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*Benito Mussolini*

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# INTRODUCTION

The man who forged the very name “*Fascism*,” **Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini**, is oftentimes dismissed and ignored in the circles of those who foremost identify with Adolf Hitler and German National Socialism, even among those that recognize how *both* served the same fundamental Worldview. The Jungian quote “*Hitler is a spiritual vessel, a demi-divinity; even better, a myth. ... Mussolini is a man*” is, of course, an accurate one, but it is used too much to downplay Mussolini rather than to elevate Hitler – are mere men not capable of great things? Why is it that we still give due recognition to people like Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Oswald Mosley, José Antonio Primo de Rivera and etc., yet Mussolini gets dismissed on no other grounds than “*he wasn’t Hitler*”? **Mussolini** should be rightfully recognized in the pantheon of our Champions for what he had contributed to our Struggle, and for his true value to Italy and her people.

To this end we must touch upon several distinct subject matters, first of which will provide the necessary context for Mussolini’s actions and vision – the realities of Italian history before and during the rise of Fascism. Other subjects we’ll cover will deal with the character of the Italian people and thus with the character of Mussolini himself; Machiavelli’s influence on Mussolini; and finally we’ll go over Mussolini’s goals regarding Italian racial policies and Italian Fascism’s solid roots in the Fascist/NS Worldview.

As a quick aside before we begin proper, I will note that in writing this article I will foremost be relying on the analysis of Italian Fascism and its rise to power provided by **Nikolay Vasilyevich Ustryalov**, with some additional points taken from **Julius Evola** and the biography of **Italo Balbo** “*A Fascist Life*” by Claudio G. Segre.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## ITALY DIVIDED

For **centuries** after the final fall of the Roman Empire and prior to the March on Rome there was no unified Italy, and this period is best characterized by the **Klemens von Metternich** quote *“Italy is only a geographical expression.”* There was no such thing as Italy but rather a peculiar geographical expanse with a **variety of no less peculiar and unique states and provinces**, all with their own respective capitols and forms of rule, quite often existing under the direct influence of some foreign power (*ex: France, Germany, Austria in particular*). This naturally led to the development of cultural regional divergences, and even to the formation of dialects that were different enough that a Northerner could barely understand a Southerner and vice versa.

And yet there was a distinct urge for unification that found its first, superficial triumph in the **Risorgimento**, when, finally, a single Italian State was forged. It is a superficial triumph, because it only accounted for creating a singular State, but not a singular people, for the centuries old divide between the people of Italy was yet to be overcome in the same fashion that the Italian lands were, as was remarked by **Massimo d’Azeglio**: *“We have made Italy, now we must make Italians.”*

As a result of this merely outward unification, internally Italy remained largely divided. Imagine the attempted merger of two states, with their own respective ruling elites that fight to sustain some equivalent of their former power, as well as other social classes, all vying for their particular local interests dictated by the history of their respective state – an unstable situation and a difficult task to overcome.

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Now imagine that it's not two states, but ten – this was the real struggle that Italy was facing in order to truly become unified.

No one social group could ever realistically hope to act as the basis for true unity, instead serving to only further contribute to the internal divide. The fact that there were no distinct social classes that existed overall everywhere in Italy further complicated matters, instead it was a hodgepodge of relatively similar groupings with often conflicting interests. For example, the Italian “peasantry” was a combination of petty property owners, farmers, the *mezzadri*, and short-term laborers – the *braccianti*. The proportions of these groups varied from province to province. Of course, all of these colorful groupings were nevertheless fertile ground for socialist and communist influences, hence their prominent rise in Italy at the turn of the century – the prime enemy of true Italian unification.

All of this is an example of **but one** vaguely defined stripe of people in Italy out of many others, moreover this way of categorizing the many divides across Italy is likewise but one of many. Regional history (*and thus complications towards Italian unity*) can be also illustrated by the Italian Mafia, which could only have formed in the lawless South. The Italian intellectuals had no unity among themselves either as they all promoted some notions that were representative of their own region's legacy, hence there were the usual suspects such as republicans, monarchists, democrats, conservatives and liberals, but also the specifically Italian “*Garibaldians*” and “*Mazzinians*.”

Furthermore, there was a growing divide between this disjointed Italian society and its newly forged, unified, but clumsy and indecisive, State. Industrial, agrarian, and the newly formed bourgeois interests were all at war with one another (*and as we highlighted above, within themselves as well*), as well as with the State itself, depending on whom among them it decided to court. The Church likewise had a strained

relationship (*to say the least*) with the State, due to its historic conflicts with all Italian political states. Increasingly, local forms of self-organization were springing up everywhere: syndicates, leagues, people's banks, rural collection funds, various associations, cooperatives, catholic and socialist councils.

One major factor that is often overlooked, is that at the time Italy experienced overpopulation, which in part fueled **Italian irredentist motivations**, in search of more living space, placing them at a crossroads with the same foreign powers that used to influence various states that existed in Italy prior to unification.

Overpopulation coupled with economic turmoils of an indecisive unified Italy led to mass migration abroad – between 1881 and 1901 the number of Italians migrants jumped from just over a million to well over 3 million people, favored destinations being America and other European countries, with fewer people moving to Africa, Asia and Oceania. By 1908 there were already over 5 million Italians abroad, terms like *“Italian colonies without the Italian flag”* and *“Imperialism of the Poor”* become accurate descriptors of this situation.

The problem of overpopulation also inevitably fueled the goal of industrializing Italy in order to combat the poverty of the wide masses. Hence, unified Italian nationalism developed closely alongside goals of economic necessity, pitting it directly against marxist socialism in the fight for the Italian proletariat. Italian nationalism and imperialism/irredentism had a distinctly proletarian flavor to them: it was in the Italian worker's own interest to help expand Italian borders. The prevailing attitude was that the Italian immigrants were slaving away for foreign powers when they should be working for themselves and for their homeland – Italy.

*What is socialism for the proletariat, is nationalism for the Italian: a weapon of liberation against insufferable oppression. What is the*

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*bourgeoisie to the proletariat, are the French, Germans, English, Americans, be they Argentinians or Yankees: the rich – these are our enemies.*

–**Enrico Corradini**

The sentiment above, along with the historic background provided so far, is a good indicator of how easily any Italian person of the time could have started out seemingly socialist, while nurturing nationalist attitudes, as was the case with **Mussolini**. Moreover, one can easily see certain distinct parallels with German history and its precursors for the rise of National Socialism, more of which will become apparent further along in this article.

### **MUTILATED VICTORY**

Arguably, the formal history of unified Italian nationalism, starts on December 3rd of 1910 in Florence, with the first Nationalist congress. However, this was the tired Old nationalism of the 19th century, one that relied exclusively on upper class and big banks' support, hence in 1913 they gained only 6 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Italian Nationalism had surged with Italy's involvement in the First World War (*over 200,000 volunteers*), which the Nationalists and Irredentists saw as an opportunity to complete the process of Italian liberation of **1848, 1859, 1860, 1866**, the very history of which negated the possibility of Italy joining the War on the side of the Central Powers, even though such a possibility was toyed with by the Italian State, but would have found total opposition within the masses. In 1914 **Mussolini** spoke as the voice of those masses when he declared: *"If you begin a war against France you will find barricades in Italy!"*

It was in this moment, as it is well known, that **Mussolini** broke with the socialists, who had refused to support the war effort. In fact, their

behavior stood in distinct contrast with the socialist movements in other countries: European socialists had broken with their dogma in favor of patriotism, while in Russia the dogma was carried out forth with revolutionary fervor. In short, Italian socialists acted as neither patriots nor revolutionaries, instead they opted for total neutrality, which would hamper them for some time after the war, in the wake of Italy's victory.

**Mussolini** would, in the end, simply state: *"those who remain neutral do not command the course of events, but are subservient to them; blood alone moves the wheel of history."* Moreover, **Mussolini** takes his daring further still, as he forms the interventionist union *"Fasci di azione rivoluzionaria"* with the slogan *"War today, tomorrow – revolution!"*, combining patriotism with revolution, nationalism with socialism. In the final days before Italy enters the war, he would go on to threaten the uncertain King with the ultimatum: *"The honor and future of the Fatherland are in danger; it stands at a great crossroads in its history. Last word belongs to the people! Either war, or a republic!"* (Il Popolo d'Italia, May 15th, 1915).

The initial enthusiastic surge of nationalism inevitably turns sour and becomes enraged at the conclusion of the war – the words *"sconfitta vittoria!"* (defeated/ruined victory), or **Gabriele D'Annunzio's** *"mutilated victory,"* and a call for *"mending"* said victory begin to spread all over Italy. The promises of *"Italia irredenta"* of the **Treaty of London** met strong opposition from US president **Woodrow Wilson** in his **14 points**, and would ultimately be nullified by the Treaty of Versailles.

While the results of the war were not unfavorable or disadvantageous to Italy (both in the sense of shifted geopolitics and in what territories it did receive as per the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Treaty of Rapallo), they were not entirely what she was promised. **Fiume** became a potent symbol of *"mutilated victory,"* as per

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the Treaty of Rapallo it was declared an independent city-state: a pointless and artificial compromise for all the parties involved that satisfied absolutely no one. **The events that followed** in many ways can be looked at as a precursor/microcosm to the larger national reaction that would give rise to Italian Fascism.

Ustryalov notes: *“They say that if you ask in Italy “where had Fascism come from?” – the inevitable answer to follow would be “Fascism was born from the rage of warriors...”* – an echo of something very similar happening in Germany and expounded on in the interwar articles of Ernst Jünger. Further parallels can be found in what the frontline soldiers of both countries had to witness when they had returned home.

Italy was then, as it is now, a popular tourist destination – rich tourists living in expensive hotels, who regarded Italy as a country of museums, singers and artists; living it up alongside them were *“new money”* military officers and upstart reservists who had never seen the front but exploited and speculated on Italy’s military industrialization to fill their pockets. They would earn themselves the derogatory name *“pescicani”* – *“sharks.”* The same wartime industrialization which was disastrous for Italy, a fairly new and poor country led by indecisive politicians. It had strained itself to the limit and only now, after victory, was switching into the transitory period towards peace time economics, something that other, older and more experienced countries, had already been slowly and seamlessly moving towards as the war was reaching its obvious conclusion. In fact, large industry continued to grow in spite of war’s end, as the State gave in to the demands of the new bourgeoisie and banks, who had everything to gain from this move.

Rich foreign tourists, rich capitalists, rich traitorous *“allies”* who stole Italy’s victory, rich military cowards and upstarts everywhere, meanwhile the average Italian was poor and struggled to survive in his

own “victorious” country as unemployment and inflation rose. “Fascism was born from the rage of warriors” – of the 4 million Italian combatants in WW1, no less than 3,5 million had come from the village, which had been hit hard by the industrialization politics of the big cities. All of this, of course, likewise began to revive the Italian socialists, who promoted the narrative of the war having been only conducted for the sake of capitalist interests.

## RED ADVANCE

Social unrest mounts, agrarian riots sweep the country, reaching their most violent manifestations in the South, the internal divisions of the hodgepodge “peasantry” begin to manifest further as the rural proletarian *braccianti* side with the most revolutionary leftist elements. The agrarian question reaches such dire dimensions that in October of 1919 the King relinquishes ownership of most of his own lands in favor of the State, hoping to mitigate the situation.

In the cities the workers were utilizing their favorable foothold brought by wartime industrialization to secure and improve their material situation, Revolutionary Russia inspiring them to make more and more demands of the Italian State, led since 1919 by the **Nitti** government. It represented the new progressive Italian bourgeoisie, which sought to solve Italy’s numerous problems through reforms and what Nitti himself called “*sacred ideas of a new labor democracy,*” as he sought to “*unite capital with labor.*”

**Mussolini** characterized this period by saying “*Nobody had the courage to be that, which they are meant to be. Bourgeois took on a socialist facade, and the socialist was growing into a bourgeois. The whole atmosphere was painted in halftones [mezze tinte].*”

And yet the labor revolution was continuing its advance, rejuvenated by the aftermath of the same war, the beginning of which

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had virtually cut off its oxygen. Metallurgical plants (*which benefited greatly from the War*) are forced to sign a collective agreement with the main Metallurgists Confederacy in February of 1919, the workers are granted an 8 hour work day along with other rights and benefits, realization of the agreement was overseen directly by the workers themselves. Yet soon enough 300,000 workers go on strike with new demands. Nitti insists that the factory and plant owners agree to these demands, thus only feeding the revolutionary hunger. Just some 4 months later, on February 18th, Milan is rocked by a workers demonstration of at least 10,000 people. The whole of May is marred by riots.

