon*, cit., p. 84. Op. cit., p. 93.

Op. cit., p. 101

ropea at the end of the Great War. Romualdi denies the totalitarian character of fascism, that is, he denies that it is possible to recognize in them the reduction of life to a single dimension, that of history and the State. The fact that Fascism represents itself as a totalitarian fact is, for Adriano, the answer to the totalitarian challenge launched by Communism. Alternative institutions - the monarchy in Italy, the *Wermacht* in Germany - survived and thrived even under Fascism and Nazism; production never forgot consumer goods even during the war, the Christian Churches continued to exercise their role. «In short, Romualdi's polemic against the totalitarian interpretation of fascism represents a fundamental point of his speech tending to demonstrate the centrality of Fascism compared to the past, albeit in a revolutionary perspective, which aims at the socialization of national values Europeans with the masses, but rejects, at the same time, the concept of the indiscriminate, dehumanizing and depersonalizing massification of communist regimes<sup>144</sup>. Precisely Fascism as a conservative revolution.

Adriano Romualdi's work remained unfinished, although it retained its conceptual completeness and showed more than sufficient formal elaboration. Certainly, many reflections would have been explored and integrated, while others appear questionable. The interpretation of Fascism as a conservative revolution, for example, is correct, but partial and does not account, like all univocal readings, for a phenomenon of great complexity. However, the acuity of the analyses, the passion of the historian who faces his problem with the passion that derives from the desire to learn from history what is useful in the current political struggle and at the same time the ability not to fall into prejudice ideological diction, are nothing more than elements that strengthen the regret for his premature death.



## Note to the second edition

The pages of this book are a study by Adriano Romualdi found among his papers, eighty-two typed and personal folders correct minds, contained in a binder under the title «The fascism as a European phenomenon." A study unfortunately interrupted.

In publishing this work again, the Publisher wishes to thank it re the friends of the editorial staff of L'ITALIANO who edited the first edition of the volume and the Hon. Pino Romualdi who kindly ceased the possibility of republication.

This second edition of «FASCISM AS A PHENOMENON IN EUROPE» comes out with a new introduction by Marcello Veneziani and without the appendix including the reviews of Adriano and his notes from his notebooks. The annotated bibliography remains unchanged on fascism and the general bibliography by the will of the Publisher who thus tends to remember Adriano in the completeness of his work today beyond the time it was written.





## INTRODUCTION

The reprint of "fascism as a phenomenon" would already be meritorious European" if it were animated only by the intention of paying homage to Adriano Romualdi, over ten years after his untimely death.

It would be a tribute to a scholar who has given us much and much he could have given everything if a merciless fate had not given him torn from life. It would be the testimony of an unchanged loyalty ta, of a profound solidarity, of a friendship unchanged even from some of those, like the writer, who they did not know personally Adriano Romualdi but they nevertheless felt the strong presence and felt it shared passion.

But this is not just a tribute to Romualdi. The reprint of «fascism as a European phenomenon» reiterates One of the most essays lucid and intelligent writings on fascism. An unfinished, written essay in the early seventies, published posthumously, integrated with other essays and Romulidian interventions; but an essay in which the great king is felt breath of the historian and the noble stride of one who bathes history in the torrent you of ideas, values, myths.

«Fascism as a European phenomenon» represents one of the rare ones examples in which the rigor of the historian, the richness of the documentation ne, the critical sense of the scholar meet without clashing with the passion of the militant intellectual, interpenetrate with the spirit of a man who has the courage to show his identity card, one's loyalty, one's political conviction. In this sense, Romualdi's composite essay perhaps represents the unsurpassed attempt "from the right" to write a history of fascism seen as European phenomenon and also the first attempt to compare the in- historiographical interpretations of fascism with the «sto- interpretation rica» of the right.

In the first sense, the only study of fascism of any importance Europeans that precedes the Romulidian commitment, is made up of «Ifasci- unknown smi" (latest edition, Ciarrapico Editore, Rome, 1983), a collection of essays coordinated by Maurice Bardèche. It is a important contribution, but the perspective followed is not the "euro" one pea": the authors rather carry out a fruitful exploration of kings gimes and non-European movements, in search of hidden assonances and unexpected affinities.

In the second sense, the right has lacked a rigorous comparison

on a historical and interpretative level with fascism. Before Romualdi's studies there had been above all the essay by Julius Evola, «Fascism seen from the right» (Volpe, Rome, 1970). But it was a reconnaissance on the level of principles, a "transpolitical" evaluation of fascism, limited to the analysis of Italian fascism, subsequently integrated by the interesting "Notes on the Third Reich".

The specificity of Adriano Romualdi's contribution is therefore revealed in its "historiographical" stance, albeit integrated by a continuous attention to the movement of ideas, and in his definition of fascism as a European phenomenon. In this sense Romualdi rejects both the widespread interpretation of fascism as an exclusively Italian phenomenon, which retraces the old assertion: «fascism does not

è export goods"; and, on the other hand, rejects the interpretation of fascism as a "universal phenomenon", extended even to the "development" and modernization regimes of the third world.

Romualdi appropriately classifies the regimes and movements improperly defined as fascist into three different classes; a) the pre-fascist movements, such as Maurras's Action Française and in many ways Italian nationalism, which lacks political attention towards the masses, inclusion in the process of modernization and socialisation; b) pseudo-fascist regimes or authoritarian and paternalistic regimes, fundamentally conservative and usually led by soldiers, such as the regime of the colonels in Greece and that of Pinochet in Chile; c) the extra-European fascist regimes including the regime of Nasser or Peron which lack the "European spirit" that substantiates and characterizes

fascism.

Romualdi lucidly underlines the cultural roots of fascism in European civilization, and in particular in the romanticism of the last century. And following this precious Ariadne's thread, it reaches the various expressions of European fascism. Beyond the fascist regimes, the fascist movement that emerges in Romualdi's analysis with characteristics of intense spirituality and great political tension is the Romanian legionary movement of the Iron Guard which revolves around to the figure of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

Some reservations can however be placed on the identification of the cultural sources of fascism in romanticism. That there is a fruitful romantic source at the roots of fascism and, even more so, of German National Socialism, is beyond question: George Mosse, in particular, has highlighted with convincing arguments the notable impact of romanticism. However, lead back until the example is exhausted

without fascism in romanticism it doesn't seem legitimate to us. Carl Schmitt already proposed his concept of politics in a classic and realistic sense, opposing the concept of "political romanticism". But there is a whole cultural and sociological trend that fuels fascism and which rather expresses the traits of a classical and realistic conception of politics, certainly not romantic: it would be enough, for example, to recall the neo-Machiavellian realism of Mosca, Michels, Pareto to identify a strong anti-romantic component in fascism, which is certainly not secondary to the romantic tendency, and which rightfully belongs to the best European tradition.

According to Romualdi, fascism is not possible if there is not on the one hand the spiritual and historical humus of Europe and on the other the strong crisis of traditional values that passes through and characterizes Europe. For the first reason, it is not possible to speak of a fascism in the third world, a Nasserite or 'Afro-Cuban' fascism. For the second reason it is not possible to refer, for example, to an alleged Japanese fascism: in Japan between the two world wars a living and valid tradition still existed, the Emperor was still recognized as his divine descent.

In Europe, however, fascism arises from a dual consideration: a) the need to restore lifeblood and vigor to the traditional values that historically and spiritually characterize European civilisation; b) the urgency of re-proposing them in a modernized and massified society which is undergoing a strong process of secularization, uprooting, "secularization".

The fascist attempt is therefore for Romualdi the attempt to "socialize traditional values", to re-propose them in a tumultuous and confused society, prey to the whirlwind of social and ideological changes.

In this sense, fascist socialism appears subordinate to the basic values of fascism. Romualdi lucidly points out: «While for Marx the emancipation of the proletariat is the instrument for the overthrow of all handed down values (family, homeland, religion, are "superstructures" that must dissolve with private property); for Fascism, sociality is a means of reintegrating the dispossessed into their property, their family, their homeland."

This innovative and socializing character of fascism also distinguishes it from any conservative or reactionary policy: the fascist project is to "return traditional values to the world of the masses".

Romualdi's thesis, in principle, coincides singularly with Togliatti's famous definition of fascism as a "mass reactionary regime": in fact, by "sterilizing" Togliatti's statement from the Author's polemical intention, the definition summarizes the originality of fascism with rare effectiveness.

«Fascism – writes Romualdi in a memorable page – is precisely in this synthesis of the ancient and the new, in this risky attempt to perpetuate the spirit, the myth, the symbols of a primordial tradition in an armor of glass and steel. The concrete and geometric splendor of the 20th century used to recreate an illusion of linear Roman classicism; the loudspeakers and reflectors, placed at the service of Nibelungian and Wagnerian reconstructions; the African consular roads resonant with the roar of legionary trucks and the twilight of the gods in the concrete bunker in a petrol fire: all this dared to conceive fascism, and that's no small thing.»

Undoubtedly the main reference center of "European fascism" for Romualdi has moved to Germany, to Hitler's Third Reich. For Romualdi, Italian fascism would have had the great role of "initiator", of "paradigm", it is the first political affirmation of fascism in chronological order. But Hitler's Germany would have the primacy in a political-cultural order.

Romualdi's observation is based on solid coordinates: 1) the consideration of Germany as the heart of Europe; 2) the recognition of Germany as the homeland of political romanticism and the revolutionary-conservative movement; 3) the supranational and European scope of German Great Politics and Hitler's Reich;

4) the strategic and political consideration of Germany as the strongest European nation in terms of military tradition, *wille zur macht*, population and extension, industrialization and modernization.

Romualdi's observations are therefore well founded. The crux of Europe is Germany; every European unification, the Lords of Yalta understood very well, passes through German unification. And it is no coincidence that a nouveau philosophe like André Glucksmann recently wrote that the only path towards peace is the reconstruction of Europe in a political and military sense: but reconstruction is possible, notes Glucksmann, only on condition of restore to Germany the freedom to self-determine, to arm itself, to exist as a nation and a European power, freeing it from the forty-year captivity in which

è confined. (See «La forza della vertigo», Longanesi, Milan 1984). However, Romualdi's observations lead us to ask one question some reservations. First of all, the old doubt emerges persistently that German supranationalism translates, in reality, into supranationalism, or into an affirmation of German primacy well beyond a political-military hegemony. In this sense, Mussolini's concerns about the ultimate intentions of the German Reich (Pan-Germanism) were clearly founded and the foreign policy of a Mussolini appears more far-sighted, more realistically balanced and more fruitful in a European sense, despite all its contradictions, oscillations and uncertainties, with respect to the foreign policy followed by Hitler.

Secondly, Romualdi's inclination towards German fascism, his evident preference for a political-cultural model that has its foundations in the German spirit and in Nordic traditions, sometimes appears in contradiction with the demand for "rootedness" », with the constant reference to the values of a people and a civilization to which Romualdi himself refers.

Could an Italian "right", a revolutionary-conservative movement that should express the affirmation of deep-rooted values, be inspired and based on a tradition largely foreign to Mediterranean tradition and civilization? Could it really have established itself in Italy and become a mass regime, a "German" fascism in spirit and historical-cultural heritage? Wouldn't it rather have been a fictitious rooting, of a tradition that fundamentally does not belong to our country, to our historical memory, to our religious heritage?

Wouldn't there be a strong risk that the "tradition" referred to would rather be perceived as an ideology, or worse as an imposition from above, as an abuse of the history and nature of a people who remain, for better or for worse, Mediterranean? In reality, the only Europe worthy of the name, the only Europe towards which it would make sense to strive, is not a Latinized or Germanized Europe; but a Europe in which the cultural and traditional specificities, the fruitful diversity of the roots had equal evidence and citizenship of that underground, ancestral and profound affinity of blood and unity of spirit that binds Europe. A Germanized Italy or a Latinized Germany would be monsters born of ideology and kept alive with the armor of imposition; artificial creatures, absolutely inorganic compared to the peoples in question. Claiming the Mediterranean vocation, the fa-

seismo did not identify the Italian tradition with a southernism that winks at the third world. It was not a question of Neapolitanizing fascism, but of linking it to that Mediterranean civilization which exported Romanism, Catholicism, the Renaissance of letters and the arts to the world. Romualdi is right when he writes that «if we look closely, Fascism appears to us, together with Romanism and Catholicism, to be the third great idea that has gone around the world».

Certainly, German fascism exerts a stronger attraction than Italian fascism: its development, but even more so its epilogue, retains a dignity and pride that is undoubtedly greater than Italian fascism. The image of the Hitler youth resisting in the burning Berlin that Romualdi evokes in his «The last hours of Europe» (Ciarrapico editore, Rome, 1976), retains a charm and an exemplary grandeur that is not found in reduced in Valtellina or in the last hours of Dongo.

In our opinion, Nazism can be defined as a high-voltage fascism that radicalizes and exasperates the innovative and traditional aspects of fascism: a fascism that surpasses, on the one hand, the modernity of Italian fascism, in a more broad and advanced in modernization, industrialization and national integration of the masses; and on the other hand it transcends the traditional appeal of Italian fascism by re-proposing, in a highly ritualized and intensely liturgical atmosphere, primordial and millenary traditions.

What is aesthetic in fascism becomes magical in Nazism; Mussolini's charisma still remains in the political sphere, Hitler's charisma already reveals itself to be "religious", a singular mix of hierophany and demonism. What in fascism is populism in Nazism becomes the mysticism of the people.

Nazism is therefore a high-voltage fascism that radicalizes fascism with extreme coherence but also exasperates the errors of fascism, turning them into horrors.

Romualdi is certainly right when he observes: «to say that Nazism is identified with the concentration camp would be the same as establishing identities between Christianity, the stakes, the inquisitions, or perhaps the campaign of extermination of the pagan Saxons by Charlemagne». But an extermination of those dimensions, which is not unique in history and especially in contemporary history, cannot be resolved as an accident, it cannot be dismissed as an excess or intemperance of a few, nor can it result in the responsibility of some



individuals. It is necessary to understand what is individual and what is instead linked to the theoretical essence of Nazism, what belongs to the ideology of its Leader. These are uncertain boundaries that must be relentlessly explored, revealed, faced, without guilt complexes due to an impossible "ideological complicity" but also without fears of denouncing the monstrosities.

The root of those exterminations can perhaps be found in a dangerous aberration inherent in German racism: a conception that favors the biological factor over the spiritual one, and in this way ignores the recognition of the person as a spiritual value in itself, first and foremost uphold the zoological concept of the species.

But even more fundamentally, there is a further aberration of Hitlerian racism with respect to the conception of race: Nazism replaced the traditional conception of race, understood as a "defense" of one's specificity, of one's identity, of one's own existence, an "aggressive" version of race understood as the denial of another's specificity, of another's identity, of another's right to exist. The defense of one's roots has turned into hatred against the roots of the Other, in a delusional application of Darwinism. Race, which should be the distinctive character of ethnic differences, has thus turned into a factor of annihilation of differences; from an element of diversification it has become a factor of elimination of diversity. In the reversal of the Different into the Enemy there is the hallucinated character of Nazism.

In the traditional conception of race, defense naturally implied the possibility of a conflict with the Different, when one's identity was in danger: but it was a consequence, a secondary and subordinate factor. In Nazism the idea of race is combined with the idea of German primacy and what was secondary and subordinate becomes primary, imperative.

È time to critically analyze these sad legacies: without limiting ourselves to removing the problem, quickly closing the closet inhabited by skeletons, and not "talking about it anymore". We need to have the courage to talk about it again. And to draw the consequences.

Beyond these reservations on his interpretation of Nazism, Romualdi has the undeniable merit of having identified in fascism

a European birth and vocation, in the sign of the conservative revolution.

We reread your pages with the bitterness of someone reading an unfinished work by an unfinished author. Not that the work lacks its organic nature, nor can it be said that the writing reflects the mood of a "youthful" work, reflects a personality still in progress or is the immature fruit of a still "immature" historian. Romualdi already had a well-defined style, rigor and character, as Tricoli highlighted in his notable essay prefaced to the previous edition of this posthumous work by Romualdi.

But there is still regret for what its further unfolding in living matter could have given; what stimulating observations of his could have arisen from the in-depth historiographical analysis of the last ten years; what new problems his fruitful scholarly sensitivity could have called up.

Beyond the historical hedge, we can already glimpse in the pages of this book illuminating intuitions, germinal glimmers of a new political vision, reasons for an in-depth study of the right and its contents.

Romualdi observed that the "new right" had already been invented with the revolutionary-conservative response of nationalism and fascism. «The 'new right' – writes Romualdi – no longer has anything to do with the old reactionaries». And further on he adds: «The need for the unity of the Right, and the need for a new theme for the Right, go together. The tactical need cannot be ignored, nor the need for a new co-detainee. Without it, the Right would still be destined to remain a soft and boneless agglomerate, an invertebrate Right.»

Intuitions, signals, fruitful seeds launched into our future by a young man who loved, and not only as a historian, the Great Past.

Marcello Veneziani



## CHAPTER I

Even though the fascist regimes fell almost thirty years ago, a real historical discussion on Fascism began just a decade ago. Of course, already in the years in which Fascism was making its parable on the horizon of Europe, books of notable interpretative level had appeared. And yet, many years had to pass before the whole of Fascism - as an overall era of the European spirit - was made the object of systematic study.

There are, on the one hand, obvious reasons that have prevented an objective discussion of the fascist phenomenon. Fascism has waged a deadly struggle against the major world powers and ideologies; Russia and America, democracy and communism have allied to destroy it, crushing - under its ruins - the whole of Europe. That after this duel to the death, Fascism - and above all that which had been the most radical projection of fascism, Nazism - were identified with the forces of evil; that a sort of mythology of darkness was woven around them, always talking about their crimes and never about their ideas, is quite understandable.

Even more understandable if you consider that Communism - which in fifty years of history has always used strictly "fascist" methods, eliminating tens of millions of people and reducing hundreds of millions more to slavery - has done so that we always talked about the "crimes of fascism" to divert the world's attention from the facts at home. Add to this the fact that European Fascism claimed its victims among elected and particularly powerful and listened to minorities in the world - and not among those useless millions of "whites", "bourgeois", "kulaks", disappeared ingloriously; minorities not without power in Hollywood and other centers of production of world public opinion and capable of producing films, diaries and comics to perpetuate in intellectuals and servants a healthy horror of Fascism and its misdeeds. Films and diaries that describe the millions of Russian peasants annihilated because they were refractory to collectivization, or the twenty million Chinese who disappeared because they were unwelcome to Chairman Mao, the "bourgeois" eliminated by the millions in Russia and beyond the Curtain, or the three million Germans who disappeared in Russian invasion, they did not have time to leave them behind.

We do not write this with a polemical tone, but only to explain why - while we study the French or Russian revolutions first in their ideas, and then in their crimes - Fascism is instead rejected and liquidated as a pure explosion of violence. Among other things, the reduction of Fascism to a simple creature of violence with O'ra, Gestapo, concentration camps and the like, prevents us from understanding the consensual aspect of Fascist regimes, that is, the passions, the hopes - the illusions, perhaps - which animated the masses who followed them, making the phenomenon of Fascism appear to us as an inexplicable parenthesis of brutality, "the invasion of the Hyksos" - as Croce called it.

That this eventually became tiring is understandable, so much so that even a scholar who is not suspicious of revisionist tendencies like De Felice writes:

«On a journalistic level, however, the years following the end of the world war saw above all the flowering of a vast "historical" literature on Fascism, which in reality had nothing or almost nothing historical about it and oscillated between the poles of a «esoteric neutralism»; of an irrational Satanism which one would have had to refer to in order to understand an otherwise inexplicable scourge-phenomenon; of a simplistic vision, incapable of grasping differences and nuances in fascist reality... and yet focused on the most pathological and horrible aspects of it (exasperated nationalism, the coercive-terrorist system, etc)... And what was worse, this type of approach to Fascism had no small influence on a good part of that "consumer historiography", so poor in robust intellectual contents... which characterized the post-war period in the most rich."

But, if we look carefully, there are also other reasons that have delayed the understanding of the fascist phenomenon. For example, the difficulty of studying movements as a coherent ideology that are different in many respects, and which often display anti-intellectual activism.

The scholar will find himself increasingly at ease when faced with a phenomenon such as Communism, at the basis of which there is the book - Capital - which he can read comfortably. Then in Capital it is written that communism means abolition of the state and management from below, while in Russia and China things are a little different; or that communism is a vanguard movement of the most advanced industrial society, while in practice it only exists in backward countries; this is another matter. But this does not mean that the scholar finds himself in the community

nism a "system", something easier to define, while Fascism, with its abrupt improvisations, disorients it.

At first sight: because in reality all it takes is a little patience to realize how fascism possessed certain common contents. Nationalism, the authoritarian conception of the state, the idea of class collaboration within the framework of a "national socialism", the cult of certain values linked to military life and war (discipline, camaraderie, spirit of sacrifice) - together with a generic "anti-materialistic" and "anti-bourgeois" disposition - are constants found in all fascisms. And if scholars had not so hastily retreated in the face of the brutal apologia of the action punctuated by Mussolini and Hitler, they would have been able to see how behind fascism

vi there are at least a hundred years of criticism of parliamentarism, of romantic culture, of the cult of the "lineage" and the "nation".

Of course, a theory of Fascism does not exist. But, firstly,

i Fascist leaders left writings such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Mussolini's *The Doctrine of Fascism*, Codreanu's *Iron Guard*. Secondly there is the phenomenon of intellectual precursors and supporters: a Gentile, a Volpe, an Evola in Italy; a Spengler, a Jünger, a Moeller van der Bruck in Germany; a Maurras and a Drieu La Rochelle in France have written books from which many of the ideals of Fascism can be extracted. Thirdly, scrupulous observation can teach us that certain slogans such as "the nation", "the rizza" have a long and complex history in the history of ideas; one could say that the first germ of fascism is contained in the romantic polemic against the Enlightenment.

This myth of "anti-culture" Fascism has been undermined in recent years by various works, among which we mention Paul Séran's book on French fascist intellectuals (*Le Romantisme fasciste*, Paris 1969), John Harrison's book on English "reactionaries" (*The reactionaries*, London 1966), from the books of Mohler, Sontheimer, Klemperer, Mosse on right-wing intellectuals at the time of the Weimar Republic. Mosse himself writes in the end of his book *The crisis of German ideology*:

«All fascisms have attempted to monopolize and control the dissatisfaction of certain bourgeois with the concrete industrial and political situation, a dissatisfaction that had begun to take on a revolutionary physiognomy at the end of the 19th century, when especially young people had attempted to escape from the "materialistic" society

ca" in which she had grown up... If on the one hand this revolt led to a fight against conventions, on the other it was aimed at promoting a new sense of "belonging", such that it could be combined with the revolt towards which he tended. Fascism was far from being merely nihilistic; indeed, the development of a positive ideology was the element that allowed certain fascists to achieve success, where their more "negative" ideological confrères had failed".

Then there is the apparent contradiction of an "international" of nationalisms, which has hindered the study of fascisms in a single context. It took time for some differences to level out at first glance and for movements that referred to different cultural myths to appear similar to us, precisely because what linked them was the form of the myth, and not the content.

It took some time for it to be understood that the "Latinity" of Maurras, the "Romanity" of Mussolini and the "Germanness" of Hitler were nothing other than the different projections of the differences between Nazism and the Iron Guard on the one hand, and the Italian Fascism on the other: Hitler and Codreanu are violently anti-Semitic, while in Italian Fascism anti-Semitism was artificially introduced only in 1938. Fascism and the Falange rely on the Catholic religion; Nazism has a pagan color. But this evidently depends on regional characteristics. The Nazis and the Iron Guards were anti-Semitic because Jews occupied positions of power in Germany and Romania — while in Italy the Jewish question did not exist. Fascism and the Falange support the Church because they develop within strongly Catholic peoples, while Nazism — in a half Catholic and half Protestant Germany — must refer to a tradition based not on religion, but on blood. With great insight Ramiro Ledesma Ramos stated that what in Nazism was race, in the Falange had to be Catholicism, showing that he understood that the Catholic religion entered the Falange — exactly like the idea of race in Nazism — as an element of national ideology.

After the war, the desire to distance the more moderate forms of Fascism from the more radical ones, and in particular from Nazism, pushed the survivors to deny a unity of fascisms. And yet, a historical consideration of the problem cannot take these uncertainties into account. On the other hand, we cannot fall further behind Mussolini in 1930 who already grasped the new constellation as a whole

of political movements:

«The struggle between the two worlds does not allow compromises: the new cycle that will begin with the year IX highlights the dramatic alternative even more. It's us or them. Either our ideas or theirs. Either our state or theirs! The new cycle is harder! Anyone who has interpreted it differently has fallen into a serious error of misunderstanding or faith!

Comrades!

This explains to you how the struggle is now taking place on a global level and how Fascism is the order of the day in all countries, feared here, implacably hated there, ardently invoked elsewhere. The phrase that Fascism is not an export commodity is not mine. It's too banal. It was adapted by some for newspaper readers who need expressions of mercantile practice to understand. However, it needs to be corrected. Today I affirm that Fascism as an idea, doctrine, realization, is universal; Italian in its particular institutions, it is universal in spirit, nor could it be otherwise. The spirit is universal by its very nature. We can therefore envisage a fascist Europe, a Europe that inspires its institutions by the doctrines and practices of Fascism. That is, a Europe that resolves, in a fascist sense, the problem of the modern state, of the 20th century state, very different from the states that existed before 1789 or that were formed after.

Fascism today responds to needs of a universal nature. In fact, it resolves the triple problem of the relationships between the State and the individual, between groups and organized groups."

Of course, one can speculate on what would have happened if sanctions had not been placed on Italy, if the clash between Hitler and Mussolini over Austria had not been healed, if Anglo-French policy towards Italy had been more conciliatory. But these are the classics with which history is not made, and the affinity of fascisms is too evident for their confluence not to seem to belong to a kind of logic of events.

Again by this logic, once the front of the schisms had been created, it was inevitable that Germany would take the lead. This, and because Germany had greater weight and greater importance in Europe, and because in Germany the nationalist ideology was born and had its most complete expression, and because Nazism offered the model of a realized fascist state without compromises with structure

pre-existing kings. Finally, the position of Hitler's Grossdeutschland in the heart of Europe and the Nazi idea of space and race pushed beyond the limits of fascist nationalism towards the prospect of a European "New Order".

Another difficulty - arising from another, apparent, contradiction - has blocked the understanding of Fascism: its simultaneously conservative and revolutionary character.

That fascist movements are conservative cannot be doubted. While Communism abolishes property, denies the nation, persecutes religion, rejects the past as the dark age of exploitation, fascisms cultivate patriotism, idealize the past, defend property and national traditions by relying on religion or, in any case, respecting it. On the subject of Nazism, the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* is often cited, with which Pius XI expressed his "burning concern" for the neo-pagan ferment within Hitlerism. But the Catholic religion was never persecuted as such and a concordat regulated relations between the Church and the Third Reich.

The conservative aspect of fascist movements is highlighted by their relationships with the old ruling classes. Fascism took power with the neutrality of the conservative liberals, allied itself with the Monarchy and the Church, and was on good terms with the industrialists and capitalists. But even in Germany - where the absence of a monarchy allowed Hitler a more radical course - Hitler came to government with Hugenberg's monarchists and was appointed Chancellor by Junker von Hindenburg. For his part, Himmler filled the SS with nobles and princes, and, despite "national-socialism", the prerogatives of the industrialists would never be questioned.

On the other hand, fascisms never said they wanted to erase the past, but to shore it up; not to abolish an elite, but to reinvigorate it; not to destroy property, but only to subordinate it to everyone's interests.

This led Marxist scholars to conclude that Fascism was nothing but a trick of capitalism and a tool of the wealthy classes to disarm the people and prevent a true social revolution.

But whoever looks better sees that - if the fascisms have come to terms with the "masters of steam" - they have created a state so strong as to condition them; if they ally themselves with conservative forces, it is to involve them in a process of transformation from which they emerge diminished.



The sociological analysis of the Third Reich or fascist Italy shows that the process of social mobility has no end, and that the rise of the petty bourgeoisie undermines the prerogatives of the old bourgeois-noble oligarchy while the popular classes in turn flow into a new, very small bourgeoisie. Moreover, in many countries, fascist movements openly clash with the old conservative oligarchies. In Romania, the Iron Guard is the expression of students, idealistic petty bourgeois, peasants, against King Carol's business camarilla. In Hungary, the Arrow Crosses represent the protest of the lower middle class, the young officers and a part of the proletariat against the magnates and landowners represented by Horthy. In Spain, the Falange has a bold social program, and Franco's first concern will be to render it harmless.

Finally, a party that conquers the state to govern it with mass propaganda and totalitarian discipline is a new fact in history, and upsets any strictly classist interpretation.

Seaton-Watson, in his final essay of the collection *International Fascism*, rightly writes that one can think of all the evil of fascist movements, but not deny their revolutionary character: «The fact that their aims and policies were distant from the evil of the French Revolution, does not mean that they were not evil revolutions, but not to deny their revolutionary character».

#### Some interpretations

We cited Seaton-Watson's essay contained in the issue of the *Journal of contemporary history* dedicated to *International Fascism 1920-1945*. Several of these collective studies - tending to reconstruct the entire phenomenon through the various fascisms - have appeared in the last decade, and they mark the point at which Fascism began to be studied from a European perspective.

We will highlight *The European Right*, edited by Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber; *European Fascism* (transl. it., //fascism in Europe), the issue of the *Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale* «Sur le fascisme», the University of Reading seminar on *The nature of Fascism*. To these must be added the books of individual authors who have tried to give us an overall picture of the various fascisms such as *Varieties of fascism* by Eugen Weber, *Die faschistischen Bewegungen* by Ernst

Nolte (it transl. The crisis of liberal regimes and fascist movements), The Rise of Fascism by FL Carsten (it transl. The genesis of fascism), Les fascismes dans l'histoire by Henri Lemaître. Furthermore, we felt the need to retrace the different perspectives in which Fascism was seen by publishing studies of interpretations or anthologies of interpretations of Fascism. Excellent in this field are De Felice's books The Interpretations of Fascism and II fascismo and the interpretations of contemporaries and historians. To them must be added Theorien über den Faschismus, edited by Nolte; Komintern und Faschismus 1920-1940 by Pirker, Faschismus und Kapitalismus, etc.

From these studies emerges a renewed interest in the fascist phenomenon which is recognized as one of the key moments of contemporary history. There is no doubt that this renewed fervor was also given impetus by Ernst Nolte's book *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, which appeared in Germany in 1963 and translated into Italy in 1966 with the title *The Three Faces of Fascism*. It has been said that it is "the most ambitious attempt at a phenomenology of fascism that has been published so far", a judgment that - in its ambiguity - can be shared.

The *Three Faces of Fascism* is divided into three essays on Maurras, Mussolini and Hitler. The book aims to demonstrate how the same principles of Fascism can be deduced from Maurras' radical nationalism and how they coherently return to the logic of Hitler's extermination. The Maurrassian anguish towards the Jews, the foreigners, the progress which risks distorting the ancient physiognomy of France, is the same anguish meandering in Fascism against Bolshevism, internationalism, international capital: «Hitler's thought could easily be inserted into Maurras' scheme as a more recent and cruder expression. The true enemy of Maurras and Hitler has been identified in the freedom towards the infinite which, innate in the individual and real in universal evolution, threatens to destroy what is known and loved. From all this it is already clear with clear clarity what "transcendence" means for us."

È the coherence of Nolte's thought is undeniable. In fact, if the universality of the spirit, the "transcendence" of history, is identified with that process of transformation, leveling and reshuffling initiated by bourgeois capitalism and carried forward by industrial society and communism, a conservatism, nationalism, and racism, as they tend to defend "what is loved" against transcendence



historical are identified with the denial of history itself. From this analysis of Fascism - a "fascism" so vast that it also includes Action Française - comes an even more radical condemnation than the Marxist one. For the communist, in fact, Fascism is simply a repressive instrument of the bourgeoisie. For Nolte it è «resistance against transcendence», the spirit that denies, evil itself.

È The importance of Fascism in Nolte's work is clear and he even speaks to us of a "world era of fascism". Understanding and refuting Fascism means unmasking the moment of negativity in the history of our century, a moment that is identified with the sovereignty of particular groups (nations, peoples) against the universality of the spirit.

