

The Manifesto of Ventotene (1941)

Caption: In 1941, the anti-Fascist activists Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, placed under house arrest on the Italian island of Ventotene, draw up a manifesto for a free and united Europe.

Source: SPINELLI, Altiero; ROSSI, Ernesto. The Ventotene Manifesto. Ventotene: The Altiero Spinelli Institute for Federalist Studies, [s.d.]. p. 75-96.

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The Manifesto of Ventotene

I — The crisis of modern civilization

Modern civilization has taken as its specific foundation the principle of liberty which says that man is not a mere instrument to be used by others but that every man must be an autonomous life centre. With this definition in hand, all those aspects of social life that have not respected this principle have been placed on trial in the grand, historical process that has begun.

(1) The equal right shared by all nations to be organized into independent states has been recognized. All peoples, defined by ethnic, geographic, linguistic and historical characteristics, were to find, within the state organization created according to its own particular concept of political life, that instrument best suited for satisfying its own needs independent of any outside intervention. The ideology of national independence was a powerful stimulus for progress. It helped overcome narrow-minded parochialism with a sense of the vaster solidarity against foreign oppression. It eliminated many of the obstacles that hindered the circulation of people and merchandise. It extended within the territory of each new state the institutions and systems of more advanced societies to those populations which had remained undeveloped. It also brought with it, however, the seeds of capitalist imperialism which our own generation has seen expand to the point of forming totalitarian states and to the unleashing of world wars.

No longer is the “nation” considered to be the historical product of the communities of man that, as the result of a lengthy process of increasing similarities of custom and aspiration, find their state to be the most efficacious form of organizing collective life within the framework of the entire human society. It has, instead, become a divine entity, an organism that has to consider only its own existence, its own development, without the least regard for the damage this might cause to others.

The absolute sovereignty of national states has given each the desire to dominate, since each one feels threatened by the strength of the others, and considers as its living space an increasingly vast territory wherein it will have the right of free movement and can ensure itself of the means of a practically autonomous existence. This desire to dominate cannot be placated except by the predominance of the strongest state.

As a consequence of all this, from guardian of civil liberty, the state was transformed into the master of vassals bound into servitude, and it held within its power all the faculties needed to achieve the maximum war-efficiency. Even during peacetimes, considered to be pauses during which to prepare for subsequent, inevitable wars, the military class predominates by now in many countries over civilian society. Expressions of civil policy, therefore, such as schools, research, productivity, administrations, function with difficulty and are mainly directed towards increasing military strength. Women are considered merely as producer of soldiers and are awarded prizes in much the same way as they are awarded to prolific cattle. From the very earliest age, children are taught to handle weapons and to hate what is foreign. Individual liberty is reduced to practically nought since everyone is part of the military establishment and constantly subject to recall in the armed forces. Repeated wars force men to abandon families, jobs, property, often demanding the ultimate sacrifice for reasons of which no one really understands the value. It takes just a few days to destroy the results of decades of common effort made to increase general well-being.

The totalitarian states are those that have most consistently achieved the unification of all forces, in effecting the greatest concentration and the highest degree of self-sufficiency. These are the organizations which have proved to be most suited to the current international environment. If even one nation moves a step towards a more accentuated totalitarianism, it is followed immediately by the others, drawn through the very same furrow by their will to survive.

(2) The equal right of all citizens to participate in the formation of the intentions of the State has been recognized. This was to have been the synthesis of the freely expressed changeable economic and ideological needs of all the social categories. A like political organization has allowed for the correction or at least the minimizing of many of the most jarring injustices inherited from previous regimes. But freedom

of the press, of assembly and the extension of suffrage, made the defence of old privileges increasingly difficult, while maintaining a representative system of government.

Those who owned nothing slowly learned to use these instruments to battle for the rights acquired by the privileged classes. Taxes on unearned income and on inheritances, increasing duties to be paid on increasingly large incomes, tax exemptions for low incomes and on prime necessities; free public schooling; increased social security spending; land reforms; control of factories and of manufacturing plants — these were threats to the privileged classes in their well-fortified citadels.

Even the privileged classes who had consented to the equality of political rights, could not accept the fact that the under-privileged took advantage of this in order to achieve economic and social equality in fact as well as word, and that would have lent concrete significance to the liberty these rights promised. After the end of the First World War, the threat became too serious; it was only natural that certain classes warmly approved and sustained the installation of dictatorship. Legal weapons were thus struck from the hands of popular adversaries.