It is around this time that Fascism takes its first, tentative roots: on the 23rd of March the first congress of Fascists takes place, and at the start of September D'Annunzio takes Fiume, forcing the Italian State into an uneasy diplomatic situation. In fact Nitti's government was failing on all fronts, losing support from everyone with its half-measures and compromises as it tried to be friends with all opposing sides and interests: bourgeois, socialist, catholic (*represented by the center-left Popolari*). The November 1919 parliamentary elections end with large victory for the socialists (156 seats) and Popolari (100 seats), much to the dismay of Nitti, who had himself carried out the preceding electoral reform to increase proportionality of votes and make the entire process more democratic. In hindsight it would be said that this reform was an act of suicide on behalf of the old ruling liberal oligarchy. In 1920 Nitti's government would finally fall.

In his place returns **Giovanni Giolitti**, a familiar face to Italian people, who, unlike Nitti, favored the agriculture to industry, and thus his policies were targeted against the bloated parasite of industrial interests. This would still pit him against both the socialists and capitalists, who were interested in maintaining the underlying status

quo for the pursuit of their respective interests. The combined opposition of the bourgeoisie, workers, banks and cooperatives foiled him at every turn, and he would eventually follow in Nitti's footsteps, suggesting factory owners and employers to give in to the workers' demands, fearful of factories closing down.

The socialists, however, hit their own breaking point, and in January of 1921 the party was formally split in two: socialists and communists. The split was growing slowly but steadily in the party for some years, foremost due to a lack of a truly iconic leader, one that they had lost in **Mussolini**, confirming Lenin's remark: "*What a waste that we lost Mussolini. He is a first-rate man who would have led our party to power in Italy.*" Instead, the socialists were left with figures like **Bissolati**, who had switched to the right of the main party line; **Turati**, who was averse to any extremist notions; and **Seratti**, party majority leader, who, despite his sympathies towards Revolutionary Russia, constantly pursued centrist half-measures. None of them could carry the revolution forward, ensuring that Italian socialism remained a phenomenon of parliament games and intrigues, or as **Mussolini** would describe it "*pasta socialism.*" Still, revolutionary attitudes grew naturally, wildly, in spite of Socialist party leaders, which would inevitably force the split between the tentative socialists and the radical communists.

Revolutionary spirit reached its zenith in the summer and autumn of 1920, a period of raging general strikes. July was marked by a **military revolt in Ancona**. At the end of May a congress of metallurgists takes place in Genoa, and on the 18th of June the demands are passed on to the federation of industrialists, but no agreement is reached. Both sides are represented by **Jews**. In response the workers begin organizing for a general strike, and on August 30th the "*Romeo*" factory organizes a lockout, the workers respond by taking over around 300 factories in and

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on the outskirts of Milan. Soon enough the first Red Guard are organized.

All the while the State remains impotent, incapable of influencing these rapidly developing events. Giolitti tells the bourgeois parties that a forceful eviction of the workers from the factories is impossible both technically and judicially. The revolutionary fire spreads to nearby cities and the metallurgists are joined by workers in other fields, including the post, as mailmen would deliver letters addressed to bourgeois factory owners directly to the workers occupying the factory. Interestingly enough the Popolari support the uprisings, even though at the start of the year they assisted the government in resolving similar strikes.

Herein the internal split began to manifest itself, as the communist radical **Gennari** pushes for the conflict to advance from its phase of economic demands to the full on political takeover, while the **Confederation of Labor** led by **D'Aragona** maintained a reformist course of action, welcoming the strike, all the while denying giving it a political character. In the end D'Aragona, with the support of other moderates Tuarti and Serrati would win this standoff, effectively staggering the revolutionary advance. Italian socialists proved themselves capable of taking over factories, but not taking power, capable of a general strike, but not of direct political action.

Giolitti immediately takes advantage of the shift within the Socialist party and declares support for their economic demands. This paved the way to a compromise between the State and the socialists, one that both sides were equally eager for, and an agreement was reached on the 19th of September, with further concessions made towards the workers. Factories were cleared out and normalcy was restored, yet this state of affairs, a new compromise forwarded by Giolitti, satisfied neither the industrialists nor the workers. In the case of the latter this

resulted in some moderate socialist leaders being voted out of their party positions by the workers in favor of radicals and extremists.

The government crisis only deepens further, revealing just how paralyzed the State truly was, unable to push forth any reforms, instead it constantly found itself dragging behind events, facing new situations instead of directing them. Unrest was growing everywhere, and everywhere tentative half-measures and inaction resulted in louder cries for radical solutions and extreme measures.

Constant concessions to manual labor created a curious inversion, where said labor paid better than qualified labor of specialists and engineers, who in their majority, as a result, did not support the socialists, and instead, along with universities, sided with the bourgeois parties, at a time when the bourgeoisie was near-universally hated. The Popolari, for having sided with the workers, lost all their support in the patriotic and bourgeois circles, having gained nothing. Villages were strained by riots, burglary, pogroms. It had become unsafe for soldiers to appear in their uniforms on the streets, as they would be besieged on all sides by calls of retribution against those who dragged Italy into the war that ended up costing it so much. In fact, a general assault on ideas of patriotism was in full swing, pushed by the most revolutionary elements. Ustryalov gives his evaluation of this move: *"It was as if the red revolution had set as its goal to "devalorize Italy." On its part this was worse than a crime: it was a mistake."*

## **THE FASCIST DRAGON**

While the Red Revolution effectively fizzled out, having lost its momentum and suffering an internal split, patriotic, irredentist and nationalist sentiments were reaching critical mass and desperately needed a directed output. On the 23rd of March 1919 WW1 Italian Arditi stormtroopers, who had once followed D'Annunzio to take

Fiume, legionaries and other former frontline combatants had gathered in a small hall of a trade school on San Sepolcro square of Milan, brought together by patriotic rage, hatred for the allies, disdain for their own weak government and a thirst for a different kind of revolution. These were the first Fascists led by **Mussolini**, organized in a “*union of war combatants*” – *Fascio di combattimento*. Most were former socialists and syndicalists, and **Mussolini** himself still maintained some loyalties to his “*socialist*” past (*which we’ll discuss in detail in the next major segment of this article, on Italian Character*), and the local workers looked favorably on his new organization. As a result of this, during a worker’s strike on the outskirts of Milan, when the local factory was seized it wasn’t a red banner, but the national flag that was hoisted over it, and **Mussolini’s** new newspaper, *Popolo d’Italia*, rejoices and supports the workers. However, the newspaper soon changes its presentation from a “*weekly socialist newspaper*” to “*newspaper of workers and combatants*” – *Giornale dei combattenti e dei produttori*.

This initial meeting, at the height of the Red Advance, was a seed planted in fertile ground of civil unrest, digging its roots deeply into the yet unmanifested, and overshadowed by the socialist revolts, patriotic energies. Italy wasn’t yet ready for Fascism, and likewise the Fascists were not yet ready to take the stage, still trying to find themselves in the midst of commonplace political formulas and banal “*radicalism*” of the time. In those early days Fascism was still toying with some socialist party and democratic formulas, the only thing standing out as its own unique characteristic was the very vividly nationalist overtone and militant makeup of those, as **Mussolini** put it, “*who called the country to war and led her to victory.*” Here the nationalist, irredentist and patriotic energies found their output and would manifest as the only force capable of rivaling socialism in the hearts of the masses. However, this wasn’t the old and tired “*upper crust*” nationalism of the previous

century, but a form of nationalism that toyed with the ideas of mass appeal and democracy, at least for now, until it would throw all democratic notions overboard, during Fascism's deadly struggle with red revolutionaries.

While the Red Advance was at its peak and fed on the mind and soul of the masses, leaving no room for contenders, **Mussolini** carefully waited and placed more attention on propaganda regarding foreign affairs, the bread and butter of irredentist ambitions, patriotic rage and militant resentment. Fascism remains quiet during the height of the red takeover of factories, biding its time, waiting for its own moment of revolutionary activity. And that moment came with the September agreement, when the Red Advance faltered all on its own and a widespread antisocialist reaction began to rise, carrying Fascism with it, becoming a hub for that reaction. On the 21st of November red revolutionaries kill a popular lawyer **Giulio Giordani**, which had proven to be the final straw, and some characterize his death to be the starting point of the Fascist Era. Squads of Blackshirts begin to arise rapidly all over the country – the teeth of the Fascist Dragon, sown by years of civil unease and tentative half-measures, finally ready for harvest. Fascism skyrockets from a small group to a national phenomenon.

The red revolution would never have won out, even if it didn't falter and split, for one of its major goals was to take away from the Italians their homeland, so soon after an incredible time of national tension and national victory, *too soon* since the Risorgimento. National pride, perhaps bruised and battered, was still alive and well, in fact more so, specifically *because* it was bruised. Ustryalov: *"Mussolini had found the wide masses at a dead end and blew up that dead end with furious preaching of love for the Fatherland."* One Italian Fascist slogan dictates: *"The Fatherland is not denied – it is conquered!" – La Patria non si nega, si conquista!*

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Fascism begins to find support in a variety of places, making for a colorful pallet of members, often contradictory in their ideas, but united by a not yet clearly defined feeling, one that **Mussolini** masterfully directs through his fiery and radical speeches and articles. Without him this movement (*or “antiparty,” as the Fascists had referred to themselves at the time*) would have surely never found its footing and broken down into warring factions. He was the axe to their rods, bound together by that mysterious feeling, creating the symbol of the Fasces. As he had united different groups in Fascism, he would unite different Italians into one nation – *“We have made Italy, now we must make Italians.”*

And Italians flocked to Fascism in droves, hungry for radical, revolutionary means, which the socialists and workers, to their disappointment, did not in the end provide. The appeal of extremes was now displaced instead to the qualities of the very sort of men that had founded the squads of Blackshirts and were now recruited from all walks of life – strength, honor, decisiveness and bravery. The Red Advance had lost its monopoly on revolutionary appeal, which Fascism combined with militant patriotism – socialism and nationalism, together. **Mussolini** declares: *“I love Italians, people of one blood as me, of same habits, who speak my language, belong to the same history. Then, while hating parasites of all kinds in all countries, I love the workers... It is not at all necessary for one to accept the international chimera in order to improve life. One does not need to reject their Fatherland and nation, for it is first of all absurd, and then criminal, to reject one’s own mother...”*

By 1921 the Blackshirts become a fact of everyday life in Italy. According to the data of the Fascist Congress from November of the same year, the Fascist organizations consisted of the following: 24 thousand industrial workers, 34 thousand agrarian workers, 18

thousand landowners, 20 thousand students, 22 thousand state and private servants, 18 thousand industrial and trade bourgeoisie, 12 thousand teachers and people of “*liberal professions*,” coming to a total of around 150 thousand. Thus, over a third of Fascists came from the villages and over another third were intellectuals.

Fascism finds widespread popularity with the youth, which while being already hot-blooded by nature, was charged by wartime experience, having become tense and ready for action. The indecisive and timid nature of the state angered them and made them question the legality and universal value of rights, growing more confident that might makes right. Fascism declares itself to be a movement of the youth, one that aims to rejuvenate the nation, bringing back its own youthful vigor. Here the Futurist elements within Fascism (*which often found itself at odds with the Roman traditionalist elements*) begin to dance more rapidly, and at one point **Marinetti** proposes to replace the Italian Senate with a “*Council of Youth*.” The same youth that had taken Fiume had now joined Fascism, and the most popular Fascist hymn **is an ode to youth**.