We talked about "coherence"; in fact, no one has so consistently legitimized the status quo established on the rubble of Fascism. The Nuremberg trial emerges as a verdict of the universal spirit against the idea of national sovereignty; coexistence as the dialogue between the "theoretical transcendence", embodied in the liberal West, in conversation with the "practical transcendence" dwelling in Moscow. From this point of view, Nolte's philosophy of fascism appears to us as a kind of Yalta metaphysics and its author the exegete of the "unholy alliance" between Americanism and Bolshevism.

Wiesler wrote that Nolte «in his work reports for historiography the same victory obtained over Fascism with weapons and violence». In fact, if behind the catastrophe of fascism there was hidden a hidden meaning different from the quantity of airplanes produced by America versus those built by Dr. Speer, there is no doubt that this hidden and metaphysical meaning is hidden in the pages of Professor Nolte.

Whether his logic appears to be based on a couple of arbitrary concepts is another matter.

That there is a spirit of the world transcending itself in history is a historicist myth that only Hegel's disciple can accept. Properly, the concept of transcendence is not horizontal, but vertical; not historical, but meta-historical.

Those who believe in certain religious values will rather see society as a structure of values whose defense against constraints-dissolving progressivism (Nolte's "freedom towards the infinite") is a sacred duty. Whoever conceives of society as an organism that can prosper through the assimilation of what is weak, or sick, or corrupt, will see in

"resistance to transcendence" is nothing other than resistance against degeneration. Finally, those who have studied races as biological groups created by different selective experiences - almost natural aristocracies produced by multi-millennial isolation - cannot appreciate the idea that the value of a selection spanning millennia is lost due to an ephemeral fashion of equality.

Thus, both from a religious, organic and national, and racial point of view, "freedom towards the infinite" is nothing more than an instinct of dissolution. Precisely this national-religious (Codreanu, José Antonio), or national (Maurras, Mussolini), or national-racial (Hitler), or religious-racial (Quisling) root develops the protest of fascisms against a "transcendence" that hurries towards that which is corrupted, decayed, levelled.

After all, it is enough to change the concept of transcendence because we find ourselves faced with a radically different interpretation.

This is the case of Augusto Del Noce - the only Italian author whose writings Nolte has included in his *Theorien über den Faschismus* and, together with De Felice, the most illustrious Italian interpreter of the "fascist phenomenon".

Del Noce's most important pages on the problem of Fascism are contained in the essays *Totalitarianism and philosophy of history* and *Ideas for the interpretation of fascism*, collected in volume II *fascism* edited by Costanzo Casucci; in the introduction to his main work *The problem of atheism* in the essay *For a historical definition of fascism* contained in *The historical problem of fascism* and in some glimpses of the new dialogue between Spirito - Del Noce *Eclipse or decline of traditional values?*

Del Noce is a Catholic philosopher, disciple of Maritain, who started from the positions of a left-wing Christianity to arrive - in the face of the spectacle of neo-enlightenment and the welfare society - at increasingly "reactionary" positions. Del Noce's starting point may recall that of Nolte: he is a philosopher, interested, rather than in an exact reconstruction of events, in a definition of Fascism in the spiritual problem of our tertype. The divergence from Nolte lies in his religious conception of transcendence which configures contemporary history for him as a kind of theological drama.

If for Nolte Fascism is the "resistance against transcendence" - where transcendence is the making of the spirit in history - for

Del Noce Fascism not only does not resist the course of history but, together with Communism, is an expression of it; the expression of the pseudo-religion of history that replaces religious transcendence. Fascist and communist totalitarianism are two aspects of contemporary heresy. They represent the "sacral moment" which in communism lasts until Stalin's death.

The "sacred moment of secularization", the era of fascism and Stalinism - the heroic, idealistic era of atheism - is followed by the second phase of secularization, the one we are experiencing. In it atheism spreads in the form of the "opulent society" with the civilization of well-being and pornography in which every value and every ideology slowly sinks.

È a position, it has been said, Catholic, which led Del Noce from anti-fascism "open to the left" to a "reactionary" anti-fascism full of reproaches for any radicalism. Perhaps it is his rapprochement with the right that made him introduce some changes in his system. Recently Del Noce believed he had to distinguish between nationalism on the one hand, and Fascism and Nazism on the other. The first would be an expression of "traditionalism", "an effort to perpetuate a legacy, this legacy being mostly legitimized in relation to transcendent values"; «Fascism, on the other hand, conceives the nation no longer as a legacy of values, but as a becoming into power». Unlike what happens in nationalism, «history does not

è conceived as a loyalty, but as a continuous creation that deserves to overthrow in its passage everything that can oppose it". Hence - according to Del Noce - the intrinsically "nihilistic" character of figures like Mussolini and Hitler who destroy a tradition while claiming to affirm it.

These last statements would require a long refutation  
tion.

Here we will content ourselves with remembering how the idea of nation was born with Herder and with the discovery of the "genius of nations", how it finds its boldest formulation in Hegel in the conception of history as the creation of peoples and the "Idea" that they embody; how this justifies war - a measure of the "ideas" of peoples - and how therefore, from the origins, the moment of loyalty and the moment of dynamism are implicit in nationalism.

And, finally, how *La terre et les morts* of the nationalist Barrès differs from the *Blut und Boden* of national socialism, is what

which should be demonstrated.

Let us gloss over the interpretation that Del Noce gives of Italian Fascism: let us only observe that the role of Gentile and of currentism is more modest than what Del Noce supposes and that it is just a veneer of Hegelianism on the nationalism of "proletarian Italy". As for "the mysterious closeness between Mussolini and Lenin", it arises from the simple circumstance that Mussolini, an ex-socialist, had a sense for mass propaganda. Mussolini's totalitarianism is less the expression of fascist "historicism" than the desire to respond to a totalitarian challenge with a totalitarian organization.

Fascism - Del Noce suggests - is a "truncated totalitarianism": this is true, but in the sense that in Italy the monarchy and "diarchic" management were maintained. But even in Germany - where Nazism pushed the fascist experience to the extreme - there was, compared to Russia, a "truncated" totalitarianism. Property was never threatened, the Church continued to preach, it was repeated that farmers had to return to the soil and women to their families. And all this did not remain on paper: the law for the reintegration of the peasantry (Erbhofgesetz) is a reality, and Speer complains in his Memoirs that, while England was mobilizing women for war production, in Germany the Party he was opposed due to his conservative assumptions.

Finally, a reduction of National Socialism to an abstract "totalitarianism", without regard to its conservative substance, can only be achieved by those who ignore the ideological prehistory of Nazism and how it represented, within the so-called conservative revolution of German intellectuals, precisely the *volkisch*, racist and vulgar wing. Moreover, the conquest of the great spaces in the East itself had to serve precisely to reintegrate the German people into a virgin and peasant environment.

To argue that Fascism and Nazism - due to their activist physiognomy - refute the tradition they claim to affirm, means abstracting from the ideas, feelings, and perhaps from the illusions, which fueled these movements.

Thus, in the reconstruction of the ideal physiognomy of Fascism, not è possible to ignore:

- 1) from the Risorgimento tradition, "national" no less than "liberal";

- 2) from pre-war nationalism which represented the rethinking of the unitary tradition at the moment of transition into the era of large spaces in which Italy, to preserve its sovereignty, had to

gain adequate space.

That the nationalist conception became, in practice, that of Fascism can be illustrated by Mussolini's phrase that Corradini "had been a fascist since 1896". Faced with certain evidence, Mussolini's "solipsism" interests us only up to a certain point and Gentile's actualism appears to us as just a veneer of Hegelianism spread over national-fascism.

Likewise, an objective analysis cannot ignore the fact that in National Socialism we find:

- 1) the aspiration to "Greater Germany", with Austria and Bohemia, born in 1848 and reborn after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918;
- 2) the myth of the Reich, of medieval and romantic origin, and which overlaps with the image of "Greater Germany";
- 3) the myth of blood and earth spread by neo-romanticism at the beginning of the century and connected with anti-Semitism and anti-industrialism.

The transition from nationalism to imperialism takes place due to the need to save this Germanic national substance by gaining adequate breathing space for it in the age of large spaces.

È It is clear that all these elements cannot be lost sight of if we want to understand the nature of fascism. Thus, when Del Noce writes that Mussolini's action «could not be described as destructive»; that he destroyed the Kingdom of Italy and was "truly the anti-Cavour" - he forgets that this occurred because he played and lost; and the same goes for Hitler. Likewise, the "mysterious closeness and distance of Mussolini and Lenin" is nothing other than the total response to the challenge of total revolution and, in any case, a problem of political technique rather than substance.

In reality, while Nolte is perfectly coherent in his position, Del Noce is troubled by an individual contradiction; how to take a stand against progressivism, without ending up in the embarrassing proximity of Fascism and Nazism. Hence the need to bring together Fascism and Communism and pass the buck, so to speak, to the enemy.

But it is clear how fragile this position is. By the way, not è certainly due to the neo-enlightenment ("due to a disease of culture", as Del Noce suggests) that the "opulent society" sinks into unbridled hedonism and mass pornography. It is the very meaning of-

democracy, as the freedom of the smallest and most numerous to set the values themselves, which leads right to the "last man" of Nietzschean memory. A "last man" that fascism - with the cult of a certain discipline, of certain ideals - would have liked to spare Europe.

II-De Felice and Weber.

Compared to Nolte and Del Noce, scholars such as Weber or De Felice give the impression of greater solidity. One could say that they have less imagination, the *chp* - for a historian - is a compliment. The fact is that, while Del Noce is a philosopher and Nolte a graduate in philosophy who came to history in a roundabout way, Weber and De Felice are professional historians, curious about all aspects of events.

Since, finally, studying Fascism does not mean circling around concepts ("resistance to transcendence", "secularization") but concretely reconstructing the political, social, cultural background from which the fascist movements detach themselves.

The name of Renzo De Felice is linked to the History of Italian Jews during Fascism and to the monumental biography of Mussolini, of which the first three volumes appeared (Mussolini the revolutionary. Mussolini the fascist I, Mussolini the fascist II). De Felice was perhaps stimulated to discuss the entire fascist phenomenon by reading Nolte. However, his approach to the topic is very cautious and concrete. He does not indulge in personal theories but analyzes, with great diligence, all types of interpretations of fascism.

Two books are fundamental for this research: The interpretations of fascism and the collection of texts Fascism: the interpretations of contemporaries and historians.

De Felice first illustrates the three "classic" interpretations of Fascism: that of fascism as a "moral disease", a crisis of disorientation after the First World War; that of fascism "revelation", revelation of a lacking political education in Italy and Germany; and the Marxist one of fascism as the reaction of capitalism against socialist movements. The first of this interpretation is that of the liberal scholars (Croce, Ritter, Colo Mann). The second is that of certain radical circles (Gobetti, the Rossellis, etc.). The third is that of the communist party and the Third International. To each of these interpretations



ni De Felice recognizes its own, limited validity; very critical è however, against the reduction of Fascism to an epiphenomenon of capitalism, a reduction that prevents us from understanding how fascism had a petty-bourgeois social base.

To these interpretations De Felice adds other more recent ones. There are the interpretations of the so-called "social sciences" which are divided into the psycho-social school (with psychological or psychoanalytic explanations) and the sociological one. De Felice also recognizes a partial truth in these interpretations, while deploring the fact that social sciences end up studying Fascism as an abstract pattern of social behavior divorced from historical ground.

Personally, De Felice does not recognize himself in any of these interpretations. He repeats Angelo Tasca's phrase that «to define Fascism means writing its history."

They are statements. In fact, an a/nor/ concept of Fascism is not given, but only a definition of Fascism derived a posteriori from the examination of individual fascist movements. An examination that can show us how many varieties exist in the body of every fascist movement.

Thus, there is the Fascism of the action squads, an expression of the fighters and the most energetic part of the northern petty bourgeoisie; there is a transitional Fascism watered down by conservative forces and the rhetorical and humanistic southern bourgeoisie; there is a bureaucratic Fascism of the 1930s leveled by the cult of the Duce's personality; finally, after the conservatives' about-face in the face of defeat, there is a Fascism of RSI that attempts to recover its spirit  
rite of origins.

Likewise, there is a Nazism of the 1920s, rooted in patriotic and conservative Bavaria; there is a Nazism of 1930 conquering the masses of Northern Germany troubled by the economic crisis; there is a Nazism in power that agrees with the industrialists and the military to prepare for war; there is an increasingly "totalitarian" Nazism of the war years under the goad of the war effort.

The analysis of all these aspects must not lead us to an absolute empiricism but is indispensable if we want to grasp the reality of Fa-  
schism in its concreteness.

For his part, De Felice proposes the following typological scheme already of Fascism:

Type of countries. Fascism established itself where:  
the process of social mobility was more rapid and intense (vertical



hauls above all);

was an agrarian-landlord economy predominant or there were massive remnants of it that were substantially not integrated into the national economic complex;

an economic crisis was underway (inflation, unemployment, high cost of living, etc.) or had not yet been overcome;

a confused process of crisis and transformation of traditional moral values was underway;

there was an ongoing crisis (of growth or senility) of the parliamentary system which called into question the very legitimacy of the system (both on the socialist and communist side and on the part of some sectors of the bourgeoisie) and gave credence to the idea of a lack of viable governance alternatives;

the war had not resolved or had aggravated some national problems (irredentism and the presence of strong minorities of other nationalities above all) and colonial ones, causing nationalistic tension and the rise of revisionist tendencies with respect to the European structure established with the treaties of Versailles, of the Trianon, of Saint-Germain etc.

Typology of forms of power. Fascism asserted itself through: a mystical conception of politics and more generally of life, founded on the primacy of irrational activism (trust in direct and decisive action) and on the contempt of the ordinary individual to whom it was contrasted with the exaltation of the national community and extraordinary personalities (elites and superman), from which it descended

the myth - essential in Fascism - of the leader',

a mass political regime (in the sense of continuous mobilization of the masses and a direct leader-masses relationship, without intermediaries) founded on the system of the single party and the party militia and achieved through a police regime and a control of all sources of information and propaganda;

a verbal revolutionism and a substantial conservatism, mitigated by a series of welfare-type social concessions;

the attempt to create a new ruling class, an expression of the party and, through it, above all of the small and medium bourgeoisie;

the creation and enhancement of a strong military apparatus; a private economic regime, characterized by a tendency towards the expansion of public initiative and the transfer of management

economy from capitalists and entrepreneurs to senior state officials and control of the broad lines of economic policy, as well as from the assumption by the state of the role of mediator in labor disputes (corporatism) and from an autarchic direction.

È an acceptable typology, if one ignores that "verbal revolutionaryism" which however - strangely - does not prevent the dictatorship of a mass party, nor the passage "of the economic direction from the capitalists and entrepreneurs to the high officials of the state".

De Felice appropriately underlined the role of the middle classes in the rise of Fascism. The pages he dedicated to this problem in the introduction to *Fascism* - the interpretations of contemporaries and historians are among the most balanced that have ever been written on this topic. He quotes Salvatorelli's words on the «class struggle of the petty bourgeoisie caught between capitalism and the proletariat as the third between the two litigants» and reproaches the Third International for not having understood the petty-bourgeois nature of Fascism in time.

Renzo De Felice is certainly the Italian historian who has made the greatest effort to bring the discussion of Fascism into a more calm atmosphere. However, he is keen to highlight that he does not believe in "absurd revisionisms" and that his effort goes to what "Croce pointed out as the real problem: investigating and understanding how Italian and European history has brought about the fortune of such men, of Mussolini and Hitler that is." Since "the overall historical judgment on Fascism cannot be certainly changed or substantially revised."

An attitude that has attracted the following comment: «Singular reversal of positions whereby historical research is conducted already taking its conclusions for granted, and a historical phenomenon is taken for granted, while admitting that one is not able to define it."

Compared to the authors discussed so far, Weber - a naturalized Romanian American - seems less tormented by that anti-fascist conscience that torments European scholars. His opinion on Fascism is not completely negative, perhaps due to his in-depth knowledge of one of the most idealistic fascist movements, the Iron Guard. Weber—a professor of modern history at the University of California at Los Angeles—is known for his book *Action Française* (1962) and *Varieties of Fascism* (1964), one of the best overviews of the subject.

In a recent essay, Weber criticized the tendency to paint

re the fascists as brutal and ridiculous gangsters, which doesn't help us understand why so many people followed them:

«The fascists worked hard to organise, manoeuvre, fight, march, shake up the people with speeches which - like all speeches - were not entirely coherent: which, moreover, also happens in current political activism. .. We have, to tell the truth, several of their writings, but what people remember above all are their deeds and their personalities. And what were we told about them?

That they led an unworthy life, which may be true of a man like Streicher, but could hardly be said of men like Himmler or Eichmann. That they were original and exalted, which is relatively true: but who else would have embarked on the extraordinary adventure of turning the world upside down? Who were devoured by jealousy and selfishness, from which - thank God - other men, and above all the other political parties, seem to be immune!... Who faced the pressure of young gangsters - that is to say, who were young in leg and decided. That they were rude, sometimes clumsy, which is exactly what people used to say about the young Bonaparte. All this is reminiscent of the stories that were told before 1940 about the cardboard tanks and wooden cannons of the Germans...

Riots, revolutions, protests always seem crazy until they take hold, and the men who lead them are often very smart, as their actions demonstrate.

They were also much younger than their opponents. In 1933 Blum and Herriot in France were 61 years old, Baldwin 66, Ramsay Mac Donald and the Belgian socialist leader Emil Vandervelde 67, Hindenburg 86, Hitler 44, Mussolini 50, Mosley 37, Doriot 35, Codreanu 34, José Antonio Primo De Rivera 30, Degrelle 24...

Hermann Rauschning was a Prussian and a patriot who initially supported Hitler, but then broke with him and with Nazism when he realized their overly radical tendencies: he then left Germany and spent his last thirty years making the world alarmed against that revolution of nihilism. Here is how he expresses himself about a relatively minor character like Forster, Gauleiter of Danzig, a man whom he cordially detests, but whose abilities he praises: "An extraordinary young man who, due to his energy, industriousness and organizational aptitudes would have succeeded brilliantly in a normal career if at that time a young man in Germany had had the opportunity to create an economic position for himself".

If we then consider characters like Codreanu in Romania, Degrelle in Belgium, Mussolini in Italy and Doriot in France, we get the same impression of energy, ability and spirit of initiative to a much higher than average extent."

We have cited this page by one of the most important American scholars because it fills a gap in the observation of Fascism.

After the fascist tendency to defend the exclusivity of a certain tradition against the pluralistic currents of ultimate history was identified with Nolte; After the petty-bourgeois social base of Fascism has been identified with De Felice, it is appropriate to grasp another aspect of the fascist movements between the two wars.

Fascism was also a matter of generation, the generation that returned from the war with a more energetic mentality and a more sporting education. We cannot understand the phenomenon of fascism if we do not remember that it was also a revolt of the young against the old. A revolt that did not go against the ideals of the older generation, but against the parliamentary slowness in which a youth educated to fight no longer believed.

Weber rightly underlines the young age of the fascists, their dynamism and their thirst for action. A Mussolini who becomes Prime Minister at 39, who practices every sport and knows how to fly a three-motor plane; a regime with thirty-year-old ministers like Bottai and Balbo; a Nazism with a Hitler who founded the NDSAP at 30 years old and at 44 years old è already Chancellor, with a Himmler who at 29 is head of the SS and is already dead at 45; men like Degrelle, Codreanu, van Severen, José Antonio - young, elastic, sporty, photogenic - represented something new in the history of Europe and explain the irresistible strength of the fascists in their time.

Rauschning's judgment on Forster contains another precious element: that he too could have had any career if he had lived in a normal era. In fact, there is no doubt that the post-war years saw the presence of a large number of young people who returned from the front with a great thirst for action, but without a possible place for the economic crisis. This mass of capable, energetic, unscrupulous young people flowed into the ranks of fascism.

Another element on which Weber insists is the meaning of the "bourgeois" character of Fascism. At the beginning of the essay *The Men of the Archangel*, in the issue of the *Journal of contemporary history* dedicated to international fascism, he notes how the small-

bourgeois is also present in the social democratic unions of northern Europe, without therefore making them "fascist".

There is no doubt that the petty-bourgeois element plays a role in fascist movements, but its character is rather interclassist — that is, it serves to keep together elements of the higher classes with the popular ones. According to Weber, "if fascist-type movements recruit a good number of farmers and small artisans, this is not enough to disqualify them", because precisely the small and very small bourgeoisie has embodied the main revolutionary demands of the last 200 years.

In essence, Fascism was not the reaction of a class, but a melting pot of different social elements.

This melting pot was born in an era of increased social mobility, in which the problem of integrating classes by strengthening the state arose. Weber writes: «The way in which the fascists treated the problem of classes shows that they were looking for a new formula more appropriate to an organic society, in which they believed...».

In this respect, fascisms can be brought closer to certain "national socialisms" of underdeveloped countries. Of course, these are very different phenomena. And yet we are dealing with revolutionaries whose value - according to Weber - is not exhausted:

«Faced with societies divided by economic and social conflicts, or societies shaken and disturbed by the rapid changes of our time (things that have already been seen, that have actually occurred, but not in a world where the political and technological situation makes them so dangerous, while unity and solidity are so necessary) the only thing that could serve to unify forces would be a common dream and a common challenge offered, preached and illustrated by a common leader.

This is where the importance of Fascism in its time lay, and this is the reason why I am convinced that this time is far from over."







## CHAPTER II

Before moving from the examination of some interpreters to that of the principles  
cipal interpretations, it will be worth taking a quick look at the movements  
fascist minds, so that the matter - so to speak - does not escape us  
ga from the hands.

The fascist movements that give shape to the complex phenomenon of  
«Fascism» are the following:

1) Italian Fascism. On 23 March 1919 Mussolini founded the «Fasci di  
Combato» in Milan with a program that was both national and social. The first  
"Fasci" - an expression of ex-combatants, ex-socialists and revolutionary trade  
unionists - slowly evolved towards right-wing positions until the end of 1920.  
From this moment, tired of two years of socialist violence culminating in the  
occupation of factories, growing masses of the small and medium bourgeoisie  
begin to flow into "Fascism". The phenomenon of "squadrist" is spreading in the  
Po valley - a reaction of former combatants and landowners especially of the new  
agrarian bourgeoisie against the terrorism of the red leagues. The teams -  
financed by the landowners and tolerated by the government - spread throughout  
northern and central Italy. Carried by the wave of the Po Valley squadrist.  
Mussolini moves to far-right positions and founds the National Fascist Party  
(November 1921).

They converge in Fascism:

- a) the ex-combatants, outraged by the socialists for their military past and  
disappointed by the government's weakness at the peace table;
- b) the students, attracted by nationalist ideals and the hope of a "greater  
Italy";
- c) the middle and small bourgeoisie, frightened by the strikes and violence  
of the socialists;
- d) the landowners, the small landowners and tenant farmers threatened by  
the reds with confiscations and collectivizations.

The rise of Fascism took place against the backdrop of the crisis of the  
other political forces: 1) the liberals, incapable of adapting to the new era of mass  
parties; 2) the socialists, tempted by violence but incapable of making a  
revolution; 3) the Catholics, incapable of reaching an agreement with both the  
liberals and the socialists.

II October 28, 1922 - in front of the imposing concentration of



fascist squads over Rome — the King instructs Mussolini to form a coalition government.

In essence, the National Fascist Party gains power by:

- a) the resourcefulness, youth and courage of the squadristi launched against left-wing organisations;
- b) the complicity of the police and the army which shares their patriotic ideals;
- c) the financial support of a large part of the economic forces that want a return to order and an end to strikes;
- d) the neutrality of a large part of the old liberal class hostile to socialists and Catholics and sensitive to Mussolini's appeals for order and patriotism.

Thus, partly through violence, partly through consensus, Fascism came to power in a context that initially remained that of parliamentary monarchy.

They resist longer against Fascism:

- 1) the workers of certain industrial areas strictly regulated by the Communist Party.
- 2) vast Catholic masses linked to the Popular Party.
- 3) characters and institutions of the old ruling class (// Corriere della Sera, La Stampa) and industrial environments that fear the revolutionary spirit of Fascism.

The crisis following the killing of Matteotti and the abandonment of Parliament by the opposition deputies allowed Mussolini to begin the transformation of parliamentary democracy into the fascist state. A series of transformations - the last of which were completed in 1938 - brought about:

- a) to the dissolution of the political parties and their replacement with the Fascist Party conceived as the party of all the Italian people;
- b) to the gradual disempowerment of Parliament and its definitive replacement (1938) with a Chamber of Fasci and Corporations representing the Party and the producing categories;
- c) to the establishment of the action squads in the Volunteer Militia for National Security in 1923 as an armed force alongside the Army;
- d) to the introduction of special legislation against the enemies of the Fascist State with penalties ranging from confinement to the death penalty;
- e) to the dissolution of the unions and the abolition of the right to strike with the promulgation of the Labor Charter which provides for the establishment

guardianship of corporations and state mediation in disputes between bosses and workers;

f) to the creation of public bodies for intervention in the economy — which, together with numerous forms of assistance — express a concept of the State that is no longer neutral but eager to protect the citizen and economic initiatives of common interest;

g) to the mobilization of young people in gymnastic and paramilitary organisations, with the related construction of sports fields, swimming pools, etc.

From the alliance of the fascist movement with the conservative forces (the monarchy, the Army, to which - after the Conciliation - the Church was also added) the Fascist Regime took shape, closely linked to the person of the Duce of Fascism - Mussolini - whose personal policy becomes the policy of the Regime and of Italy.

This policy pursues the following internal objectives:

a) I dampening the most revolutionary spirits of the fascist movement and the downsizing of the strongest and most independent personalities (Farinacci, Arpinati, Balbo).

b) the increasingly clear affirmation of the Duce's personality above all the organs of the party and the state and the reduction of the National Fascist Party to an organ of mass mobilization rather than of political discussion.

c) the strict control of the press and radio as instruments of indoctrination of public opinion.

This political tactic is combined with propaganda aimed at valorising the following ideals:

a) the exaltation of the nation-state as the bearer of the tradition of ancient Rome and of its own ethics and spiritual validity. This exaltation of Romanity and the ethics of the state therefore finds a limit in the rank recognized to the Church after the Concordat.

b) the vindication of moral and military values, as well as the exaltation of the land, of prolificacy, of peasant and warrior values as opposed to those of the citizens and tending to vindicate the type of the peasant over that of the "bourgeois".

c) the apologia of all forms of risk and daring with the spread of sport and pre-military education and the valorisation of every manifestation of collective audacity (Balbo's «Atlantic flight», etc.).

The technique of dictatorial government and mass propaganda are combined with certain fixed foreign policy directives which are:

1) the aspiration to give the Italian people a living space adequate to its importance and the number of its inhabitants;

2) the tendency towards a revision of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles in favor of the most unfortunate nations (Hungary, later Germany and Italy itself);

3) the controversy with nations that are too rich in territories and colonies (France and England) with the consequent creation of a strong army and a strong navy capable of questioning the Anglo-French dominance in the North Africa and the Mediterranean.

This foreign policy direction led first to the conquest of Ethiopia and then to a rapprochement with Germany - the only nation capable of questioning the Anglo-French dominance in Europe.

The conquest of Ethiopia, the same intervention in the Spanish war which resulted in a success for the "nationals", brought Fascism the maximum popularity. The opposition can be considered destroyed

- and this not only due to the relatively mild repressive means - but due to the skilled propaganda and successes of the Regime.

They support Fascism above all:

a) the young people, educated by the Party and raised in the new climate of sporting mobilization and national enthusiasm;

b) the middle classes, satisfied with the political and economic stability of the Regime;

c) the clergy, quite happy with Fascism's policy of conciliation towards the Vatican;

d) the military and the monarchy, sensitive to the new prestige acquired by Italy in Europe;

e) vast fringes of the popular classes conquered by Mussolini's "populism" and by the welfare institutions created by the Regime.

Thus, only a few intellectuals and a few thousand workers indoctrinated by the clandestine Communist Party remain in the active opposition against Fascism. Furthermore, the Pact of Steel - with the consequent looming of a new war -, the racial laws and too invasive "anti-bourgeois" propaganda lead large fringes of the middle classes and the Catholic Church to a position of criticism and rethinking.

This position of criticism and reserve is accentuated with the entry into war into which Fascism is pushed:

a) by the very logic of his doctrine of expansion and vital space;

b) by the ideological and political affinity with Nazi Germany;  
 c) by the need to transport to the international level that struggle against the world of democracies and the capitalist bourgeoisie which - together with Russian Bolshevism - is the counterpart of Fascism. The intervention was implemented by Mussolini at a very favorable moment (France was out of the picture and England was unable to defend Malta and Egypt), but the uncertainty and ineptitude of the class undermined political and military soon came to the fore in a catastrophic way. The war quickly exposed the Regime's weaknesses:

a) the compromise between Mussolini and the conservative forces left the old ruling class intact with its tendency towards careerism and compromise (Badoglio, etc.);

b) the Party, mortified by too many years of conformism, is unable to effectively inspire the Italian people to fight;

c) the propaganda is more nationalist, patriotic, than "fascist" and is not enough to illustrate the ideological and geopolitical meaning of Germany's revolutionary and continental war.

Thus, after the first defeats - and then with the invasion of the national territory - the unity of the Monarchy with Fascism and of the conservative ruling class with the fascist movement fell apart. The national-fascist splits, and the "national" part - that is, more generally bourgeois and conservative - seeks any way out of the war. This leads to July 25th and September 25th.

The Italian Social Republic and the new Republican Fascist Party represent a kind of "return to the origins". Furthermore, the 18 points of Verona and the Law on the socialization of businesses constitute completely secondary motivations of the new Fascism, whose vitality is to be seen in the defense of military honor and in the charm it still exercises on a part of the youth Italian. Italian Fascism was the paradigm of other fascisms. The single party, the youth organizations, the corporate order of the economy, the party militia served as a model for other fascist movements - starting with National Socialism. Furthermore, Fascism itself - which had created the "totalitarian state" - never implemented it. Behind the facade of the National Fascist Party - a mass organization with an increasingly accentuated pro-labour character - the Regime remained a dictatorship supported by a monarchy. The militia, born as the armed guard of the revolution, never became a party army, like the SS, but remained a mere

army appendix.

Thus Mussolini was not entirely wrong when he observed in the Social Republic that "there had never been a fascist revolution: Italy was first a monarchy, and remained so afterwards".

#### National Socialism

In September 1919 Adolf Hitler joined the tiny «German Workers' Party» (DAP). In February 1920 - having become its most important leader - he relaunched it as the "National Socialist German Workers' Party" (NSDAP). The program calls for the abolition of the constraints of the Treaty of Versailles, the unification of all Germans in a single Reich, the degradation of the Jews to foreign citizens, the nationalization of large companies, profit sharing, the creation of a "healthy middle class" etc. The new party established itself above all in Bavaria. Its base is recruited among ex-combatants, students and petty bourgeois sensitive to patriotic appeals and frightened by communist uprisings. To protect his meetings from the disturbing actions of the left, Hitler founded the SA, action teams with an anti-communist function. With the favor of the Bavarian regional government, monarchist and conservative, and with the complicity of members of the Bavarian army and police, the Hitlerite movement developed until November 1923 - the month in which the National Socialists attempted to take over of Bavaria to march on Berlin. The putsch is repressed and the party is dissolved.

Upon his release from prison, Hitler founded the NSDAP again (1925), which - thanks to the Strasser brothers - began to spread in Northern Germany. At the end of 1925 there were 27,000 members, at the end of 1926 49,900, at the end of 1927 72,000. In 1928 the Party won 12 seats in Parliament. It is with the economic crisis of 1929 - which causes the number of unemployed to grow to 6 million - that the Nazi Party becomes a mass party. In the elections of September 1930 the Nazis obtained 107 deputies and, in those of July 1932, 230.

Nazism converges:

- a) ex-combatants and nationalists who want to free Germany from the humiliating conditions of the Treaty of Versailles;
- b) young people, attracted by the dynamism of the new party and by the myth



of the Third Reich;

c) the middle and small bourgeoisie threatened by the economic crisis, the concentration of capital and the progress of the communist party;

d) the unemployed or a large part of the underclass.