On the other hand, the formation of gigantic industrial and banking groups, and of trade organizations bringing together whole armies of workers; groups and unions pressuring the government to obtain that policy which most clearly responded to their particular interests, threatened to dissolve the very state into so many economic baronies bitterly fighting among themselves. Liberal, democratic instruments became the tools these groups used to exploit all of society even more, losing the prestige they had had. In this way, the conviction took hold that only a totalitarian state, in which individual liberties were also abolished, could somehow resolve the conflicts of interest that existing political institutions were unable to control.

In fact, then, the totalitarian regimes consolidated, generally speaking, the various social categories at those levels they had reached a bit at a time; using police control of every aspect of each citizen's life, and through the violent silencing of all dissenting voices, these regimes barred every legal possibility of further correction of the actual state of conditions. This ensured, then, the existence of a thoroughly parasitic class of landowners who contributed to social productivity only by cutting the coupons off their stocks; the monopoly holders and the chain stores that exploit the consumers and volatise the sums set apart by small investors; the plutocrats hidden behind the scenes pulling strings on the politicians and running the machinery of the State for their own, exclusive advantage, behind the appearance of higher national interests. The colossal fortunes of a very few have been preserved, and the misery of the masses as well, excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of modern culture. Another expression has been preserved substantially in the economic regime in which material reserves and labour, that ought to be applied to the satisfaction of fundamental needs for the development of vital human energies, are instead addressed to the satisfaction of the most futile wishes of those capable of paying the highest prices; an economic regime in which, through the right of inheritance, the power of money is perpetuated in the same class, and is transformed into a privilege without any correspondence to the social value of the services rendered. The field of proletarian possibilities is thus reduced, and in order to make a living, workers are often forced to accept exploitation by anyone who offers a job.

In order to keep the working classes immobilized and subjugated, the trade unions have been transformed from the free organizations of struggle that they were, directed by individuals who enjoyed the trust of their associates, into police surveillance organs run by employees chosen by the ruling class and responsible only to them. If improvements are made in this economic regime, it is simply and solely dictated by the needs of militarism, that has joined with the reactionary ambitions of the privileged classes in giving rise to and strengthening totalitarian states.

(3) The permanent value of the spirit of criticism has been asserted against authoritarian dogmatism. Everything affirmed must have reason in itself, or it must disappear. The greatest conquests our society has made in every field are due to the methodicalness of this unbiased attitude. But this spiritual liberty did not survive the crises created by the totalitarian states. New dogmas to be accepted like articles of faith, or to be accepted hypocritically, are taking over all fields of Knowledge.

Albeit no one knows what race is, and the most elementary notions of history emphasize the absurdity of the statement, physiologists are held to believe, demonstrate and convince that one belongs to a chosen race — simply because this myth is needed by imperialism to excite the masses to hate and pride. The most evident concepts of economic science must be anathema if the autarchic policy, balanced trade and other old standbys of mercantilism can be presented as extraordinary discoveries of our times. Because of the economic interdependence of all parts of the world, the vital space needed by any population which wants to maintain a living standard consonant with modern civilization, must be considered the entire globe. The pseudo-science of geo-politics has been created, however: it will demonstrate the consistency of the theory of living spaces, giving theoretical cover to the imperialist desire to overpower.

History is falsified in its essential data, in the interests of the ruling classes. The shadows of obscurantism newly threaten to suffocate the human spirit. The social ethic of liberty and equality is undermined. Men are no longer considered free citizens who can use the State in order to reach collective purposes. They are, instead, servants of the State, which decides their destinies, and behind the will of the State is masked the will of those who hold the power. Men are no longer the subjects of law; arranged hierarchically they are expected to obey without discussion all their superiors, culminating in a suitably deified Chief. The caste regime is born, arrogant, out of its own ashes.

This reactionary, totalitarian civilization, after having triumphed in a series of countries, finally found, in Nazi Germany, the power that was thought to be capable of drawing the final consequences. Its victory would mean the final consolidation of totalitarianism in the world. All its characteristics would be exasperated to the greatest degree, and progressive forces would be condemned for long years to the role of simple opposition.