*Giovinezza, giovinezza,  
Primavera di bellezza.  
Nel fascismo e la salvezza  
Della nostra liberta  
  
Youth, youth  
Spring of beauty,  
In fascism is salvation  
Of our freedom.*

Fascism found support and “*fellow travelers*” among futurists and traditionalists, republicans (*in the sense of supporting the establishment of a republic*) and monarchists, intellectuals, bureaucrats, bourgeoisie, peasant landowners and small business owners, a considerable portion

of Catholics (*not taking kindly to antichristian red rhetoric*), anyone and everyone who were motivated either by enraged patriotism or class interest. This led to Fascism having a different flavor in different regions, showcasing both the national divide *and* its overcoming. Fascism came about as a pan-national phenomenon, overcoming all divisions, including those of class, promising both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat what was viewed as duly owed, but issuing warnings against greedy ambitions of either. One such warning came directly from **Mussolini** as he said: *“Do not claim that Fascist politics will serve capitalists. There are different sorts of bourgeoisie. One that you yourselves are bound to respect due to technical and historic necessity. You too feel the necessity of this intelligent and productive bourgeoisie, one that creates and directs industry. In the current period of history, at least, we can’t do without it. Then there is an ignorant bourgeoisie, a lazy and parasitic one. [...] Rest assured: if the capitalist circles hope for us to grant them excessive privileges, they will be mistaken. They will never receive such from us. Yet, on the other hand, if certain working circles, who have turned bourgeois in the bad sense of the word, hope to siphon from our system unfair advantages, electoral or otherwise, – they will likewise be mistaken. They will never see any of that.”* At another point he says: *“If the bourgeoisie hopes we’ll be their lightning rod, they will be wrong.”* Fascism declares itself to be *“a friend to the entrepreneur but not to the bourgeois.”*

With this wide spread support and a thirst for action from its youthful supporters, with the Red Advance halted and crumbling from within, **Mussolini** switches the emphasis of his rhetoric from foreign affairs to internal politics and declares that he would establish order using the same means by which socialism wanted to create disorder – by means of violence. Blackshirts organize into units known as Squadristi, each Fascist is instilled with the idea of service, order and

unity akin to those of Knightly Orders. The Fascist Charter dictates *“The Fascist party as such is a militia.”* To join this Order meant to be reborn for the new world that was to be built in place of the old: *“The Fascist Warrior has his own morality. Laws of common morality regarding family, politics, social relations are foreign to him.”*

From 1921 and onward Fascism takes up arms, militarizes and centralizes its organization. In December of same year the movement transforms into a political party – *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, the National Fascist Party, complete with its first concrete political programs that sing of service to the Nation – the State is declared to be a judicial manifestation of the Nation, however if the existing state does not fulfill its role as the carrier of national values, then the party, in the name of the Nation, will not stand with it, but against it. The program also talks, among other things, of national syndicalism, 8 hour work day, participation of the workers in the control of the factories, foreign interests, improving the military, creating a Fascist Militia, it highlights the importance of Fascist youth, as well as a number of things regarding the party structure. One of the fascist theorists states that *“fascism is a synthesis of the healthy old and the necessary new.”*

After the death of lawyer Giordani the country is swept by waves of Fascist terror which would target both individuals and masses. Punitive actions and actions of reprisal begin against all those who are deemed to be enemies of the Nation and those who dared to attack a Fascist, or as Italo Balbo had put it: *“Above all, we have to strike terror in our adversaries. A fascist cannot be killed with impunity.”* Youthful energies, nationalist tensions, patriotic rage begin to finally spill out and Fascist violence finds its targets: red peasant leagues and cooperatives are burning in the countryside – a strike against those who wished to renounce the Fatherland, their revolution has fizzled out; broken windows of ally embassies – vengeance for mutilated victory; a Popolari

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cooperative is burnt down for allying with the socialists; random enemies assaulted by flying squads of Blackshirts. A bit later insult would be added to injury as castor oil becomes a common way to “*finish off*” the foe. The usual accusations of thuggery follow, yet Fascists prove that the only way to beat back red violence was with black violence, echoing what Hitler would write in the pages of *Mein Kampf*. Again, Italo Balbo cuts to the heart of the matter: “*[Violence is] the quickest and most definitive way reaching the revolutionary goal. [...] No bourgeois hypocrisy, no sentimentalism; action, direct and sharp, carried out to the end, at whatever cost.*”

Fascist terror reaches its height in the summer and autumn of 1921. And just as in the years of the Red Advance, now faced with the Fascist Dragon, the government remained passive and quiet. At first the state saw in the Blackshirts a useful tool for negotiating worker and bourgeois interests, a boogeyman to keep them in line with, however in doing so they allowed a virtual state within a state to develop and run rampant against its enemies until **Mussolini** would boast loudly to the whole nation: “*Fascism has already won because socialism has already been defeated everywhere.*” In April of the same year Giolitti dissolves the Chamber of Deputies, hoping that the new elections would clear it of socialists, communists and the Popolari, all the elements that opposed his reform plans. During the elections he creates a “*Block of Parties for Order*” that had included the Fascists. However the 15th of May election had not realized his hopes, as he was unable to secure a majority, despite the socialists losing a few seats to the liberals. Instead the Popolari retained control of the parliamentary machine, however now, for the first time, Fascists secured their place at the table with 30 seats, one of which was taken by **Mussolini** himself. By the end of June, Giolitti’s cabinet resigns, to be replaced on the 4th of July by a social-reformist **Bonomi**, whose turn as Prime Minister would only last until

February of next year, proving itself to be just as impotent as all its predecessors.

The socialists, on their part, continued their course of sabotaging their own efforts, as their representatives in parliament stood in staunch opposition to the new government, for its bourgeois nature, thus eliminating any power it could have through parliament. Meanwhile Fascism continued its confident march to victory, its ranks increasing in numbers from year to year: in 1919 the Fascist Dragon still slept, few in numbers; in autumn of 1920 it had tens of thousands of followers stirring it awake; a year later it was 150 thousand strong, spreading its wings over Italy and breathing fire at its enemies; in the summer of 1922 it amassed 470 thousand members (*of which 277 thousand were peasants and agrarian workers and 72 thousand were industrial workers*), and in the autumn of the same year, by the time it had taken power, it was nearly one million strong. By autumn of 1921 the Red Advance was effectively crushed, but the political crisis continued to grow.

## **MARCH ON ROME**

With socialism and the Red Advance thoroughly crushed, **Mussolini** sets his sights on the liberal government. The change of course was made drastically clear, when in his speech from December 1st of 1921 he threatens, that if the government upsets the Fascists enough, they would unite with the communists against the state, only to swiftly destroy communism thereafter. A potent threat which came at a time when the State believed that Fascism's usefulness as a tool against the Red Advance was outlived, however it was now virtually powerless against it. Ustryalov colorfully describes the situation thus: *"Giolitti, having at first favored Fascism's freemen, had become to a degree akin to the notorious mage, helpless against the powers he had summoned.*

*The anti-red medicine proved to be so effective, that it now threatened the official “pink” government of Rome.”* In turn, Bonomi likewise was unable to hold on to the seat of Prime Minister, which had passed to **Luigi Facta**, who would be later nicknamed *Romulus Augustulus*, in honor of the last Roman Emperor, yet another in a long line of ineffective, weak politicians.

Par for the course of Italian parliamentarism which continued to play its petty games of party relations. Socialists were steadfast in their opposition, the Popolari kept wavering and waffling, all the while the small band of Fascists, emboldened by its support outside of parliament, acted with disproportionate bravado, all of which deteriorated the parliament’s prestige. There is finally talk of “*subduing the Fascists,*” which further moves **Mussolini** towards the idea of a forceful takeover. His articles are full of anger and disdain for the state, democracy, and liberal government. Fascist action renews across the country as the Fascist armed forces, by now fully formed and organized, take over entire cities, cleansing them of whatever little red presence still around, and proclaim their own rule and laws. Ferrara, Bologna, Ravenna and Genoa become such bastions of Fascism. *Both* the socialists **and** communists now ask the government for help and protection, for a return to the rule of law. Balbo jeers: “*What revolutionary fiber these socialists have! To defend themselves, they have no other arguments than the Royal Carabinieri...*” The Fascist reply to any accusations of lawlessness was “*We greatly revere the law, however at the same time, in our ambitions towards just goals we will not stop short of breaking it, if it acts too slowly or unsuccessfully.*”

Both the government and the socialists enter yet another phase of their respective crises. Facta’s government begins to fall apart after a Fascist attack on the home of the leader of leftist Catholics, **Guido Miglioli**. The Popolari exit the government majority in protest.

Meanwhile the socialists suffered another split in September, between those who wanted to cooperate with the government and those who wished to maintain opposition, leading to the expulsion of the former from the party. The latter begin toying with the idea of a new general strike, which was planned for the 1st of August, with no coordination with the General Confederation of Labor. This was the last, desperate, dying scream of the Red Advance. **Mussolini** had masterfully utilized this to his advantage, to deliver the final blow against all antifascist forces in the country. On the very first day of the strike he issues a warning to the government in his newspaper: *“if the government does not stop the general strike within 48 hours, it will be done by fascists.”* The strike had failed and officially dispersed on the 3rd of August, not without Fascist participation, which gave credence to **Mussolini’s** further criticisms against the impotent liberal state. It could not be improved, only destroyed. The new government crisis was over just in time for the start of the strike, with Facta retaining his position, however now its days were numbered.

**Mussolini** is now fully committed to a revolutionary takeover. Both technical, military and ideological preparations are underway. As the Blackshirts form up and take arms, **Mussolini** writes article after article, gives speech after speech, threats and warnings in every single one: *“The liberal government is but a mask with no face behind it!”*; *“There is a proletariat which deserves punishment so that it may improve, and a bourgeoisie, which hates us, tries to mix up our ranks, and pays for papers that spread lies about us – I will have not one drop of mercy towards this bourgeoisie.”* In his famous Udine speech from September 20th of 1922 he declares **“Rome or Death!”** He speaks of a *“Nation’s struggle against an antinational government.”* The goal of Fascism is made crystal clear, some of the words in the speech sound so familiar, as if spoken by **Corneliu Codreanu** himself: *“We wish to rule*

*Italy. That is our credo, our ambition. Italy never had a shortage of programs for salvation. What it did lack was real people and the necessary will! We are a new people, capable of ruling a new Italy. Fascism will place a great responsibility on its own shoulders."*

There was only one obstacle in the way to taking power, one that came from within. Fascism, having united in its ranks both Monarchists and Republicans (**Mussolini** himself having been the latter for all his life), was threatened to be divided over the issue of the King – was he to be deposed by the Fascist revolution or not? **Mussolini** will not risk division of his forces at this, most crucial hour, especially over a non-issue. The King, much like the Parliament, was passive, impotent, in short, not a threat to Fascist power – there is no reason why he couldn't be brought into the fold, or as Ustryalov puts it: *"The monarchization of fascism was bought with the fascization of the monarchy."* The King could retain his, by this point in time, purely symbolic and cultural position, however only in exchange for his support of Fascism. Depending on the King's decision, Fascists would march under one of the two slogans: it is either the union of Fascism and the King against the liberal state – *long live the Fascist Monarchy!*; or Fascism would march against both the King and liberal state – *glory to the Fascist Republic!* That is how **Mussolini** had posed the question of the Monarchy in Udine. Moreover, he declares: *"The republican tradition in fascism is explained by the fact that the **Italian Monarchy is not monarchistic enough.** [...] the monarchy, to the contrary, has no reason to turn against that, which has been called the "fascist revolution." It is in its own interests. If it were to do so and find itself in the ranks of our enemies we would be unable to grant it mercy or to save it, as it would be a question of life and death for us... **Why are we republicans? It can be said that this is so, because we see a monarch who is not enough of a monarch!**"* These formulas are very much reminiscent of the

French **ultra-royalists**, and were more than welcomed by the Monarchists and Traditionalists in the Fascist ranks, and were acceptable to the Republicans. The resolution of the King question was to be left up to the King himself.

Fascism was likewise letting go of its more radically anti-christian beginnings. **Mussolini**, in this, was a student of Nietzsche, and back in 1919, on the 28th of September he spoke in the hall of a Milan conservatory: *"I very much favor pagans, who thirst for struggle, life, progress, alien to blind faith in otherworldly truths and detest miraculous panaceas."* This, just as the republicanism, were leftovers of the socialist past, which still held some truth to **Mussolini**, but would be refined in the long path of Fascism's ascend to power, this is clear from just how many Catholics had flocked to its side over the years. The metamorphosis was necessary as yet another way of breaching a historic national divide, and the Vatican was likewise offered its place within the Fascist state after the takeover. Fascist Militia would at one point update their oath, now having its members swear to both God and Fatherland, which wouldn't stop them, however, from attacking the Popolari. On the 27th of June, 1922, **Mussolini** again sends a signal to Catholics, both in his ranks and in the wide masses of Italians, that they had nothing to fear: *"Fascism is not going to evict God from the heavens or religion from the earth, as some materialists foolishly desire. It does not consider religion to be either a figment of the Pope's imagination, nor a sneaky trick of oppressors, interested in enslaving the people."* In his first parliamentary address he would even say: *"God will help me successfully realize my difficult task."* It is not likely that **Mussolini** himself had undergone some form of religious awakening, but rather that he was following in the teachings of **Machiavelli** (*who saw the Vatican as one of the major obstacles on*

*the path to Italy's unification), or, to paraphrase Ernst Niekish: "for the sake of Italy I am capable even of Catholicism."*

Another group to have found its home in Fascism, representatives of the old nationalism, were the easiest to assimilate, moreover, Fascism had transformed it thoroughly and made it accessible to the wide masses of people, releasing it from the tired and dying stuffy cabinets of the upper crust of society. Back in 1919 the Fascist and Nationalist programs had nothing in common, but over the years the differences were washed away, and the Nationalists clearly saw the realization in Fascism of ideas that were so dear to them. Eventually the Nationalists would formally integrate into Fascism in the March of 1923. Corradini correctly summarized, that the two movements held the same beliefs, but approached them from two different directions: old Nationalism was a pre-war phenomenon, exclusive to the elites, whereas Fascism held within itself a post-war, new Nationalism of the masses, one that we commonly recognize today as THE definition of nationalism as such. This exact same development, by other means, would arise in Germany through the NSDAP.