The rise of Nazism took place against the backdrop of the crisis of the other parties.

1) The Social Democrats, responsible — in the eyes of the German bourgeoisie — for the national humiliation of 1918; 2) the communists, prevented by Stalin's policy from forming a common front with the social democrats; 3) the bourgeois parties, incapable of forming a solid majority of government.

On 30 January 1933, Reich President von Hindenburg instructed Hitler to form a coalition government with the nationalist conservatives (DNVP). The fire of the Reichstag, the elections of March 1933 - in which the Nazis obtained 43.8 percent of the votes - allowed the National Socialist Party to dissolve the opposing organizations and seize all power.

The longest resisters to "Nazification" are: 1) workers in many industrial areas organized by trade unions; 2) many Catholic circles hostile to certain neo-pagan tendencies; 3) individual fringes of the old conservative class annoyed by the regime's populism.

After the elimination of the internal left-wing opposition in the purge of 30 June 1934, the Nazi state began to take on its definitive physiognomy. It is based on:

a) on the dissolution of the political parties and their replacement with the National Socialist Party as the party of the German nation;

b) on the suspension of regional autonomies and the coordination of the Länder by the authority of the central Reich;

c) on the unification of the regional police forces into a single police force dependent on the Reichsführer SS Himmler.

d) on the creation of concentration camps for the political opponents of the regime;

e) on the unification of workers' organizations in the Labor Front and on labor legislation based on principles of solidarity between entrepreneurs and workers;

f) on the creation of numerous forms of assistance to workers (houses, medical assistance, the recreational organization «Strength and Joy», Volkswagen, «people's car») such as to give a sense of relief after the economic crisis ;

g) on the mobilization of young people in the Hitler Youth and on the annual and compulsory labor service imposed on young people from bourgeois families for a better understanding of the workers and peasants.

The rapid decrease in the number of unemployed, the rapid elimination of the most turbulent elements of the Party nestled in the SA, earned the Hitlerian regime the sympathies of the middle class and the military. Systematic propaganda illustrates the regime's achievements and the Gestapo monitors its opponents.

As the regime consolidates, the following trends can be identified:

- a) a substantial interclassism that brings the previously mortified small bourgeoisie to the forefront of German life;
- b) a tendency to protect small traders and small savers;
- c) a tendency to preserve the peasantry in a privileged position with the laws on hereditary property (Reichserbhofgesetz) and on the majorato;

- d) the tendency of the SS — the party militia — to consider itself a kind of state within the state and to increase its powers.

The uniformity of the totalitarian state extends over this complex social reality with its propaganda reaffirming the following values:

- a) the German greatness which manifested itself first in the Holy Roman Empire (the first Reich), then in the Prussian-Bismarckian Empire (the second Reich) and which has now found a third incarnation in the national and social Third Reich;

- b) the purity of the German lineage (represented above all by the Nordic type) to protect which German citizenship was taken away from the Jews and various eugenic measures were taken;

- c) the military spirit - embodied in the Prussian tradition - and the peasant spirit, exalted in the myth of "blood and soil".

However, the Third Reich only makes sense as a preparation for revenge. From the origins of the party, Hitler's aim was to disavow the Treaty of Versailles and overturn the verdict of the First World War. The foreign policy objectives of National Socialism are:

- a) the union with the Reich of Austria, the Sudetenland, Memel and Danzica;

- b) the reconquest of the ancient position of dominance of the German lineage in Central and Danube Europe;

c) the war against Bolshevik Russia with the conquest of one living space in the East.

The revision of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles began with the reintroduction of compulsory military service (March 1935) and continued with the remilitarization of the Rhineland. In 1938 - after having secured the friendship of Italy - Hitler annexed Austria, where since 1918 many voices had been raised in favor of union with Germany. The German troops encountered the same favor when entering the Sudetenland. With this, more than ten million Germans were reunited with the Reich. But here we see that the principle of living space has the upper hand over that of nationality: in March 1936 Hitler annexed Bohemia and Moravia. The danger of war, new anti-Jewish persecutions, certain eugenics and euthanasia measures reawaken a certain opposition, represented above all:

- a) by the military, who assess the risk of a world conflict;
- b) by the Churches, hostile to racial politics;
- c) by certain circles of the upper middle class and aristocracy who despise Nazism as a regime of parvenus.

However, the regime remains in control of the situation and can initiate hostilities against Poland. Once the world war broke out, the annihilation of Poland, the timely occupation of Norway and the sensational victory over France strengthened the Nazi regime and created a climate of success and trust around it. Meanwhile, the occupation of Western and Northern Europe, and then of the Danube-Balkan area, created a new characterized situation:

- a) by the leadership of Nazi Germany compared to other European fascisms;
- b) from the slow dawning of the idea of a European "New Order";
- c) from the formulation of this "New Order" not in terms of equality, but - as the logic of nationalism dictates - according to the rank of each lineage: Neuordnung Europas aus Russe und Raum ("reorganization of Europe on the principles of blood and space").

In 1941 Germany attacks Russia. The war on Russia has its origins - as well as from the need to eliminate the Soviet army before the Anglo-Saxons are ready for a landing - from the desire to annihilate Bolshevism by conquering the coveted living space in the East. The war against Russia creates a new situation characterized by:

a) from the improvement of the front of fascism led by Germany in the "Anti-Bolshevik Crusade";

b) from the culmination of the ideological struggle against Bolshevism - a motif common to all fascisms - and of the anti-Jewish one, since in Hitler's conception Judaism and Bolshevism are equivalent;

c) from the development of the Waffen SS with the recruitment of volunteers initially only "Germanic", then also "European".

Therefore the position of National Socialism evolves through the following three stages: 1) pan-German stage (reunion of the Germans of Austria and the Sudetenland in the Reich); pan-Germanic stage (synchronization of Danes, Norwegians, Dutch and Flemings with the Reich) -, European stage (hegemony of the Reich over Europe as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation in the Middle Ages). The declaration of war on America in December 1941 opens a further chapter in the history of the war, the main characteristics of which are:

a) the configuration of the conflict as a duel between the fascist conception on the one hand, and the democratic and communist one on the other;

b) the pressure exerted by this new ideological dimension on the "national" regimes allied with Germany;

c) the conception of the "New Order" as a sort of "Monroe doctrine of Europe" against Russian-American interference.

Thus National Socialism arrives - through the idea of race and space - at a global vision of the European problem. This vision envisages the hegemony of the most important peoples in terms of blood and number and an ideology of Europe based on German hegemony. Meanwhile, the war is exacerbating the characteristics of the regime - but here, unlike Italy - no contradiction emerges, although a ruthless coherence. The coherence of a state that accentuates its totalitarian physiognomy through:

a) the growth of the party militia - the SS - to a determining factor in all sectors of civil and military life;

b) the growth of surveillance and the multiplication of concentration camps;

c) the elimination of a good part of the old ruling class that conspires against the regime.

Furthermore, Nazi totalitarianism also remains very distant from Soviet totalitarianism. The total planning of the economy to the detriment of the individual, the subordination of consumer goods to production

war will never be fully implemented - which is also to be seen as one of the causes of the defeat.

Unlike Fascism, National Socialism did not find a monarchy in its path and was able to go further in building a totalitarian state. Moreover, even in Germany there will never be private initiative. threatened, and Nazi "totalitarianism" will express itself above all in the control of political and spiritual life. But even spiritual control finds a limit in the freedom of worship of the Churches, which Nazism would never dare to openly threaten. Through Nazism, the fascist idea - which had arisen and taken shape in Italy - acquired European relevance. The central position of Germany, the tradition of the Reich as a hegemonic and ordering power, the ideology of race and space help German fascism to channel fascisms into a European perspective. This ideology is specified in the war against America and Russia as a "Monroe doctrine" of Europe, a doctrine which, precisely since the catastrophe of the Reich and the subsequent division of Europe into ~ Russian and American influence has gained credibility.

#### The Iron Guard

In Romania in the 1920s, the presence of strong foreign minorities, the poverty of the agricultural masses and the economic dominance of the Jews, together with the corruption of the ruling class, created a state of unease. In 1919 Corneliu Codreanu created an anti-Semitic, anti-communist and nationalist student movement. In 1923 Codreanu, together with Professor Cuza, founded the National-Christian Defense League whose symbol is the black flag with the swastika in a white circle. In 1926 the League won 6 seats in the elections, but Codreanu separated from Professor Cuza who did not share his tendency towards political terrorism. In 1927 Codreanu founded the Xth Legion of the Archangel Michael or Iron Guard, with a monastic-military discipline that could lead to political assassination. With its youth base and strong proselytizing spirit, the Iron Guard gains widespread popularity. Its propaganda especially targets those areas where there is a strong Jewish minority or which are neglected by the government. In 1932 the Iron Guard obtained 5 seats in parliament, but in 1933 - after the assassination of Minister Duka - it was

melted. Reconstituted with the name Totulpentra tara (Everything for the Homeland), the Guard continues its rise and its green shirts are soon known throughout Romania.

They join the Iron Guard; 1) university youth, attracted by their nationalist ideals; 2) the farmers of the underdeveloped areas, assisted and organized by the legionaries; 3) vast sectors of the small and middle bourgeoisie damaged by Jewish competition; 4) a part of the military. In the 1937 elections the Iron Guard obtained 16 percent of the votes and won 66 seats in parliament. Codreanu declares that his aim is the replacement of the parliamentary regime with a legionary regime, the expulsion of the Jews, major social reforms and an alliance with Italy and Germany.

In 1938 King Carol dissolved all parties and established a personal regime. Codreanu is arrested and killed. This is followed by the extermination of 1200 leaders of the Iron Guard. The movement is decapitated and forced underground. The humiliations suffered by Romania (cession of Bes-sarabia to Russia, of Transylvania to Hungary), together with the German victory over France, lead to the abdication of Carol and the establishment of a national-legionary regime of Marshal Antonescu and Iron Guard leader Horia Sima. Furthermore, the reprisals in which the Guard indulges throw the country into chaos. Antonescu exonerates the Iron Guard, whose leaders - after the failed uprising of January 1941 - are interned in Germany.

#### The Phalanx

After the fall of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and the establishment of the Republic, Spain went through a period of serious social tension. In 1931 Ramiro Ledesma Ramos founded the newspaper *La conquista del Estado* proposing the fascist model as a remedy for the Spanish crisis. Subsequently, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos and Onesimo Redondo gave life to the National Syndicalist Offensive Councils (JONS), taking as symbols the yoke and arrows of the Catholic Monarchs and the red and black of anarchy. In 1933 José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the dictator, founded the Spanish Falange, against political parties, the class struggle and for the restoration of ancient greatness. In 1934 the Falange merged with the JONS and adopted the fascist model blue shirt. In 1935 the Falange made many converts, above all



to among young people; it is estimated that 80 percent of its 25.(XX) members are under the age of 25. However, in the elections of January 1936 the Falange did not obtain even one seat and the Popular Front government had José Antonio arrested on the pretext of the continuous clashes between Falangists and socialists. The outbreak of the Spanish civil war surprises José Antonio and Ramiro Ledesma Ramos in the republican prisons. They are killed, as are Onesimus Redondo and a large number of leaders of the old Falange. In this way, the Falange, like the Iron Guard, is practically decapitated and can no longer oppose its incorporation into Franco's personal regime. At the beginning of 1937, he ordered the merger of the Falange with the Carlists, and had their leader, Hedilla, arrested. Thus - despite the fact that the fascist facade of the Falange was preserved, and that a division of volunteers was sent to the Russian front (the "Blue Division") - the Falangism found itself practically a prisoner of the conservative forces. The defeat of the Axis powers allows Franco to eliminate one by one the most characteristically "fascist" traits of the Falange (saluted Romano, etc.), while a veneer of Falangist syndicalism does not hide that the country finds itself in the hands of clerical organizations and a conservative oligarchy.

## II movement «Ustascia»

The creation of the kingdom of Yugoslavia took place at the expense of the Croats who were subjected to the centralism of the Serbian monarchy. In the 1920s, the Croatian autonomist movement found expression in Stefano Radic's Peasant Party. After his killing Ante Pavelic founded the "Ustascia" movement (the insurgents), declaring war on the Yugoslav state. From their bases in Italy, the «Ustaša» fomented terrorism against the kingdom of Yugoslavia; King Alexander himself fell under their blows in 1934. The rapprochement between fascist Italy and Yugoslavia put a brake on the activities of the "Ustasha", but - after Yugoslavia was invaded by the Germans in 1941 - they settled in Zagreb at the head of an independent Croatia. The new Croatian state was built on the fascist model as a party state, with the Ustaša Guard or the Ustaša Militia, and parallel youth and women's organizations. The "Ustaša" state enjoys the support of a large part of the Croatian population, hostile to the Serbs, and of the Catholic clergy. As in





Phalanx and in the Iron Guard, religious faith becomes an element of nationalist orthodoxy. The spread of partisan guerrilla warfare led to large massacres of Serbs who, in turn, once the war was over, drowned the "Ustaša" movement and Croatian independence in blood.

#### The Arrow Crosses and the French movements

The short and bloody dictatorship of Bela Kuhn leaves a legacy of anti-Jewish and anti-communist hatred in Hungary. Added to this is nationalism, which flares up due to the territorial mutilations suffered by Hungary. Within the conservative regime of Admiral Horthy, movements developed that did not hide their fascist sympathies, such as the reawakened Hungarians of Major Gömbös.

In 1932 Gömbös was appointed Prime Minister by Horthy and proclaimed the 95 theses for "a century of national life in Hungary" against Marxism, liberalism and capitalism. But despite the fascist attitudes and the rapprochement with Italy and Germany, the Gömbös regime does not have a mass party behind it and relies only on the support of Horthy. Thus, Hungary remained a parliament state, until, upon the death of Gömbös (1936), everything went back to how it was before.

Meanwhile, "national socialist" movements developed, such as the Crossed Sickles of Zoltán Böszörmény and the National Socialist Hungarian Peasants' and Workers' Party of the former war minister Festetics. But these smaller groups were overshadowed by Ferenc Szálasi's Party of the National Will (Nemzeti Akarat Partja), later renamed the Arrow Cross Party. The Arrow Cross wear gray shirts and are organized according to a paramilitary model. Their program provides for the restoration of the Kingdom of Hungary within the borders of 1914, the dissolution of the parties, the rejection of the class struggle, corporate representation, the expulsion of the Jews. The Arrow Cross movement has many followers, particularly among young people and officers. Large sections of the proletariat also flocked to the Arrow Cross, which took the place of the left-wing opposition against Horthy's conservatism. Despite Szálasi being arrested, the 1939 elections gave 50 seats to the Hungarian National Socialists - of which only 31 to the Arrow Cross. In the

1940 Szalasi is released, but the course of the war does not favor his movement. Only in October 1944 - after Horthy's attempt to ask for an armistice - did the Germans put the Arrow Cross in power. However, they can no longer use it, because the Russians occupy most of Hungary.

France was the birthplace of one of the strongest European "pre-fascist" movements, Action Française. It is a dissident of the Action Française, George Valois, who founded the first French fascist party, Le Faisceau. In the meantime, various nationalist associations spread, such as the Jeunesse Patriotes or the Croix de Feu; the latter will organize several hundred thousand ex-combatants. In 1933 Marcel Bucard founded the Francisme, with teams in blue shirts and berets, and participated in the congress of the "fascist international" in Montreux. All these groups - together with the activists of the Action Française - took part in the march on Parliament on 6 February 1934. The Spanish war, the Popular Front, the prohibition of the Leagues gave new fuel to fascist ferment. Elements of the Camelots du Roi give life to Cagoule, a terrorist organization financed by the Italian government. Finally, in July 1936, Jacques Doriot - a communist leader expelled from the party - founded the Parti Populaire Français. Unlike the Jeunesse Patriotes, the Francisme, the Crosses of Fire, the French People's Party is not a simple patriotic-bourgeois league, but a movement with its own popular base. Despite these more genuinely "fascist" characteristics, Doriot's party was unable to assert itself and was already in crisis at the end of 1938. The catastrophe of 1940 breathed new life into fascist movements. While in free France the Vichy regime seems to be inspired by the principles of Action Française (organic, Catholic, decentralized state), in the area occupied by the Germans Doriot's Parti Populaire Français, Marcel Déat's Rassemblement National Populaire and the other groupings fascists demand a one-party regime. This mutual distrust between the conservative nationalists of Vichy and the fascists and national socialists of Paris will continue until the liberation, when a single revenge will befall the "collaborationists" of this or that colour.

#### The Heimwehren

The same contrast can be found between conservatives and National Socialists

in Austria. The Heimwehren (Homeland Guards) movement has its origins in the early post-war years (1919-20) when the socialist threat and guerrilla warfare on the borders (Carinthia, Styria) gave rise to defense militias. While a wing of the Heimwehren (those of Styria) was oriented towards Nazism and greater Germany, the majority rather longed for an organic state supported by the church and Italian Fascism. At the end of this politicization of the Heimwehren stands the Korneuburg Oath (1930) in which they declared themselves in favor of a corporate state with the dissolution of the parties and trade unions. With it, the Heimwehren are on the way to becoming the arm of that part of the Catholic party (Dolfuss) which leans towards an authoritarian regime. Under pressure from Mussolini, who never stopped financially supporting the Heimwehren, Dolfuss transformed Austria into a fascist-style corporate state. The Nazi and Social Democratic parties are dissolved. However, a large part of the national environment, including the theorist of the "organic state" Othmar Spann, continues to hold fast to the idea of "Greater Germany". This generates continuous tension which culminates, firstly in the killing of Dolfuss (July 1934), and then in the annexation of Austria to the Reich (March 1938).

#### The Slovak national movement

##### The Lappist movement

Like Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia was the combination of two ill-matched peoples: the Czechs, with secular and democratic spirits, and the Slovaks, conservative and Catholic. Since the post-war period, the autonomist movement led by Monsignor Hlinka took hold in Slovakia. The most extreme wing of the movement already in 1923 constituted the Rodobrama (Guard of the Fatherland).

In 1927 it was dissolved and the Slovak nationalists sentenced to prison. Upon Hlinka's death, the Slovak People's Party passed into the hands of Monsignor Tiso. The Munich crisis led first to Slovak regional autonomy and after its revocation by the Prague government and prompt German intervention (March 1939) to the independence of Slovakia. The Rodobrama was reconstituted as the Hlinka Guard for the paramilitary organization of the Slovak people. Even in Slovakia, a rivalry between the classic-

Tiso's fascism and the "national-socialism" of Vojtech Tuka and Sano Mach.

Finland's independence had emerged from a civil war between "reds" and "whites" which had left a strong anti-Marxist legacy. The National Guard (Suojeluskunta), the national association of farmers, led by Pehr Svinhufvud, who claimed Soviet Cardia, the conservative kokoomus party - against which the national heroes of the anti-communist struggle, President Svinhufvud and General Mannerheim moved - kept alive the hostility towards everything that was "red". And yet the Communist Party, supported by the Soviet Union, was very active. At the end of 1929 a violent anti-communist reaction started from the town of Lapua and swept through the countryside. In 1930 the «Lappists» marched on Helsinki and achieved the dissolution of the communist party. Immediately afterwards, they continued the agitation, also demanding the dissolution of the Social Democratic Party. At this point the conservatives themselves took refuge behind democratic legality and disavowed Lapua's movement. At the end of February 1932 the "Lappists", with a part of the National Guard, attempted a new march on Helsinki. Its failure led to the dissolution of the Lapua movement and the establishment of the «National Patriotic Movement» (Isänmaallinen Kansanliike) which won 14 seats in the 1933 elections. In 1936 the «National Patriotic Movement» confirmed its 14 seats (8.3 percent of the votes), but in 1939 it dropped to 8 seats (6.6 percent).

The progressive inclusion of Finnish social democracy in the patriotic legality of Finland deprived the Finnish far right of its strongest propaganda theme. Despite the broad sympathies enjoyed by Germany in Finland, the Soviet aggression of 1939-40, the alliance with the Third Reich in 1941, the Finnish far right was no longer able to escape from the position of isolation in which it was caught after the putsch of 1932.

Dutch «Nationalism».  
The Verdinaso

In 1931 the engineer Adrian Mussert founded the National-Socialistische Beweging in Utrecht, for a corporate and authoritarian national socialism, mitigated by his loyalty to the Queen and the absence of

any anti-Semitism. Mussert's party - modeled on the Nazi type with black-uniformed assault troops (the WA) and a sort of Horst-Wesellied (WA marscheered) - is experiencing its moment of popularity after the mutiny of the Zeven Provinciën ship which arouses a strong fear of communism in the Dutch bourgeoisie. In the wake of this state of mind, the NSB gained 7.8 percent of the votes in the 1935 provincial elections; However, it dropped to 4.2 percent in the 1937 elections, obtaining just 4 seats. The 1939 provincial elections saw a further decline in the NSB (3.9 percent), energetically fought by Colijn's conservative government. The German occupation of Holland allowed it to return to the limelight. Mussert is proclaimed Leider ("leader") of the Dutch people and several thousand Dutch volunteers enlist in the Waffen SS.

The inferior position of the Flemish citizens compared to the Walloons within the Belgian state causes the rise of a Flemish national feeling. While the «activists» of Flemish nationalism collaborated with the Germans during the «14-18» war, the Flemish fighters on the Yser front also put forward their demands. Among these young officers belongs Joris van Severen, who after the war was elected deputy of the Frontpartij, and who then turned his back on the parties and founded the Flemish militia in 1929. In 1931 van Severen gave life to the Verbon van Dietsche Nationalsolidaristen (currently called "Verdinaso", and its militants - like the German "Nazis" - "dinasos"). The Verdinaso, whose members are recruited above all from the students of West Flanders, repudiates the parliamentary method and gives itself a severely hierarchical and paramilitary structure. It professes the union of all speakers of Dietsch (as the dialects of Flanders and Holland were called in the Middle Ages) in an authoritarian and corporate state. Given its extra-parliamentary character, the "Verdinaso" remains an elite movement based on its discipline and the aristocratic charm of van Severen's personality. He possesses sufficient authority to make his militants accept the concept of a larger Dietschland also embracing French-speaking Belgium. With this, the "Verdinaso" reconciles with the Belgian monarchy which would like to be united with the Dutch monarchy in a Dietsches Rijk embracing Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and their colonies. Belgium invaded by the Germans, van Severen is arrested and murdered by French soldiers.

The Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond. From the Flemish parliamentary group

mingo — expanded in the 1920s to win 11 seats in 1929  
— the Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond takes shape, founded in October 1933. Under the leadership of Staf de Clercq the party adopts the yellow flag with the black lion of Flanders, uniforms and fascist salute, but retains a more accentuated character bourgeois of the "Verdi-naso". However, his presence on the electoral field allowed him to achieve good successes, gaining 8 percent of the votes and 18 deputies in the 1936 elections. Unlike the «Verdinaso», the Flemish National League opposed any reconciliation with Belgian unity and pursues a Dietschland formed by Holland with only Flanders. His attitude is far more Germanophile than that of van Severen. Once Belgium was invaded by the Germans, the VNV committed itself to collaboration, together with most of the elements of Verdinaso. A few thousand Flemings will join the Waffen SS or the Zwarte Brigade.

#### Rexism

Leon Degrelle, a Catholic Action activist influenced by Action Française ideas, engages in a campaign to renew the Catholic Party. His newspaper Rex (from «Christus Rex») denounces with extreme violence the scandals of the «system». In February 1936 Rex formed a party with a program of social rehabilitation and constitutional revision. With his exceptional activism, speaking up to 12 times a day, Degrelle manages to interpret the general discontent with the parliamentary system. In May 1936 Rex suddenly won 1.5 percent of the votes and 21 seats in the chamber, with peaks of 21% in the Walloon constituencies. In 1937 Degrelle felt strong enough to challenge Prime Minister van Zeeland in a special election in Brussels, but all the parties and the Catholic Church itself faced off against his now openly fascist movement and Degrelle was defeated and the decline of the Rexist movement which, in the 1939 elections, faced with the growing Hitlerian threat, lost its electorate and obtained only 4 percent of the votes and 4 seats. Having invaded Belgium by the Germans, Degrelle forms the Walloon Legion against Bolshevism and leaves for the Russian front, where he rises to the highest ranks of the Waffen SS.



## II National Collection^

In the post-war period, the adhesion of the Norwegian Social Democratic Party to the Third Communist International and the economic crisis spread a strong anti-communism in certain parts of the bourgeoisie. The Fedrelandslag, the "Patriotic League" to which a man of Nansen's prestige joins, and the Peasant Party, preach Nordic nationalism, the return to the land and Tanticommunism. From these environments emerges the figure of Vidkun Quisling, an officer who a long diplomatic mission in Russia filled with horror for the Jews and for Bolshevism. In 1931 Quisling - who had set out in his writings his national-corporate idea, his faith in the superiority of the Nordic race - was appointed minister of defense in the government of the Peasant Party. From this position he launches a violent attack against the socialists, accusing them of connivance with the USSR. Once the government fell, Quisling founded his own party, the Nasjonal Samling (National Grouping), a small elite of the patriotic bourgeoisie. The Nasjonal Samling did not enjoy much success: in the 1933 elections it collected just 2.2 percent of the votes and in the following 1\*1.8 percent. Once Norway was invaded by the Germans, Quisling offered his services, and in 1942 he was appointed Prime Minister. The number of NS members grew from around 7,000 in 1939 to 43,000 at the end of 1943, while a few thousand Norwegian volunteers fought on the Eastern front in the ranks of the Waffen SS.

## The British Union of Fascists

During the 1920s, small groups calling themselves "fascists" spread across Great Britain. But it is only with the appearance of the personality of Sir Oswald Mosley that English fascism acquires its own face.

A fighter in the Great War, a Conservative MP and a young hope in English politics, Mosley joins the Labor Party and is charged with solving the problem of unemployment within the Mac Donald government. The economic crisis, and his radical ideas on how to fight it, pushed him to found the New Party (1931) for increased intervention by public powers and a strengthening of the executive. From this «dirigiste socialism», Mosley evolves on a positive note

authoritarian and autarchic tions and at the end of 1932 he founded the British Union of Fascists. The black shirts of Mosley's followers, their Black House in central London, the large meetings at the Olympia or the Albert Hall attract the curiosity of the English, the anger of the left and the sympathies of some to the new party. conservative environments. However, the party never won even one seat in parliament, while its anti-Semitism, pro-Hitler attitude and street clashes gradually made it disliked by the majority of public opinion. Once war broke out, Churchill had Mosley and his followers imprisoned. They were released only in 1943.

#### The New State

Salazar's Portuguese corporate state is remembered last here due to the difficulty of placing it among fascist regimes. If in fact Fascism is based on a mass party, conservative but also revolutionary, Salazar's Portugal is as little fascist as Vichy France, Dollfuss's Austria and Horthy's Hungary. However, the corporate authoritarian state developed in the Europe of fascism by affinity and sometimes by imitation, almost like a more tepid version. Therefore, it must be examined in this context.

In 1926 a military coup put an end to the parliamentary regime. In 1928 Professor Salazar became Minister of Finance and began his work of revising the foundations of the Portuguese state. In 1930, Uniao Nacional was created as the only authorized party. In 1932 Salazar became prime minister, continuing to hold the position of finance minister. In 1932 the Estado Novo was proclaimed on a corporate basis while in 1935 the Mocidade Portuguesa and the Legiao Portuguesa were established as paramilitary organizations of young people and adults. The latter are simple imitations of fascist regimes soon emptied of all content. In the Second World War, Portugal maintained good relations with England and the United States and the Estado Novo increasingly ended up not being the instrument of a conservative revolution but the paradigm of a static society.

The regimes and movements quickly examined here are the most important, those that present their own individual physiognomy and do not result in mere imitations.

Thus, the National Social Party is to be considered imitations is Dr. Clausen's Danish, or the National Social People's Party in Sweden, with their SA in brown shirts and their traced slogans on the Nazi ones. Proof of this is that the Germans, having occupied Denmark, they didn't know what to do with the collaboration of the National Party, although a few thousand Danes enlisted in the Waffen SS.

In Bulgaria, General Schkoinoff's Rodna Sashtita and the National Zadruga Fascists by Alexander Staliyski were imitations of the Italian fascism, while the Social-National Movement of the former Prime Minister Zankoff had his way blocked by the coup d'état of King Boris (1934). In general, fascisms collided in the Balkan countries not only against democrats or Marxists, but also against those governmental authoritarian vernacles improvised by monarchs to restore order. As, in Yugoslavia, the dictatorship of King Alexander (1929) in anti-function Croatian; in Bulgaria that of King Boris was directed, among other things, also against Zankoff; in Romania Carol's personal government against the Guard iron dia.

Not very important are the Polish Falanga, the Blue Shirts of General O'Duffy, commander of the Irish Home Guard, and the various Swiss movements of fascist or Nazi inspiration from which hundreds of Waffen SS volunteers came out.

The Comintern instead had their own physiognomy and importance flying for Estonian freedom (WASE), heirs of the White Guard who in 1918-19 he had liberated the country from the Bolsheviks, and that at the end of 1935 attempted a coup. Even the Thunder Crosses (Perkunkuruts) Latvians and the Lithuanian Steel Wolves originated from the former voluntary operations that arose in 1919 against the Red Army. These movements, nationalists and anti-Semites, collaborated with the Germans during the second World War. The guerrilla warfare of Estonian and Latvian nationalists and Lithuanians against Soviet Russia did not die out until 1950.





### CHAPTER III

If we now turn to consider the fascist movements in their own right complex, we cannot help but see certain common characteristics.

Let's leave aside the external characteristics: black shirts in Italy, brown shirts in Germany, the green shirts of the Iron Guard, the blue shirts of the Falange, the gray shirts of the Verdinaso; external characteristics that still have their own meaning which express a military type of solidarity. What immediately jumps out in the eyes of fascisms is that they are conservative movements.

Italian Fascism relies on the monarchy, the army, the Church; Nazism allies itself with the Prussian military caste, believes in elites founded on blood and the SS even dream of resurrecting it king the Teutonic Order. For its part, the Iron Guard opens its doors parades with the popes carrying the icons in procession; followed by young people in uniform and in national costume to symbolize the new discipline that arises from the faith of the fathers and the Romanian land. Quisling, who dreams of a "Viking" Norway extending as far as Greenland, or van Severen, who from his house overlooking one of the most romantic canals of Bruges preaches the resurrection of the kingdom of Burgundy, I don't know no less tied to the past.

On the other hand, how could Fascism call itself to national Italian national without respecting the House of Savoy which is the leader of this unit symbol? The same policy in agreement with the Vatican does not respond so much not to tactical needs, but to convergence on "spiritual" terrain "static" remote to liberal secularism and Marxist materialism. Same mind, Nazism could not speak of "Prussianism" without reminding belong to those great-grandchildren of the officials of Frederick the Great who also form the backbone of the general staff. And, despite judging it as severe and mindful of the defection of the reigning princes in 1918, it cannot fail to honor the history of Germany itself in them. Thus it is with wisdom that Hitler forces his party to vote against expropriation without compensation of the German princes: to vote in favor would be to condemn imperial Germany and the war itself.

But here a problem arises for fascist "conservatism": to a fault at what point do the values that we want to defend identify with certain ones institutes.





In fact, if certain values run the risk of perishing because they are entrusted to now decrepit aristocracies, or to too limited managerial cadres, without contact with the masses, - it is necessary to create a new elite by breaking caste selfishness. This need to socialize values

— hierarchical, heroic, cultural values — to restore traditional values to the world of the masses is the most characteristic instance of Fascism. Without it, you are just a conservative or a reactionary.

This - and not only this - is fascist "socialism". A socialism that does not aim to improve the living conditions of the working class for generically humanitarian reasons, but to reintegrate the dispossessed into solidarity with the state and its values. This is expressed most clearly by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, when he writes that only when even the last German citizen enjoys a minimum of well-being will it be permissible to talk about national values. And Codreanu expresses himself with words that are not very different. Here the radical difference between fascist "socialism" and Marxist one appears. While for Marx the emancipation of the proletariat is the instrument for the overthrow of all handed down values (family, homeland, religion are "superstructures" that must dissolve with private property); for Fascism, sociality is a means of reintegrating the dispossessed into property, family and homeland.