The traditional arrogance and intolerance of the German military classes can give us an idea of what the character of their dominance would have been like, after a victorious war. Victorious Germans might even concede five years of generosity towards other European peoples, formally respecting their territories and their political institutions, in this way satisfying the false sentiment of patriotism of those who consider the colours of the boundary fence, and the nationality of the politicians in the forefront; and instead it is the ratio of power and the effective content of state organs, that warrant attention. However camouflaged, the reality is always the same: a new division of humanity into Spartans and Athenians.

Even a compromise solution between the two sides in battle would be one more step ahead for totalitarianism. All those countries which had eluded Germany's grasp would be forced to adopt its same forms of political organization, in order to be adequately prepared for the next war.

Hitler's Germany, however, did succeed in felling the minor states one by one, and this action forced increasingly powerful forces to join battle. The courageous fighting spirit of Great Britain, even in that most critical moment when it faced the enemy alone, was the cause that brought the Germans to collide against the valiant resistance of the Red Army, and gave America the time it needed to mobilize its boundless productive resources. And this struggle against German imperialism is closely linked to that of the Chinese people against Japanese imperialism.

Immense masses of men and wealth are already drawn up against totalitarian powers whose strength has already reached its peak: at this point it can only gradually consume itself. The opposing forces, instead, have already overcome their worst moment and are now on the way up.

The war of the allies awakens more forcefully each day the desire for liberation, even in those countries which had submitted to violence and had lost their way due to the blow they received. And even in the very Axis populations this desire has been re-awakened: they realize they have been dragged into a desperate situation, simply to satisfy the lust for power of their rulers.

The slow process, thanks to which enormous masses of men passively let themselves be formed by the new regime, adjusted to it and even contributed to its consolidation, has come to a halt. And the opposite process has begun. Within this immense wave, slowly gathering momentum are included all the progressive forces,

the most enlightened groups of the working classes that have not let themselves be swayed, either by terror or by flattery, from their ambition to achieve a better quality of living; it included as well the more aware elements of the intellectual classes, offended by the degradation of human intelligence; businessmen and investors who, feeling they are capable of new initiatives, want to free themselves of the trappings of bureaucracy and national autarchy, that encumber their every movement; and all those others who, due to an innate sense of dignity, cannot bend before the humiliation of servitude.

Today, the salvation of our civilization is entrusted to these forces.

II — Post-war duties — European unity

Germany's defeat would not automatically lead to the reformation of Europe according to our ideal of civilization.

In the brief, intense period of general crises (during which the fallen governments lie broken, during which the popular masses anxiously await a new message and are, meanwhile, like molten matter, burning, susceptible to being poured into new moulds, capable of welcoming the guidance of serious internationalists), the classes which were most privileged under the old national systems will attempt, underhandedly or violently, to quench the thirst, the sentiments, the passions groping towards internationalism, and they will ostentatiously begin to reconstruct the old, state organs. And it is probable, that the English leaders, perhaps in agreement with the Americans, will attempt to push things in this direction, in order to restore the policy of the balance of power, in the apparent and immediate interests of their empires.

The conservative forces, that is: the directors of the fundamental institutions of the national states; the top-ranking officers in the armed forces up to, where it applies, the sovereign; the groups of monopolistic capitalists who have bound their profits to the fortunes of the states; the big landowners and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, who can expect their parasitical income only in a stable, conservative society; and following these, the interminable band of people who depend upon them or who are simply blinded by their traditional power. All these reactionary forces already sense the structure creaking, and are trying to save their skins. A collapse would deprive them in one blow of all the guarantees they have had up to now, and would expose them to attack by the progressive forces.

The revolutionary situation: old and new trends

The fall of the totalitarian regimes will have the sentimental meaning for entire populations as the coming of "liberty"; all restrictions will disappear and, automatically, complete freedom of speech and of assembly will reign supreme. It will be the triumph of democratic tendencies. These tendencies have countless shades and nuances, stretching from very conservative liberalism to socialism and anarchy. They believe in the "spontaneous generation" of events and institutions, in the absolute goodness of impulses from the lower classes. They do not want to force the hand of "history", or "the people", or "the proletariat", or whatever other name they give their God. They hope for the end of dictatorships, imagining this as the restitution to the people of their inalienable rights to self-determination. Their crowning dream is a constitutional assembly, elected by the broadest suffrage and with the most scrupulous respect of the rights of the electors, who must decide upon the constitution they want. If the population is immature, the constitution will not be a good one; but it can be corrected only through constant efforts of persuasion.