With all Fascist forces consolidated, organized, armed and ideologically prepped, **Mussolini** was ready to finally seize power. On the 24th of October, 1922, a Fascist congress takes place in Naples. Besides the delegates, tens of thousands of Blackshirts arrive into the city, to see, to hear, to salute their leader, to demonstrate the power of Fascism. The proceedings took on the appearance of a fair or festival, Fascist songs could be heard throughout the city, the locals took to the streets to partake in the Fascists' uplifting merriment. **Mussolini's** speech had once again contained an ultimatum to the state, the final ultimatum: ***"If the government does not give in to the wishes of those, who represent the nation, the blackshirts will march on Rome."***

The next day **Mussolini** leaves Naples, the congress is declared to be over and the Blackshirts disappear without a trace. The March on Rome has begun! In the minds of the Blackshirts this was a formality, they already de facto ruled the country, it was simply time to recognize that fact in the highest offices of power. They push onward to the capitol, *“in the name of the dead and those who would live in the future”* – another parallel to Codreanu. The Nationalist Blueshirts rush out to join them on the march. Meanwhile Rome is still stuck in petty parliamentary intrigues, now joined by wild rumors of supposed coalition plans and other political combinations, as if blind to the approach of the Fascist Dragon.

On the 27th Rome is surrounded by the mobilized army of Blackshirts, finally silencing the mill of petty politics behind the curtains of parliament. Fascism issues its proclamation, saying how it has marched to overthrow *“the political class of the weak and miserable, who in the course of 4 long years were unable to give the nation a real government.”* The proclamation ends with these words: *“We call upon the Almighty and the souls of our 500 thousand martyrs to bear witness, that we are moved by a singular purpose, united by a singular will, ignited by a singular passion: to help save, and to serve for the greatness of our Fatherland.”*

At the eleventh hour Facta manages to grow some backbone, and on the night of the 28th he declared the whole of Italy to be under siege. Rome was turned into a huge military camp and some felt that the nation was but a spark away from a full blown civil war, were it not for the King, or rather, were it not for **Mussolini’s** ultimatum to the King. When Facta brought his declaration of Martial Law (*which de facto was already enacted*) to **King Victor Emmanuel III**, the King refused to sign it. The very same day the government resigned. **Mussolini** receives a telegram, delivered on behalf of the King, where he is invited to give the

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King consult. **Mussolini** replies, that he sees no reason to bother over consultations. In the next telegram he is offered to organize the Cabinet of Deputies. On the 29th **Mussolini** appears in Rome and is immediately given audience with the King. An hour later he emerges from his meeting and returns to his hotel, surrounded by the masses who await his speech: *“Fascists! Citizens! Fascism has achieved Total Victory! I have been summoned to Rome – to rule. In a few hours you will not have a ministry, but a government. Long Live Italy, Long Live the King, Long Live Fascism!”*

## ITALIAN CHARACTER

Any national character has its extremes, the people at their best and their worst, however, both stem from the same source, same roots, same blood, two sides of the same coin. The characteristic root of Italian character seems to be their desire to have it all, which manifests in their reaction to the outcome of the War, the slogan of “*mutilated victory*.” A different people might have reacted in a tamer manner and felt that they should be glad for what they *did* secure and settle for less than everything they hoped for. One could think of the English character and the British Empire – more calculating, more *mature* in a certain sense of the word, ready to accept lesser deals but always looking for other avenues to exploit. However the Italian spirit is of a different sort.

At their worst Italians seem to be indecisive, tentative, shy – they still look to their desires with hopeful eyes, though lack the daring to actually reach for it with full strength, instead opting for very timid gestures. This can be seen in the Parliamentary games we’ve gone over before, namely how the government attempted to befriend or placate both the bourgeoisie and the socialists, ultimately giving in to the latter, who practiced more daring, while the bourgeois often times conceded to the demands of the state. “*One cannot sit on two chairs*” but this is exactly what each Italian government tried to, in fact they tried to sit on all the chairs at the same time. They’d push electoral reforms to help them secure their standing and grant power to enact other reforms, and it blew up in their face each time. In short, at their worst Italians still want it all, but are unable to have any of it.

At their best, however, Italians are wild, reckless, daring and want to get everything out of life, while having the audacity to actually go for it, hence they can’t help but hate with a passion all that is indecisive and

timid. Life is for the living, turn everything into an adventure – that is the Italian outlook. When the Italian soldier got bored of sitting in the trenches for weeks on end with the frontline remaining unchanged, he gave birth to the reckless Arditi, who would storm over no man's land with daggers in their teeth and bombs in their hands to take over the enemy trench. While the timid negotiations of the Italian state led to the proclamation of Fiume becoming an independent city-state, passionate poet D'Annunzio assembles volunteers to take it by force, establishes a Regency, and then funds it with piracy, all the while his faithful followers have play-fights with live weapons and grenades. This "*country of museums*" births the Futurist movement that is ready to smash the past to pieces (*and their enemies, the "pasteists" – passéiste*) – Italians are not statues, they are race cars with no breaks! Marinetti seeks to remove any and all sources of the worst Italian qualities, even in food: "*No more pasta, as it causes lassitude, pessimism and lack of passion.*" All these figures sing of their love of life and danger:

- "*Let me breathe! Let me drink the wind, feel danger, extinguish the sparks and stars of my unrest! Let me again experience silence, victory and night!*" -**D'Annunzio**
- "*It is not possible to root our desire, to fight passion is to sin against life.*" -**D'Annunzio**
- "*We advocate a plunge into shadowy death beneath the white and staring eyes of the Ideal. . . . And we ourselves will furnish the example, abandoning ourselves to the furious Seamstress of battles who, having sewn us into a handsome scarlet uniform, garish in the sun, will anoint our hair with flames, our hair brushed back by bullets. . . .*" -**Marinetti**
- "*For my part, I have only one proposition: dare everything.*" -**Italo Balbo**

While the Italian at his worst is afraid of extremes, the Italian at his best wants to embrace all the extremes, which, ironically, leads the “Yoga” movement of D’Annunzio’s Fiume to question the notion of dictatorship: they do not believe that any one man is capable of accepting many views and many extremes. **Guido Keller** declared that it was the dialectic capacity to embrace opposing positions that was the sure sign of the fullness of life. In contrast, the dictate of a single person created a devastating monotony, which was negation of life itself. To dare wish and strive for embracing of all the extremes of life, yet distrusting one man to rule and be capable of doing exactly that – this in of itself is a contradiction, one the Italian soul dares to embrace regardless.

One may think these aspirations of the Italian soul to be ludicrous, yet they are, in fact, absolutely real and organic, an expression of a deeper truth that permeates all of life and finds its most acute expression in the Italian people: there is no creation without destruction, no life without death, and it is always darkest just before the dawn. To revive Italian spirit it must break the past; to truly live it must embrace danger and challenge death, or as Balbo had put it, to know “*the pride of peril*”; to help the sun rise over Italy once more it had to first be blocked out with the smoke of burning socialist collectives.

*“... the sword’s double edge, it represents a twofold power of the Word, creative and destructive, which takes us back precisely to the vajra. Indeed, the latter also symbolizes a force that, although one in its essence, is manifested under two aspects that are contrary in appearance, although complementary in reality. These two aspects, just as they are represented by the two edges of the sword or other similar weapons, are here represented by the two opposite*

*points of the vajra; this symbolism is moreover valid for the totality of cosmic forces..."*

**-Rene Guenon, Symbols of Sacred Science**

Therefore, the history of Fascism's rise to power is not only one of the struggle between the Red Advance and the Fascist Dragon on one hand, but also between the two sides of the Italian soul on the other. The Italian state and socialists are a perfect crystallization of that passiveness and timidness, the indecisive nature of Italians that makes them waddle around clumsily at their lowest point. Were the state more decisive it could have possibly pushed through its reforms and kept the Red Advance at bay. Had the socialists been more decisive they would have chosen to either support the war effort or use the war to the advantage of their revolutionary goals, instead they chose passivity, and when history offered them another chance to have it all they once again proved to be too timid.

We repeatedly insist in our writings that there is a single Worldview from which all our champions hail, how both NS Germany and Fascist Italy represent the same thing at their core, but are different expressions thereof. Italian Fascism is indeed the distinct expression of the Italian character at its best, it is the manifestation of their National Truth and through it a manifestation of larger Truth that we all serve. Just look back to the colorful assortment of Fascism's supporters, the different and often opposite extremes that were united by it as one, reconciled in the discovery of their common fundamental nature. If we're to again quote Guenon from the same book we will find Fascism as the **axis** of the Italian people: *"the axis is the place where all oppositions are reconciled and vanish, or in other words the place of perfect equilibrium, which Far-Eastern traditions designate as the "Invariable Middle.""* And soon Fascism would become the axis to all of Italy, granting it true unity, completing the work of the Risorgimento.

And much to the contrary of the fears held by members of the *Yoga* movement, Fascism could never have succeeded, were it not led by a leader who did, in fact, embrace life in its totality. While Adolf Hitler was *larger than life*, **Mussolini** was *as large as life*. In terms offered to us by Savitri Devi, one could argue that **Mussolini** was actually more of a *man in time* than *man above time*, more lightning than sun (*as opposed to Hitler being more sun and not enough lightning*), but he came at a turning point in history, when time itself demanded the birth of those who would struggle against it – a season for all things, a time for negation, and a time for *negation of negation*. A period of time when even pure lightning would herald the coming sun.

**Mussolini** would unconsciously wish for that, which fate desired, if we are to recall the words of Ernst Jünger, while the marxist **Clara Zetkin** would go as far as to say that “*Mussolini was fate.*” Meanwhile Ustryalov would characterize **Mussolini** as foremost a practitioner, rather than a theoretician, moreover, he describes him as “*a great artist of action.*” All of which is to say, that **Mussolini** was a masterful conductor of life itself, he instinctively felt its ebb and flow and knew how to direct the course of events, while everyone else were swept away by them, helpless to influence them in any way. “*Mussolini ist eine Urkraft*” – “*Mussolini is an Elemental Force.*”

*“An acute sense of the masses, political intuition, thirst for action and will to power, dexterity of an arriviste, organizational skill, a living practical mind with the temperament of an authentic Italian, a strong pen, and vivid speech – Mussolini is generously endowed with these qualities, invaluable in the era of revolutionary crisis.”*

**-Ustryalov**

We can likewise provide some more relevant quotations from Carl Jung, which are seemingly overlooked in favor of the one quote that we used to introduce this article:

- *“Mussolini has a certain vitality about him. He is a man – natural [and] warm. ... He speaks as a real person.”*
- *“Mussolini is a man of physical strength. When you see him you are aware of it at once. He is [the] original man and he enjoys a military parade with the zest of a small boy at a circus.”*
- *“Mussolini is all that he is on the surface, whereas Hitler is not.”*

*“With the zest of a small boy at a circus”* – one can easily see in this the manifestation of that distinct Italian character at its best, one that regards the whole of life as a playground. This attitude likewise leaves one very open to, and appreciative of the humors of life or what others would describe as *“God having a sense of humor,”* something that **Sir Oswald Mosley** attests to in his autobiography, describing it as **Mussolini** having *“a peculiar sense of fun, a lively appreciation of life’s ups and downs”*:

*“His humour was simple and direct; it had almost a barrack-room savour. He said to me on arrival one day: ‘Do you know who sat in that chair yesterday? — The Chief Rabbi of Italy. Do you know what he said to me? — We Jews rise on top of you Gentiles like oil on water. — The effrontery of him. Do you know what happened last night? — he dropped dead.’ Mussolini slapped his big thigh and roared with laughter.”*

**-Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life**

**Mussolini** and his followers could be deservedly regarded as scoundrels, rebels and *“thugs,”* but it all contains that Italian charm of a grin and a wink, never simply malicious, in fact often completely detached of any ill thoughts and instead filled with that childlike thirst

for life, to which violence and thuggery were intrinsic. In fact, if one is to observe how children play games involving pirates and bandits, and then look to the antics of the Arditi, the Blackshirts and all Fascists at large including **Mussolini** himself, one can notice, that while the piracy and banditry are now real, no longer just pretend, the Italian Fascist enjoys it all with the same childlike wonder of an innocent game. **Mussolini's** biographies often point out how he was a bully and a troublemaker, but also a natural leader to the other kids in school, and he would retain those youthful, vigorous qualities well into his adult years. A movement of scoundrels, a nation of adventurers, could only be led by a leader of the schoolyard gang:

*"... the Italian masses find nothing fake in his gestures, mannerisms, habits, the poses from his cabinet of curiosities, where one can find anything ranging from a "bored God" to an "enraged lion." And truthfully there is nothing deliberately fake in these poses. Each people have their own cultural style."*

**-Ustryalov**

All of this is not to say that **Mussolini** did not have his moments of genuine anger and malice, being truly upset, cold or distant, however all of these qualities define **Mussolini** at his worst – some might venture to continue the analogy of youth and say that at his worst **Mussolini** acted like an upset or spoiled child. In the analogy of an elemental force one would easily see in this a typical caprice of nature. Italian passion runs hot, it accepts extremes, which means that they can return to norm just as quickly as they can fly off the handle in the first place:

*"When I arrived, Mussolini was in such a rage that none of his associates dared approach him on the subject, and some of them suggested that in my interview I should try to cool him off. I made*

## *Italian Character*

*the attempt, and he took it very well; at first a hard stare of the glittering eyes, and then a most reasonable and realistic discussion.”*

### **-Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life**

Such is the nature of the Italian character, and therefore, the nature of **Mussolini**. As a manifestation lightning, a man in time, he cannot help but embody its ever changing flow. As for **Mussolini's** own take on himself: *“I am an eternal traveler and will never recognize the achieved stage as the final one.”*

Yet, it is exactly for that very reason that he is a man in time, more lightning than sun, that he would begin to falter after attaining victory for Fascism in Italy, when certain negative qualities of Italian character would creep in and make him undermine himself, which is the subject matter of our next segment.