"Bourgeois socialism" as it has been called with a hint of derision: in fact it aims to transform the proletariat into a petty bourgeois. It aims to reinsert him into that social order from which poverty expelled him. Thus - while remaining conservative with respect to their values - fascist regimes are revolutionary due to their openness to the masses and their desire to propose these values on a popular basis. Unlike classical conservative regimes - such as those of Franco, Horthy, Salazar - fascist regimes never descend into simple "paternalism", but are distinguished by social and propagandistic activism. As was rightly observed by De Felice, they tend to keep the masses in a climate of political mobilization.

Here, clearly recognizable, is the first distinctive character of fascist movements: they are conservative in values, but revolutionary in terms of the type of their propaganda and their openness to the masses.

History shows us many examples of symbiosis between conservatism and fascism, authoritarian regimes and fascist movements, but the latter differ precisely in this, that they are "movements". They go"

towards the people, since they understood that the people cannot be left aside, in the era of the masses.

Few examples illustrate the relationship between conservatism and Fascism as clearly as the relationships between the two Primo de Rivera fathers and sons. Miguel, the dictator, is a typical military caudillo, energetic and a good patriot, but incapable of attracting young people, intellectuals and the masses to his government. José Antonio - the founder of the Falange - is already a "fascist". He does not deny his father's memory, but wants to continue his work in a different way, with a young movement and a bold social program. The same idea of the "renewing continuation" - or the "conservative revolution"

— expressed this time, not by the father-son relationship, but by the hierarchical one, is in a poster distributed in Germany in 1932. There were portraits of Hindenburg and Hitler, with the writing "11 Field Marshal and the Corporal". This principle of the renewal of conservatism for the advent of a new generation, or for the rise of new social elements that claim the values that the old ruling class is no longer able to defend, is precisely the principle of fascism.

È therefore the difference that separates fascist movements from regimes like that of Franco, or the Greek colonels, is clear. They are united by the conservative attitude towards traditional values, and the negative part of their program: denial of parties, of Marxism, etc. But the fascist ones possessed something more, which today's authoritarian regimes - or authoritarian regimes contemporary with them such as Dollfuss's Austria or the Vichy French state - did not possess. They also had a positive part in their program: the single party, youth organizations, mass propaganda aimed at fighting communism; not only with repression, but with activism, propaganda and social reforms.

This first distinction allows us to distinguish fascist movements in their historical dynamics from those authoritarian regimes that resemble them from a formal point of view. While the former are to be considered truly fascist, military dictatorships, clerical and conservative authoritarian regimes are to be considered only as pseudo-fascist.

Needless to say, it is precisely these pseudo-fascist regimes that are recurrently cited by communists to demonstrate that Fascism was nothing other than immobilism, repression and social injustice.

A second distinction is then necessary to distinguish an element in fascist movements which, like the conservative one, is

closely fused with them, namely nationalism. A distinction that is not easy, because the slogans that Hitler or Mussolini always have in their mouths are "the fatherland", "the people", "the nation", and it can be said that fascisms were based on the feelings aroused by these words. Here too, as in the case of conservatism, we see how there is no fracture between Fascism and the ideals of the older generation. A Volpe or a Gentile supported Fascism precisely because they saw in it the continuation of the patriotic-resurgence-mental tradition and even in Germany the creation of Hitler's Grossdeutschland seemed to many to be the fulfillment of the dream of the Paulskirche.

Was it political naivety? This can be said as little as it could be said about the conservatives who gave their support to fascism. Since, if it is certain that fascism was something more radical than the conservatives deluded themselves into thinking it was, it is also true that the values in which the conservatives believed would either have transformed with Fascism or would have collapsed with it. Nazism was something very different from Prussianism, but it is certain that the Prussian-Frederick war tradition would either have won with Hitler or would have disappeared with him. Equally, Fascism was very far from nineteenth-century patriotism with its liberal tradition. But, in some way, it represented the projection of the unitary Italian state into a new perspective of expansion and power.

Thus, between a Gentile who gave his adhesion out of Risorgimento education, and a Croce, who denied it out of Risorgimento education, è It's hard to say who was more wrong. Gentile was wrong, because the totalitarian nationalism of Fascism was very different from his generic patriotism, but Croce was also wrong because the collapse of Fascism was also the collapse of a certain "national" Italy and of the forces on which it had supported itself. The fact is that the world of the old homelands in which Croce and Gentile had both grown up had reached a turning point. Either it would have been renewed, or it would have been slowly emptied by those forms of international hegemony of which the League of Nations, the Russian revolution and American intervention were the vanguards. It is not a case that

i fascisms appear precisely at this crossroads.

As complex as the relationships between Fascism and the patriotism of nineteenth-century spirits are, those between fascism and the nationalist movements of the beginning of the century are simpler. This «new right» takes shape at the end of the SOO with the spread of trends

imperialism and the criticism of parliamentary democracy.

The "new right" no longer has anything to do with the old reactionaries. The reactionaries took refuge behind the throne and the altar. They lived in a world where certain traditional structures still existed: it was enough to stop history and everything would return to order. On the contrary, nationalisms are born in an already bourgeois society, where traditional institutions have been put into crisis by revolutionary ideologies.

They do not want to go back, but identify the nation with certain traditions or a certain biological heritage and present their conservatism as a dynamic continuity. They are the Drumont, the Barrés, the Maurras in France: Action Française with its myth of classical and monarchic France. It is anti-Semitism in Wilhelmine Germany, the Pan-German League, the Youth Movement with its romanticism of blood and soil. It is Italian nationalism with its polemic against liberalism, socialism and freemasonry, and the imperialistic slogan of the "great proletarian".

What is still missing from Fascism? Nothing... and everything.

Nothing - or almost nothing - of ideological content. All of the real bases and mass consensus. Nolte's mistake in associating Maurras with Mussolini and Hitler is not a logical error, but arises from considering only the ideal aspect. There is no doubt that Drumont's anti-Semitism already had popular, "Nazi" characteristics, like that of Schönerer in Austria. There is no doubt that the actions of the *Ca-melots du Roi* are a prelude to squadristism and that Sorel's flirtation with Maurras, or the marches of the Action Française led by workers' representatives, prefigure the fascist fusion of the social with the national. Joan of Arc and the workers: this is already Fascism.

And yet, the Italian nationalists, the German Pan-Germanists, the Action Française remain intellectual minorities. Their social composition is bourgeois, their influence on the masses is almost zero.

Only the war, by spreading the taste for life in uniform among millions of young people, will create contact between the two nationalist avant-gardes and the masses, giving rise to Fascism. At the same time, the Russian revolution puts socialism into crisis. Elements of the left - or at least elements outside the quiet world of the middle classes - put themselves at the head of the nationalist groups, communicating a completely different spirit to them. A Maurras will always remain an intellectual and a bourgeois. On the contrary, a Mussolini, a Doriot - who emerged from socialism -

they compete on equal terms with the agitators of the left. As for the Nazis, Goebbels' agitation in Berlin in 1929 made Ernst Jünger exclaim: Der nimmt ihnen die Revolution aus der Hand!, «That takes the revolution out of their (the communists) hand»!

Therefore, if the theme of fascism can be found entirely in the nationalist movements of the early 20th century, or in the myths, dreams, hopes of the great national movements of the SOO, the fascist movements differ in their popular base, their mass propaganda and the paramilitary organization derived from war mobilization.

This second differentiation allows us to distinguish the fascist movements from the intellectual avant-gardes of the Action Française type and the Nationalist Association. The latter should only be considered "pre-fascist". The war mobilization and the anti-communist activism aroused by the fear of the Russian revolution - together with the imitation of the opponent's methods - represent the "threshold" of fascism.

A third distinction appears important to us, namely that between fascisms - in their European historical reality - and certain "fascist-like" tendencies that have emerged in other continents.

We intend to talk about Argentine Peronism, "Nasserism" in Egypt, certain varieties of Japanese "fascism", to which Bardèche would even like to add the "national socialism" (?) of Fidel Castro and some recently formed African states.

To grasp the difference between European fascists and the non-European "fascist" variants, we must not forget the spiritual terrain from which Fascism arises. This humus is romanticism, which dawned in Germany already at the end of the 18th century as a reaction to the rationalistic and leveling tendencies of the Enlightenment. It is from this spiritual ground that the idea of "nationality" as loyalty to one's blood and past grows. This idea spread throughout Europe during the SOO, it helped the bourgeoisie to re-enter the order that it wanted to destroy and experienced a new flowering at the end of the century, when socialism, industrialism and materialism re-proposed the same challenge of the Enlightenment.

Therefore, fascist "nationalism" is not a simple doctrine of national efficiency, a "national socialism" for developing countries, but a particular reaction of the European spirit to a particular turning point in its history. Fascism was not just a doctrine

an expansionist one. The nostalgia for the origins was embodied in it at a time when tendencies to level every organic and spiritual structure were manifested. That is to say, Fascism was the reaction of a modern civilization that risked perishing precisely due to an excess of modernity. It is against liberal indiscipline, Marxist materialism, leveling egalitarianism that the cry is raised demanding new bonds, new spirituality, a new loyalty to blood. This "romantic" stage of a culture is the moment in which Fascism develops.

This is why so-called Japanese "fascism" is out of time. Japanese imperialism presents fascist tendencies, but arises in a Japan in which traditional structures have not yet entered into crisis. Despite modernization, despite parliament, 1930s Japan was still a divine right monarchy like European states before the French Revolution. In this way the values are still presented as something natural, and the recovery of the origins as a national myth is not necessary. Where the Tenno è still the Son of Heaven, where the suicide bombers leave with the sacrificial bandage around their heads after praying to the sun, the tradition still naturally exists. We can start talking about a "Japanese romanticism", a fascist nostalgia for a past greatness to be restored with Yukio Mishima.

Arab countries could have offered favorable terrain for fascist movements. Here there was a past to recall - together with the danger of a desecrating modernity. Furthermore, they were only peripherally interested in the events of Fascism. After the war, "Nasserism" represented a national socialism echoing National Socialism. But it was soon seen how the historical conditions of Egypt were different from those of Europe in the 1920s, and the Arab countries remained halfway between national dictatorship and developmental socialism.

Even in Argentina the historical conditions were too different. Despite General Peron's sympathies for the Axis, despite the generous welcome given to the fascist exiles from Europe, Peronism did not rise above the level of South American "caudillismo". The lack of a true doctrine, the impossibility of creating nationalism in a country without national traditions, made Peronism a "fascist" phenomenon, but not fascist.

This is true a thousand times more for Cuba, for Ghana, for Niger, even if an enthusiast like Maurice Bardèche would willingly include them.



stay in the "fascist nebula".

È It is therefore appropriate to distinguish between Fascism on the one hand, and those extra-European phenomena which - through imitation, or contemporaneity, or a too generic "national socialism" - may resemble it. Only in certain concrete situations of Western society, only in a certain particular climate of European culture, do fascisms take shape. They are the fruit of certain spiritual developments that can be followed until the beginning of the 19th century and - in Germany - until the second half of the 18th century.

This third fine-tuning allows us to distinguish between fascist movements, aimed at recovering certain values, a certain racial heritage, a certain national tradition from those "fascist" phenomena that manifested themselves in non-European continents. Fascisms were not simple "development dictatorships", even if their national socialism sometimes fulfilled this task. With this, the revolutionary-conservative physiognomy of fascism that has already emerged from the comparison with conservatism and nationalism is more clearly defined.

#### The economist interpretation

Since the origins of Italian Fascism, Marxist scholars saw in the fascist tendencies that were manifesting themselves in Europe a reaction of the bourgeois class threatened by the demands of the workers.

This interpretation - later repeated countless times - is already in Lenin's message to the Italian workers on the occasion of the Fourth Congress of the Third International. «The fascists - you could read about it — they are first of all a weapon in the hands of the big landowners. The commercial and industrial bourgeoisie anxiously follows the experiment of ferocious reaction, which it considers to be black Bolshevism.»

It promptly returns in the VII Congress of the International in Dimitrov's classic definition: «Fascism in power is...

the open dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialist elements in finance capital... Fascism is not a power above the classes, just as it is not the power of the petty bourgeoisie or the Lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of financial capital itself. It is the organization of terror against the working class and against the revolutionary part of the peasants and the intelligentsia



read them..."

Therefore, fascism-reaction, fascism-violence, fascism-capital. A refrain spread throughout the world by communist propaganda, and with which it still deafens the ears of the young and the less young.

In truth, the finest heads of Marxism already understood various nuances in the early 1920s. Thus Gramsci - in a writing reported by De Felice - distinguished two fascisms, that of the small bourgeoisie and that of the agrarian reaction; Radek saw the roots of Fascism in the proletarianization of the lower middle class and defined it as "a socialism of the middle classes"; Arthur Rosenberg doubted that Fascism was a mere reaction, seeing in it a backward capitalism eager to modernize and recognizing that «the state capitalist structure imparted to Italy with the so-called corporate system» had «secured the domination of the country to efficient capitalist groups."

However, despite these admissions, the Third International continued to identify Fascism with the final phase of bourgeois decadence, the one in which the bourgeoisie - dying - resorts to violence. This means admitting that France, England and America also had to go through Fascism; which — starting from the Marxist conception of the fatal catastrophe of capitalism — was perfectly consistent. In truth, a German communist scholar, Thalheimer, had noted that «the fascist form of state has established itself precisely in countries that are certainly not at the head of capitalist development», but he resolved the contradiction by stating that Fascism was just one of the forms of capital's domination.

The identification of Fascism with the bourgeoisie led the communists to put the fascist and social democratic parties on the same level, which would have considerable consequences in the strategy of the communist parties in the 1930s. There is no doubt that the German communists - lumping together the Social Democrats and the Nazis — certainly did not favor the anti-fascist resistance in Germany. It is clear that this interpretation was one-sided. Of course, it cannot be denied that fascisms relied on capitalist groups to obtain funding. But there is a big difference between this and saying that Fascism was a pure and simple "invention" of the wealthy classes. Among other things - as has been noted - to say that Fascism

or Nazism were "invented" by industrialists, presupposes a dose of imagination that one would not expect in such prosaic characters.

In reality, the capitalists always distrusted their fascist allies. Already in 1922 Gramsci and Togliatti believed that "the industrial classes" did not trust the new regime too much and refused to be "occupied" by Fascism, whose fortune they had ensured in the period 1921-22 to avoid the collapse of the state. They too realized that, if Fascism had rendered services to the wealthy classes, it was nevertheless the bearer of its own political logic which could greatly restrict the space of "pressure groups". Even an author who is certainly not suspected of having sympathies for Fascism like Ernst Nolte rejects the vulgar Marxist "Vom-manipadne-bum" which tends to attribute every catastrophe to the "weak and ugly petty bourgeoisie": "... .Isin~"

These economic backgrounds do not seem to have had particular importance. Hitler's power was not due to capitalist financing; but some capitalists financed him because the specific method of his agitation was successful. After all, no political decision can exist that is good without at the same time favoring certain specific economic interests."

In Italy, it was liberal scholars who rejected the identification of fascism with a particular social class. Thus I I Croce, in his way between the serious and the anecdotal, refuted that Fascism had been an expression of the rich bourgeoisie:

«Whoever remembers the origins and the first outbreak of fascism in Italy, and has carefully followed its development or rather its events and adventures, knows that fascism found its proponents and supporters in all classes and in all economic and intellectual orders, industrialists and agrarians, clericals and old aristocrats, proletarians and petty bourgeois, workers and rural people; but he also found very ardent opponents in all these classes... It comes to my mind that, having been offered a good shoemaker who made very comfortable ones for me, and having asked the person who knew him, to commit another couple of crimes on my behalf, this one (it was around 1925 and I was making myself known among the opponents of fascism) came back to me mortified and brought back the clear revulsion that had been given to him with disdainful and proud words in good Neapolitan dialect: Who? The one who spoke badly of the Duce? I don't want to make shoes for him!

And yet, it is one thing to admit that Fascism found supporters among the humblest classes, another to believe that it escapes anyone.

that social characterization. To say that it was not strictly identified with the interests of one class does not mean that all classes vi were equally represented. While the communist interpretation is biased, the Crocean interpretation risks remaining abstract.

If we say that Fascism was also supported by certain proletarian fringes, we are saying something exactly, but it would no longer be accurate to say that it was a proletarian or predominantly proletarian phenomenon. Thus, many exponents of the nobility and upper middle class militated in fascism, but it cannot even be said that Fascism was a pre-eminent expression of the nobility or upper middle class. The proletarians who joined Fascism did not do so as representatives of their class, but for certain ideals (artisan proletariat, proletarian intellectuals, ex-combatants) that transcended the framework of wage demands. Likewise, the members of the upper classes who joined Fascism belonged to a particular type of aristocrat or rich bourgeois imbued with national-populist idealism at which many of their classmates turned up their noses. The German nobility entered the ranks of Nazism en masse (of 4,000 leading exponents of the Nazi party, 670 were nobles), but it could hardly be said that Nazism was an expression of the nobility.

So what is the dominant class in fascist movements? Evidently, the middle and small bourgeoisie are evolved enough to be interested in something other than simple wages, but not so refined as to feel the first symptoms of exhaustion of the educated classes. This more recent bourgeoisie, «young enough to refine its strength, not so refined as to destroy its» (Drieu La Rochellé), is the one that gives Fascism its energy, not without a bit of naivety and crudeness.

Mussolini is the son of a blacksmith and an elementary school teacher, he himself is a teacher by profession. Hitler is the son of a customs officer, Coudreau of a professor; but his grandfather is a farmer. Grandi is a lawyer, Balbo and Bottai come from the middle class, but Farinacci is a railway worker and Arpinati a worker. Goering and von Schirach are sons of officers, like Szalasi; Hess of a merchant, Himmler of a professor, but Goebbels is the son of workers and appears to Ernst Jünger «Wie in einer Familie Mechaniker del studierte Bruder auftritt». Only Mosley and José Antonio belong to the nobility — but

i their followers are rather recruited among the London lower bourgeoisie

and Madrid.

Overall, the social framework of the fascist base is middle and lower middle class. A young social stratum, recently acquired culture and responsibility, but precisely for this reason more energetic in claiming those tasks that the old elite is no longer able to perform. It is that small bourgeoisie sufficiently close to the proletariat to still have its sanity and violence, and also to resist the temptation to idealize it, which - on the threshold of the 1920s - gives life to Fascism.

One of the most important moments in the rise of Fascism was precisely this irruption of the lower middle class in the aftermath of the First World War. It is a phenomenon that takes communists by surprise (Marxist dogma taught that the bourgeoisie was now old, decadent). This explains the spite, the envy that exudes from their judgments.

According to Marxist thought, the Russian revolution should have been the beginning of the collapse of the bourgeois class throughout Europe. The Bolsheviks expected revolutions in Italy, in Germany, in Western Europe and a large part of European socialists oriented themselves in this direction. Instead, right on the rock of Fascism, their expectations were wrecked. But not only is the hope of a rapid seizure of power in Italy and Germany wrecked. It is the entire communist perspective of the imminent dissolution of the bourgeoisie that crashes against the energetic reaction of the Italian and German petty bourgeoisie.

Here we disastrously discover the main weakness of the Marxist interpretation of the development of society, namely the faith in a homogeneous proletariat that capitalism should increasingly level in conditions of ever-increasing poverty. But the development of Western capitalism does not bring with it poverty and leveling, but rather the emergence of a new small and very small bourgeoisie hostile to collectivist experiences. This is why communism can take root in Russia

- a country two hundred years behind Europe - but in European nations, where private property and initiative have deep and complex roots, fascist reaction is attracted.

Here then - instead of the capitulation of the Italian bourgeoisie in the face of the maximalism of the Serratis and Bordigas - the violent reaction of the small owners, tenants and tenants of the Po valley from which squadristism takes shape. And here, - instead of the catastrophe of the German bourgeoisie - the impetuous anti-Marxist revival of the German petty bourgeoisie flowing into National Socialism. AND

again, in Eastern Europe, here is the Romanian and Hungarian petty bourgeoisie which wrests the demands for renewal from the hands of the communists. The Iron Guard and the Arrow Crosses represent - among other things - the outburst of a new, petty bourgeoisie against the old oligarchies and the Jewish monopoly on trade.

That this petty-bourgeois push that took shape in fascism was not a reactionary regurgitation, but a profound social movement is demonstrated by the fact that it continued even after the Second World War without Fascism or violence. The proletariat did not replace itself as the ruling class on the ruins of capitalism; on the contrary, it has disintegrated into a new very small bourgeoisie teeming with the "welfare society". And the Western communist parties were careful not to repeat the "assault on the bourgeoisie" of 1919-20, but they practically took on a social democratic physiognomy. The communists understood nothing of the evolution of modern capitalist society. They exchanged Europe for Russia, they took on a bourgeoisie that was neither decadent nor parasitic at all and which demonstrated that it knew how to defend itself very well with Fascism. To console themselves for the blow, they repeated until they were satisfied the legend of a Fascism invented by big interests and capital. Today, out of loyalty to Lenin, they continue to repeat the same version, but their behavior - so prudent and respectful towards the lower middle class - shows that they have understood the lesson.

Was Fascism therefore a petty-bourgeois phenomenon? It was - as Salvatorelli defined it - "the class struggle of the petty bourgeoisie caught between capitalism and the proletariat"!

Of course, this social characterization is the closest to the truth. It has the merit of contrasting with the other - so crude - identification of Fascism with that big capital which, however, only later allied itself with Fascism.

But it would be dangerous to settle on such a generic characterization. Since - as has been observed - the English employee unions or the French radical party also have the same "petty bourgeois" base, which - until proven otherwise - are not "fascists". In other words, when it was said that the petty-bourgeois element plays a very important role in fascist movements, it does not follow that Fascism is a direct consequence of a defense mechanism of the petty bourgeoisie.

Finally, petty-bourgeois is an expression designating a reality

social elusive and which - unlike the proletariat and the aristocracy - does not obey a rigid class logic. It is not just rhetoric if fascist movements talk so much about "national unity" and "overcoming the class struggle". It is true that a national unity outside of any class interest can only be an ideal point of reference, since no reality can ignore social groups and their different interests. But there is no doubt that when the fascist movements claimed the right to speak of national unity they could do so with greater right than other political components, for example, Horthy's governing party which represented the Hungarian aristocracy, or of the Bolshevik party in which a minority of officials and skilled workers triumphed over millions of peasants and the mass of the Russian people.

In fact, that petty-bourgeois element that set the tone for fascism represented - in a certain sense - something "interclassist", so much so that a scholar like Weber asked himself: "is the concept of middle classes a meaningful one in this context?".

Does it therefore make sense to speak of Fascism as a petty-bourgeois movement? It makes sense if one wants to give a more precise physiognomy to the generic fascist "interclassism". But if with this term we wanted to deduce a desire to close Fascism to the popular masses, we would be off track. In fact, fascist statism, the guided economy, welfare reforms and popular education represent precisely an instrument of that absorption of the proletariat into bourgeois society which constitutes true "social progress" in 20th century Europe. That is to say: the "social revolution" of our time is not communism, but the transformation of the oligarchic bourgeois society into an open bourgeois society through fascism, managerialism or social democracy.

This last comparison, however, shows that Fascism cannot be defined only with respect to its social dynamics. Like any historical movement, it also lives in a geopolitical and cultural dimension. Fascism is not just the bourgeois version of interclassism. It is also the crisis of growth of national states towards autarky and imperialism. In this it allies itself with monopolies and big industry. It is also the reaction of European culture to hedonistic, individualistic and utilitarian conceptions. In this, it

is heir of the aristocratic polemic against the spiritual dangers of democracy. It is an element of conflicts between classes, but also of con-



conflicts between states and conceptions of the world.

The economic interpretation of Fascism proposed by Marxist scholars stimulates us to study its social components, but is completely insufficient to explain such a complex phenomenon.

#### The moralistic interpretation

After the economic interpretation, there is what could be defined as "moralistic". We gather under this label three interpretations that De Felice examines separately: the interpretation of Fascism as a "moral disease", that of "revelation", and the psychological-psychoanalytic one. The latter in fact claims to be scientific, but it is only an expression of that pacifistic-materialistic and neo-enlightenment moralism which hides its preconceptions and prejudices behind a scientific language. If we make a bundle of such different herbs, it is because they all give off the same smell. It is the smell of historical judgments made in a moralistic way — even if the morals they inspire are very different from each other.

In fact, the condemnation of Fascism as a "moral disease" arises from the moralism of liberal arbitrators in the face of young people returning from the trenches, who do not understand, and the world of the masses, who they are unable to control. Hence the deprecation for the "irrationalism" of the times and for those bad boys who throw away good books and good manners.

The condemnation of Fascism as a "parenthesis" starts from a different type of moralism. It is the radicalizing criticism of Fascism as a "revelation" of the political and moral backwardness of Italy and Germany. A backwardness measured by the yardstick of a vaguely Masonic moralism, which has its models in the Anglo-Saxon world, and sees an absence of civic virtue in the authoritarian spirit. Even for this radical moralism the problem is that of "evil", be it the Counter-Reformation, Prussianism or some other Beelzebub invented by radical-Masonic criticism.

Finally, the third form of moralism is inspired by the pseudoscientific morality of contentment and relaxation brought into vogue by psychoanalysis, and which is replacing Christianity in much of the world. It is a kind of religion of pleasure - with its messianism of a hedonistic-hedonistic humanity - and for which Fascism, as



every form of authoritarianism is the evil face of the ancient order that prevents us from reaching and achieving new goals of happiness and anarchy.

The interpretation of Fascism as a moral confusion, a slip-up, the "lowering of the sense of freedom" was supported in Italy by Croce. It expressed the disoriented disappointment of the older liberal generation in the face of the new world that emerged from the world war. What struck Croce painfully was the obfuscation of the idea of freedom which had dominated the entire nineteenth century until 1915.

It escaped Croce and many liberal critics that Fascism was less the cause than an effect of the European crisis of freedom. The real causes were the birth, the rise of the masses or of the collective mentality, the replacement of the elites of notables with mass parties, and the Bolshevik challenge to Europe. Fascism was a reaction to the Russian revolution and the mass society that it tried to master by interpreting it.

Croce's whole attitude towards the fascist phenomenon is spoiled by this moralism of freedom for which liberalism takes on the characteristics of a religion rather than its real historical connotations of emancipation of the bourgeoisie in a very specific context. This explains how famous, but disappointing, the History of Europe in the 19th century is. It is precisely the history of liberalism as the history of the "religion of freedom". However, this precluded us from understanding the fact that this liberalism had been the expression of certain social and political forces which - with the First World War - had lost their traditional hegemony, causing the appearance of Fascism to be a more complex historical reality than a simple "moral disease". Thus Croce's deprecation against this Fascism, "which doesn't suit him", took on a more moralistic than historical character.

Even the interpretations of two great German historians such as Meinecke and Ritter are affected by the same attitude.

For Meinecke, "the transformation of the German people according to the Hitlerian model... was made possible together with the disruption of the spiritual forces in existence since Goethe's time, which can be conceived as a disturbance of the psychic balance between forces rational and irrational. Reason was immeasurably developed on the one hand, and on the other the sensual desire for power, wealth and security. The new ethics of national egoism, the doctrine of the "sacred ego"

smo" also had to appear on the scene, to give due consecration to this murkiness of psychic forces."

Here, even more than in Croce, the moralistic abstractness of a certain way of judging Fascism shines through, which becomes just a detail in the much more complex picture of that spiritual crisis that opened with the French Revolution and modern times.

Even for Ritter, Hitlerism is a disease of modern times in which Dei Damonie der Macht, the "demon of power", takes over. With this, undoubtedly, he highlights one of the characteristics of our century, present in National Socialism, but he does not help us to reconstruct its social and ideological physiognomy.

For Kohn - another Central European scholar with liberal tendencies - it is the irrationalism of the masses that manifests itself in the crisis following the First World War:

«The exaltation of life and the contempt for reason led to a new Verzauberung of the world, to its derationalization, to the reappearance and resurgence of leaders and slogans, to a new world, triumph of the magicians and thaumaturgists equipped with this once and for all the most recent discoveries of technique and mass hypnosis. What had been an esoteric teaching in the intellectual class before the First World War became, after the war, a fundamental problem for the new generation. In the growing complexity of the world, after the unprecedented catastrophe of the world war, astonishment led the masses to growing impatience and contempt for reasonableness, compromise and slow progress."

There is no doubt that fascist movements often offered the spectacle of mass fanaticism. On the other hand, there was a new solidarity that arose between men of the same generation, emerging from a great collective experience such as the war: that this national passion, this militant solidarity full of a spirit of sacrifice appeared as fanaticism to men of another generation was fatal, but it was also unfair. Of course, fascisms exploited these collective feelings with a technique so modern and unscrupulous as to scandalize the spirits rooted, ideally rooted, in the idyllic world of the liberal belle époque.

But, even in this case, Fascism was more a phenomenon than the cause of mass action with collective persuasions and centers of public suggestion. In the scenario of the restored liberties

ity, the suggestibility of men has continued to grow even if the hidden direction that regulates the picture has become more hidden.

Of course, propaganda techniques have changed. In place of the propaganda of Goebbels and Minculpop there is the occult dictatorship of the eggheads who - through cinema, television, magazines - disseminate the by-products of Marxism, the myths of sex, those of "third World". There is the dictatorship of advertising, the propaganda of the welfare society and permissive morality, imposed with more refined techniques (but not too much). Thus, it is not surprising that in the post-war period the moralism of liberal critics in the face of the "lowering of the consciousness of freedom" and the oppression of consciences found no reasons for satisfaction. The "moral disease" with which they identified Fascism was a broader and deeper evil.

And yet, however abstract, moralistic and generic the criticisms they made of Fascism were, this interpretation must be given the merit of having claimed against Marxist simplifications that Fascism had not just been a bloc of interests, but a profound restlessness devouring the entire European civilization.

In our opinion, the interpretations of Fascism as "revelation" deserve to be placed alongside that of "moral disease".

Here too we want to highlight the aberrant character of fascist movements. However, while for the supporters of the Fascism-disease equation, Fascism and Nazism were sudden disturbances, the theorists of "revelation" believe in a predisposition already latent in the Italian and German national tradition. If for a Croce Fascism was the "invasion of the Hyksos" in the orderly annals of the liberal Ritalietta, and a Ritter refuses to admit that Nazism is a necessary consequence of the Prussian tradition, for a Mack Smith Fascism is already germinating in clientelism Giolittian while there is a whole literature tending to demonstrate how Nazism is nothing but the "revelation" of the aggressive nature of the German people, from Hitler to Bismark, to Frederick the Great, Frederick Barbarossa, Luther, Arminius, and so on and so forth the more you put.

Even more than in the case of the reduction of Fascism to a "moral disease", this way of judging suffers from a fundamental abstractness. Only a certain left-wing moralism can challenge nineteenth-century liberals for the merit of having achieved the unification of Italy. That it

whether it was done without widespread popular participation, or whether the ruling classes then governed by means of cliques, this largely depended on the backwardness of the people and the nature of certain pre-existing relationships. In the same way, only a radical moralism can claim to put Bismarck on trial, who - if he was not a "democrat" - was nevertheless a very realistic, balanced politician. The Prussian tradition has shaped one hundred and fifty years of German history, leading to the unity of Germany: accusing it of the catastrophe of 1945 would obviously be excessive.

But the greatest weakness of the theory of revelation is in attributing to fascism very general responsibilities rooted in the very nature of the respective peoples and in their national traditions.

«Fascism – Gobetti wrote in 1922 – had at least this merit: of offering the synthesis of historical Italian diseases: rhetoric, courtliness, demagoguery, transformism. Fascism is the legitimate heir of Italian democracy, eternally ministerial, fearful of popular initiatives, oligarchic, parasitic, paternalistic." Even from Nazism it was often said that it would expose the defects of the German national character, first of all conformism and deference to established authority, whatever it orders. But Erra said of this judgment by Gobetti: «In the 1950s, anyone who had reread these pages would have found there not the face of Fascism, but that of the new democracy which was visibly consolidating with those same characteristics. And he could have drawn only one conclusion: those weaknesses, those congenital defects - provided that it was legitimate to consider them exclusively or at least characteristically Italian

— had been present before, during and after Fascism." Thus, one could fall back into the opposite; rely on the opposite judgment of Evola, that it is not Fascism that is ruining the Italians, but the Italians that are ruining Fascism - if this too were not an abstract judgment, since it would be necessary to establish who, when and what the spoiled Italian character of Fascism. That the conformism of the Germans, their zeal for order - any order - did not die with Nazism could be demonstrated by the supine acquiescence with which they underwent democratic "re-education".