The democratic factions do not deny violence on principle: but they wish to use it only when the majority is convinced of its being indispensable, that is, when it is little more than an almost superfluous "dot" over the "i". They are, then, useful leaders only in times of ordinary administration, during which the population is generally convinced of the validity of the fundamental institutions, and if they are to be modified, then only in relatively secondary aspects. During revolutionary times, when the institutions must not simply be administered, but rather created, the democratic procedures fail clamorously. The pitiful impotence of the democratic faction during the Russian, German, Spanish revolutions are the three most recent examples. In these situations, once the old state apparatus has fallen, along with its laws and its administrations, there is

an immediate swarming of assemblies and popular delegations in which all the progressive socialist forces converge and agitate, either with the appearance of former legality, or scorning it. The population does have some fundamental needs to satisfy, but it does not know with precision what it wants or what to do. A thousand bells ring in its ears. With its millions of minds, it cannot orientate itself, and it breaks up in a number of tendencies, currents and factions, all struggling with one another.

In the very moment in which the greatest decisiveness and boldness is needed, the democrats lose the way, not having the backing of spontaneous popular approval, but rather a gloomy tumult of passions. They think it their duty to form a consensus and they present themselves as exhortatory preachers, where instead there is a need for leaders to guide where they themselves know they are going. They miss chances that would be favourable to consolidating a new regime while they attempt to make certain bodies work immediately when a longer preparation is needed and they are in any case more suited to periods of relative tranquillity. They give arms to their adversaries who use them then for revolt. They represent, in their thousand tendencies, not the will for renewal, but the confused whims and desires found in every mind that, becoming paralysed, actually prepare the terrain for the growth of the reaction. Democratic political methods are a dead weight during revolutionary crises.

Bit by bit, as the democrats wear down their initial popularity as assertors of liberty by their endless polemics, and in the lack of any serious political and social revolution, the pre-totalitarian political institutions will inevitably be reconstituted, and the struggle will again develop following along the lines of the old class opposition.

The principle according to which the class struggle is the condition to which all political problems are reduced, has become the fundamental line especially among factory workers, and has given consistency to their politics, up to the point where fundamental institutions were not questioned. But this line becomes an instrument to isolate the proletariat, when the need to transform the entire social organization is imposed. The workers, educated in the classist system, cannot see beyond their particular class, or even category, claims, without worrying about how to connect these with the interests of the other social strata. Or they aspire to a unilateral dictatorship of the proletariat in order to achieve the utopistic collectivisation of all the material means of production, indicated by centuries of propaganda as the best cure for all evils. This policy attracts no other strata, except the workers, who thus deprive the other progressive forces of their support, or it leaves them at the mercy of the reaction cleverly organized to break up the worker movement.

Among the various proletarian tendencies, followers of the classist politics and of the collectivist ideal, the Communists early recognized the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient following to assure victory. They therefore transformed themselves — unique among the other popular parties — into a rigidly disciplined movement. It has exploited the Russian myth in order to organize the workers, but it does not accept their word as law and it does utilize the workers in the most disparate manoeuvres.

This attitude makes the Communists, during revolutionary crises, more efficient than the democrats. But their maintaining the workers separate as much as they can from the other revolutionary forces — by preaching to them that their “real” revolution is yet to come — turns them into a sectarian element which, in decisive moments, weakens the sum of the progressive forces. Besides this, their absolute dependence upon the Russian State, which has repeatedly used them in pursuing its national policies, impedes this Party from undertaking political activity with continuity. They always need to hide behind a Karoly, a Blum, a Negrin, and then to go along towards ruination with the democratic puppets that had been used. Power is attained and is maintained, not simply through cunning, but with the capacity of responding to the needs of modern society in an organic and vital manner.

If the struggle were to remain limited by the traditional national boundaries, it would be very difficult to avoid the old uncertainties. The national states, in fact, have so deeply planned their respective economies, that the main question would soon be which economic group, that is, which class, ought to handle the controls of the plan. The progressive front would be quickly shattered in the brawl between economic classes and categories. The most probable result is that the reactionaries would benefit more than anyone else.