## MUSSOLINI – MACHIAVELLI’S PRINCE

The whole purpose of Machiavelli’s *“Prince”* was to provide a hypothetical leader the manual for the unification of Italy, one that was written in an atmosphere of Italian character at its worst: the various split states that existed across Italy indulged in petty political bickering and backroom dealings, backstabbing and assassination plots, duplicity and treachery. One could only hope to unify this great land by being both Lion and Fox, arguably two aspects of Savitri Devi’s *“Lightning”* – force and cunning. And there is absolutely no question that **Mussolini** had armed himself with this manual. He had, in fact, dedicated an entire article, in the 1924 May edition of the Fascist journal *“Hierarchy,”* titled *“Prelude to Machiavelli.”* Enemies and friends alike would call him an “Italian of the Renaissance period,” a politician who embodied the qualities of the Machiavellian hero, which was either condemnation or praise, depending on who said it.

**Mussolini** could be rightfully called *Machiavelli’s Prince*, the very person for whom that manual had been written, so that he may navigate through a multitude of conniving enemies with both brute force and cunning, all in the service of a singular goal – to unite Italy and her people, Machiavelli’s dream realized. It is a manual for struggle against mere politics in service to a greater goal, one that shows how to turn the tools of the enemy against himself and strike at his weak points with appropriate means. Is that not exactly what **Mussolini** had done? He waited out for the Red Advance to overexert itself, focusing instead on rhetoric of external politics, but once he turned his focus inwards he immediately robbed the socialists of their revolutionary appeal, claiming it for his Blackshirts. He’d issue ultimatums and threats when he knew his enemies could not respond in any way other than to his

benefit, and wherever the state was passive and inactive he would show up to claim victories for his Fascist legions. He would often bluff, and his enemies could tell that he was, so they ignored him, making them look even more so as indecisive cowards to the masses. However, at times what was perceived only as a mere bluff turned out to be a very real, and devastating blow, to the enemy.

Much is said of Machiavelli's teaching by modern liberal academia, claiming that it separates morality from politics. However, liberal morality is nothing more than bourgeois sentimentalism – of course they would say that! It claims that Machiavelli taught that ends justify the means – yet this is, in reality, the credo of modernity, that any goal will justify the means, like goals of naked power for its own sake, or naked profiteering. These are the real qualities of present day politics and economics – do whatever it takes to win and make a profit. What Machiavelli taught, in reality, was how GREAT and NOBLE ends justify the means, for Machiavelli indeed pursued a great and noble goal of unifying Italy, specifically in a setting where everyone else would deploy any means at their disposal for the sake of their own petty interests that kept Italy divided. Machiavelli had been accused of preaching exactly that, which he taught to navigate and struggle against. Fight fire with fire, only so can you overcome fire completely, much like how Adolf Hitler had surmised in Mein Kampf, and how both he and Mussolini acted:

*“He was ruthless, amoral, brutal when fighting the brutality of the bestial Red gangs of Italy — all those things — but a patriot, a brave man who served what he saw to be great ends. He was too a man of some vision and some sense of beauty, whose epitaph might be expressed in his own words recommending certain qualities which his life and character incarnated:*

*Youth is beautiful, because it has clear eyes with which to regard and to reflect the vast and tumultuous panorama of the world.*

*Youth is beautiful because it has a fearless heart that dreads not death.”*

**-Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life**

In all regards, the “*Prince*” was a manual for a conqueror and unifier, a revolutionary, and during **Mussolini’s** rise to power it provided invaluable insight. However, once the ultimate goal was achieved, the time had come to finally do away with the tired old political games established by bourgeois liberalism and the history of Italy’s disunity, thus marking the passing point after which the lessons of Machiavelli could be set aside for a different age. It was here, that **Mussolini** had truly faltered and allowed the worst elements of Italian nature to creep in. Somehow he lacked the daring to let go of this manual to his success, and instead continued to regard the politics of his own regime in the same light that he regarded the politics of the liberal state that he had overthrown – the only logical outcome for this would be actions that only served to undermine what he had established.

This attitude wasn’t *entirely* unfounded. Italian Fascists would proudly declare: “*It is relatively easy to become a fascist, but hard to remain one,*” and yet not much was done to enact the full meaning of these words. In his tireless work for maintaining the unity of his movement and the unity of the Italian people at large he inevitably attracted various opportunistic elements that saw in Fascism a vehicle of personal gain. One Fascist figure had complained “*The cry “who is not with us is against us” has been cast to the four winds! Cowards and profiteers were not deaf to this call, and the good wine was diluted with impure water,*” only to be beaten up by the Fascist youth for his impertinence. During Fascism’s rise to power some of these elements

could be exploited to its benefit, which **Mussolini** had no qualms about doing, however once victory was achieved time had come to clean house.

Some measures were indeed undertaken for this exact purpose as the movement began the process of weeding out undesirable elements, which led to the expulsion of some 30 thousand members. However, the majority of these measures were targeting the unruly elements of the rank and file, which continued to act in a manner encouraged for the revolutionary period, but severely frowned upon once power has been acquired. A symbolic example of this is how the use of castor oil was made punishable with up to 3 years of prison by the Fascist state. Internal disciplinary measures ranged from reprimand and temporary exclusion, to indefinite exclusion not just from the party but from the entirety of Italy's political life, as well as the "*Traitor*" mark of shame. These measures had turned the Fascist legions from a rambunctious, revolutionary gang, into a well-disciplined military order in service of the nation. "*Not Italy for Fascism, but Fascism for Italy*" as Ustryalov put it.

The problem was that these measures were not enacted widely enough in the higher echelons of the movement, where the most corrosive elements had resided. A hidden parasite is always worse than an undisciplined follower. **Julius Evola** and his "*La Torre*" magazine had become at the time prime objects of disdain among such parasitical elements, who rightly suspected it as a threat to their cushy positions. The pages of "*La Torre*" proclaimed: "*We would like a more radical, intrepid Fascism: a truly absolute Fascism, founded on pure energy and subject to no compromise.*"

Considering that **Mussolini** had not established his own dictatorship until January 3rd 1925, having first (*immediately after his victorious March on Rome*) organized an old style parliamentary cabinet

and government which included the Popolari, democrats and liberals, this call for Fascism to be more Fascistic rings both true, and very reminiscent of what **Mussolini** had himself said about the Italian Monarchy. To **Mussolini's** *"we are antimonarchist only because the Monarchy is not monarchistic enough"* Evola echoes *"we are antifascist only because Fascism is not fascistic enough,"* or if we were to directly quote the latter: *"The label "anti-Fascist" only suits us to the extent that it suits those wishing to go beyond Fascism."*

The entire ordeal surrounding the publication of *"La Torre"* serves as a telling story of the climate within the higher positions of power within the Fascist state:

*"Fascist circles were initially shocked by our publication. Soon, however, we were made the object of more violent and brutal reactions, particularly because our "club" was striking at real gangsters: men devoid of all qualifications, who had been awarded the role of arrogant representatives of Fascist 'thought' and 'culture' merely on account of their past as Blackshirts, or their dull fanaticism – a truly pathetic spectacle.*

[...]

*Accustomed as they were, to acting with impunity, these 'Fascists' turned vicious when faced with our criticism. As they were incapable of defending themselves and addressing our criticism on an intellectual level, they resorted to more direct means. What followed were vile slanders, 'chivalrous' disputes, lawsuits, and acts of physical aggression. For a period of time, I was forced to walk around with a few bodyguards (other Fascists, sympathetic to my cause). Failing to meet their goals, these 'gentlemen', by way of their personal acquaintances, turned to the higher echelons of the Fascist Party, and to its former secretary, Achille Starace.*

[...]

*Within Fascism, certain men of character met an ill fate because of their denunciation of the misdeeds of powerful, influential members of the Party.*

[...]

*In strictly cultural terms, however, the Fascist 'revolution' was simply a joke. All that was required in order to become a representative of Fascist 'culture' was to become a member of the Party and to pay formal, conformist tribute to the Duce. All else was more or less irrelevant.*

[...]

*Instead of starting from scratch, of ignoring fame and big names, instead of subjecting each intellectual candidate to a radical reassessment, Fascism, with provincial and bourgeois ambition, chose to welcome all the 'cultural representatives' of the bourgeoisie, as long as they could give proof of their formal (and irrelevant) adherence to the regime. This led to pathetic cases such as that of the Academia d'Italia, the members of which were largely agnostic or anti-Fascist in their private beliefs. But the same is also true of many other men who were assigned prominent roles within the Fascist cultural establishment and media. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many of these gentlemen now donning a new uniform in democratic, anti-Fascist Italy."*

#### **-Julius Evola, The Path of Cinnabar**

Ultimately **Mussolini** needed to consolidate the party by expelling the undesirable elements and leaving only a loyal band of brothers, a gang, a brotherhood of revolutionary veterans. Hitler had willed such loyalty naturally, **Mussolini** on the other hand should have worked towards the same results, and he had all the qualities to be successful in this endeavor. Instead, he focused foremost on suspicions and distrust of all his comrades, and resorted to using the lessons of

Machiavelli against them. Loyalty was never fostered but always questioned, to the point where **Mussolini** would not allow certain figures to occupy a seat of power for too long, fearful of them amassing too many connections and prestige in one place, he would maneuver them to a new post. Some figures would be effectively “*banished*” by their placement in very remote and minuscule positions, until they were finally removed from political life altogether.

Italo Balbo, for example, had been moved around from post to post, each time building a fledgling organization into something noteworthy, only to be sent elsewhere: he would virtually single-handedly be responsible for building up the Fascist Militia, Aviation and Libyan colony. And yet his relationship with **Mussolini** was turbulent as they would go from friends to rivals, in particular Balbo’s own charismatic popularity often made **Mussolini** question his loyalty.

*“[Mussolini] might easily have created a defense ministry or a general chief of staff with powers over all three services. Balbo made such proposals in 1933, and Mussolini repeatedly turned them down. Such an office, particularly with Balbo at the head of it, as he proposed, posed too great a political threat to the dictator. Italy paid dearly for this decision in 1940.”*

**-Claudio G. Segre, Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life**

**Mussolini** was indeed too much lightning, and once he achieved success he didn’t know how to, despite his status as dictator, simply “*rule unabashedly,*” as **Konstantin Leontiev** once advised, and transcend from lightning to sun. Instead he fell back into the kind of petty political intrigue that he had sought to root out.

## FASCISM, RACE AND WORLDVIEW

From everything explored in the history segment of this article one should have easily spotted a number of parallels between Italian and German history and how it helped foster a certain national response. The second segment helped provide context as to why that response took on the shape that it did, as opposed to the one taking place in Germany, being in turn a manifestation of the same force through German national character. *“Fascism was born from the rage of warriors.”* While German warriors experienced the rage of humiliating defeat, Italian warriors experienced the rage of humiliating victory – the source of humiliation in both cases being the Treaty of Versailles. What truly upsets any warrior is injustice, and the treaty spelled injustice for both nations, if for different reasons, and what motivated the rise of Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany was the desire for justice – to put things into their rightful place, for the true order of things to be restored. In this pursuit of justice their scope kept expanding, as they continued to follow the pattern behind events having unfolded as they did to their source – a fundamentally erroneous view of the world at large, and not just in military, political and societal affairs. Thus, for different reasons yet a common motivation, and by similar avenues, both had come to find the same answers, which led them to the same Worldview. They would gain their strength in that Worldview, which would find its expression through their blood.