Evidently, when we try to interpret fascism as epiphenomena of moral evils rooted in the history or nature of peoples, we easily get lost in the vagueness. Among other things, there is a risk of writing history with one's head turned backwards, casting the shadow of

what was, in the shadow of what was yet to come. Thus - how much history there is openly "thesis" such as that of Mack Smith, who sees the germ of Fascism in the Cavourian "combination", or in those histories of Prussia-Germany dominated by the concern to demonstrate the inevitability of Hitler — this is something to be established.

Thus De Felice, with his usual lucidity, judges these trends: «In fact, however suggestive and stimulating some of these studies are, especially because they highlight certain fundamental differences between the various fascist movements and regimes in relation to their respective historical contexts, it is however a fact that the supporters of this interpretation have very often limited themselves to stating it on the basis of a series of more or less external and mechanical findings and assonances and to contradicting it apodictically to the others, especially to that of moral illness, without generally translating it and making it true in overall research. And the very few attempts in this sense have proven to be not at all convincing, weak and incapable of explaining a whole series of problems of decisive importance (how - for example - despite so many flaws in Italy and Germany it was possible to create and consolidate the unitary state, create the national market and bring about effective development

economic, social, civil and political)...".

In reality, the theory of "revelation" - dominated by the moralistic obsession of studying fascism under the guise of an "evil" (be it a Catholic-counter-reformist or Prussian-authoritarian "Evil"), which is contrasted with a implied "Good" of Enlightenment extraction - does not help to understand the complex social, cultural and political aspects.

It may seem risky to compare the two theses of "moral illness" and "revelation" with certain psychological and psychoanalytic interpretations. But their secret inspiration is also moralistic, since the idea that aggressive tendencies should be repressed and relaxing tendencies should be promoted, or that making love is better than making war, is also a preconceived judgment like many others. . In them a clandestine ethic triumphs which would like to claim to refer to science, but which - under certain aspects - we could consider the extreme degradation and secularization of Christian pacifism in a smug and twilight hedonism.

Of these psychosocial interpretations, those that study Fascism in the context of crowd psychology can be taken seriously. Thus, for Erich Fromm, Fascism is a product of the "solitary crowd", of the disintegration of society into anonymous masses who flee

They have a freedom that scares them into taking refuge in authoritarianism.

Parson also believes that the uncertainty of the masses, the insufficiency of the integration of certain social and intellectual strata constituted the psychological basis of the fascist phenomenon. In his essay *Some Sociological Aspects of the Fascist Movements*, he holds close to Fromm's line. And yet, with a much greater sense of measure, he believes that the disarray, the desperation of the masses pushed the success of the fascist movements in the 1920s, but alone were not enough "to explain the actual genesis of such movements and above all their political structure."

Where instead we distance ourselves from any serious historical discussion — to delve into that kind of metaphysics which is psychoanalysis applied to social facts — is in the interpretations of Adorno, Reich, and others.

For Adorno and the group of collaborators of the collection, E. Frenkel Brunswick, D. Lewinsohn and RN Samford, authors of the collection *The Authoritarian Personality*, Fascism would be the expression of an "authoritarian syndrome" of sado-masochistic origin. Along the same lines is the research collected under the title *Tensions that cause wars*. But the wildest psychoanalytic fantasies are given free rein in the book *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* by Wilhelm Reich, a German Marxist "sexologist" who emigrated to the United States and died here in prison for crimes against morality.

The Reich - which already raised controversy among its German comrades for its sexual indoctrination courses for children - is the one that brought the reduction of Fascism to an "authoritarian disease" to its extremes; for him, fascist movements are born when in among the lower-middle-class masses, feelings of sexual frustration explode violently in the form of collective neurosis:

«... the destruction of man's vital function perpetrated for thousands of years had deeply rooted character neurosis. At this point the great catastrophe of the "psychic plague" broke out, that is, the disastrous prevalence of the irrational human character in the form of the victory of dictatorships".

The first objection that can be made to Adorno and Reich's theory is that it uses concepts such as "neurosis" which - if they can help to characterize the behavior of an individual - do not lend themselves to being simplistically adapted to entire masses, peoples and historical eras. But also the idea that the aggressive spirit



and authoritarian derives from forms of sexual frustration is completely arbitrary. As Evola noted in a classic polemic with an Italian popularizer of the Reich, De Marchi, it is not at all proven that the type of the great rulers or warriors such as Caesar, Napoleon, or Mussolini is that of the sexually repressed: quite the opposite. Indeed, classical antiquity very significantly associated Venus with Mars.

On the other hand, this "authoritarian syndrome" to which the origins of Fascism are supposed to be traced back is specific to a number of manifestations ranging from patriarchal and absolute monarchies, to hierarchies and religious orders, up to Stalin's Russia and Mao's China. Significantly, in subsequent editions of the *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus*, the Reich was forced to associate Stalinism with Fascism, while its accusation against the "thousands of years" that would have rooted the "character neurosis" involves all the structures of all civilizations of all eras.

Thus, the indictment against the "authoritarian syndrome" leads to a new myth of the noble savage, seen in the guise of the hippies or the "flower children". However, they do not seem to have solved their problems, at least judging by the use of drugs.

Jokes aside - since certain "interpretations" are really jokes - the interpretative canons based on psychological-psychoanalysis lead to much more vagueness than the theory of moral illness. All these explanations are affected by a preconceived attitude that seeks to exorcise Fascism rather than understand it. But, while the pages of a Croce, a Ritter, a Meinecke serve at least to understand the seriousness of the spiritual crisis from which fascism arose, the interpretations of a Reich and his companions are themselves the sin - volume of a moral crisis due to which it is no longer possible to understand that the ethics of struggle, discipline and sacrifice are not forms of neurosis. Far from it.

#### The formalist interpretation

Under the common denominator of "formalist interpretation" we can bring together both those scholars who have considered Fascism under the species of "totalitarianism" and the sociologists who analyze it as a "dictatorship of development" or a study of social development".



In these interpretations, Fascism is considered for the form of its regime or the abstract model of social behavior. This way of considering the problem is characteristic of those who see Fascism under the guise of mass dictatorship (and, in this light, it may appear similar to Bolshevism), or of sociologists, who — due to their particular training — they are led to reduce historical facts into abstract models of "social behavior".

The limit of formalist interpretations appears right from the start: they tend to compare similar political forms with each other, in certain external technical aspects, but at the risk of not seeing i political, cultural, moral processes that are the most intimate substance of historical life.

The first paradox of the formalist interpretation is that it must necessarily link fascist movements with the Russian and Chinese revolutions, not to mention all the revolutions of the Third World.

For Annah Arendt, author of the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, totalitarianism was a phenomenon linked to the disintegration of a certain society and the advent of disintegrated masses on the scene of history. Fascists and communists owed their strength to the fact that they appealed to new social strata, to crowds and individuals who had never participated in liberal values and culture, and who rushed towards action at the call of the crudest myths:

«... / European totalitarian movements, the fascist ones as well as the communist ones after 1930, recruited their members from this mass of manifestly indifferent people, whom all the other parties had left aside... This allowed the introduction of entirely new in propaganda and an attitude of indifference towards the arguments of opponents; in addition to placing themselves outside and against the party system as a whole, these movements found a following in sectors that had never been reached or "spoiled" by that system. Therefore they did not need to refute opposing opinions by preferring methods of terror and civil war to persuasion.»

The characteristic of totalitarian regimes is that they no longer possess the dimension of the individual but think in terms of the masses. This global mentality is responsible for mass mobilisation, mass propaganda and mass extermination such as were implemented in Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia and Mao's China. This mass mentality is only possible on a large scale; hence Arendt's doubts

in including fascist Italy among totalitarianisms, which would represent a compromise between a nationalist dictatorship and a true totalitarian regime.

Also for Karl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, in the volume *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, totalitarian regimes all present common characteristics which would be a common ideology, a single party, a police system, monopoly of propaganda, control of the economy, etc. Totalitarianism is defined there in its technique of power, as a type of regime, but its more complex contents are not clarified much. Once it has been established that the fascist and communist movements of our century have given rise to mass regimes, with certain techniques and certain systems, it remains however that the internal meaning of these regimes, the different perspectives, the different historical directives towards which they move, are not examined at all.

Equally formalistic as the classification by «totalitarianism», is the interpretation of Fascism in a technocratic key.

The first to follow this path was Burnham in *The Managerial Revolution*. It supported the thesis that Nazism, Communism, but also Roosevelt's New Deal represented, albeit with different ideologies, the phases of the same "technical revolution". "Actually

- Burnham wrote at the beginning of the last war - there is no formal identity, but there is a historical bond that unites Stalinism (communism), Nazism (fascism) and the New Deal movement. Against the background of different conditions of development and at different stages of development, these are all technical ideologies. They all have the same historical orientation: they move away from capitalist society and tend towards the society of technicians."

This first group of interpreters already leaves us with many perplexities. Thus, from Arendt's analysis it would appear that fascist Italy itself - which made totalitarianism an explicit profession - would not fall into the category because a true mass society was not created in Italy. But, if we take "massification" as the yardstick of totalitarianism, not even Nazism is entirely included in it. However suggestive some pages dedicated to the crisis of '29 or mass extermination may be, the fact remains that National Socialism reigned over a petty-bourgeois society - with popular trains and cruises for workers - not at all dehumanized and depersonalized. Nazi and fascist totalitarianism was defined above all as a monopoly of power, but fe-

Even Hitler's Germany did not know massification names such as Soviet and Chinese.

But even Burnham's thesis, if it can find support in the fact that fascisms were - in their time - technically avant-garde, lacks adequate historical verification. Of course, Fascism and Nazism had understanding for this new "world of technicians" and technology; they imposed themselves with their more modern technique of agitation and propaganda, outclassing their democratic rivals, they conceived a more rational, planned economy. But the memoirs of the most illustrious "technician" of the Third Reich - Albert Speer - demonstrate, without the possibility of doubt, that the role of managers in totalitarian states of the fascist type was purely subordinate, instrumental.

Indeed, the power of the "managers" will be a thousand times stronger in the discolored structure of a parliamentary government with mainly administrative tasks, than in the proximity of real political leaders, of a single party and of an ideology.

Even the most recent sociological and socioeconomic studies tend to create purely formal schemes. Like all schemes, they are useful for cataloging some characteristics, but they remain paintings defined in the frame rather than in the subject or colours.

Les cadres sociaux de la connaissance is precisely the title of Georges Gurvitch's book in which Fascism is seen as an expression of modern "technical-bureaucratic" societies. It would be accomplished in the "complete fusion of the totalitarian state with the bodies of economic planning and with the organization of the army by groups of technocrats" coming from the army, the bureaucracy, high finance or the old revolutionary guard. That the leader is - like Hitler or Mussolini - a victorious demagogue, or - as in the case of Franco - the figurehead of certain interests, or - like Nasser and Ben Bella - a "young colonel" in whom the anxiety of renewal of a people, this would be secondary. But, here, one could object that the "technical" aspect of the management of power does not exhaust the problem of nature, of the type of political will that is expressed through it.

For Seymour Martin Lipset, author of *The political Man*. The social Bases of Politics, there are three fundamental alignments: one on the left, made up of the poorest classes; one from the center, an expression of the middle classes; and one on the right, which brings together the interests of the landowners and the aristocracy. These deployments would be in good shape

moderate as in extremist form. Thus, the moderate left can appear — moderately — as socialism or — extremistically — as communism, while the extremist form of government of the middle classes would be Fascism and that of the rich classes would be authoritarian regimes of the type of Salazar's Portugal or Horthy's Hungary. Properly, while Italian Fascism and Phalangism would be centre-right movements (i.e. of the middle and rich bourgeoisie), Nazism would be an expression of the center of society, i.e. of the small and medium bourgeoisie. Only Peronism, at the limit of the properly fascist horizon, could be considered a left-wing fascist movement.

If this scheme by Lipset usefully distinguishes between the real fascist movements on the one hand, and the authoritarianism of a Salazar or the populism of a Peron on the other, it however does not help us to understand the necessary reason internal fascism. In fact, assuming that, socially, they place themselves "at the center" and represent "a movement of the middle class against capitalism and socialism, against big business and big unions", why should this position not express oneself in a bourgeois, indifferent and moderate way? Why did they - starting from an expression of normal petty-bourgeois discontent - give shape to revolutionary movements?

Precisely this "centre" (or "centre-right") framing of Fascism shows us how the sociological pattern, leaving out the ideal and political contents, ends up resembling those nets from whose meshes the biggest fish escape. . There is an entire literature on the bourgeois and petty bourgeois characteristics of fascist ideas and taste which has gradually analyzed aspects of politics, culture and customs. Paolo Monelli's book "Mussolini piccolo bourgeois" is well known, and Arendt believed she could define Himmler as "des ent-fesselteKleinburger", "the petty bourgeois unleashed". But after it was explained that Fascism had bourgeois origins, it has not yet been explained why what came out of it was something so dramatically unbourgeois. Hitler's tastes, his private life - like those of a Himmler, a Rosenberg, etc. — they are the most German bourgeois you can imagine, but, evidently, what came out of it was not as reassuring. It is therefore clear that certain concepts, while they help us frame the picture, do not define its contents for us. Another scholar who has taken care to frame so—

ciologically, Fascism is the Italian-Argentine Gino Germani who already in 1956, with the essay *Integración política de las masas y el totalitarismo* had lucidly described the differences between fascism and Peronism.

For Germani, mass movements arise from the "mobilization" of the popular masses which can be primary or secondary: "In the case of primary mobilization, the mobilized groups are non-participating groups with respect to modern society, and their marginality precedes their insertion into the modern structure. Secondary mobilization instead takes place on groups that are already participating in many aspects, and yet "displaced" or made marginal by factors such as inflation, loss of status, unemployment and so on.»

Peronism, which appealed to the popular masses until then excluded from Argentine political life, would have been a case of primary mobilization. Italian Fascism, which arose by grafting onto the crisis of the Italian popular masses following the Great War, which in turn was intertwined with the crisis of the declassed petty bourgeoisie, would be a case of mixed primary-secondary mobilization. Nazism

— arising from the economic crisis and the consequent disorientation of the German bourgeoisie — would represent the phenomenon of a primary mobilization. Germani's studies also contain many interesting elements to characterize the social bases of fascist movements, but it is clear that these elements alone would not be sufficient to characterize the phenomenon.

By AF Kenneth Organski — a Russian naturalized American

— Fascism would have its precise place in certain schemes of "economic development" which give the name to his book *The Stages of Political Development*.

The first would be the one through which the creation of national states is achieved with the centralization of power and an initial coordination of the economy. In the second, the masses should concretely integrate into this political unity; in it the new industrial economy, just outlined in the unification phase, must develop in the interest of the nation by imposing a regime of low consumption that allows capital to reinvest in means of production. This stage is that of early capitalism in Western countries, Stalinism, and Italian Fascism. In the third stage, industrialization has already been achieved: the problem is now that of defending the people from capital by guaranteeing them the enjoyment of the new internal wealth.



industrial. At this level TOrganski places Nazism, which could not be studied in the category of fascism because it developed in an already evolved and industrialized society: «The term fascism in this book will be used to refer to one of the varieties of politics deir industrialization: a system that arises only in stage two; which arises in social and economic conditions that are fundamentally similar in each case; which represents... a typical compromise between two power elites; and which contributes in recognizably similar ways to giving shape and pace to industrialisation. Seen in this light, Hitler was an authoritarian dictator but he was not a fascist, he was an aggressor and a madman, but he was not a fascist, because Germany was fully industrialized when Hitler came to power. In terms of the stages of political development... the Nazi system was not a political form of industrialization; but a variant of the politics of well-being.»

Finally, the last and fourth stage of development is that of the society of well-being and automation.

Like Lipset's and Germani's schemes, the typology of economic development described by Organski allows us to grasp some concrete aspects of Fascism. Faced with certain Marxist deformations of Fascism as an instrument of reaction against the progress of society and the emancipation of the proletariat, the description and definition of the fascist experience as a forced, but necessary, experience of the modernization of a society, opens up more serious perspectives for a historical discussion. Moreover, one of the finest minds of German communism, Arthur Rosenberg, already in 1934 thought that Fascism was essentially a typical phenomenon of backward capitalisms in need of modernization. Rosenberg believed that Fascism, while not solving the underlying problems of the Italian proletariat, had however developed the productive forces and «the state capitalist structure imparted to Italy with the so-called corporate system» had «ensure the domination of the country by efficient capitalist groups».

Generally, the interpretations of Fascism as a "form" of development characteristic of certain societies in certain historical moments helps to understand the "modern" and "progressive" character of the fascist experience in its own way, against the crude simplifications of those who would be reduced to pure reaction and brutal repression. But the tendency to equate the fascist experience with the Soviet one, Nazism with Stalinism, fascist movements with revolutionary dictatorships



ctionaries of Latin America and the Third World, makes us lose sight of the specific physiognomy of fascisms, the meaning they had in European culture and crisis.

De Felice writes: «If, in fact, we accept the inclination (in certain cases the claim) of social scientists to give their analyzes and explanations the value of complete interpretations of fascism, the balance must be negative. Therefore, in the context of historical reconstruction and historical judgement, these analyzes and explanations (even those less detached from a historicist vision) alone are unsatisfactory, as they are insufficient and partial, and end up being distorting, to bring them too, or, worse, to bring the discussion on Fascism back to the stage of schematic interpretations... With the aggravating circumstance, in some cases, of generalizing the problem too much, creating abstract models (to justify which must be introduced so many exceptions and variations that make them lose much of their value) and, above all, enormously expanding the geographical area and the chronological span of the fascist phenomenon (typical in this sense is the tendency of numerous social scientists talking about Fascism for a whole series of single-party Afro-Asian and Latin American countries); thereby losing the possibility of grasping one of the basic peculiarities of Fascism: its inseparable relationship with the crisis (moral, economic, social, political) of European society that emerged from the First World War".

In other words, the "formalist" interpretation describes the skeleton of fascism, but the organic tissues, which are those that give the specific essence to an organism, escape its analysis.

Here end the 82 pages typed and corrected by the author. Those that certainly followed, perhaps not yet typewritten, have no longer been found. But Adriano Romualdi's speech on Fascism does not stop. He continues with some working notes found in one of his notebooks, and with another series of studies, observations, bibliographical reports and reviews, which we consider useful to publish as a follow-up and completion of this work which, thus integrated, it is perhaps the most organic and challenging study made on Fascism by a right-wing writer. A historical analysis and bibliographical research among the most objective and culturally in-depth. To which, we think, all those who wish to study and learn about Fascism and the movements that derived from it will have to refer in the future.



## ARTICLES

(published in newspapers and magazines from 1967 to 1973)

### Notes for history

If the history of the world were nothing but an interminable, confused series of wars and trade, of collisions and mixings of peoples, of ebbs and flows of social well-being, it would be a dark and bloody affair unworthy of memory.

Each age could live as if segregated from those that preceded it, consider that part of the historical event that involves it and forget the rest. Then it would be in vain to seek values, that is, spiritual orientations within historical becoming. The great civilizations of being that arose in the most remote antiquity, the Egyptian, the Indian, the Assyrian-Babylonian, did not seek it, isolated in an ahistorical space and in a mythical dimension, regardless of time, dazzled by the light invisible of eternity. But if we recognize that human constructions have the possibility of being able to express, at times, something that transcends the moment and of manifesting in history that which is above history, a study of social and spiritual forms does not appear useless to us. within which the life of the generations that preceded us flowed.

The problem that arises is this: what actually remains of the history of the world?

In addition to the political, military and diplomatic events that mark the movement of mere quantities of power and wealth, is there anything valid destined to remain as a heritage for the men who come? Given that progress, considered as the automatic progress of the crowd of men in a single, continuous direction, is a stupid and crude fable, which the great artistic, religious and philosophical flourishes exploit and then run out of steam, what meaning can we give the complexes of events that we call historical ages?

This meaning lies in the spiritual values expressed by the political, technical, cultural constructions that we call states, peoples, civilisations, values that survive the organisms through which they manifested themselves and which remain as an intangible heritage of examples, of models, of living ethical forms capable of gathering and imprinting

create new human contents. The polis, the Roman empire, the fiefdom disappear, but Greekness as a school of total discipline of the body and spirit does not die, Romanism as the spirituality of virile and disciplined action, the Middle Ages as the image of a hierarchy built on the sacred and on honor. Thus the dominion of the Romans perishes but after thousands of years Italian Fascism can draw inspiration from the warlike firmness of the style of Rome and, if the Teutonic order degenerates and becomes extinct, the idea of an order that governs the state and with it it is permanently identified to the point of inspiring the theorists of the Germanic SS. Empires collapse and others arise, peoples are formed and others decompose. Aquileia burns under the fire of the Huns and Dresden is consumed in one night like a single torch under the phosphorus bombs of the Anglo-Americans. The grass grows on the Via Sacra like on the central streets of Berlin, once glittering with elegant life, now a squalid frontier of two worlds. But the immense catechism of history in the making highlights veins of true gold to then rediscover them and make them reappear again in the eyes of new men far in the future. These golden veins emerging at times from the darkness of time as in the darkness of the bowels of the mountains, sink their invisible roots into being. We will call these spiritual strands values. They are all that remains of a historical age, they represent its unmistakable ethical physiognomy and, crystallized, they come together to form its myth. Myth, not fable, not legend but an x-ray of civilization that reveals to us the internal structure that kept it standing, historical time studied under the guise of eternity, non-perishable unitary forms of a historical-political matter that has long been lost – alone.

What do we have left of the great eras of history? Their myth, that is, their model abstracted from social, ethnic and economic contingencies. In this sense, in a different sense from that intended by those who wrote it, it is Spengler's true basis according to which history is the study of symbolic forms. Not because, as this author stated, naturalistic and mechanical projection of an unconscious image passively suffered, but because the conscious action of a group of men aimed at imprinting economic, political, artistic structures of certain living values to the point of making these structures, social symbols of a certain reality of the spirit.

È this spiritual reality, the aspect of European Fascism considered in these pages, are the values expressed by it beyond the contingent political situations, the particularities of time and place.

Having clarified what is meant by values, it remains to be seen in what sense we speak of European Fascism as a spiritual movement.

Some - and we will see this to refute their objection - denying that we can speak of a supranational fascism, highlight that it is instead very difficult to extract from the programs of Italian fascism, German national socialism, the Romanian iron guard, a precise scientific ideology such as, for example, the Marxist one. We have nothing against conceding that Fascism does not è an ideology, i.e. something previously developed at the table, even if it would be easy to demonstrate, and we will demonstrate it, that the saying according to which "les révolu-tions are faites avant d'éclater" is also valid in the case of Fascism. Who reads certain of Sorel's invectives against intellectuals, the fragments of the will to power where Nietzsche outlines the new ruthless and enlightening caste of leaders, the apology of the hero in Carlyle and D'Annunzio, the lyric prophetic by Stephan George, the preaching of the Third Reich built on the *hen-scheffe und Dienst* formula cannot fail to agree that fascism, all fascism was already on paper when the fire of the great war began to painfully forge the human metal that was to shape it. However, these are scattered anticipations of the various leitmotifs that will resonate united in fascism and not a complete and orderly organic doctrine in all its parts. Therefore we will talk instead of an ideology rather of a fascist spiritual movement. The fascist spiritual movement differs from ideology, not only for the imprecision of the statements, but also for the fact that it pre-exists the formulations that may later be given to explain it. Spiritual movement means something like a state of mind, it is agitation and interior illumination that captures the men of a certain time and conveys their restlessness towards new forms of social expression like a mass of water collects in a river and struggles to dig a bed among the rocks. Another reason for differentiating between spiritual movement and ideology is that ideology has objectives already set previously and therefore presents a certain rigidity in adapting to reality. The easiest example is that of Bolshevism which, starting from a pre-established idea of the type of economy to be imposed, mechanically superimposes this ideal economy on the real economies of the countries where it has taken power at the risk of completely crushing them and compromising the entire production complex. On the contrary, a spiritual movement has a clear general plan of the ideal city and the human type.

not to be educated within this city, leaves a wide margin of imprecision regarding the means of implementation. This is why Italian Fascism was able to be from time to time republican, monarchist and then again republican, syndicalist, corporatist and finally socialist without ceasing to always be the same thing, because these contingent forms covered the same substance imprecise, but very clear in its imprecision and precisely called "fascist".

Only pedants and imbeciles could confuse Fascism with the labor charter or the eighteen points of Verona, with nationalism or national socialism. These are but dead remains from which the spirit immediately fled. Again: a spiritual movement, on the contrary, does not crush the national and religious particularities of individual states but manifests itself in structures compatible with them. Thus Italian fascism could recognize itself in the Roman myth, German fascism in the Nordic one, while the Phalangists were inspired by the reconquest and the Iron Guard evoked the great figures of national history fighting against the Tartars, Magyars and Turks. In the same way, if National Socialism in some of its expressions takes on neo-pagan attitudes, not without roots in the romantic and naturist world of Northern Europe, Fascism always maintained good relations with the Roman Church and it is correlatively known strongly Catholic character of Falangism and the Christian mysticism of Corneliu Codreanu. Thus, continuing the same reasoning, it can be observed that Hitler and Codreanu were passionately anti-Semitic because a serious Jewish problem existed in their countries. Mussolini did not turn to anti-Semitism until 1938 and mainly for foreign policy reasons.

The claim of Fascism as a spiritual movement must naturally not be understood as an aversion to the need for precise political and economic programs, but as a reminder of the essentiality of this revolution. An essentiality that uses the contingent formulas of internal, foreign and social politics, without exhausting itself in them.

If we lose sight of this essentiality, we slip into the worst confusion and can run into serious contradictions.

We will cite the case of that fraction of Italian neo-fascists who demand the rigid implementation of the program of the Italian Social Republic, without understanding that such a class program, if it could

If it makes sense in a fascist state and in a heroic climate of national discipline, applied in times of democracy, it would mean nothing other than a further debasement, a further proletarianization, a further regression of man in the face of the scoundrel .

Up to now we have talked about Fascism tout-court, embracing with this term all the national anti-democratic and anti-communist movements of Europe between the two wars. Some, increasingly rare, might contest the use made of this term.

Frankly speaking, the issue seems to us to be outdated; the world now commonly uses the terms fascist and fascism to designate and perhaps to insult all the men of the European revolution of the 1920s, without distinguishing whether they are Italian, German or Spanish. It is a generalized usage, which will pass into the vocabulary of history. Even if it were not justified (but we believe it is) we should still take note of the *fait accompli*. Future centuries will speak of Fascism as a general term of reference, just as they speak of Enlightenment or Romanticism, and with this designation, they will indicate both the state of Mussolini and that of Hitler, as well as the pages of Spengler, who those of Gentile, both the poetry of George and that of D'Annunzio. It is of no use to persist in saying that Fascism is a uniquely Italian experience. It is not clear what results one would like to obtain from this attitude. Perhaps separate one's responsibilities from those of some men of German national socialism responsible for the massacres of Jews carried out in Eastern Europe?

Apart from the general objection that an idea is not  
è never responsible for the excesses committed in his name (to say that Nazism is identified with the concentration camps would be the same as establishing identities between Christianity, the stakes, the inquisitions, or perhaps the campaign of extermination of the pagan Saxons by Charles Magno) it must be noted that the responsibilities for crimes are of an individual nature and concern only those who took part in them. Or perhaps the Italian nature of fascism is reiterated due to misunderstood national pride?

In this case we do not realize that by recognizing a European dimension to Fascism, not only is nothing taken away from Italy, but rather its merit of having given life to the strongest and most original political conception of our time is highlighted century.

If we look closely, Fascism appears to us, together with Romanism and Catholicism, to be the third great idea that has traveled around the world. Actually.



whatever one thinks of populism, in the light of the fascist experience his Mazzinian predictions of the third Italy, creator of a new universal conception, acquire a singularly prophetic value.

It therefore seems to us that the reasons for national pride that some latecomers still oppose to the recognition of the supranational dimension of Fascism do not exist.

But confirming that Fascism is a European idea entails other problems. In fact, it is necessary to specify what type of relationship, logical and chronological, exists between the various fascisms. And in particular, the priority position of Italian Fascism must be defined, the "first-born" one compared to other national movements. This priority is not found when developing the doctrinal reasons. It is only later that we will deal with the spiritual and ideological origins of Fascism with due calm.

Here it is enough for us to point out that as regards the cultural level, when nothing was moving yet in Italy, France and Germany were far ahead in the revolutionary criticism of democracy and mercantile and egalitarian values. The most direct and significant precursor, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose "Will to Power" rightly appeared to Ernst Jünger "like a control room cluttered with keys thrown away by those who did not have time to use them", is not a Italian but a German. From what has been said it appears that we cannot speak of an ideological priority of Italian Fascism, and strictly speaking we cannot even speak of a chronological priority; Hitler joined the Deutsche Arbeitspartei in September 1919, a few months after the foundation of the Fasci di Combattimento in Milan.

National Socialism arose and developed in the early days in the dark of the contemporary rise of fascism. Codreanu began his struggle in the Romanian universities - the struggle that was to lead him to the establishment of the Green Shirts - in 1919 without yet knowing about Mussolini and the Black Shirts. In what exactly does the privileged position of Italian fascism lie? In the example. And example, in politics, is everything. It matters little that a series of ideas are already living on paper when no one has yet shown how to implement them.

In 1919 Europe was already potentially fascist. The veterans of the trenches who had returned or were returning, those who had lived for long years in the outposts struck by fire and death, could not return to the squalid affair of the give and take of a

mercantilist society. The generation that returned from the front had built a second existence built on concepts of command and obedience, honor and responsibility, discipline and courage.

These new values pressed against the old structures of liberal democracy to enter the State, but found the doors barred.

When Mussolini's Blackshirts marched through the streets of Rome on 28 October 1922, veterans from all over Europe knew that the road had been opened, and that their values had become the law of life. Mussolini was the first to express and organize in politically effective terms the unrest that was rising from all over Europe like a tide. He, with the certainty of intuition that in art is called genius, was able to give a precise formulation to a state of mind felt by many. Mussolini was the first to show the young people of Europe that peace did not condemn yesterday's soldiers to live on the margins of the returned bourgeois normality as restless and discredited *déracinés*, but rather that the height of the times required that the experience of the war became the political heritage of the new state and the values developed in the trenches replaced the evaluations developed up until then in the banks, cafés and parliaments.

It was thanks to the experience of Italian fascism that the veterans understood that they (those values) could still win under fire and definitively take the place of the pacifist, egalitarian and progressive myths in the organization of the new civilization.

«Italy docet»: this was the significant title of an article by Moeller van den Bruck which appeared in the *Gewissen* magazine in which he commented on the march on Rome. Fascism was precisely the great political lesson that Italy was able to give to the new and old continent in one of the most tragic moments in its history. Another significant objection could be raised: that according to which it would be impossible to discuss Fascism without considering the personality of the leaders who created and embodied the European fascist movements in their persons.

According to it, the role played, for example, by Mussolini in Italy and by Hitler in Germany in their respective national revolutions would be so overwhelmingly predominant as to obscure any abstract programmatic or ideal value contained in Fascism and Nazism, to the point that it would be possible speak simply of Mus-Solinism or Hitlerism.

The importance of this objection cannot be denied: a fascism without Mussolini and a Nazism without Hitler would be unimaginable. In Italy and Germany the confusion between the idea itself and the leader who carried it forward was so close that the fallen legionnaire in sight of the Nile on the burning sands of El-Alamein, or the SS killed in the fjord of Narvik or in the frozen plains of the Caucasus died with the name of the Duce or the Führer in their mouths. The objection is strengthened if we return to what we wrote a little while ago; that is, Fascism is not a defined scientific ideology but a spiritual moment, that is, something mobile and elusive.