A real revolutionary movement must rise from among those who have known how to criticize old, political statements; it must know how to collaborate with democratic and with Communist forces as well as with all those who work for the break-up of totalitarianism, without becoming ensnared by the political practices of any of these.

The reactionary forces have capable men and officers who have been trained to command and who will fight ruthlessly to preserve their supremacy. When it is necessary, they will call themselves the lovers of liberty, of peace, of general well-being, of the poorer classes.

The point they will seek to exploit is the restoration of the national state. Thus they will be able to grasp that most widespread of popular sentiments, most deeply offended by recent events, most easily utilized for reactionary purposes: the patriotic sentiment. In this way they can also hope to confuse their adversaries' ideas more easily, since for the popular masses, the only political experience acquired up to this time has been within the national context, and it is therefore fairly easy to converge them and their more short-sighted leaders into the terrain of the reconstruction of the states felled by the tempest.

If this purpose were to be reached, the reaction would have won. In appearance, these states might well be broadly democratic and socialistic; it would only be a question of time before power returned in the hands of the reactionaries. National jealousies would again develop, and the state would again express its satisfaction at its own existence in its armed strength. In a more or less brief space of time the most important duty would be to convert populations into armies. Generals would again command, the monopoly holders would again draw profits from autarchy, the bureaucracy would continue to swell, the priests would keep the masses docile. All the initial conquests would shrivel into nothing, in comparison to the necessity of once more preparing for war.

The question which must first be resolved, and if it is not then any other progress made up to that point is mere appearance, is that of the abolition of the division of Europe into national, sovereign states. The collapse of the majority of the states of the continent under the German steamroller has already placed the destinies of the European populations on common ground: either all together they will submit to Hitler's dominion, or all together they will enter a revolutionary crisis after his fall, and they will not find themselves adamantly distinct in solid, state structures. The general spirit today is already far more disposed than it was in the past to a federal reorganization of Europe. The hard experience of the last decades has opened the eyes even of those who would not see, and has matured many circumstances favourable to our ideal.

All reasonable men recognize that it is impossible to maintain a balance of power among European states with militarist Germany enjoying equal conditions, nor can Germany be broken up into pieces once it is conquered. We have seen a demonstration that no country within Europe can stay on the sidelines while the others battle: declarations of neutrality and non-aggression pacts come to nought. The uselessness, even harmfulness, of organizations like the League of Nations has been demonstrated: they pretend to guarantee an international law without a military force capable of imposing its decisions respecting the absolute sovereignty of the member states. The principle of non-intervention turned out to be absurd. According to it each population was left free to choose the despotic government it thought best, as if the constitution of each of the single states were not a question of vital interest for all the other European nations. The multiple problems which poison international life on the continent have proved to be insoluble: tracing boundaries through areas inhabited by mixed populations, defence of alien minorities' seaports for landlocked countries, the Balkan Question, the Irish problem, and so on. All matters which would find easy solutions in the European Federation. Just as corresponding problems, suffered by the small states which became part of a vaster national unity, lost their harshness as they were transformed into problems regarding relationships among various provinces.

On the other hand, the end of the sense of security which an unassailable Great Britain inspired, the England which advised "splendid isolation"; the disbanding of the French army and the disintegration of the Republic at the first serious collision with the German forces (a result which, it is hoped, has lessened the chauvinistic attitude of absolute Gallic superiority); and particularly the risk of total enslavement. These are all

circumstances that favoured the constitution of a federal regime, placing an end to current anarchy. And the fact that England had accepted the principle of Indian independence; and that France had potentially lost its entire empire in recognizing defeat at the hands of the German army, make it easier to find a basis of agreement for a European arrangement of colonial possessions.

To all of this must be added the disappearance of some of the most important dynasties, and the fragility of the bases which sustain the ones that survive. It must be taken into account that these dynasties, in considering the various countries as their own traditional perquisites, together with the powerful interests backing them, represented a serious obstacle to the rational organization of the United States of Europe, which can only be based on the republican constitution of the federated countries. And, once the horizon of the Old Continent is passed beyond, and all the peoples who make up humanity embrace in a grand vision of their common participation, it will have to be recognized that the European Federation is the single conceivable guarantee that relationships with American and Asiatic peoples can exist on the basis of peace cooperation; this while awaiting a more distant future, when the political unity of the entire globe becomes a possibility.