Which is where the second segment of this article, dealing with national character, comes in. Germans are more systematic, thus their expression was more coherent, concrete. Meanwhile Italians had a strong instinct and a strong guiding feeling, but one they did not always know how to express in a systemic way, instead opting for artistic

expression and intuitive action. **Mussolini's** path towards self-actualization as a Fascist is very much the same as that of many of us today, it is akin to having a general sense of direction, of familiarity that guides us to the source, and only once we have reached it will we see what it all meant in retrospect. Take, for example, **Mussolini's** beginning as a socialist. How many Fascists and National Socialists in general have had a socialist or even communist path? There is clearly something familiar there which can initially draw a searching Fascist to it, however everything else that surrounds that familiarity will inevitably push him away, while granting clarity on what that familiar *something* was.

In his youth, **Mussolini** expressed his view of socialism thusly: *“Socialism is not a trade deal, not a politician’s game, not a dream of the romantic and even less so a sport... Socialism is something cruel, strict, something sewn together from contradictions and violence. It is war; and woe to the softhearted in that war; socialism is a terrible, serious and lofty deed.”* There is certainly something Fascist (*and Italian*) about this evaluation, reminiscent of the Conservative Revolutionary and National Socialist evaluation of Socialism. It is more so the Prussian Socialism of **Oswald Spengler**, than of Marx. It is militant and duty bound. Further still, it is elitist: in his socialist youth, on the pages of a provincial socialist paper *“La lotta di classe”* **Mussolini** had written: *“Quality is more important to us than quantity. A select minority, full of firm faith and aware of its goal, is more prized by us than the gentle, tolerant herd, obedient to its pastor and one that runs away at the first howl of a wolf.”* Those who had read our previous piece **“Zero Tolerance”** will no doubt immediately realize in this quote further implications that support our stance on Italian Fascism and German National Socialism being expressions of the same Worldview, both in principles and actions.

Yet there are plenty of people who insist on these two national expressions of a common truth to be absolutely different, fueled foremost by liberal academia definitions and categorizations, as well as a reading of *The Doctrine of Fascism* that exists in isolation of the broader context, which we had provided herein. To read the Doctrine of Fascism on its own is to completely miss the story of Fascism's search for itself, which is the story of **Mussolini's** self-actualization.

One of the primary gripes these people (*as well as their fellows from the NS side, who refute Fascism as being something else, alien to National Socialism*) have is how, supposedly, Fascism has nothing to do with Race and is foremost centered around the State. The insistently misinterpret **Mussolini's** infamous quote "*All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.*" Both sides believe this means that the state is placed above race and nation, rendering those things secondary, if not irrelevant.

One wonders how the "*classical fascist*" types would react if they were made familiar with the following thoughts, that Mussolini had expressed in one of his more dismal moods in the spring of 1920: "*To hell with the state in all its forms! The state of yesterday, the state of today, the state of tomorrow. The bourgeois state, the socialist state. The only thing left to those of us loyal to dying individualism, in this sad present and dark future, is the, perhaps absurd, but comforting religion of Anarchy.*" Does this quote render Mussolini an anarchist? Does it mean that at a certain period he was an anarchist or had anarchist leanings, same as how he once was a socialist? Of course not. It is the broader context of history and national character that offers up to us a true answer to the meaning of these words, as well as to the quote on the all-encompassing nature of the state. Think back to our first segment and consider the reality **Mussolini** and all of Italy had faced: a weak and inactive state, one incapable of taking care of its own people,

one that had given up the spoils of victory. The sentiment **Mussolini** expressed in 1920 has distinct Futurist tones to it, and also mimics what was said by Italo Balbo when he had returned home from the war: *“To fight, to struggle, to come home to the land of Giolitti, who transformed every ideal into a business proposition? No. Better to deny everything, to destroy everything, in order to renew from the ground up.”* In short, **Mussolini’s** *“Anarchy”* quote is the other extreme that he dared embrace for a moment in full, when faced with all the weak and impotent forms of statehood before him. One could say, yet again echoing one of his other expressions that for a moment **Mussolini** had become an anarchist *“because the state was not total enough.”*

So then, what is the true meaning of the total state quote? It’s true meaning is that, of pursuing the goal of an **organic unity**, where the state exists as a manifestation of the nation as a single whole and, as Ernst Jünger would put it, a gestalt: *“that, which is more than the mere sum of its parts,”* the Fascist declaration of the State being a judicial manifestation of the Nation is expressed more succinctly by **Francis Parker Yockey** as *“The State is the form of a nation for action.”* The 1921 Fascist Party program expresses these ideas, as well as (*again*) something from Codreanu, almost entirely in the same words: *“The Party regards society, which makes up the state, not as a mere sum of individuals living at a certain point in time in a certain territory, but as an organism, which contains within itself the infinite ranks of past, living and future generations, for whom separate individuals appear as but a passing moment.”* Italy, a country with a history of division, united only nominally, while being led by a parliamentary government, the very nature of which is divisive, while also being weak and passive, demanded a State that would *“rule*

*unabashedly*” and one that would become the expression of total unity of a single organism.

*“These lofty ideas had to be made flesh and blood. The contents of the national cult had to be unveiled and the desired state visibly displayed. By declaring that “the fascist organizations must become the fascist nation,” fascists had set before themselves a grandiose task and took upon themselves an incomparable responsibility.*

[...]

*Fascism does not deny classes, but subjugates the interests of each one to the interests of the whole, i.e. the nation, organized in a state. Class aspirations are legal, however when one class tries to elevate itself above the state, then, inevitably, the entirety of national life is thrown in disarray.*

[...]

*... the “nation” is depicted by fascist ideologues not in the old “arithmetic” and “atomistic” spirit of the french revolutionary doctrine. Rejecting the “mechanical” understanding of society as a sum of equal and free individuals, they declare the “organic” understanding, which accounts for the economic division of functions and subsequent social differentiation.”*

**-Ustryalov**

The total state quote is thus a promise by **Mussolini**, that Italy as a country, and Italians as a nation, would never suffer artificial and mechanical division again, a sentiment that in no way contradicts the tenets of German National Socialism, but mirrors them: the State exists to serve the nation, which is exactly why during Fascism’s rise to power in Italy it had expressed its readiness to destroy the existing state, for failing to fulfill its role as the carrier of national values. No part of the whole can be allowed to rule over the whole, that is the most succinct

meaning of that quote. **Miguel Serrano**, in his *Golden Cord*, said that *“The Jew elevates the part over the whole.”* Fascism and National Socialism put everything in their rightful place. **Mussolini** reaffirms this, and much more of what we talked about in this article: *“It is often said that we lack a doctrine. Yet I do not know any other ideological or political movement that is armed with a doctrine more solid and well defined. We are facing unquestionable realities: a state that must be strong; a government that has a duty to defend itself, for it defends the nation from destructive work; the cooperation of classes, respect for religion; developing all national energies; that is the doctrine of life.”*

Indeed, the goal of the Fascist State was to serve the nation and organize its energies for action, in which all would be elevated. One can hardly deny D’Annunzio’s influence in Fascism, so let us recall his Fiume constitution *“Carta di Carnaro,”* namely article 18, which defines the State as *“the common will and common aspiration of the people towards the more elevated state of spiritual and material being.”* Julius Evola in turn likewise defined the quintessential function of the State, which mirrors the ultimate Fascist and National Socialist ambition:

*“The higher and more genuine legitimization of a true political order, and thus of the State itself, lies in its anagogical function: namely, in arousing and nourishing the individual’s disposition to act and to think, to live, to struggle, and eventually to sacrifice himself for something that goes beyond his mere individuality.”*

#### **-Julius Evola, Men Among the Ruins**

Still, the *“classical fascists”* will question in what context Italian Fascists talked about nation, claiming that it has nothing to do with ethnicity and race: *“Fascism is not racist!”* they cry. We could, once again, go over how it was Fascism that introduced the new nationalism that took the place of the old, 19th century nationalism, how it became

a thing of the masses and dealt with blood, the 14 points of Woodrow Wilson and mutilated victory of territories populated by ethnic Italians that were not relinquished to Italy – or we could simply remind them what **Mussolini** had said during the first Fascist congress in Milan: *“We cannot remain deaf to the struggle for Fiume, we deeply feel the living nature of the ties that bind us not only with the Italians of Zara, Ragusa, Cattaro, but also with the Italians of Ticino, even with those Italians that do not wish to be Italian – with the Italians of Corsica, Italians living across the ocean, with that huge family that we wish to unite under the aegis of common racial pride.”*

One can find no traces of civic nationalism within Italian Fascism, instead it would constantly reaffirm the nature of race and blood and their constancy through the ages. In fact, Fascism had officially proclaimed itself to be, in point 4 of The Fascist Decalogue, *“the genius of a race reborn, of latin tradition, unchangingly active in our thousands of years old history, a return to the roman and simultaneously christian idea of state, a synthesis of the great past with a radiant future.”*

And what did **Mussolini** have to say about Race? *Well...*

*“Well we, Fascisti, want to bring into every city, into every part of the country, even the most remote, the pride and passion of belonging to the most noble Italian race; the race which has produced Dante, which has given Galileo, the greatest masterpieces of art, Verdi, Mazzini, Garibaldi and d’Annunzio to the world, and which has produced the people who won Vittorio Veneto.”*

**-Speech in Ferrara, April 4, 1920**

*“Italy had twenty-seven million inhabitants in 1870, she has now fifty million; forty million of whom live in the Peninsula, and represent the most homogeneous block in Europe,*

*because, compared with Bohemia, for instance, where five millions of the Czecho race govern seven millions of other races, Italy has only 180,000 German subjects on the Upper Adige and 360,000 Slavs, all the rest forming one compact whole."*

**-Speech in Trieste, September 20, 1920**

*"In the first place she (the Italian nation) has a sure foundation, and that is the vitality of our race."*

**-Speech in Trieste, September 20, 1920**

*"I have an unbounded faith in the future greatness of the Italian people. Ours is, among the European peoples, the largest and most homogeneous. ... Unlike the pessimists who believe that everything is great in other people's houses, while everything is too small in their own, we have pride in our race and our history."*

**-Speech in Trieste, February 6, 1921**

*"How then was this Fascismo born... it was born of the profound and perennial need of this our Mediterranean and Aryan race..."*

**-Speech in Bologna, April 3, 1921**

*"...we feel those bonds of race to be alive and vital which bind us, not only to the Italians of Zara, Ragusa and Cattaro, but also to those of the Canton Ticino and Corsica, to those beyond the oceans, to all that great family of fifty million men whom we wish to unite in the same pride of race."*

**-Speech in Bologna, April 3, 1921**

*“Italy is not a State, she is a nation, because from the Alps to Sicily there is the fundamental unity of our race, our customs, our language and our religion.”*

**-Speech in Milan, October 4, 1922**

*“It must not be forgotten that, besides the minority that represent actual militant politics, there are forty millions of excellent Italians who work, by their splendid birth-rate perpetuate our race...”*

**-Speech Delivered in the Chamber, November 16, 1922**

*“We, here and everywhere, are ready for any battle so that we may uphold the foundations of our race and of our history.”*

**-Speech in London, December 12, 1922**

*“Let me first of all say how happy I am that we should have met in these magnificent rooms which furnish evidence of the strength and beauty of our race.”*

**-Speech in Rome, January 2, 1923**

*“It is obvious that the problem of Italian expansion in the world is a problem of life or death for the Italian race.”*

**-Speech in Milan, March 30, 1923**

*“I have looked you well in the face, I have recognized that you are superb shoots of this Italian race which was great when other people were not born, of this Italian race which three times gave our civilization to the barbarian world, of this Italian race which we wish to mold by all the struggles necessary for discipline, for work, for faith.”*

**-Speech in Sassari, June 10, 1923**

*"...Fascism, representing an irresistible movement for the regeneration of the race, was bound to carry with it this island where the Italian race is manifested so superbly."*

**-Speech in Cagliari, June 12, 1923**

*"Rome is always, as it will be tomorrow and in the centuries to come, the living heart of our race!"*

**-Speech in Rome, June 25, 1923**

*"It is therefore necessary to take great care of the future of the race, starting with measures to look after the health of mothers and infants."*