In reality, the leader-moment relationship takes on great importance in the context of fascism and deserves to be adequately treated. First of all, it must be said that it is not easy to define. In fact, if on the one hand the leader is the creator of the Movement, on the other the ideas and needs of the moment have already been in the air for some time and one might think that they could end up finding another means of expression. This is clearly evident in Germany where Hitler's party was, in the first post-war period, a group among groups and where that complex of social and spiritual needs that they call German fascism could also have been organized by other circles politicians: Erhardt's Frankish Corps, who at the time of the Kapp putsch marched on Berlin with the swastika on their helmet; the Steel Helmet League, the strongest nationalist organization of ex-combatants; the national revolutionary sects around which the two Jünger brothers gravitated. And as regards Italy, it is enough to think of D'Annunzio's coup in Fiume to see how the reasons for the nascent fascism were all present even outside the narrow political sphere dominated by the personality of Mussolini.

## The roots of fascism

The world in which we live, despite all its internal divisions, the opposing parties, the opposing blocks of powers presents itself to us as ideologically unitary.

Listen to a speech by the President of the Finite States or one by a Soviet leader, read a communist or a liberal newspaper, study the political mentality of the English prime minister or that of the leader of Ghana and you will see how, through different formulations and a different language expresses the same content, the same crude myths of progress, of well-being, of greater happiness, of greater numbers. One will want to achieve progress with capitalism, the other with communism, this by advancing freedom, that equality but the final goal, the goal towards which America and Russia, democracy and Bolshevism are hurrying is invariable and identical : a universe organized in the name of science, smoothed out by equality, exorcised by psychoanalytic sorceries against any offensive return. In this secular and egalitarian universe the type of ascetic, of saint is little more than a "deranged", the warrior a "criminal" and the true leader of men a "fascist". Beyond all the formal divergences, the political clashes, the conflicts of interest, the representative men of the East and the West agree on the fundamental points and, even before that, on the spirit of what can well be called the «internal doctrine» of the contemporary world. This internal doctrine is not written or codified anywhere but informs every word and every political measure and can be more or less identified with the Enlightenment ideology, with the philosophical journalism of Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alambert.

The Soviet constitution and the Atlantic Charter are unimaginable without the rights of man and citizen proclaimed by the French constitution of '89, the dictatorship of the proletariat descends directly from Rousseau's "general will", the process of Nuremberg has no legal meaning outside of the natural law ravings of the 18th century. This filiation is so evident that it is not worth illustrating it with other examples. The dominance of the ideology of the Third Estate is today almost undisputed. The argument between democrats and communists is only about legitimacy, which each claims for

itself, to truly represent the progress of mankind, true freedom, true equality and true brotherhood. This contrast, which opposing material interests magnify, must not make us forget the substantial affinity between the two myths, the liberal-capitalist one and the collectivist-Bolshevik one. They represent a unity and this unity imprints the image of the world of contemporaries who are beginning to be incapable of thinking in terms other than those of a populist egalitarianism, of a bourgeois rationalism, of a secular and humanitarian hedonism. Even those who, due to the different foundations of their vision of the world, should rise up violently against modern ideas no longer dare to speak their own language and adapt their arguments to the dominant slogans as best they can. It is enough to give the example of the Catholic Church, whose doctrine is based on transcendent values, on asceticism, on sacrifice and which should constitute the perfect antithesis to the world of progressive materialism, but which, nevertheless, is careful not to take a position faced with a world that represents the total denial of everything it teaches. Indeed, its official representatives almost try to hide the metaphysical nature of their message by smuggling it as a pious addition to the philistine morality of social utility and the good of humanity.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the ideology of the Third Estate has so saturated the contemporary mentality with itself that it is difficult, even for very important and intellectually strong groups, to find their own language, a way of expressing themselves independent. We find ourselves faced with a compact unity of expression that goes from the most tepid liberal to the most ardent communist, an expressive totality that shows no cracks, a common heritage of taboos that are recited one after the other, all in one breath. We say freedom, equality, well-being, peace, progress with the same automaticity with which we once said god, king, honor, loyalty, fidelity.

If we now turn our gaze away from the bourgeois world and turn to consider an era not far away in time, the era of Fascism between 1920 and 1945, we immediately have the impression of finding ourselves faced with a different world, which it has other myths and a different internal gravitation. Mussolini driving his trimotor, Hitler consecrated the pennants by touching them with the blood flag, Codreanu praying to the Archangel Michael, are figures that belong to a different experience. They move in an ideal space different from

that in which contemporary society lives, start from other premises and move towards other points of reference. The "fascist style", as found in Italy, Germany, Romania, etc. in the era between the two wars, it presents its own unity of tone and accents which immediately strikes us for its heterogeneity.

If we want to find the reason for this difference we must note an undeniable and important fact: the non-belonging of fascism to bourgeois ideology, its extraneousness to democratic, pacifist and humanitarian themes. The dialectic of the philosophes, the omnipresent doctrine of eighteenth-century progressivism, has no hold on the world of fascism which has its own different internal orientation. Bourgeois and fascist ideology each have a different language and a different rhetoric.

Of course, such a very complex global evaluation of political and spiritual phenomena may seem approximate. The distinction between ideas that refer to the principles of the French Revolution and ideas that reject them is very schematic, especially when you examine things in detail. First of all, we would see notable differences between the various fascisms, between Catholic Falangism and pagan National Socialism, between the Italian fascism of the twentieth century, so-called right-wing, and that of the Social Republic, so-called left-wing. We would also see how many genuinely revolutionary and Jacobin motifs are present in fascism, first of all the Jacobin pathos of the "nation", then infinite pro-socialist and liberal nostalgias. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are great formal affinities between the totalitarian communist state and the fascist one, the same ones that cause them to be condemned collectively as "dictatorships" by right-thinking people, incapable of understanding that dictatorship is only an instrument for radically transforming a society and that what really matters is not the dictatorship itself but the type of transformation you have in mind.

But, in order to always have an eye on the essential and to be clear about the heterogeneity of fascism compared to the entire bourgeois ideology, it is not necessary to focus so much on the political structures, which often present formal similarities with those of the plebeian and revolutionary world, in the midst of which, after all, fascism arose and developed. Rather, we need to grasp the meaning and direction of the entire development process. We need to see if fascism tends towards the ultimate goal of the pacifist, egalitarian, progressive ideology co-



liberalism and socialism, democracy and Bolshevism tend towards it or whether it has its own autonomy of march and a different final perspective.

In mathematics we encounter a certain type of quantities, called vectorial, whose characteristic is that of not exhausting their distinctive signs in weight, quantity, dislocation, but also possessing a direction and also differentiating themselves. Above all because of the direction in which they tend. By analogy it can be said that fascism, if it has many formal characteristics in common with Bolshevik totalitarianism and nineteenth-century liberal patriotism, with the various movements arising from the ideology of the Third Estate, is also distinct in terms of vectoriality, for the divergent direction.

The final goal of these movements is, whether they know it or not, the same type of society, leveled by Americanism or Bolshevism, derailed by atheistic science or proletarian barbarism. Their common and discordant labor tends to create a world that frighteningly risks resembling the brave new world of Huxley's novel of the same name. But, in the midst of the composite mechanism of bourgeois ideology, working towards the same form of "progress", at the beginning of the new century, a foreign body suddenly lands and risks stopping the mechanism. This foreign body is fascism, considered as a spiritual and intellectual reaction that will be able to form its own political instrument. It exalts the elites against the masses, the State against society, claims the formative values of war, searches for the mythical dimension of history, rediscovers the prestige of what is sacred, presents an agonistic and pessimistic vision of life which is of religious and heroic conceptions.

The world of fascism, linked in its forms to certain aspects of bourgeois ideology, is in its profound essence irreducible to the spirit of progressive mythology. Considered from this aspect it may even seem to us to be the embryo of a different type of civilization.

From what has already been said, it should be clear that fascism is not just an Italian phenomenon but a European one. Strictly speaking, this clarification would not be necessary since this supranational dimension of fascism is generally recognized. We speak of "fascism" as we speak of "romanticism" or "enlightenment" and it is obvious that, despite many differences. Mussolini and Hitler, Codreanu and José Antonio were "fascists" exactly like Novalis and Manzoni,



Hugo and Shelley were all "romantics".

But we must always take into account the limited and delayed spirits, closed in holographic and patriotic conceptions of fascism (and in Germany of Nazism), devoid of understanding of its European revolutionary meaning. In Italy some are dominated by a sort of nationalistic jealousy towards fascism, almost as if recognizing its supranational significance diminished it instead of increasing its importance. Others are quick to deny the affinity between Italian fascism and German national socialism due to the massacres of Jews carried out in Eastern Europe by some Nazi organizations. Here too we are faced with a misunderstanding: the significance of Nazism, that is, German fascism, is no more diminished by the massacres of Jews than the ideas of the French Revolution are devalued by the Terror and Christianity by the Inquisition, from the massacres of the conquistadors, from the extermination of the pagan Saxons carried out by Charlemagne.

An overall analysis of fascism, considered as the central current of the European spiritual revolution in the first half of the 20th century, must be conducted beyond any mental, sentimental or national preclusion.

However, if the idea of a European fascism is acceptable, the conception of "universal" fascism is highly questionable. Fascism presupposes a romanticism, a mystique of tradition that gives rise to a national myth with a revolutionary and conservative function. These conditions exist only in Europe where the idea of nation is not a recently created word but a thousand-year-old historical reality which for more than a hundred years has been at the center of every interpretation of history and culture. The Japanese, who in 1941 appeared "fascist" in the eyes of the terrified good democrats, did not have, nor had they needed, fascism because their tradition was still naturally alive and should not be artificially evoked with a traditionalist myth. They didn't even need a new elite born from the national idea because their feudal hierarchies had managed to adapt to the country's industrialization process, making Japan a living synthesis of modernity and chivalric spirit.

Fascism presupposes an ancient political and cultural structure threatened by industrial and democratic leveling which, to escape this slow disanimation, attempts to draw new life from the mythical evocation of blood, soil, strength. The only non-European phenomenon which, with a bit of good will, could be defined as «fa-

schist" is that of Nasser's Egypt where an attempt was actually made to graft a national mystique of ancient Arab culture onto a revolutionary political discipline. However, it is a secondary phenomenon which presents somewhat faded characteristics. However, it seems to us that General Peron's Argentine movement cannot be defined as "fascist". South America has none of those historical and cultural characteristics that presuppose fascism.

Peronist justicialism was only a South American dictatorship that was fascinated by fascist achievements and which practiced a policy of friendship towards the refugees of defeated Europe. All this is still not enough to define Peron's Argentina as "fascist".

Fidel Castro is less of a "fascist" than ever, despite the doubts of Maurice Bardèche, who claims to see traces of Mussolini's energy and activism in him. The Cuban dictator, with his unkempt beard and two watches on his wrist, is just a picturesque figure of a chicken stealer and partisan. Talking about fascism in relation to recent black states is complete nonsense. History is missing here, modernity and industrialization are missing. Therefore, no romantic myth of the land and the nation, no problem of the decadence of traditional structures and, consequently, no fascism. Bardèche's assertion that even the regime of Ham-mani Diori in Niger or that of Ciombe in Katanga can be traced back to the fascist "nebula" is untenable.

Compared to the current stage of the modern world, three typical situations could be distinguished. The first is that of countries that find themselves in a rudimentary stage of associated life, which crudely try to conquer a level of modernity from which the great mass of inhabitants is far away. This is the case of Russia, with the exception of the large centres, of China, India and the South American countries. At this level a more or less national socialism is established which seeks to mobilize all the productive forces to bring the country to a higher stage of development. This stage of superior industrial development introduces them to the second typical situation, that of the United States and Europe where modernity has fully asserted itself, bringing with it an easier, more comfortable, more individualized life. Here, however, the conditions arise that can lead to the third typical situation: fascism. In fact, civilization generates weakness, indiscipline, physical and spiritual decadence. The need to rediscover arises

a contact with the origins, to defend those spiritual, heroic, religious values linked to social and political structures that civilization crumbles. We need an antidote against the poison of decadence. Thus was born fascism which is a typical European phenomenon, characteristic of that continent which has the deepest spiritual traditions and, at the same time, a high degree of modernity.

Fascism is precisely in this synthesis of the old and the new, in this risky attempt to perpetuate the spirit, the myth, the symbols of a primordial tradition in an armor of glass and steel. The concrete and geometric splendor of the 20th century used to re-create an illusion of linear Roman classicism; the loudspeakers and reflectors, placed at the service of Nibelungic and Wagnerian reconstructions; the African consular roads resonant with the roar of legionary trucks and the twilight of the gods in the concrete bunker in a petrol fire: all this dared to conceive fascism, and that's no small thing.

From this it follows that there cannot be fascism at the level of primitive peoples by race or civilization. Unless by "fascism" we mean any form of energetic and totalitarian national discipline, but in this case Bolshevik Russia and Mao's China should also be considered "fascist". The adjective "fascist" should instead be applied to the movements that arose in those countries where certain historical and cultural characteristics exist, that is, to the European national movements of the 20th century. Otherwise we risk making an abstract and poetic use of this term, exactly as any form of severe and soldierly discipline is called "Spartan".

This clarification of the limits and extension of the fascist phenomenon is not intended to be an academic dissertation on the legitimacy of the use of certain terms, but a general survey intended to point out to us the direction in which we could see the dawn of a new rise. I want fascism. All the elements collected converge in indicating Europe as the natural homeland of fascism. It reawakened Europe to the awareness of its decadence, it armed it with fanaticism against the ideas and instincts of dissolution, it held it in a rigid block of steel to break the fatal grip of Russian and American imperialism. Perhaps one day we will see the fiery signals emerge on the horizon of history announcing the rise of a Nation-Europe and a fascism of the European nation.

Fifty years after the foundation of the combat fascists, it will not be useless to think back to that period between the two wars

saw the rise of fascist movements. It is a period in which Italy appears for the last time capable of taking an initiative capable of arousing the attention and imitation of Europe.

In 1919 Italy found itself facing the situation created by the war. Four years of total mobilization had pushed the masses onto the political scene, definitively overwhelming the bourgeois and liberal system. Now the situation was worsening, leaning dangerously towards Bolshevism in a climate of rebellion and violence. A man, Mussolini, understood that it was necessary to oppose violence to violence while simultaneously creating a truly just order in which the masses could find a justification for life. Against the communist danger he called together the war veterans, reviving together with their flags the virtues of decision and discipline. The spirit of the front, this heroic ethos explained to the masses, this practice of obedience capable of reconstructing a hierarchy, became the foundation of the fascist concept and of a new anti-bourgeois and anti-proletarian state.

In 1922 the fascist squads marched on Rome and Mussolini took power. In a few years, Mussolini's state proved to be the most effective formula for solving the problems of post-war Europe. Interest in the originality of the fascist state and admiration for the personality of its leader grew beyond borders. The tension of the nation in a successful effort, the march of a people towards new destinies, the permanent mobilization of all youthful energies veiled fascist Italy with a light hovering above the borders like the fiery glare of a new era.

On the tenth anniversary of the fascist revolution, Mussolini had predicted that one day Europe would be "fascist or fascistized". Slowly that prophecy was taking shape. In France, where national activism had already been channeled into the Action Française before the war, fascist movements multiplied. Pierre Taittinger's "Jeunesse patriotique", Colonel La Roque's "Crosses of Fire", Bucard's "Francism", Doriot's French People's Party attempted to repeat the Italian experience on French soil.

The Third Republic creaked under the weight of scandals and government crises and right-wing forces organized themselves into real paramilitary formations, like the Cagoule, which was said to have an entire underground network in the sewers of Paris. On February 6, 1934, while the government was dying after yet another scandal

Lo, a crowd of demonstrators marched on Palazzo Borbone shouting "Down with parliament!". The police opened fire and French fascism had its first deaths. In the following years, fascist tendencies established themselves with ever greater solidity supported by newspapers of audacious and corrosive intelligence.

In Spain José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the dictator's son, had founded the Falange Española which had merged with the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (JONS), a national socialist movement founded by Onesimo Redondo, already a reader of Spanish at the University of Mannheim. The novelty of its approaches, the strong personality of José Antonio, the courage of his youth, made the Falange the place of crystallization of those forces that were preparing to react to the terrorism of the left.

In Romania a magnificent leader, Corneliu Codreanu, gathered university youth into the Legion of the Archangel Michael, which would later become the Iron Guard. Reacting with weapons to the persecutions of a retrogressive police, the Iron Guard fought against the corruption of Romanian society for which the main culprits were the 800,000 Jews present in the country.

Also in the Danube area, Croatian nationalists gathered in the Ustaša movement, aided and protected by fascist Italy. Persecuted and exiled, they waged an all-out struggle against the Yugoslav state which culminated in the killing of King Alexander in Marseille. Even the republic of Prague was creaking in its unsteady unity and the Slovak separatists were organizing themselves under Monsignor Hlin-ka and Monsignor Tiso to defend the national and Catholic physiognomy of Slovakia from the radical pro-Bolshevik policy of the central government. Hungary, after the Jewish and communist terror established by Bela Kuhn and his Jewish friends, had given itself a conservative government headed by Admiral Horthy. But, here too, as a reaction to the somewhat backward conservatism of the regent, more distinctly fascist tendencies were taking shape which would materialize in the Hungarian Movement, or the Arrow Cross, directed by Major Szalasij.

At the other end of Europe, in capitalist and socialist Belgium, a very young orator, Leon Dégrelle, gathered enormous masses around him by denouncing the corruption of the parliamentary regime. In 1936 Rexism entered parliament, obtaining the same number of seats as the liberal party while

an alliance with the Flemish leagues increased its strength. Even in bourgeois Holland a National Socialist movement founded by Adrian Mussert garnered 10 percent of the votes and even in England fascism made its appearance under the leadership of a man of the prestige of Sir Mosley, former minister with the Conservatives and the Laborists. A man of great personal value was also the head of the Norwegian Nasjonal Samlingg Vidkun Quisling, disciple and collaborator of Nansen, former minister of war, denounced the decadence of the party system and announced a new national and authoritarian state.

But the strongest expression of the new fascist consciousness that was conquering Europe was German National Socialism. In 1919, when Mussolini founded the Fasci di Combattimento, a handful of veterans gathered in Munich around Adolf Hitler. Their program was that of the first fascists: re-establish order, suppress the class struggle, oppose communist violence with violence. Alongside these assumptions was the decision to wrest control of German life from the Jews and the desire to eradicate degenerate culture and art germinating like flowers of decay on the rubble of defeat. The veterans of the Great War had converged in the ranks of Hitler's party, the Baltic Freikorps who had continued to fight after the armistice, the volunteers who had repressed the communist revolution in the bud. Like the brave men from Fiume, the men of the Frankish Corps represented the fighting elite and the spearhead of anti-communism.

In November 1923, while the French occupied the Ruhr and the communists rose up in Saxony, Hitler proclaimed the national revolution in Munich. But the next day, November 9, the Nazi columns found themselves facing police fire and the putsch ended in blood. Locked up in Landsberg prison, Hitler dictated the fundamental text of the movement to his faithful Hess. My battle. Immediately after his release, the fight began again. While Hitler was relaunching the party throughout the Reich, a young orator with a small body but an indomitable soul, Joseph Goebbels, challenged the communists in red Berlin. The struggle entered its decisive phase and the 1930 elections saw the Nazis go from 12 to 107 seats. At the same time, communist votes increased dramatically: the final phase of the battle for power began.

1932 had been the decisive year. 1 Nazis, animated by a fever



revolutionary, explained a continuous activity in all sectors of public life. The communists fought over their land bloodily with strikes and workers' violence. Berlin lived its civil war day by day and every evening the two warring sides collected their dead and wounded.

With the force of a magnet, which irresistibly attracts every metal fragment, Nazism was exerting a fatal influence on all classes of the German nation: the bourgeoisie, reawakened to the claim of patriotic values; the proletariat, confident in social reforms; the aristocracy, sensitive to the veneration shown by Hitler for the Prussian tradition. On 30 January 1933 Hindenburg delegated the task of forming the new government to Hitler. In the night, lit up like day by the fire of thousands of torches, a procession of marching columns paraded continuously under the Brand gate.

deburgo singing                      Horstwesselied.

With the advent of the National Socialist regime in Germany, fascism took on a decidedly European scope. The effects of Mussolini's creation went beyond the limits of Italy in a historical context of revolutionary significance for the entire continent.



Benito Mussolini with fascist leaders

## Fascism and the bourgeois world

"I call the healthy classical and the sick romantic": these severe words of Goethe do not need, in their glacial clarity, any comment. But alongside them, for integrative purposes, we could recall that profound and nocturnal sentence of the romantic No-valis according to which every disease is nothing other than the limited and painful striving of a limited organism towards a broader condition of equilibrium. Are not the same destructive diseases, the same death, perhaps radical crises that denounce the narrow confines of individuality? The more a social order is insufficient, limited, closed to the spiritual reality of man and the totality of being, the more acutely it becomes ill and, worn out by a liberating fever, it aspires to dissolve. When a society dries up due to a growing process of "humanization", the elementary forces of the spirit, both the positive, fiery, diurnal ones and the dark, instinctive, telluric ones, turn jointly against it. The spiritual energies that a society refuses to organize press threateningly on its uncertain frontiers to the point of erasing them. We Europeans of the second half of the 20th century are witnesses of the crisis of Western civilization. Behind a glittering showcase of economic well-being we feel the emptiness growing. We talk about progress but darkly predict that it risks resulting in mechanical brutalization. Science is exalted only to the extent that its practical applications and hypotheses multiply, resulting in the feared "vertical invasion of the barbarians" which causes plebeian vulgarity to rise to the surface of life and annihilates qualitative values. Finally, democracy is loudly praised, but the most attentive observers see the problematic nature of a system that allows everyone and everything to be discussed and in which, according to an expression by Ernst Jünger "jeder jemanden eine Frage stellen darf".

Time of crisis, time of transition in which the strong doubt themselves and no longer dare to command while the weak drift following their basest instincts and fragile utopias. Our era lives in the certainty of being the most "rational" of all historical eras but not

è It is difficult to realize that, to the extent that the "rationalization" of social and individual existence grows, irrational forces reawaken.

not everywhere. Phenomena such as that of "rebel without a cause", which arise with greater violence, precisely in the "most advanced" countries, the informal squalor of modern art, which reflects the feeling of a world, the hysterical cult of gold, of alcohol, of meaning, of primitivizing music leave no doubt about the degree of "rationality" of the modern world.

Behind a glassy screen of frigid rationalism an anarchic, dark, hysterical substance urges with ever-increasing power. But, with the characteristic obstinacy of organisms marked by death, the contemporary world, the more uncertain and precarious it becomes, the more it entrenches itself in defense of its scientific, materialistic, democratic myths. It calls that which does not understand irrational, that which does not corrupt anti-historical, and any attempt to return to political normality as fascist. It presents itself as the only possible world, the only human, rational order. It tries to convince us of its normality and disqualifies with convenient labels those spiritual elements that cannot be reduced to this "normality". The general meaning of today's "movement of ideas" through books, newspapers, magazines, radio and television is simply this: the intrinsically subversive Third Estate worldview attempts to establish itself as the true order.

But against this claim, we must begin to understand that the political system of the economicus, the atheist, rationalist, democratic, progressive world as it was configured in the publicity of the 18th century, as it established itself in Europe and outside Europe with liberalism, capitalism, socialism and communism it is a grotesque caricature of the true order. To preserve itself, it intentionally closes its horizons, banishes the sacred and the heroic outside its protective belt, condemns as "irrationalistic" any political conception that refuses to degrade the State to an instrument for the pursuit of well-being. Its internal logic is supported only by means of continuous deformations of spiritual perspectives. These deformations reduce the meaning of history to a march towards the total confusion of the masses in a climate of socialist or capitalist economic euphoria. The world of the Third Estate has chosen as its model the world of the last man of Nietzschean memory:

"Then the earth will have become small and the last man who makes everything smaller will jump on it. His race is indestructible, like that of the flea; the last man lives longer than the others."

«"We invented happiness" say the last men, and wink. They have abandoned the areas where life was harsh: they need warmth. You still love your neighbor and you rub against each other: you need warmth."

«We still work, because working is fun. But care is taken not to let the fun get too tiring."

«No longer the question of becoming rich or poor: both things are too tiring. Who still wants to lead? And who to obey? Both are too tiring. No shepherd and only one flock! Everyone wants the same thing. All equal. Anyone who thinks otherwise goes to the mental hospital."

Further on we will recall in its general lines the process that allowed us to achieve all this. Here it is enough for us to state clearly and categorically that the society in which we live cannot be considered normal. Money has driven out blood and honor. The hierarchy of money has driven out that of blood and honour, the bourgeois class has replaced a faltering clergy and nobility, but the need for true order, for an authentic hierarchy of spiritual values cannot die. To the extent that the world of the Third Estate tightened its political and ideological meshes around Western civilization, a vast restlessness took shape within it. This restlessness is what we call romanticism. At the dawn of the 19th century, in the Germany of the Holy Empire where the pious vestiges of the feudal past still remained, a group of writers felt, confusingly, a desire for medieval restoration against a world threatened by mercantilism and egalitarianism. Some of them entered the political field and collaborated closely in the creation of the Holy Alliance.

Once the prospect of a restoration had fallen, romanticism grew into a tumultuous and disorderly revolt against the «bêtise bourgeoise». In his fury of revenge against a fallen world, he forgot his Right-wing origins and dreamed of revolts of all kinds. He was shipwrecked in alcohol, in dreams, in death. But, in 1914, the flames of the Great War, which Nietzsche had prophetically seen rise from afar, burned the shell of bourgeois and positivist Europe. From these flames came the political form of romanticism, what the world calls Fascism, «le fascisme immense et rouge» that fascinated Brazil with its tides of flags, torches, songs. Goebbels called it "steel romanticism". Fascism, due to the sudden viol-

line with which he imposed himself on the world scene, for the violent, passionate and revolutionary denial of everything that the world called good and holy, has been compared to the onset of a pathological phenomenon, to the manifestation of an illness. With zealous and truffle-like uniformity, the doctors called to the bedside of the shocked European civilization accuse Fascism of having caused its collapse. For their part, the fascists have always made a point of presenting themselves as the bearers of new health and new youth.

There is reason on both sides. Fascism undoubtedly presented characteristics \_\_ romantic, irrational, pathological. But the organism within which atheistic and bourgeois civilization manifested itself could certainly not claim to represent a healthy body. The democratic hatred against Fascism consists eminently in the fact that through the latter it becomes aware of its political and spiritual inconsistency. The crisis against which Fascism rises with its violent, dazzling outburst is not imaginary. It is the same crisis denounced by the European culture of the time: by Nietzsche, by George, by Spengler, by Unamuno, by Ortega, by Huizinga, by Massis. The delirious exaltation of the masses, the sharp and intoxicating slogans, the roar of the armies marching to bring the New Order to Europe have a feverish and hallucinatory character. But in them the aspiration for another balance, for authentic normality, for true health is expressed.

Nietzsche wrote at the end of the 19th century: «Why, how come  
è Is the advent of nihilism necessary? Because the same values that we have had up to now find their ultimate consequence in nihilism, because nihilism is the logical conclusion of our great values and ideals, because we must experience nihilism to be able to understand what the truth really was. importance of these values". Fascism represented the coherent and passionate denial of the egalitarian, economic, pacifist pseudo-values of the bourgeois world. And its leaders who knew how to live the experience of nihilism in the denial of these pseudo-values, show us, beyond the flames of the extreme catastrophe, the way to search for authentic values.

È It is typical of human sight to see the signs of an evil only when it has reached full maturity. In the same way, those who navigate a river do not notice the increasing speed of the water until they are sucked into the deadly whirlpools of the waterfall. The crises that smolder within the structures of a civilization, the irreparable that matures in

certain historical situations appear visible only when peoples and nations are caught in the death grip that crushes and annihilates them.

Behind the collapse of Europe as a historical-political entity is a long history of crises whose traces allow us to go back at least a century and a half. The revolution of '89 had opened the crisis of the elites. From the premise justified in itself, from the political disempowerment of the French nobility, it had drawn the extreme consequence of the uselessness of every aristocracy. In the name of an imprecise freedom, of an unachievable equality and a plebeian "brotherhood" it had inaugurated a new mystique of the masses and vulgarity.

During the 19th century, the ideas of revolution had spread throughout Europe. But, having destroyed the vestiges of aristocratic power, liberalism had not managed to improvise any other political class than a clique of parliamentarians and businessmen. The consequences had been less serious in countries such as England and Germany where an aristocracy with great political traditions still retained many positions of power, giving the government of the state a character of severity and responsibility. Even in other nations the forces of law and order marked the army, the church and the administrations with their solidity. But no one could delude themselves about the final outcome of the "liberal" direction if it reached its final conclusions.

Meanwhile, the mass of the people, sucked in by the millions into increasingly larger cities, badly tolerated the yoke of the new masters who only wanted to exploit them to enrich themselves and were incapable of earning the respect that the aristocratic class, with its generosity and superiority staff, he had owned at the time. At the very moment in which Europe was celebrating its maximum colonial and commercial expansion, fearful seeds of decay were already rising within it.

European civilization was sick. Sick in the unstable and improvised elites, sick in the dejected and rebellious masses, sick in the shapeless and ugly cities, sick in the situations, in the ideas, in the bodies and in the souls.

Beyond easy slogans, beyond a propagandistic mythology that stirred up the concepts of democracy and progress, the most lucid European minds had not hesitated to denounce the ambiguities and dangers inherent in the "evolution of the times". Even at the time of the French Revolution the great Burke warned his compatriots that "no great country could by any means long subsist without a

aristocratic body of one kind or another." On the continent a De Maistre and a Bonald, having escaped the clutches of the Terror, branded the ideas and methods of the revolution, which, in the words of a master of the European Right «is called French because from it come all the evils of France and it is also called great for the vastness of the evils it has caused." The German romantics considered with interest the popular mobilization brought about by the revolution but only as an anticipation of a new monarchical and authoritarian state enlivened by national passion. Novalis wrote that «the State should be characterized as citizen. Badges and uniforms could not be introduced compulsorily", and he added that "as long as there are cowards and braves, an aristocratic inequality will be necessary".

Once the barrier created by the Holy Alliance had been overcome, liberalism had established itself everywhere with its commercial and mercantile spirit, the one Carlyle distrusted when he warned the English that «the fact that trafficking is growing in the city of Manchester does not mean necessarily that the city of Manchester becomes richer but rather that some of the least nice men in the city of Manchester become so." For his part, Gobineau studied the phenomenon of the decline of civilisations, denounced decadence disguised as progress and railed against democracy, "this galloping consumption of the people". Nietzsche, closed in the solitude of his forge, sweated blood and water to prepare the new incandescent values. Pushing his gaze into the future century he saw the advent of world wars, the great slave revolt, the advent of the last man and of proletarian subhumanity. As an antithesis he flashed the image of a new class of lords emerging from the "war school of the soul". At the beginning of the new century, a new youth was forming that no longer had excessive illusions about the values of bourgeois democracy. She was waiting for her big chance. And this came with the war.

The war arrived unexpectedly in the torrid August of 1914. Like a summer storm, it swept away the belle-époque scenario and plunged millions of men under a thick hail of fire. On the Marne and the Piave, in Ypres and Verdun, an entire generation learned to kill, to attack, to crawl under fences, to know what a writer of genius would have called «the divine couple of courage and fear." The myth of eternal peace, longed for



from utopia and socialism in the long interval between 1970 and 1914, it was pulverized by a rain of grenades that dug the earth like a lunar wasteland resplendent with lights and explosions.

But this very event of death allowed us to rediscover the elementary laws of life. The organization of society, compromised by a hundred years of demagoguery, was spontaneously reforming itself in the world of the trenches on the basis of the ancient values of command and obedience. Bourgeois individualism and proletarian turbulence, forced within the iron mesh of discipline, dissolved without residue to make room for the primordial spirit of solidarity of the human nucleus gathered around a flag in the struggle for a common goal. The ability to sacrifice oneself, to forget oneself, the will to follow a leader, the decision to commit even with blood to achieve the predefined objective reawakened everywhere silently like the eternal shaping force of history.

In the mud of Flanders and Argonne, on the Carso plateaus, in Poland and Galicia, a new spirit was born, a new faith, a new intolerance. European youth were bleeding to death by the millions, competing for a few kilometers of land with a courage and obstinacy that might have seemed absurd. But those who remained could not forget and an entire epic was born from the sacrifice of the dead. The war was nurturing a revolution which had not yet found its name but which, a few years later, was joined by two veterans of the front. Mussolini and Hitler will give an overwhelming expression.

If the war had nourished the seeds of a revolution of spirits, it, as an immediate result, brought only squalor, uncertainty and imbalance. The defeat of Germany and the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire created fearful power gaps open to currents of disorder. With Germany, the largest population in Europe had been conquered and at the same time the middle nation which, in the center of the continent, exercised an irreplaceable function in science, culture and commerce. One of the nations that had suffered least from the spirit of disintegration promoted by the French Revolution and which had been able to fuse in an alloy of solid steel the severity of an aristocratic elite and the laborious effort of the most advanced proletariat of Europe. The Prussian spirit, which had given such great proof of itself in the four years of the war, constituted an irreplaceable cornerstone of European tradition, the still living example of an aristocracy present in political life and in

army leaders with a meticulous seriousness and an ability to lead by example capable of shaping the style of an entire people.

Now this people was humiliated by a peace that claimed to be born from noble senses of justice towards the oppressed nationalities but behind which they saw the spirit of revenge of their great enemy, France. Alsace and Lorraine, inhabited by ethnically and linguistically German populations, were again incorporated into the French state without a plebiscite. One million Germans living in West Prussia and Posen were placed under Polish sovereignty while the entirely German city of Danzig was separated from the territory of the motherland to offer a maritime outlet to Poland. Even Upper Silesia, despite the option for Germany in the plebiscite called by the League of Nations, was arbitrarily divided between Poland and the Reich. Further south, as many as three and a half million Germans living in the Sudetenland region were absorbed into the Czechoslovakian state while Austria, whose parliament had unanimously requested union with Germany, was forced by the victors to establish itself as an independent republic.

It could not seriously be thought that Germany would tolerate these conditions of peace for long, just as it could not be believed that the chaos of states and peoples that arose from the dismemberment of the empire would serve the cause of peace in the Eastern Europe.

This territorial arrangement was not dictated only by the harshness of the victors. The traditional American ignorance that was placed on the geographical map of Europe with the utopianism of President Wilson had contributed to it. Because here was the most serious consequence of the war: for the first time a European conflict was decided by a power foreign to the continent. The arrival of the American expeditionary force had reversed the military situation and Ludendorff's armies, which had recrossed the Marne in June 1918, had had to capitulate in the same autumn in the face of overwhelming enemy superiority.

History does not allow one to suddenly desert one's responsibilities: Europe discovered the existence of America and was immediately sucked into the vortex of its power. She paid for the guilt of having allowed millions of her children to emigrate to feed with their blood the great republic of mechanical and democratic civilization. In the 19th century the ancient mistress of the world was too dazzled by her prosperity, too blind in the face of the crisis that

consumed to see a threat in the titanic rise of the United States. Unaware of what was maturing outside of it, devoid of a unitary political leadership, torn apart by a civil war opened by the French Revolution and which has continued up to the present day, it had suffered with careless irresponsibility the haemorrhage of its best forces. English, Irish, Dutch, Scandinavian and Italian blood had flowed across the ocean to give body and substance to a new world imperialism.

Now America was coming to Europe with its masses and the overwhelming mass of its industrial production. With the First World War the invasion of Europe began, a political, psychological and economic pressure that would end up destroying the originality and autonomy of the continent. The Europe of the 1920s, the Europe that apes the propaganda and advertising vulgarity of the United States while listening to Negro rhythms and admiring jazz, "the funeral march of Western civilization", is already a twilight Europe devoted to Americanization and political decline.

At the same time as America, another giant awoke. Confined to the limbo of the imagination until the 16th century, remaining on the remote periphery of European political life in the 16th and 17th centuries, Russia had suddenly appeared in the heart of Europe at the time of Napoleon's wars when the Tsar had triumphed in Paris together with the allied armies. It was a first appearance, but enough to give rise to the prophecy of "Cossack horses drinking from the fountains of St. Peter", while Goethe noted these words full of destiny in his papers: "It's true: I no longer see Frenchmen or even Italians. In their place I see Cossacks, Woodsmen, Croats, Magyars, Kas-subi. Balts, Brown Hussars and more. For too long we have been accustomed to turning our gaze to the West and expecting every danger there. But the land also extends for a large stretch from the East."

As in the twilight of the Roman Empire, as in the centuries of the Golden Horde, Asia once again opened a path towards Europe. The Bolshevik revolution, which broke out in the fateful 1917, the year America entered the war, might have seemed like the eclipse of Russia; the collapse of his state. But, once the monarchical and European superstructures had disappeared, a rejuvenated Russia had appeared that was rediscovering its Asian soul with the joy of barbarism. Russia far from Europe, in a historical space close to Tatar Muscovy. In the geographical depths of this space a population of slaves sweated blood

in a productive effort that sacrificed him by the millions. The revolution had pushed Russia away from Europe. Sooner or later, when it would have had the most modern weapons ready, it would have left its borders and poured like a river over the European nations.

Meanwhile, Europe had time. It still had time to find a form of organization that would allow it to resist the two imperialisms of the future, the Soviet and the American. Due to a series of circumstances, American pressure had eased. In the aftermath of Wilson's peace, the electorate of the United States had chosen the path of isolationism. Later, in 1929, the economic crisis pushed America even further away, forced to face a disastrous internal situation. In the meantime, Russia was also completely absorbed in the revolution of its structures, industrialization, the elimination of the bourgeois class, the extermination of millions of kulaks and other categories of the small and middle economic class. .

## Le dieux s'en vont

We have often thought very badly of Mussolini. Granted, his critics and detractors were infamous, but there was something in his work and his conduct that didn't convince even us. He had talked about war for twenty years and it seemed to us that he had avoided seriously preparing for it, neglecting armaments and surrounding himself with inept generals. He had preached the idea of the new hierarchy and had surrounded himself not with an aristocracy of men but with an entourage of rhetoricians and flatterers. He had proclaimed the revolution but tolerated the bourgeois and indifferent inaction of the salons and official circles. Finally, twice, at the decisive moment, he, the Duce, the greatest interpreter of the doctrine of force and action, had resigned himself without fighting: on July 25th when he had gone to the king without taking any protective measure, and on April 25th, when he left Milan with a heart resigned to the end.

But today, beyond these shadows, we feel the entire positivity of his nature and his creation. He was a revolutionary: a man who set the wheel of history in motion; who opened roads, demolished prejudices, founded a state, built cities, created a style, aroused a myth. Above all, he was able to embody and interpret the need posed by the culture of his time: to overcome the scientific and egalitarian bourgeois ideology of the 18th century.

Fascism, as he realized it, is the great breach opened by assault in the gray horizon of rationalistic and economic modernity.

In an hour of sunset and decomposition, he was able to gather around himself the best forces of Italian youth to take the state by storm and make it the beacon of a new European faith. Hitlerism, which engaged Europe's last battle against Russian and American imperialism, emerged from the spirit of Mussolini's revolution.

That all this came from Italy, from this country of beggars and lawyers, of Catholics and opportunists, is almost incredible.

Mussolini placed himself at the service of this revolution with prodigious energy, implacable lucidity, ruthless realism. The fact-

Although in recent years he has increasingly conceded to the conformism and "southernism" of those around him, he must not make us forget the clarity and courage with which in 1919 he was able to save the country from a cowardly ruling class and from the scoundrels of the streets .

Mussolini was aware that he himself was the embodiment of this will to fight and renew. He knew that his very person was a banner, a myth. This made him forget that a single man, even a very great one, is too little to make the strength of a regime and that democracy can only be fought with an aristocracy.

But it must be recognized that he was able to embody this myth with great prestige by subjecting himself to a style, a discipline including physical discipline, a scruple of duty which, when the criticism of these years clears up, will appear to us in their correct value.

He dominated his time for many years, aroused new hope, infused strength, faith and energy into an old, skeptical and disheartened people. He was a Roman among Italians. He was the best of us.

## Considerations on Peronism

One of the most complex political phenomena of our time is undoubtedly "Peronism". On the one hand, it had sympathies and affinities with European fascist regimes, and its generic collocation between capitalism and communism, between the Russian and American alternatives, recalls that of the fascist movements between 1920 and 1945.

On the other hand, it has a strong indigenous, South American character, so that it can seem like a variant of caudillismo and the military dictatorships of Latin America. Finally, Peron's long exile, the frontist opposition to the military oligarchy, and the attraction of Castroism have confused the political lines of the picture even more to the point of making them almost indecipherable. The blood shed a month ago between Peronists of the right and the left, Campora's withdrawal and Peron's assumption of the presidency are perhaps the prelude to a forthcoming clarification.

Meanwhile, the problem remains of analyzing the Peronist phenomenon from a political and social perspective.

One of the most acute scholars of Peronism is undoubtedly the Italian-Argentine socio-logist Gino Germani. In the essay *Integración política de las masas y el totalitarismo* and in the book *Sociology of modernization* he studied fascist-type movements, and among them Peronism, as a phenomenon of "mobilization" of the masses in an era of crisis. The contemporary age is characterized by increased "social mobility". When social mobility takes on a particularly rapid pace, society is not able to absorb it within the usual channels and mass extremist movements are then born.

For Germany, mobilization can be primary or secondary. Primary, when classes are introduced into the mobilization process for the first time, i.e. the lowest strata of the population; secondary, when the mobilization concerns already mobilized classes, such as the small bourgeoisie when it finds itself "displaced" by a social crisis or inflation. The difference between Peronism and fascism would consist in the fact that, while fascism was the product of a "secondary mobilization", that is, the expression of the middle and small bourgeoisie which entered into crisis in the post-war period, Peronism would be a phenomenon of «primary mobilization» of lower classes.



polar and underclass.

In short, «Peronism» was essentially a «populist», «national-popular» movement.

This sociological clarification is correct. Peronism is a phenomenon on the border between "fascism" - of which it shares certain authoritarian tendencies and anti-communism - and a kind of popular demagoguery aimed at the masses of the disinherited Argentines. Even the fascist and Nazi regimes were "populist": it was Mussolini who declared that it was necessary to "go towards the people", and never was the word "people" (Volk) pronounced as much in Germany as during the twelve years of the Third Reich. And yet, the fascist movements arose as a reaction against the too impetuous "primary mobilization" of the proletariat which took place under Bolshevik formulas and slogans. They were movements that developed on the terrain of the middle and small bourgeoisie, which found itself facing the communist agitation of the proletarians controlled by the red organizations.

Of course, the "secondary mobilization" of the middle classes in fascism and national socialism was aimed not only against the Bolshevik proletariat but also against big capital, speculation, trusts, as expressions of an inhuman economy threatening the same small and medium bourgeoisie and its peculiar world. But, undoubtedly, the fascist movements ended up allying themselves with the traditional ruling classes. In Italy, as fascism gradually became a regime, which was identified with the monarchy and the nationalist movement, it gave ever greater space to the upper bourgeoisie and the old oligarchies, less courageous and less generous than those more modest, nila even more energetic, which were at the origins of fascism. This oscillation of fascism between the two poles - the petty-bourgeois, more genuinely and idealistically fascist - and the big-bourgeois, monarchic, conservative and calculating one - was outlined by De Felice with great historical acuity.

In Argentina we are faced with a different phenomenon. The base of Peronism never allied itself with the old Argentine oligarchies, who never hid their disapproval of Peron's "demagoguery" and matured their opposition with the military coup. Unlike the case of fascism, here there was a precise delimitation to the right, while - apart from generic anti-communism - there was never a clear closure towards the left. This made it possible that, during the general's long absence, within the op-

frontist position, all the left-wing forces, including communists, would take their place.

If the misunderstanding to which Italian fascism ended up succumbing was that of an alliance with conservative forces that identified with it only up to a certain point, the misunderstanding of Peronism is that of the "frontist" alliance with the forces leftists, including "Castroists". It is to be hoped that Peronism will be able to clarify the misunderstanding in time and distance itself from its allies in a less tragic and confused situation than that of July 25th.

Another contemporary sociologist, Seymour Martin Lipset, in the book *Man and Politics* argued that among fascist movements, one can distinguish, depending on the social base, right-wing fascisms, such as the regimes of a Horthy or a Salazar; center; and, finally, left-wing: this would be the case of Peronism. This complicated morphology arises from the observation of the different social composition. Thus, in Horthy's Hungary and Salazar's Portugal the upper classes would express themselves above all; in fascism and Falangism (not to be confused with Francoism) the upper and middle bourgeoisie; in National Socialism the middle and small bourgeoisie; in Peronism the popular classes and the underclass of Buenos Aires. Thus Peronism would be the only case of "left-wing fascism".

Aside from the greater or lesser precision of some of these characterizations, this typology bears witness to interesting research. But what always leaves something to be desired in sociological interpretations is the reconstruction of the properly historical and cultural aspects, beyond the patterns and models of social behavior. Because fascisms — which existed in Europe between 1920 and 1945 — were also an expression of the European crisis, of the idea of nation, of romantic culture: remember the appeals of Mussolini and Hitler to loyalty to blood, to a return to earth, the controversy against city civilisation, against skeptical and materialistic philosophies.

These aspects cannot be erased from the history of fascism, but are instead non-existent in "Peronism", in the development dictatorships of the Third World and Latin America. There is no doubt - and a historian like Eugen Weber never fails to underline it - that the fascist movements had in common with the "development dictatorships" of underdeveloped countries the tendency to mobilize a people to force them to skip several steps of its technical, economic and social development. It is an aspect that must be highlighted today that history

Marxist writing strives to portray fascism as pure "reaction". And yet, they differed from the "development dictatorships" of non-European countries - to which Peronism belongs - for the complexity of their cultural contents and the specific response they gave to the "crisis of civilisation". As they sought to modernize their respective countries, Fascism, Nazism, the Iron Guard, and all other fascist movements of the 1930s also sought a new contact with tradition. There was a "conservative revolution": hence their originality compared to Peronism and development dictatorships.

But a phenomenon like Peronism, born in a country poor in traditions, cannot have this very originality. Nonetheless, its national trade unionism, as the third force between capitalism and communism, has been able to exercise on the youth of Latin America the same prestigious appeal that similar slogans exercised forty years ago.

## Nationalism and Fascism

Nationalism, the "nation" - with all those moral, military and solidarity values associated with these terms - have been identified with the "right" for almost a century.

È an identification process that has its origin, and which must be retraced.

Right and left are terms that belong to the language of post-revolutionary Europe. It is with democracy and the great industrial transformations of the 19th century that the two fronts of subversion and conservation were created.

Conservation means not only the conservation of institutions or privileges, but also of the values connected to a certain type of society. And subversion does not just mean the overthrow of a society, but the assault against those values - blood, religion, hierarchy - that a certain society cherishes.

The revolution that began in Europe in 1789 - and which is not yet over - is not the demolition of this or that social order, but the denial of all those values on which every European order has been based. This is already explicit in the Enlightenment, the manifesto of subversion. Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert do nothing but repeat the clichés with which the "progressive" press gratifies us today: religion è «a lie of the wealthy classes»; military traditions, a "cult of assassination"; social, racial, individual differences, an "injustice", a case of luck. The Enlightenment - and what derives from it, whether called liberalism or democracy, socialism or communism - is anti-history. It is the hatred of those forces of blood and spirit with which the past is imbued and which have made history.

Every affirmation attracts a negation, and every negation an affirmation.

The Enlightenment had denied tradition, the past, blood. Romanticism idealized tradition, rediscovered history, retraced the most distant and mysterious paths of blood. He felt the danger that the industrialization of the planet represented for man, the drying up of all local and regional lifeblood. He clashed with the principle of the "throne and the altar", but he dug deep, until he found a new legitimacy in the community of saints.

gue and culture in the "nation". He reinserted the bourgeois forces, which the revolution had set free, in the wake of a new authority and a new solidarity. He carried out a revolution, but in order to conserve. He liberalized society, but he emptied liberalism of its poison as it created responsibility towards the state, towards the "nation".

The forces of conservation had initially locked themselves into a rigid, literal, theological defense of the threatened order: this was legitimism. Its symbol is Metternich.

Then they opened up to a more elastic understanding of the new reality and inserted the bourgeois forces into the bed of a new legitimacy: this was nationalism. Its symbols were Cavour and Bismark.

Even in Italy, Risorgimento liberalism was transformed into nationalism: not with the cry "Long live universal suffrage" but with the cry "Rome or death" did Garibaldi's squads depart and Garibaldi's Crispi is already - a generation later - a "reactionary" politician. Everywhere in Europe, the "nation" became the gathering place of certain values: tradition against leveling, national discipline against universal overreach, military honor against the international.

In short: in the 19th century the nation became that formula with which the educated classes of Western countries indicated the responsibilities they felt towards the spiritual values handed down from the past and which materialism, industrialism and the indifference of the masses threatened to destroy. destroy.

Nationalism, thus understood, stretched the spirit of struggle, affirmation and sacrifice of the European bourgeoisie to the maximum. It kept alive a quantity of spiritual energies which, without it - in the already opaque climate of parliamentarianism - would have perished. He kept alive a military, colonial, pioneering impetus without which the European peoples would have aged prematurely. It is enough to compare today's democratic states to the national and monarchical democracies of before '14 to understand what has been missing with the national idea: independence, pride, courage. Italy itself owed its rise from 1848 to 1918 not to the fact of being "liberal" - this would have benefited it as little as it benefits it today - but to that of being "national".

However, "national" values were based on one assumption: that the world revolved around the nation. They were based on a short-range myth of history according to which all history was a function of the nation and every neighboring people was a barbarian, in the original sense of

word: someone who speaks another language and therefore, in some way "bad". The national perspective excluded the existence of Europe as a unity of race and culture. In Italy they talked about Rome, about classical times, but they didn't say that the Greeks and Latins had come from the North; in France of the *Chanson de Roland*, but it was not said that Charlemagne and the paladins spoke German; in Germany the Reich was exalted, but passing into the background that the idea of the Reich had been transmitted to Charlemagne from Rome and the cathedral of Aachen copied from San Vitale of Ravenna.

The national perspective shattered history into hostile blocks, capable of educating great energies internally but containing the germ of future European civil wars. And national values were linked to the faith in the nation as something eternal and timeless, exactly as the values of the polis and those of the "commune" were linked to the faith in the timelessness of the polis and the municipality: the reorganizing history on the basis of larger units would have fatally put them in crisis.

The rise of Russia and America as continental powers embracing boundless territories rich in all possible raw materials, and — simultaneously — the rise of Russia and America as myths, ideological leadership and ways of life, was destined to eclipse the nations and empty the old homelands of their ideal content.

The First World War was the "revolution of nationalism". In the enthusiasm he aroused in youth; in the dissolution, faced with it, of the socialist international; in the custom of life in uniform, which it spread, and which remained, almost like the idea of a perpetual guard over the nation, all the strength achieved by the national ideology was expressed. This "revolution of nationalism" is very evident in Italy, where the intervention was the work of a revolutionary minority, the same one that, in the wake of the values represented by the war, conquered and revolutionized the state. In Germany, the nationalist revolution continued despite the defeat, thanks to the defeat, which exasperated national sentiment: "we had to lose the war to gain the nation" wrote Schauwecker in 1933.

Fascism was, between the two wars, the attempt to institutionalize nationalism. It was, at the same time, the awareness of the danger represented for the national mentality by the two internationals: that of communism and that of Americanism. Since the world war.

while it had exasperated nationalism, it had generated two forces capable of eclipsing it: Wilsonianism, America's claim to be arbiter in Europe; Bolshevism, Russia's candidacy for leadership of the continent. Already in the first post-war period, the two trends that would fatally emptied the old homelands took shape: communist propaganda, with the messianic expectation towards Russia, and cinema, jazz, American taste and customs, instilling, drop by drop, drop, the myth of the American world and its superiority.

Fascism was the instinctive reaction of European peoples to the prospect of being ground into anonymous dust by the internationals of Moscow, Hollywood and Wall Street. It was a reaction and a European phenomenon, which fully triumphed in those countries - such as Italy and Germany - which had suffered on their flesh the gangrene of communism and the deceptions of Wilsonianism, but present throughout Europe, from France to Scandinavia, from Romania to Spain. It is not surprising that these movements, which arose from the same need, sympathized with each other. It is not surprising that an "international of nationalisms" took shape around Italy and Germany, however difficult and contradictory the formula was. Difficult due to the mentality of nationalisms, due to their limited historical perspective, due to mutual envy and jealousy.

In any case, this alignment of fascisms, although difficult and tiring, represented the only chance offered to nationalisms to overcome their contradictions in a European order. Since the dilemma facing nationalism was: either to perpetuate itself in its small ideological and territorial dimensions - to be overwhelmed or emptied by the internationals of communism and democracy (and Francoism is a typical example of these "emptied" nationalisms ) — or instead, rise up, break the ancient limits, create, in some way, a European bloc. Nationalisms had to give life to an international that had the ideological, military and economic strength to block the way for other internationals.

In the era of the development of Russia and America into formidable holders of raw materials, no autonomy or independence would have been possible in Europe if the iron of Lorraine and Norway, the oil of Ploesti and Baku, the steel industry of Belgium, the Ruhr, Bohemia, Upper Silesia, Donbass, had not found themselves in the same hands. This was Hitler's fundamental intuition,



who had written in *Mein Kampf* that waging war just to return Germany to the 1914 borders would have been a crime. Each new historical age required new boundaries. He also wrote: "Germany will be a world power or it won't be."

But Hitler thought across large spaces in an era in which nationalism still reasoned in provinces. Hitler cut with his sword the Gordian knot of eternal European divisions and contradictions. Hitler stirred up a myth with race that transcended nations, he opened the ranks of the *Waffen-SS* not only to the Belgians, the Dutch, the Scandinavians, but also to the Balts, the French, the Slavs. Hitler played the card of Europe, of the *Neuordnung Europas aus Rasse und Raum*.

We know how he intended to adapt Germany and Europe to the new dimensions of world politics: on the one hand, the destruction of Bolshevism and German hegemony over those countries (Baltic states, Ukraine, Caucasus) reluctant to the Russian yoke; on the other, the return of the Reich to those territories (Belgium, Holland, Alsace-Lorraine) which had been part of it until the seventeenth century; in the North, the reintegration of the Scandinavian peoples into the flow of Germanism; finally, the resumption of Austria's hegemonic mission in the Danube basin. The Mediterranean *Lebensraum* would have been filled by Italy, which would have ousted England; Spain, having regained Gibraltar, would have defended its access from the West; France would have essentially preserved its African empire. It was a continental revolution inspired by geopolitics, as it had been defined by Ratzel, Kjellén, Haushofer: the awareness that politics was being reorganized across continental spaces.

It aimed at the creation of a self-sufficient European bloc, capable of escaping external pressure. «A Monroe doctrine of Europe», as an American historian of political doctrines, Sabine, defined the Hitlerian conception.

That only Germany could create this bloc was a fact: 80 million Germans, that is, double that of any other European people; its central position, between North and South, East and West, already with the Holy Roman Empire had made it the nucleus of the European ecumene; the formidable technical and industrial level; furthermore, the military and organizational superiority acquired over centuries of Prussian education made Germany the nation predestined for the reorganization of Europe.

He could have liked this reality more or less, but by denying it, he would have refused to recognize the only path that did not lead to reality.

such an eclipse of the Europe of nations.

With Germany, the other European nations would also have fallen, and the world of homelands, the world of nationalisms would have been crumbled by the internationals of the dollar and communism.

## Right and Fascism

There is a sick person in Europe today, one could say a dying person. This sick person is the Right. Look carefully at these men of the Right: they know, or rather feel that "it absolutely cannot go this way", that the current course of things is leading, step by step, towards an irreparable stage of cowardice, of disintegration, of political bastardization from which, in the end, only communism will benefit. Their instinct, which is also their last defence, still separates them from the idiotic and jubilant masses who exchange present prosperity for political values, the euphoria of well-being with the prestige of an ascending civilisation. They are the last representatives of an aristocracy that still feels like the ruling class: residual elements of solid military traditions; individual individuals of the bourgeoisie who do not want to distinguish themselves only by wealth but by managerial roles; elements of the working categories who refuse to feel like "class", "masses", in the scoundrel and Marxist sense, but who want to be considered as individual people collaborating, each in their place, in the building of national society. They are exponents of all classes and all conditions who refuse to bellow in bovine consent to that universal putrefaction of European society which the newspapers call "democracy". They are the best that remains in this bastard Europe tempted to die, the last chance of a continent otherwise condemned to a satisfied decadence.

I am the Right, the group of all those who instinctively reject the dissolution of society which is taking place in the name of the left, who reject the myth of the left now passively accepted by everyone as a symbol of "sociality", of progress. The Right, which does not identify itself with a part of society but with those dispersed fragments of the entire society which aspire to reconstruct it into a whole, into a State, a State which is beyond society and above society itself.

And yet this force, still relevant in all its composite elements, appears dispersed to us, uncertain in its language and its intentions.

Facing it stands a formidable enemy, a world revolution which has its headquarters in Moscow and Beijing, but which is

now at home in all corners of Europe, which shapes, determines and directs the mentality of the press, radio, television and, with it, public opinion. It is the revolution of equality, the myth of the leveling of classes and races, the dream of the perfect, happy and definitive bastardization of all traditions and all values in a universal bliss for sheep brutalized by promiscuity and well-being. A revolution that slowly undermined all that strength, pride and tradition the white race possessed. A revolution that will not find peace until it has reached its final goal: a society educated in "freedom" to the point of no longer tolerating any degree of discipline, open to all brotherhoods and all bastardizations, incapable of any defense, of every recovery, every future.

Faced with this formidable revolutionary offensive, announced with a roar of trumpets by the social-communist press, and greeted by the cautious hats of a fearful and cowardly bourgeoisie, the men of the right retreat, slowly, muttering, but they always retreat. They feel that "it's not like this", that "it was better before", in an eternal, unspecified "before" that seems impossible to define. But try asking them to tell you what they want, or even to declare vi clearly what they don't want. You would embarrass them. Of course, they find that the point of quackery and baseness to which today is è joints is excessive. But which of them would dare to declare themselves against "the myth of equality" which results in a leveling at the lowest level? There is no doubt: a certain irresponsible press, pornographic cinema, a certain art outrage them, but when faced with the thought of concrete political limitations on "freedom of expression" they suddenly become timid. The black violence against the whites following the abandonment of Africa has respectably outraged them but not to the point of denying the "historical fatality" of African independence and, even if they see with the naked eye the inferiority of the blacks, every precise racist formulation alarms them. Even the courage to declare themselves to be Right-wing, thus placing themselves outside of any populist conformism, is suddenly lacking in some when precise positions and clear-cut formulations are required. And now these men of order, these men of the "national" party, a short while ago so confident in their indignation, so respectable in their indignation, suddenly retreat in the face of the final logic of their feelings, refusing to translate them into precise ideological statements.

Of course, it is easier to linger on generic formulas, those that have an aura of harmless consensus and that do not compromise anything or anyone. It is easier to profess to be "anti-communist", as if it were enough to declare what you don't want to clarify what you want and what you are. And, undoubtedly, it is essential to profess to be anti-communist at a time when communism, taking advantage of the NATO crisis, is launching yet another offensive to take over Europe. But the pathetic weakness of the eternal "anti-communists" lies precisely in the fact that they, in the face of that formidable ideology, that global interpretation of the world which is communism, false and aberrant as one wishes, but also rigorous, precise, stringent, they are unable to counter with anything other than "communism suppresses freedom" as if all the other great historical movements, including Christianity, had not made their way by limiting the freedom of their adversaries and killing them. And so, while they show off anti-communist respectability, communism conquers youth with its ideas, poisons it with its dogmas, distorts it with its interpretations.

Of course, it is easier to declare oneself "patriotic", promoters of "national pacification", as if these terms were not now emptied of all political content in a world where national conflicts (and unities) give way to the collision of ideas and continents. Look carefully at these "patriots" of 1968, with how much naivety they wander around in a world that is no longer theirs, with how much childishness they hope to mend the formidable fractures caused by opposing political religions. They are the right-thinking people of nationalism, those who do not yet understand that a certain national society, characteristic of a world that ignored the great ideological clashes and continental blocs, has irrevocably faded.

In reality, a certain "national synthesis" definitively belongs to the past, to the era of still self-sufficient European states, before the European civil war dug a bloody furrow across the continent. A "national synthesis" can no longer be recovered backwards, back in time, but could only be reconquered forwards, in a Nation-Europe that had the strength to eliminate the Russian party and the American party, the ideology of Moscow and that of Washington,

Of course, it is more convenient to believe that there is no need for much, that to return to the old days it is enough to return to the idyllic political customs of the time of the grandparents, abolish "party politics" and thus return to the earthly paradise of gentlemanly liberalism. These candid utopias re-

they run in an alarming manner in the scant prose and thoughts of men of order, of men of the Right. As if today, in a world that is no longer that of "gentlemen" and the single-member constituency, but that of the masses and parties, a democracy that is not also "partyocracy" was possible, and as if evil that is called "partyocracy" was not democracy itself. In reality, our man of order willingly returns to the dream of an archaic liberalism set in a small virtuous homeland with dignity and self-sufficiency as if all this were still possible in a world shocked by the Russian revolution, by global communist propaganda – dial, from the defeat of Europe with the consequent division between Russians and Americans. He thinks that to restore that world, "national pacification" would be enough, the abolition of "party politics", perhaps even the "presidential republic", and he doesn't realize that just to recover some values of that world we must first re-cross the river of blood that separates us with the courageous annihilation of communism, the eradication of its art, its culture and the long, arduous reconquest of European freedom and independence.

But this seems to be clear only to a few. The others, the many, seem to be afraid to think about the facts and draw the necessary consequences. This lack of coherence, of radicalism, is the traditional weakness of this national environment which, if on the one hand instinctively feels certain values, on the other is afraid of deepening the logic of its feelings and drawing precise political and ideological statements from them. .

The fear of defining precisely what one wants, what one must want in order to re-establish a normal order of things, an order that can resist against the wave of communism, of filth, of license that is sweeping over the West, finds its right in fear or rather in terror of the accusation of fascism. Because any coherent affirmation of a Right-wing order becomes "Fascism".

Every limitation of freedom, that is, every plan of organized struggle against communism and its propaganda, is "Fascism". Every form of authority that is indispensable to prevent society from evaporating into chaos and filth is "Fascism". Any awareness of the superiority of the white race and its mission in the world is "racism", and therefore "Fascism".

On the other hand, the presumption of escaping this accusation by distancing themselves as much as possible from "historical Fascism", flaunting themselves as "anti-fascists" at every opportunity to guarantee the right to speak against

communism and the degenerations of freedom are naive presumption. Since the anti-fascism crusade, banned by Roosevelt's America and Soviet Russia, was not only war propaganda against the Axis countries but a total defamatory campaign against any idea of authority, of cohesion, of a nation aimed at creating a complex I know of permanent guilt in the soul of European nations and paralyzing their will to fight.

Anti-fascism was invented by Comintern propaganda around 1930 and was popularized around the world by the Jewish-communist intellectuals of Hollywood and New York. It is the attempt - successful - to involve in a general accusation of obscurantism every European force capable of reacting to political rot and Russian imperialism. Since 1945, the men of the European Right have lived as if bent under the weight of this accusation which crushes and paralyzes them, which inhibits their reactions, their feelings. It is the accusation of Fascism that keeps us from counterattacking the Marxist propaganda that is rotting Europe until it, like a rotten apple, falls into the lap of the USSR. It is the accusation of Fascism that does not allow the creation of a positive ideology, a political formula around which to unify Europe. It is the terror of the accusation of Fascism that drove the whites to the madness of decolonization, which handed Asia over to Chinese imperialism, Africa to the blacks and chaos.