**-Speech of the Ascension, May 26, 1927**

*"The entire white race, the Western race, can become submerged by other races of colour that multiply with a rhythm unknown to our own. Blacks and yellows are thus at the door? Yes, they are at the door, and not only because of their fecundity but also because of their race consciousness and their future in the world."*

**-Preface to Decline of Births: Death of Peoples by Richard Korherr, 1928**

*"Peace with honor and justice is a Pax Romana...a peace in conformity with the character and temperament of our Latin and Mediterranean race which I wish to exalt before you because it is the race which has given to the world, among thousands of others, Caesar, Dante, Michelangelo, and Napoleon; a race of creators and constructors, ancient and strong, determined and universal, which has given the keynote to the world three times in the course of the centuries."*

**-Speech in Florence, October 23, 1933**

*“This is why the racial laws of the empire will be rigorously observed and that all who sin against them will be expelled, punished, imprisoned. Because for the empire to be preserved the natives must be clearly and forcefully aware of our superiority.”*

**-Speech in Rome, October 25, 1938**

*“Our rural policy follows this course...to preserve and pass on the intrinsic virtues of the Italian race...”*

**-Speech at the Argentina Theatre in Rome, January 22, 1939**

*“Our capacity to recuperate in moral and material fields is really formidable and constitutes one of the peculiar characteristics of our race.”*

**-Speech to the Blackshirts of Rome, February 23, 1941**

Moreover, **Mussolini’s** precise ambitions regarding Fascism’s attitude to race can be evaluated in full if we are to read Julius Evola’s article, dedicated to how **Mussolini** had personally entrusted *him*, this public and outspoken critic of Fascism for *“not being fascist enough,”* with developing the official Fascist Racial Doctrine, one that was to be built on the foundation of Evola’s tripartite conception of Race as Body (biology), Mind (psychology) and Spirit (spirituality). Below, we are giving the full text of this article, which I had translated on the 2nd of October, 2014, while providing underscoring for the most potently relevant parts of our argument, though we must insist that our readers familiarize themselves with this article in full, as it further sheds light on, and reinforces points made in this article previously in other matters:

## **Mussolini e il razzismo //**

### **Il Meridiano d'Italia, December 1951**

*In September of 1941 I was summoned to Palazzo Venezia. I did not expect it to be Mussolini himself who wanted to speak to me. Pavolini was present during our conversation. Mussolini told me, that he had read my work "The Synthesis of the Racial Doctrine" published by Hoepli, that he approved of it and that he saw in the ideas presented therein the basis for the formation of an independent fascist and anti-materialist racism. "It is exactly the sort of book we needed" he said.*

*To understand the importance of these statements one must remember the state of affairs concerning racism in Italy. Some months prior to this Mussolini thought it necessary to take a stance on the race problem and gain equal footing with the German ally in this field as well. The most immediate motive was the desire to energize the sense of race and racial dignity due to the presence of natives in the new Empire. The other reason was the antifascist stance of international judaism - foremost North-American. The racial question combines goals of internal, selective, cultural and ethnic matters. That is why Mussolini assisted the publication of the so called "Manifesto of Italian Racism" that contained some ten points; it was placed in the journal "Defense of the Race" (Difesa della Razza), and later on two racial institutions were created - one in the Ministry of Popular Culture and the other in the Internal Affairs Ministry.*

*Unfortunately the situation was unsatisfactory on the whole. There were not enough precedents of serious preparation and specific studies in Italy for such action, and racial ideas were completely uncharted territory for Italian "intellectuals." Thus the group that compiled the "Manifesto" and the "Defense of Race" staff presented a strange and hastily created union. Some old science anthropologists were put in the*

*same bag with perked up racists, and journalists and writers who had only occasionally touched the subject matter - all at once. Thus a general impression of dilettantism emerged, where too often small polemics and slogans took the place of a serious and unified doctrine: a doctrine that shouldn't have gotten itself lost in either biological specialism or vulgar antisemitism, but emerge at its core on the level of a common worldview, and act as a politics and ethics forming idea. I was moved to tackle this subject because of not so kind remarks I heard from abroad regarding fascism's handling of the racial issue. I began to extract from the traditional and aristocratic idea, with which I was associated, everything that instead of select applications and conclusions could have the meaning of an organic racial doctrine. So appeared the first articles and notes, published in various fascist periodicals, and then the aforementioned book.*

*The central thesis, defended by me, was, in short, the following: the question of race for man cannot be discussed in same terms nor have the same meaning as for a cat or a purebred horse. True man, besides the biological and bodily aspects, also possesses a soul and spirit. Thus, comprehensive racism had to consider all three components: body, soul and spirit. Accordingly it is apt to talk about Racism of First Degree, regarding purely biological, anthropological and eugenic issues; next about Racism of Second Degree, regarding "race of soul," in other words the forms of character and affective reactions; finally, the crowning "race of spirit," regarding the highest elements - the general vision of this and the world beyond, of destiny, life, action, in other words those "highest values" that distinguish people from each other and make them unequal. The Classical ideal, interpreted racially, is harmony and unity of these three "races" in the highest kind.*

*Mussolini accepted this viewpoint without question. I will not take upon myself the responsibility of many memoir writers, who put in*

*quotes literal words said by the Duce. However I can, still, say in general terms the point of what Mussolini had told me, demonstrating an original level of preparation. "The Threefold concept of racism - Mussolini said to me thusly - avoids the zoological and biological mistakes that to some degree are in-bedded in German racism; it establishes the primacy of spiritual values that make up the basis of our tradition and the fascist idea. Furthermore, it possesses great political value. You have correlated the three aspects of the race issue with the three parts of the human being, which were also highlighted by Aristotle. However it would be better to defer to Plato [here I can say that I am repeating Mussolini word for word], who moreover correlates those three parts with the three societal castes. Race of body correlates to the pure masses, demos, "which is not in itself invalid, but is a force used by the masters" [exact words]; race of soul can be correlated to Plato's "warriors" or "guardians" while the race of spirit can correlate to the top caste of thinkers, philosophers and artists."*

*Speaking honestly, despite the alarmed signs given to me by friend Pavolini, I allowed myself to interrupt Mussolini and say: "Please make note, Duce, that thinkers, philosophers and artists in the modern sense Plato would have expelled from his state. It is the sages - sophoi - that Plato saw at the top of his ideal state, but not "intellectuals" who present in themselves something else entirely."*

*"Very well then, we're talking about sages" - said Mussolini, smiling.*

### **The Myth of New Italy**

*While race is typically considered a concrete, naturalistic and fatalistic factor, in my book I supported a dynamic conception: new races can be formed, while other races can mutate or disappear as a result of internal, spiritual factors, or what I called the "internal race." As an example I pointed to the same jewish type, that isn't derived from an*

*original pure race, but was molded by a millennial tradition; and nowadays the yankee type has particular features that characterize an incredible ethnic mix, that came about under the influence of the civilization or pseudo-civilization of the USA. In our discussion Mussolini unquestioningly accepted this idea as the basis of "active racism," that goes hand in hand with the creative goals of Fascism's highest ambitions. The ideal was thus: the action of internal factors, strict discipline and high ideal tension had to slowly form from the heterogeneous substance of Italian people and stabilize a new type of elite, "the fascist race of man." Duce told me that he is convinced in the soundness that processes of this type can achieve; he mentioned that he himself was astounded to see many times among the youth division Littorio and blackshirts a new type, not just in terms of behavior, but even in terms of physical, bodily characteristics, almost as if a result of a natural selection and formation effect of which I spoke in my book. These beginnings were, unfortunately, destroyed. With the fall of Italy it was not the new supreme race, but the inferior race of our people that was destined to come out on top and define the glory of "liberation" and the "Second Risorgimento."*

*Political and spiritual racism must possess a "myth," that is to say a power-idea, capable of crystallizing the energy of a given collective environment. This was precisely the idea of a superior race. It is well known that in this regard it has long since existed in the Aryan "myth." Indeed, not just racists have admitted, that the ancient civilizations of India, Iran, Greece and Rome and then the German one as well, had been derived from a unified racial root or the original prehistoric superior race, called "Aryan" - in the same way as correlating languages, religions, concepts of rights and so on point to a common root. Naturally, German racism attempted to turn things pro domo sua [**in defense of their own interests**] believing the northern Germanic tribes*

*to be direct descendants of the original pure "Aryan" race and placing the Nordic-Aryan idea at the heart of the political action and National-Socialism's worldview. But such a monopolistic claim lacks any serious foundation. Using the same premise, I presented the roman-Aryan idea as the central reference point for fascist racism: it concerns forces that, having differentiated from the same Aryan root, molded the image of that original and courageous Rome. Roman-Aryan idea, parallel to the Nordic-Aryan idea, maintains its autonomy and its own dignity; it can guarantee both these things in our movement and remove any suspicions of it following national-socialist concepts. Still, it does not lose connection with them, but to the contrary, overcomes them in the name of connecting with values and style elements of a much greater and universal tradition.*

*Mussolini told me, that this part of my book intrigued him in particular. He had spoken before: "We dream of a Roman Italy." Now an opportunity presented itself to specify this formula. To return the Roman-Aryan idea not just as a rhetorical and academic idea, but as a forming force, foremost as a view of life ("race of spirit"), then character and style of behavior ("race of soul"), and, finally, if possible, even as a new bodily, physical type ("race of body"), so that the outward appearance be a worthy representation of the internal race; and on the contrary, limit and correct the questionable elements of our people, speaking about "Mediterranean" mixing and "brotherhood of bastards" (Mussolini had already made such a comment, talking about the so called "latinhood"), in spiritual harmony with the legacy of the Holy Roman Empire - this was the maximum program of active racism, which Mussolini was ready to accept. In our conversation Duce touched on some technical problems, specifically about heredity. Then we spoke of some practical initiatives. I will write on those in a next article. But one other thing has to be mentioned here. When speaking of racism some*

*people understand only antisemitism, concentration camps, gas chambers and other such things. Here it must be made clear that for serious racism antisemitism presents in itself only a special and secondary question and not at all the primary one. In this case the Jewish threat, without a doubt, exists, but it must be felt and defined more so as an internal danger, rather than an external. This was the primary point in the ideas formulated by me: it is of little use to be "Aryan" and have "pure race" in body and blood, if in spirit and character, in the "next race" you are a Jew, a man of the "eastern race" or someone else of that kind. Thus, if one is to speak of "Aryans" seriously, one undertakes great responsibility. So appeared the chance to solve racial issues without any fanaticism and intrigue, paying attention to the core matter, giving to each his own. Approving my formulas Mussolini was entering this sphere of ideas, that would have distinguished fascist racism from the national-socialist one in its extreme and not well thought out aspects.*

### ***Blood and Spirit***

*After Mussolini considered the arguments presented in my previous articles, I told him that his approval of my classification of racial issues would be a helping step towards initiatives that I had already launched abroad myself. Indeed, for a long time I was in contact with certain German circles, being a guest at conferences and presentations, and racial issues were among the topics I had discussed. Now my formulas had stirred a particular interest and the basis of deep cooperation could be seen in the meeting of the Roman-Aryan myth with the Nordic-Aryan myth, capable of spiritually fortifying the political union of the Axis. Thus it was a topic of conversation to create for this purpose a new Italo-Germanic journal. And this interested my German friends foremost because while particular necessary criticism of biological, materialist and unyielding nationalistic racism would never be tolerated from a*

*German, statements of an Italian author would've met a different reception.*

*I had given all of this to Mussolini and asked him if I am allowed the right, on the grounds of his more than flattering evaluation, to develop such initiatives and present my formulas as official fascist ones. Mussolini, of course, answered positively. Thus he gave me the right to give the German translation of my book that was in the works a fascist blessing (its German name - "The Synthesis of the Fascist Racial Doctrine," Grundrisse der faschistischen Rassenlehre, Runge Verlag, Berlin) and use his seal of high approval.*

*As for the journal project, which was named "Blood and Spirit - Italo-Germanic journal on the issues of worldview and race," Mussolini told me, that he also approves of it. It could be published in two languages, to distribute it accordingly, under the edit of both the fascist and the national-socialist parties. However, Mussolini wanted to first define its primary points, coordinated with the possible staff of this journal.*

*And here I had begun a somewhat unpleasant job, as this meant gathering more or less qualified elements and then bringing them to a consensus. The head of the race service in the Ministry of Popular Culture, one Guido Landra, a racist by circumstances, who "demilitarized" after June 25th [**When Mussolini was deposed in a coup**], was successfully replaced with a more qualified and prepared fascist, valuable for his international connections, Dr Alberto Luchini. With his agreement a number of difficult meetings were organized with people who, as was known, were immediately nominated in various sectors of fascism (it would be risky to name them, in order to see what fascist and racist goals they've achieved). In the end we've defined the desired program points. I personally presented them to Mussolini. He accepted them in full, after that we talked about going to Berlin in order*