This accusation of Fascism is a machine that, once set in motion, spares no one. Churchill had just concluded his private crusade against Hitler and Mussolini when he heard himself accused of Fascism because he did not want to liquidate the English empire. De Gaulle had barely led the resistance to victory before he was cast aside as a "fascist." The German democrats, who twenty years later are not ashamed of trying their fellow countrymen as war criminals, are also "fascists", "imperialists": the more so, the more - by dredging up old faults and old errors - they keep the myth of the "bad" German alive in the world. Fascist Sheiba, when he sent the police against the communists; fascist Tambroni, when the Christian Democracy, accused of "fascism", needed the scapegoat - and the expiation: the centre-left -; fascists Moro, Nenni, Andreotti when the centre-left appears outdated, because the PCI has squeezed out of it everything it could and will need to move forward, ever further forward, towards chaos, towards communism. Fascists, capitalists, traitors, the super-communists Dubcek and Svoboda when their ob-



obedience is not ready, blind, absolute enough and Moscow needs more ready, more flexible executors.

È a game that is far too simple: the fear of not being "progressive" or "anti-fascist" enough is generated in the opponent's soul, he is intimidated, little by little he is pressed against an invisible wall. A climate of propagandistic terrorism is created in which one never feels calm enough about the accusation of fascism, of reactionism, until the yardstick of respectability becomes friendship with socialism, with the USSR.

We know how communism fabricated the myth of resistance. To ingratiate itself with the communists, the European bourgeoisie endorsed the comedy of resistance by pretending to forget that the partisan war was three-quarters communist war, with Stalinist methods and aims. He gave a license of heroism to the communist killers; it allowed young people to be taught that the "resistance" was an epic, and not the massacre of the anti-communists which only because of the presence of the Americans did not turn into the total massacre of the national ruling classes, as happened in the East, where the "resistance" came to power. But while endorsing the comedy of resistance - especially in front of the new generations - this bourgeoisie, due to its fascist and anti-communist past, voluntarily placed itself in a position of inferiority in the face of heroized communism. One can be surprised if a large part of the youth - raised in the myth of the fight against "Nazi-fascism" - and to whom no one explained that Fascism and National Socialism rose up precisely against the horrors of communism and the Soviets turned their backs on this democratic bourgeoisie and choose communism?

In reality, the anti-communist bourgeois in search of an anti-fascist respectability ends up with his back to the wall, first as a bourgeois, then as a reactionary, and finally as a "fascist". And, in general, the belief that certain positions can still be defended once sacrifices have been made on the altar of anti-fascism arises from the inability to realize everything that this "anti-fascism" has accomplished. gnify in twenty-five years of occult persuasion: the end of every feeling of redemption in the European nations, their renunciation of a historical mission, the advent of a society torn apart in a climate of demolishing criticism. Since anti-fascism is nothing more than a blackmail under which the Marxist intelligentsia perpetually holds the European ruling classes, preventing the rise of a revolutionary consciousness of the Right and that.

together with Soviet pressure on Central-Eastern Europe, it constitutes one of the two factors of European slavery.

The question is not to overcome Fascism - which, in these twenty years if a normal Europe had been rebuilt, would have been quite easy - but to overcome anti-fascism. And only a naïve person could now believe that anti-fascism is kept alive by the weak neo-fascist movements of Italy and Germany, or by conservative regimes like Franco's. It is rather a form of ideological intolerance, a cold and self-interested fanaticism that rages against every political will budding in Europe and whose aim is "peace", that is, the surrender at the discretion of European nations to Bolshevism.

It may be that it is impossible to stop communism, but if there is still a possibility, it does not lie in indifferent masquerades, in pre-fascist nostalgia. Hence the need for clear theses, for a "precise" line for a new Right.

You don't respond to the myth of Nazi madness by hiding behind your own finger, muttering apologetically that "Hitler was bad but Mussolini was good", and making yourself look like fools dominated by the wicked. The answer is that the war of National Socialism was the war for the independence and unity of Europe against the Russian and American imperialists and that, whatever the price, it would have preserved Europe and the white man's place in the world. The very speculation of the Jews, with which the communists try to hide the much more serious horrors of which they are guilty, cannot be foolishly accepted: in front of the Jews killed by the Nazis there are three million Germans who perished in the Russian invasion, three million anti-communists murdered by the Soviets in Eastern Europe and no less than twenty million Russian anti-communists liquidated by the Bolsheviks. If Pius XII did not speak for the Jews it was not out of simple ignorance, but because it was known that more serious crimes were committed on the other side, and that the cause of the Germans was also the cause of the Church and Eastern Europe against the horrors of a Russian invasion. It is a shame that this Europe, this Right, has even suffered the accusation of "crimes of colonialism", as if everything that the whites have inflicted on the blacks is nothing compared to what the blacks inflicted on themselves mutually in their internal wars, and as if having freed them from famine, from epidemics, from the slave raids perpetrated by those Arabs who today exalt "pan-Africanism" counted for nothing. And it is a shame that the Right, that Europe, has become

to be accused of "torture", while the FLN killed, slaughtered and tortured thousands of French and Algerians.

What the Right lacks is radicalism, hard, precise statements, sharp theses, on which those of the opponents are based. Europe, and the entire West, has lived since 1917 under the influence of a revolution which has its capital in Moscow and aims to subjugate the entire world.

Only a counter-revolution can act against this revolution. A definitive awareness of the opponent's methods and propaganda is urgently required, in order to counter ideological theses with ideological theses; to a propaganda a propaganda; to an in-transigence an intransigence.

Communism is not opposed by "freedom", that is, that libertarian rhetoric which communism takes possession of for its purposes, but by precise ideas of nation and race, order and authority. We do not accept the myths of "peace", "of equality" behind which equality lies in slavery and in the soviet peace. We do not pale over the "crimes of imperialism", like our democrats who allowed the Viet Cong massacres to become the victims par excellence in the eyes of the world. We must denounce and document the far more atrocious crimes of communism.

The terror that communists have for "Nazi-fascism" arises from the awareness that the "Nazi-fascist" is not intimidated, does not have the democracy complex that ties his hands, nor does he easily shed tears over the "crimes of imperialism" because he knows the end too well the horrible ones of communism. Communism killed millions of men in Russia, in China, in Eastern Europe and the Americans or the democrats were never able to hold it accountable. Just one name

remained, that of the Katyn pits, because there was a "Nazi-fascist" there, Doctor Goebbels, ready to document the Bolshevik ferocity for the whole world and to shame it forever. The communists' terror at the specter of fascism arises from the fact that behind it they feel the only force capable of paying them with their own coin.

You don't skip the story; certain problems cannot be avoided by taking refuge in the national-liberal dream of pre-fascist Europe. A certain liberal patriotism presupposes the nation as a reality not broken by the collapse of Europe and the judgment of Nuremberg. It presupposes a pre-party, pre-ideological universe, which no longer exists, the single-member constituency and the oligarchy of "gentlemen" as the antithesis to

"partyocracy". But ours has been, since 1917, an era of revolution, which will end either with the definitive victory of the revolution, or with the equally harsh, ruthless and definitive victory of a European counter-revolution.

The problem of the Right is defined between this need to take on a modern counter-revolutionary content - a political-ideological content, not a qualm-sentimental one - and the need for unity of action, essential for tactical reasons. Since it is evident, and the communist example demonstrates it, that a revolutionary political-mind nucleus does not isolate itself in the name of a false intransigence, but tries to exploit all similar forces, to clarify its confused sentimentalism, to lead with shrewd hardness their soft ambitions.

The Right, as we wrote at the beginning, is a group held together by certain feelings, by instinctive, sometimes even short-sighted, adherence to certain values. In addition to this instinctive adhesion, there is a void, made more dramatic by the fact that the most widespread feeling, that of homeland, since 1943 no longer reflects a historical reality. Just as the task of Marxist communism vis-à-vis utopian communism was to give a historical awareness to the ambitions of socialist humanitarianism, so the task of a new Right is to give a historical awareness, a perspective European, to the indifferent and patriotic Right.

From the environment of the Right, from the world of all those who, with uncertain convictions, but with undoubted sanity of instinct, say no to the left, it is necessary to extract something less soft, more harshly articulated in works and thoughts. What is needed is a rational, political awareness of one's own principles, a clear vision of the opponent's methods and the ability to react with the same methods. We need a Right-wing conscience which cannot be that of right-thinking people and imbeciles but that of courageous men who want to rediscover the freedom of their homelands in a European homeland. It seems clear to us that the field of action of all this is on the Right. Here is the most valid part of the bourgeoisie, the one that instinctively rejects Marxism and the dissolution of society.

It goes without saying that the Right we are talking about is the political Right. These are distinctions that after Evola, after «Men and ruins», should be clear to everyone. The political right is not synonymous with narrow-minded conservatism, but with the desire to resolve all problems, including that

social, according to the superior point of view of the totality and of the State. That Fascism, in this sense, was Right-wing is indisputable. Just as it is also indisputable that it opened the first breach within those classes most sensitive to national issues, namely the Right.

Let us not forget that Fascism, in order to carry out its policy of social union, first had to beat up the trade union agitators and destroy their organisations. Even National Socialism, despite having "socialism" in its name, came to power by gradually absorbing the Right and the Centre-Right: social democracy and communism remained intact until 1933. It was necessary to set fire to the unions and imprison the trade unionists. These are fatalities which, in an era of Marxist demagoguery, are impossible to escape. It would be grossly naive to believe that one can compete with communist demagoguery in the name of "socialization" or of Filippo Corridoni.

Which does not mean that a program of broad social opening is not necessary. A modern Right, with a European mission, must obtain European living conditions for workers, such as those enjoyed by English and German workers. It only means that the space available for a first grouping of anti-democratic and anti-Marxist forces is on the Right. Those isolated groups of workers who converge in our field are not the followers of our social propaganda but ex-combatants, children of ex-combatants and, in any case, people who have personal motivations to differentiate themselves from their "comrades class."

The idiosyncrasy of a certain fringe for the term "Right" arises from a total misunderstanding of the idea of the political Right. It comes from a romantic, Victorian propensity for the word "Left", almost as if these romanticisms didn't smell of death today that on the Left there are billionaires and dirty people from the cinema who are paid their weight in gold. It also arises from the unconscious awareness of not truly differentiating oneself from a certain right, indifferent, patriotic, if not precisely for some "social" ambitions. It is an attempt to hide behind that word "Left" the disconcerting fact that, after all, one is very "Right", and this time yes in the bourgeois, right-thinking, pejorative sense of the term.

The Right, in the present moment, must fight together. For tactical reasons, because the anti-communist forces now have their backs against the wall. For reasons of common sense, because no one will believe that certain distinctions based on labels still retain a human content

no. The problem is not that of formal intransigence, but of substantial intransigence towards outdated ideas and environments that must be destroyed, but after having been fully exploited and assimilated. Again, the communist example is valid: communism attracts similar forces, gradually empties them, conquering the younger elements.

Right-wing politics, implemented by a minority that has clarity of intent and ideas, should exercise the same function towards the confused "national" environments, exploit them in frontist formations, radicalize their little theses. little by little, attract their younger elements with the appeal of an increasingly energetic ideological radicalism.

The need for the unity of the Right, and the need for a new theme for the Right, go together. We cannot ignore the tactical need, but neither can we ignore the need for new content. Without it, the Right would still be destined to remain a soft and boneless agglomerate, an invertebrate Right.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY NOTES ON FASCISM

The discussion on the so-called "fascist phenomenon" does not seem to want to cease, indeed, for some years a whole series of studies has been reported which tend to frame the fascist movement - as it took shape in Europe between 1920 and 1945 - into broad historical and spiritual.

This discussion arises not only from a calmer retrospective of the events of the past, but also from the awareness that fascism represented not an ephemeral episode, but a key moment of the European crisis we are experiencing.

A vast overview of the discussion is offered to us by Renzo de Felice in his recent book «The Interpretations of Fascism» where however, according to the author's particular angle, the interpretations of Fascism are essentially reduced to two: the liberal and rationalistic one of Fascism as irrationalism, a "moral disease", and the orthodox Marxist one of Fascism as a "bourgeois reaction". What leaves something to be desired is first of all the lack of verification of the terms: otherwise it would have been easy to see how under "irrationalism" many values are often condemned - from heroism, to religiosity, to the spirit of struggle and sacrifice - without which no civilization

è conceivable, and that it was precisely in fascism that they sought refuge against the withering of bourgeois society. Likewise, when it is stated that fascism developed above all from the bourgeoisie, it must be remembered that this "bourgeoisie" comes into play not only as a class, but, generically, as the educated part of the nation, linked to that culture of nationalist movement widespread throughout the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. This is how when we say that fascism is an expression of the middle classes they appear almost as an interclassist function, so much so that a scholar like Eugen Weber asks himself: «is the concept of middle classes a meaningful one in this context?».

Nor does De Felice's book adequately research the interpretations of the other side. They too could be briefly divided into two. The first is the classic nationalistic interpretation, for which fascism was seen as the perfection of that process of unification and integration started by the respective "risorgimento" - an interpretation represented above all by Volpe and Gentile, and which also in Germany formed the basis of the massive adhesion of the



bourgeoisie to Hitler's Grossdeutschland. The second interpretation, with a broader scope, is the one that had its most significant spokesperson in that strong political writer who was Drieu La Rochelle (a good anthology is the one compiled by Jean Mabire «Socialism-Fascism-Europe », Ed. Volpe, Rome 1964). It sees in fascism the will to defend not only the nation, but the whole of Europe, put in crisis by a materialistic civilization and by the pressure of the two American and Eurasian masses. It is fundamentally connected to the prospect of the "twilight of the West", against which Spengler had launched his appeal in "Decisive Years" against the two world revolutions, that of the lower classes and that of the lower races. And here we could also cite, by Evola, the conclusion of the first edition of "Revolt against the modern world", where it was credited to fascism for having raised "the ancient and sacred symbols of the ax and the swastika" against the contemporary subversion.

In terms of interpretations of Fascism - of which De Felice's book is only an overview - the most weighty work to date, due to the amount of documentation and commitment, is that of Ernst Nolte, «Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche» (Italian translation «The three faces of Fascism», Sugar Editore, Milan 1966, pg. 849).

This is a questionable, but also very effective, attempt to interpret the entire phenomenology of fascism, both in historical reality and as a vision of the world. Nolte proceeds by analyzing the three most important incarnations of European fascism: Maurras and Action Française, Mussolini and Fascism, Hitler and National Socialism, each in its specific physiognomy, but also in the fundamental affinity of their philosophy of life. The treatment, as mentioned, is very well documented. Even the Italian sources are perfectly mastered by Nolte (who, perhaps having taught Latin for a few years before moving on to the chair of modern history at the University of Marburg, is also very familiar with Italian). Not even a generally little cited author like Evola escapes him.

Naturally, here too the ideological regret reveals itself as usual when Nolte attempts his own interpretation of fascism. He sees in the fascist phenomenon a "revolution against transcendence", where by transcendence we mean not "vertical", spiritualistic transcendence, but - with a reversal of meaning which to a Guénon would have seemed a "sign of the times" - a transcendence

«horizontal», historicistic. History, Nolte maintains, proceeds in the sense of equalization and mixing; in its making it transcends national, racial and spiritual differences. Fascism, on the other hand, resists it: it wants to artificially preserve a nationality, or a race, if necessary through extermination and terror.

È It is clear that fascism actually moves in the opposite direction to this Noltean "transcendence", this horizontal and almost supine transcendence. And this is because it preserves the sense of the vertical dimension of true transcendence: as heroism or spirituality, or as choice and selection; however, always in the sense of education and the accumulation of moral or racial energies, upwards. And

è this is why from the point of view of fascism this smoothing transcendence of Nolte appears as something aberrant, because no civilization can sustain itself without the accumulation of forces in closed bodies, and equality - as Maurras wrote - does not belong to life, but can only be achieved in the cemetery.

In any case, despite all the reservations that can be made about its basic conception, Nolte's book remains to this day, also due to its size, "the book" on fascism translated and discussed throughout the world. Ernst Nolte also showed himself to be an attentive student of the fascist discussion in the book «Theorien über den Faschismus» (Köln und Berlin, 1967), an anthology of writings on the problem of Fascism, while his review of the various European fascist movements appeared in 1964 in paperbacks of the Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag - «Die faschistischen Bewegungen», München 1964 - and then reappeared expanded and reworked four years later with the title *Die Krise des liberalen Systems und die Entwicklung des Faschismus*, Piper, München 1968. These are accompanied books from the widest bibliography on the subject and which no scholar of the problem can ignore.

The issue of the Journal of contemporary history dedicated to "XV International Fascism 1920-1945" and translated into Italian in 1965 by Il Saggiatore ("Fascismo Internazionale, Milan 1966") is also dedicated to an analysis of fascist movements in Europe. It consists of a series of essays which examine both fascism and Nazism, as well as the French right, the Austrian Heimwehr, José Antonio's movement and that of Codreanu. Eugen Weber's essay on the Iron Guard is good, Mosse's on the origins of fascism is passable, the reconstructions of the personalities of Doriot and Quisling by Allardyce and Hayes are more or less objective, the latter self-authoring

king of a biography of the Norwegian leader «Quisling, prophet without honor» which destroys the legend of the «traitor» Quisling and instead describes him as the «unheard prophet».

Among the collaborators of the volume, Eu-gen Weber deserves mention, under whose direction the interesting overview "The European Right: a historical analysis" was published, University of California Press, 1965 - a fundamental publication for those who want to form a general picture of the right in the various countries from the SOO to today. Eugen Weber is then the author of *Varieties of fascism*, New York, 1964 and of a work, *Action Française*, which is the most complete of its kind.

George Mosse is the author of *The crisis of German ideology* (Italian translation «The cultural origins of the Third Reich», Il Saggiatore, Milan 1968), which investigates the ideological currents leading up to Nazism, with special reference to the youth movement and the neo-golden manticism. However, one would search in vain in his work for a serious discussion of the thought of a Spengler, a Jünger, a Günther, that is, the major figures of that intellectual world.

By Hugh Thomas, author of brilliant observations on the contrast between the ideals of José Antonio and the reality of Francoism, we remember the fundamental book on the Spanish civil war published by Einaudi.

More recent is a similar collection of essays, *European Fascism* edited by SJ Wool (Italian translation «Il Fascismo in Europa», La-terza, Bari, 1968). It covers a larger area: in addition to Italy, Germany, Spain, Romania, France, it also studies the Hungary of Horthy and the Arrow Cross, the Norway of the National Sam-ling, Finland of the Lappist movement, as well as Mo-sley's party. The essays by Nichols and Woolf on Nazism and Fascism are quite flat and banal, containing the usual resentment (the latter even goes so far as to accuse Mussolini of "having thrown Italy into disarray" in the war... of Ethiopia). Those of Barbu on the Iron Guard are well documented, that of Eros on the relations between the Horthy regime and the Hungarian fascisms, Thomas is always brilliant in his glimpses of things Spanish. In Trevor-Roper's introduction one can find some interesting observations on the decisive importance of Hitlerism on the "Europeanization" of fascism.

Finally, very recently, there is a short book edited by Maurice Bardé-che on «Isknown Fascisms», (Edizioni del Borghese, Milan 1969),

with contributions from young authors such as Francois Duprat, author of an excellent *Histoire de la Waffen SS*. It contains an analysis of the Iron Guard and the Arrow Crosses, as well as some interesting contributions to the history of fascism in the Baltic countries (the WABSE in Estonia, the Thunder Crosses in Latvia), other quick news on Flemish fascism, Dutch, Danish, etc. and a documentary appendix on the participation of fascists in the anti-Bolshevik crusade in the Waffen SS. Unfortunately, the bibliography at the end of the volume is quite hasty, where serious books like *The European Lines of a Weber* stand next to authentic comics like the infamous "The Black Internationale" by the Jew Eisenberg.

The desire to include "Arab fascism", "Japanese fascism" or even "American fascism" in the discussion is also questionable. In fact, fascism is a typically European phenomenon, which presupposes a secular national society, with all those moral and ideological nuances that romanticism has burdened it with. It presupposes this ancient national society and also its crisis, due to a corrupting, leveling and decadent industrial revolution. Where these complex conditions are not present, we cannot speak of true fascism.

È so that one cannot agree with Bardèche when in his book «What is Fascism» (Edizioni Volpe, Rome 1963), in the sign of a generically «activist» morphology, he tries to include characters like Fidel Castro. And yet his book contains some beautiful pages on "the fascist man", as well as a necessary differentiation of fascist revolutionary conservatism from the merely passive one of Franco and Salazar.

Next to «What is Fascism?» we can cite Bardèche's recent book «Sparte et les Sudistes», a vindication of Whomme naturel against Whomme artificiel, of the conservative against the progressivist, and where they are found in the heroic order of Sparta and in the agricultural-chivalrous order of the states Southern Confederates the archetypes of the ideal fascist world. Another French book on Fascism was also published by Volpe, «Fascism and our time», by Francois Gaucher, which contains some of the most sensible considerations on Fascism and where the differences between the situation in 1920 are illustrated -1940 and that of today. Another French contribution to the understanding of Fascism is Marc Augier's book published in German as «Götterdämmerung-Ende und Weende einer Zeit». Marc Augier

è known to our readers under the pseudonym Saint-Loup, under which he wrote the novels *Les volontaires* and *Les hérétiques*. In *Gottterdammerung* written in exile in Argentina, he examines the nationalistic contradictions of fascisms on the road to Europe.

Finally, it is necessary to mention "*Il Fascismo*" by Julius Evola (Edizioni Volpe, 1962) - currently in reprint with an appendix on National Socialism. It is essentially a minor work alongside Evola's other books, first of all *«Men and ruins»*, this fundamental text of political doctrine whose diffusion cannot be recommended enough. Evola's examination of Fascism does not

è properly historical, aimed at reconstructing the various forces that fueled and supported it, but a "critical analysis from the point of view of the right", that is, a comparison with the ideal parameter of an "absolute right". It is a method that is sometimes a little abstract, but which provides the reader with a sure criterion of orientation regarding what was "in order" or not in Fascism. For its concise and orderly clarity, this little volume by Evola stands as an indispensable manual.

At the conclusion of these notes, we can observe how some fixed points already emerge from the discussion on Fascism.

First of all, the international character of the phenomenon, which forces historians to consider it as a whole in Europe, only to then concretely reconstruct the physiognomy of each movement as it emerged in the particular climate of each particular country. Thus, there were violently anti-Semitic fascisms, such as Nazism and the Iron Guard, in countries such as Germany or Romania where the Jews controlled large sectors of public life, while there were others, such as Italian Fascism, which barely they noticed the problem.

But, in general, all Fascisms had nationalism, the will to defend ancient lineages and traditions against a corrupting and leveling civilization, the aspiration to overcome both capitalism and class struggle, the cult of discipline, style, physical education, the tendency to forge a new human type, the type of the "political soldier". Everyone began by defending their own nation, and everyone ended up defending Europe itself, as the common heritage of all European nations.

When it is said that Fascism is studied today in a European context, this does not mean that the priority of Italian Fascism or the merit of Mussolini are overshadowed. Mussolini was the one who for

he was the first to give concrete form to trends and aspirations that were stirring in Europe. «Without the black shirt» – Hitler recognized in 1942 – not even the brown shirt would have existed». And Codreanu had written: «Mussolini gave us the certainty of our victory». Indeed, Mussolini's prestige was increased by having been not only an Italian statesman, but the inspirer of a political movement of global resonance.

È It is evident that the interpretations of Fascism current today are still influenced by the ideologies that emerged with the catastrophe of 1945. And yet, the most serious scholars already doubt the Marxist theory of Fascism as a simple "bourgeois reaction". Fascism was conservative of spiritual values, but revolutionary for its broad openness to the masses. This is honestly recognized by Hugh Seton-Watson in the closing of the aforementioned «International Fascism». Thus, he denies a classist determinism in the genesis of Fascism, recalling how the young Romanian bourgeois of the 1930s were generally "guardians", but like the young Serbian bourgeois - in the same social context - communist. It is absurd, he declares to him, to deny a true revolutionary content to the fascists: «The fact that their aims and policies were distant to me entitles me to call them evil revolutions, but not to deny their revolutionary character».

Even certain interpretations of fascism as an "irrationalistic aberration" are destined to soften into milder tones as soon as the reasons for the romantic protest against an increasingly arid and empty civilization are explored. From this point of view, already in Mosse's book on the cultural origins of National Socialism, we can see a greater curiosity for a topic that twenty years ago was simply condemned outright.

And yet, the discussion for an adequate understanding of Fascism is just beginning. It will become fully mature as soon as all the signs of that decadence of Europe against which Fascism wanted to react become widely visible.

Returning to our previous notes on the bibliography of Fascism, we would now like to dedicate a brief review to the "ideology of Nazism", that is, to that widespread literature which has as its object the ideological origins of the Third Reich. It has a natural importance for those who fight on our side, and because National Socialism was "German Fascism", and because it was it that, at the end of the conflict, took the lead in the battle fought by European fascisms against



Russian and American imperialism.

National Socialism, despite the much talk that still goes on about it, always remains a great unknown. On the one hand there is the interested deformation, the inflation of certain aspects, perhaps the darkest, certainly the most sensational. On the other hand there is also the misinformation of the average educated Italian, who is always better informed about the facts of France, America or England, than about the reality of Germany.

One of the certainly lesser-known aspects of National Socialism is its very rich, profound and complex cultural origins. They can be traced back to the first romanticism, in the criticism of the French revolution by Novalis, Schlegel, Adam Müller, up to the neo-romanticism of the end of the 19th century, of which Wagner and Nietzsche are the most visible exponents, and, in the immediately pre-Nazi era, in the so-called "conservative revolution" of German intellectuals, with authors such as Spengler, Junger, Moeller van den Bruck, Othmar Spann. Finally, there is real Nazism, with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, the racist doctrines of Günther, Claus and Rosenberg, the "nationalpolitical" educational concepts of Ernst Krieck, Alfred Baeumler, Kurt Hildebrandt.

It is not surprising that such a vast and complex intellectual world has been the subject of numerous studies, although, as we will see, none are truly complete and defined.

Among the books and essays that deal with the phenomenon of the German "conservative revolution", some works that try to frame the phenomenon in a general context also stand out. First comes, in chronological order, the book by Edmond Verméil, *Doctrinaires de la révolution allemande* (Paris, 1938), which remains one of the best texts on the subject, even if it suffers a little from the approximation of those who work a still hot matter. Thus figures such as Walther Rathenau or Herman Keyserling, who contributed just fleetingly to the formation of the Nazi theme (and in any case, Rathenau much more than Keyserling) are pushed into the foreground alongside Hitler and Rosenberg, which it is certainly excessive. In any case, Verméil was the first to denounce the importance of Thomas Mann's *Considerations of an Impolitic*, which today some prefer to benignly overlook, or to point out the importance of authors such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and Hans FK Günther, and to have in any case set up the Third Reich.



Five years after the war, the first systematic study of right-wing intellectuals of the Weimar Republic era appeared in Germany. The author is a young Swiss. Armin Mohler, who fought as a volunteer in Hitler's army, and who was later Ernst Junger's secretary. It is called *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1950). It is still fundamental today for the bibliography contained, and which forms half of the slim volume.

And yet, the tendencies he outlined are fundamental for classifying the various groups of the "conservative revolution". First of all there are the *volkischen*, that is, the racists, with a tradition that begins with Ludwig Schemann, the translator of Gobineau, and which, through Woltmann, Penka, Wilser, Chabertain goes up to the Nazi doctrinaires of race. Religious reformers, the prophets of neo-paganism, and nature lovers gravitated towards the *volkisch* area, all branched into dozens of very active sects. Communicating with the *Völkisch* environment and that of the *Bündischen*, i.e. the environment of the youth groups that arose in Germany at the beginning of the century, and which placed at the center of their ideology the idea of the *Bun*, the "manly order", built on sports and comradesly bases. Then there are the neo-conservatives, such as Spengler or Moeller van den Bruck, who underline the Prussian idea and make Prussianism the very essence of Germanism. This group is heir to the pro-Russian tendencies of the Prussian foreign political tradition and clashes with National Socialism on this point. Even more developed is the pro-Russian tendency among the national revolutionaries, who are inspired by Junger's *The Worker* and his "Prussian, Spartan and Bolshevik" ideal.

Of these four tendencies, Mosse's book *The crisis of German ideology*, translated into Italian with the title *The cultural origins of the Third Reich* (Milan, 1968 *il Saggiatore*), deals mainly with the first two, while little or nothing is found on neo-conservatives and national revolutionaries. In general, Mosse focuses on a number of small groups and characters, especially from the youth movement environment, but leaves the big books completely out of his analysis: a Spengler, nor does he get to the heart of the theses of a Günther or of a Clausen; nor does it go back to the romantic origins of the whole movement. This is why the title *The Cultural Origins of the Third Reich* is too ambitious for the content of the book.

More complete, even if within narrower limits, the study by Clemens von Klemperer *Germany's new conservatism*, dedicated, as

that of Mohler, to the period 1918-1938, and which is composed of a general part, and a detailed examination of the three most significant authors of the period: Moeller, Spengler and Junger. Also worthy of mention is Kurt Sontheimer's, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, taken from an essay already published in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (1, 1957).

Individual personalities or currents of the conservative revolution were then made the object of exhaustive studies, such as the National Bolsheviks and the "right-wing leftists" in Schuddekopf's book *Linke Lente von Rechts* (Stuttgart, 1960); the Nazi left in that of the Kühnl *Die national-sozialistische Linke 1925-1930* (Meisenheim am Gian, 1962); the youth movement in the studies of Raabe (*Die bündische Jugend*, Stuttgart, 1961), of Laqueur (*Young Germany*, London, 1962), of Jowy (*Deutsche Jugendbewegung und Nationalsozialismus*, Köln, 1962), the pan-Germanist league in that of Kruck (*Ge-schichte des Alldeutschen Verbandes, 1890-1939*).

Then there are the two books that deserve special mention: one is the excellent study on Moeller by Schwienskott (*Arthur Moeller van den Bruck und der revolutionäre Nationalismus in der Weimarer Republik*, Göttingen, 1962), which sheds light on the first enclaves of the «revolutionary conservatives» at the beginning of the 1920s, the foundation of the «Anti-Bolshevik League» by Startler, the union of Stadler, Moeller and von Gleichen in the Juni-Klub, the birth of the magazine *Gewissen* and, then, the suicide of Moeller and the creation of the Herren-Klub by Gleichen, the other is the book by Fritz Stern - an American-German Jew, like Mosse - which is entitled *The politics of cultural despair*, and which aims to portray three eras of German conservatism in the persons of Paul de Lagarde, Julius Langbehn and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck.

It is a very accurate book, even if the underlying thesis - the "dangerousness" of cultural pessimism - makes us smile in the face of the disasters that current Western society is encountering in the name of the most impudent optimism.

There are some good essays on Oswald Spengler, such as that of H. Stuart Hughes (*Oswald Spengler, a Critical Estimate*, New York, 1952), or that of Schroter (*Metaphysik des Untergangs*, München, 1961).

Overall, there is no lack of material for those who wish to have an overview of the ideological currents that converged in National Socialism. And, nevertheless, a real "book" on the "idea".

logy of Nazism" is not yet there. What is missing is the work that takes its starting point from the first novels - in a less hasty way than Viereck - and shows how those ideas of "nation", of "lineage", but also that of the "organic state" developed within romanticism, which formed the nucleus of the conservative-revolutionary idea. This movement, which will be revived in our century by Othmar Spann, Jakob Baxa, Walter Heinrich and their Vienna circle, is involved first in the fight against Napoleon, then in the journalism of the reaction and of the "Holy Alliance".

However, there is a romantic current which, while glorifying the State, certainly does not flow into reaction; it does not believe in Austria, but in Prussia and Germany. Both Arndt and Jahn, both Fichte and Hegel can be ascribed to it, and it is the one that - with Treitsche's work — transcends simple reactionism into the revolutionary conservatism of a Bismarck.

Towards the end of the century, there is then the phenomenon of neo-romanticism, a cultural horizon in which Lagarde and Langbehn, Nietzsche and Wagner, Nordic racism and the criticism of bourgeois society are framed. These currents will find a sensational expression in the "Youth Movement", which has dominated German youth since the early years of the new century.

After the war, the task of National Socialism will be to fuse romanticism with Prussianism to obtain from the crucible of the two strongest currents in German history, the indestructible alloy of that "romanticism of steel", in which Goebbels saw the essence of the Third Reich.



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