*to conduct analogical organizational activities. In the German capital I've reestablished my connections with Alfred Rosenberg, Walter Groß and other people, and we began discussing the formulated points and the journal's direction. But at this moment I had found out about certain steps of the Italian embassy that had baffled my friends so much so that nothing serious could be accomplished and I had to return to Rome. That is when I found out about the sabotage that happened while I was away. Firstly, the representatives of the first "Racial manifesto" had spoken out and attacked me on several points - they were afraid that the new, more organic formula would do them harm. Then some catholic machinations had occurred. Some professor found a way to meet with Mussolini on the premise of wanting to present to him some books on christian archaeology. But in reality this meeting was used in order to express to Duce concerns of the catholic sphere that had arisen after the approval of my initiatives. Catholics could tolerate a biological racial doctrine, but they felt an imminent danger in the 'soul' presentation of the racial problem and in the "Aryan" revision of many accepted religious and moral values of questionable origin that dominate in the West. A closer and more official cooperation with the German team further increased the danger of the project. But this man with Jesuit diplomacy attempted to present in tendentious light aspects, according to which the racial doctrine with its selection principle, of superiority and differences within one people was not coinciding with the premises of mass nationalism - and so on in same style. All of this in my absence had produced in Mussolini some abashment, the reflection of which I had felt in Berlin. I requested an explanation and further orders and waited for an answer. Meanwhile another one of my initiatives could be given the green light via Luchini.*

*The subject matter was the printing of the "Italian Race Atlas," a result of the first systematic research. Naturally the name "Italian race"*

*is nonsense. Race is a basic reality that cannot be identified with a people. In a people race enters various combinations where certain elements that dominate now give way to others later. The topic was the first study of such components. In different regions of Italy prefects had to mark certain typical and ancient families, whose representatives were evaluated by a special commission. This commission was led by Luchini. It was also made up of Dr Rossi from the anthropological side (race of body), head of experimental psychology, professor L.F. Claus (Berlin) for the "race of soul" and finally myself for "spiritual race." The results were compiled in a beautiful publication, richly illustrated with vivid pictures of the most significant types met in our research and foremost those, who still retained the higher, original "Roman-Aryan" type of our people. Everything was already prepared. Unfortunately in the meantime events were approaching their climax, all the energy had to be gathered for a big number of emergency tasks, and the revolution, the impact of which on fascism should not be underestimated, did not follow. Still it is good that the contents of these retrospective articles is known.*

*A few more words of a personal nature. After Mussolini had spoken to me, using such unexpected high praise speaking of my book, he told Pavolini to reflect that in the press, because he wanted to know what impression it made. Thus one famous "rolling paper" was sent to the newspapers. But in recent times there were many of these and those directives were executed only rarely; and practically all the Italian "intellectuals" were in agreement to sabotage "racist" ideas no matter what - pour cause [for this reason]. As a result the "big press" published very few articles about my book. This annoyed Mussolini and issued a more categorical order. Naturally, a rain of articles followed and, understandably, all giving high praise. As a result my name gained fame that my other books, perhaps, would have never gotten. And many*

*came to know of me only as a "racist," and this fame exists to this day. But as I said, I've delved into racism accidentally, as part of formulating a much larger ensemble of political traditional ideas, wanting to prevent deviations that could already be seen in this field in both Italy and Germany.*

Only the most delusional would maintain after all of this, that Italian Fascism had no racial core, no interest in blood, in the creation of the superior race. Still, to further drive home this point, we'll make light of a few other interesting facts, related to the issue of Italian colonies.

In the historical segment of this article we made light of Italy's issue of overpopulation and the desire for territorial expansion and colonies that would provide living space for the Italian people. With Fascism's coming to power and the subsequent improvement of Italian life, many Italians who had left the homeland to live abroad began to come back. In 1913 there were 900 thousand Italians in emigration, in 1925 there were 320, in 1926 – 280, and in that last year 150 thousand Italians made their way back to Italy. Hence Italy worked towards resettlement of its population into the colonies, where the matter of racial relations began to manifest, resulting in several notable things, especially in the Libyan colony, which had come to be governed by Italo Balbo:

*"He favored those Libyans whom he thought best fitted into the Italian scheme of things. The peoples of the coastal regions he admired because he regarded them as "superior races influenced by Mediterranean civilization" and capable of absorbing the new fascist values and institutions. The Negroid peoples of the Fezzan, he concluded, were not at that level and must be left to their own devices under military rule.*

[...]

*He was also very strict when matters of European “prestige” were at stake. Two Libyans, accused of having “touched” an Italian woman in the street, were sentenced to eight years in prison for having “violated racial prestige.” Foreign journalists remarked on the excessive formal respect the Italians demanded from Libyans. An English traveler commented, “The natives are browbeaten as nowhere else in North Africa,” and noted the “embarrassing obsequiousness” of the Libyans. Even in the most remote oases, they “snap and quiver to attention” as soon as a European appears. In Tripoli, bootblacks gave the fascist salute and bellowed “Evviva il Re-Imperatore, evviva Mussolini, evviva l’Italia,” before they grabbed a customer’s shoes.*

*Yet European visitors also remarked that under Balbo, Italians in some ways treated Libyans with a surprising informality and ease that was not typical of European colonial regimes. Italians thought nothing of working side by side in the fields with Libyans; Italian officials greeted Libyan notables with great cordiality and friendliness. There was little discrimination in the use of public facilities. Libyans could stay in any hotel and could travel first class on public transport whenever they could afford it. A paternalistic and Arabophobe Frenchman, travelling in Libya in 1938, remarked that the Libyans were no less well cared for than Europeans. In Libya, at least, he remarked, he did not feel the need for a “thorough cleaning up” of the Arab population as he did in Tunisia.*

*[...]*

*The “little citizenship” amounted to a token reward to Moslem Libyans who had served in Ethiopia. The measure was also*

*intended to create an elite favorable to the Italians. Qualified Libyans could now acquire certain rights and privileges – mainly that of joining fascist organizations for Libyans – without losing their family and inheritance rights under Moslem law. Under the “little citizenship” Libyans could pursue a military career in Libyan units; serve as podesta (mayor) of an Arab community – but not a mixed one; serve in public office within the corporative system; and join the Associazione Musulmana del Littorio, the party organization for Libyans. But in return for this “special citizenship,” a Libyan had to renounce his right to apply for metropolitan citizenship. Moreover, the “special citizenship” was valid only in Libya. This guaranteed that there would be no “immission of Arab elements into the peninsula,” noted Padano.”*

**-Claudio G. Segre, Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life**

These examples further solidify a clearly present racial consciousness within Italian Fascism, one that was concerned with European racial prestige, which was, however, still fair to its newfound racially lesser subjects, one that offered treatment that was appropriate for their racial status as is seen in the difference Balbo highlights between Libyans and negroes. The policy of “little citizenship” likewise showcases that there was no equal footing between ethnic Italians and natives of Italian colonies within Italy proper. The notion that a member of another race was equal to an Italian under Fascism in every way as part of a civic nationalist construction is a ludicrous fantasy of the “classical fascist” crowd.

A few more notable aspects, that prove how Italian Fascism shares common roots with National Socialism in the same Worldview.

Fascists regarded their ascent to power as “*a revolution, which is at the same time a restoration,*” which sounds awfully familiar to the ideals of the German Conservative Revolutionaries, whose ideas were in a certain sense a prelude to National Socialism.

Italian Fascism too sought the establishment of the European Imperium, which they, according to Ustryalov, called the “*United Fascist States of Europe.*”

Lastly, the final unification of Italy was sought not only in terms of overcoming a territorial and national divide, but also the historic divide: politicians of the liberal period had essentially limited the “*relevancy*” of Italian history to the era of Garibaldi and **Camillo**. Meanwhile, Fascism was actively restoring the unity of Italian history, threading together and connecting to modern history not just antique Rome, but also Medieval Italy and Italy of the Renaissance, thus pointing to the value that blood and spirit (*or blood and Tradition, with the latter word understood in that Evola/Guenon sense of capital T Tradition*) carry on through the ages. To quote the poem with which Machiavelli had ended the Prince: *l'antico valore negli italici cuor non e ancor morto – For ancient valour is not dead in Italian hearts.*

## THE FINAL HOURS

We've come to the conclusion of our article. It is our sincere hope, that this piece will indeed help our comrades recognize just how much respect **Mussolini** deserves, as he stands on equal footing with many other of our Champions. He may not have been Hitler, but he was still a magnificent beacon of our values, expressed through the concentrated lens of Italian national character. In his historic role **Mussolini** was of equal importance to the Italians as Hitler was to the Germans, though the latter will, of course, hold a higher place in terms of his position within our Worldview. He was the Machiavellian Prince, sent to finally complete the work of the Risorgimento and create the unified Italian, one that would elevate himself to a superior racial state, had Evola's racial doctrine been implemented. The tragedy of **Mussolini's** unfinished work is the same tragedy shared by all our Champions of that era.

To conclude this article, we'd like to tell the story of **Mussolini's** final hours, at least *one of the ways* this story is told, so we won't claim its historic accuracy, instead focusing on the dramatic nature of this particular retelling.

On the night of April 26-27th **Mussolini**, together with his mistress **Clara Petacci**, join 200 German soldiers who intend to cross the border. The column of trucks is stopped by a partisan blockade, its commander allows the column to continue on its way, under the condition that only Germans may pass. A German officer offers Mussolini to disguise himself by wearing the uniform of a Luftwaffe unteroffizier and hide among other German troops in one of the trucks. The partisans investigate the truck and, of course, one of them recognizes him.

He and Clara spend the night in a peasant house of the Dongo village, the news of Mussolini's arrest having already reached Allied command leads to a conflict between the secret services of Britain and USA over ownership of such an important prize. **Churchill** in particular is worried due to his former correspondences with Mussolini, and so hopes to get rid of him before he is questioned by anyone.

**Colonel Audisio** takes the initiative and transports Mussolini and Clara elsewhere under false pretense, telling them he was sent to secretly transport him to Switzerland. During the ride Mussolini was quiet, periodically falling asleep, his head slumping down till his chin would rest on his chest. Having spotted an appropriate place for the execution, Audisio asks the driver to stop the car. He orders Mussolini out of the car who obeys without protest or resistance.

His walk is heavy, slightly dragging his right leg, the zipper on one of his boots had come undone. The irony of fate, that his life would end wearing a German uniform. Some minutes later Clara jumps out of the car and runs after him. When Mussolini stood at the spot he was ordered to stand on, she stood by his side, her courage shocking some of the partisans present.

The colonel, paying no mind to her, unfurls a piece of paper and reads out the order for Mussolini's execution. Yet Mussolini seemingly wasn't even listening, he stood solemnly with his head down, staring at some spot on the ground. Once the order has been read out in full Clara grabbed Mussolini around his shoulders, the partisans ordered her to get out of the way unless she wanted to die with him. She only grabbed him tighter.

He just stood there, slightly shivering in the cold, his lips blue, mumbling something unintelligible either to himself, the partisans, her, or perhaps God.

When the colonel pulled the trigger on the machine gun *nothing happened*. No shots followed. He cocks the machine gun and pulls the trigger again and... *still nothing*. Next he reached for his handgun and when he aimed it at Mussolini... *it too refused to fire*. A dark and chill inducing moment of mystical dread befalls the partisans. The colonel nervously orders a commissar to come over, who hurriedly rushes over and hands over his machine gun.

In that short pause, when the unarmed colonel stood next to Mussolini virtually one on one, there was enough time for a desperate attempt to flee and survive – a lake just behind them, mountains and forest all around. Instead the couple stood still, rooted to the spot.

Finally the sound of gunfire tears at the deafening silence of this uneasy moment, followed by a scream of a woman, while **Mussolini** fell to the ground without making a sound. The time of death is 4:10 p.m.

We will not go into the details of the barbarous treatment of the corpses of Mussolini and Clara Petacci. Mussolini's corpse would be, eventually, buried in unmarked grave in the Musocco cemetery. In 1946 a group of young Fascists led by **Domenico Leccisi** would discover and unearth the body, moving it from place to place, avoiding authorities of "*new Italy*." It would be 11 years before the body was finally put to rest in the family crypt of Mussolini's birth town Predappio, where it is to this day, the town itself being a small bastion of proud and open Fascist shops as well as a museum in Mussolini's family home.

To the best of my knowledge Italian Fascists don't sing sad songs, at most they are bittersweet, celebrating that staple of Italian character that embraces extremes of life. Don't think of one's life having reached its end – think of the life they had lived. *Don't be sad because it's over, be happy because it happened.*

***MUSSOLINI: PRESENTE!***