The dividing line between progressive and reactionary parties no longer follows the formal line of greater or lesser democracy, or of more or less socialism to be instituted; rather the division falls along the line, very new and substantial, that separates the party members into two groups. The first is made up of those who conceive the essential purpose and goal of struggle is the ancient one, that is, the conquest of national political power — and that, although involuntarily, play into the hands of reactionary forces, letting the incandescent lava of popular passions set in the old moulds, and thus allowing old absurdities to arise once again. The second are those who see as the main purpose the creation of a solid international state; they will direct popular forces towards this goal, and having won national power, use it first and foremost as an instrument for achieving international unity.

With propaganda and action, seeking to establish in every possible way the agreements and links among the single movements which are certainly being formed in the various countries, the foundation must be built now for a movement that knows how to mobilise all forces for the birth of the new organism which will be the grandest creation, and the newest, that has occurred in Europe for centuries; in order to constitute a steady federal state, that will have at its disposal a European armed service instead of national armies; to break decisively economic autarchies, the backbone of totalitarian regimes; that it will have sufficient means to see that its deliberations for the maintenance of common order are executed in the single federal states, while each state will retain the autonomy it needs for a plastic articulation and development of a political life according to the particular characteristics of the people.

If a sufficient number of men in European countries understand this, then victory is shortly to be in their hands, because the situation and the spirit will be favourable to their work. They will have before them parties and factions that have already been disqualified by the disastrous experience of the last twenty years. It will be the moment of new action, it will also be the moment of new men: the MOVEMENT FOR A FREE AND UNITED EUROPE.

III — Post-war duties — Social reform

A free and united Europe is the necessary premise to the strengthening of modern civilization, for which the totalitarian era represented a standstill. The end of this era will immediately revive in full the historical process of the struggle against social inequalities and privileges. All the old conservative structures which hindered this process will have collapsed or will be in a state of collapse. This crisis must be exploited with decision and courage.

In order to respond to our needs, the European revolution must be socialist, that is it must have as its goal the emancipation of the working classes and the realization for them of more humane living conditions. The orientation to be chosen for the steps to take must not, however, depend solely on the purely doctrinaire principle which states that the private ownership of the material means of production must, as a general rule, be abolished, and that it can be tolerated only temporarily when there is no other choice to be made. The

general state control of the economy was the first, utopistic, form in which the working classes imagined their liberation from the yoke of capitalism. Once it was achieved, however, it did not produce the hoped for results; on the contrary, a regime came into existence in which the entire population was subject to a restricted cell of bureaucrats who ran the economy.

The truly fundamental principle of socialism, in which the general collectivisation was nothing more than a hurried and erroneous deduction, is the principle which states that the economic forces must not dominate man, but rather — as for the forces of Nature — they must be subject to man, guided and controlled by him in the most rational way, so that the broadest strata of the population will not become their victims.

The gigantic forces of progress that spring from individual interests must not be slaked by the grey dullness of routine. Otherwise, the same insoluble problem will arise: how to stimulate the spirit of initiative using salary levels and other provisions of the same kind. The forces of progress must be extolled and extended, they must find increasing ranges for development and utilization; at the same time, the barriers which must guide these forces towards objectives of the greatest advantage for all of society, must be strengthened and perfected.

Private property must be abolished, limited, corrected, extended: instance by instance, however, not dogmatically according to principle. This guideline is easily inserted into the forces of forming a European economic life freed from the nightmares of militarism or national bureaucracy. The rational solution must be used in place of the irrational, in the consciousness of the working classes as well. In an effort to describe in greater detail the content of this guideline, while pointing out that the convenience of each point of the programme, and the way it is to be effected, must always be judged in relationship to the premise by now accepted as indispensable: European unity, we would like to emphasize the following aspects:

(a) Those enterprises which conduct a necessarily monopolistic activity, and that are therefore in the condition to exploit the mass of consumers, must no longer be left in the hands of private ownership; the electricity industries, for example, or those industries which must be maintained for the common good but that, in order to survive, need customs protection, subsidies, preferential orders, etc. (the most visible example of this kind in Italy is the steel industry); those enterprises which, for the size of the capital investment and the number of employed workers, or for the importance of the sector involved, can blackmail various state organs, imposing upon them policies that would be advantageous to themselves (for example, the mining industries, banking institutes, arms manufacturers). In this field, nationalization must undoubtedly take place on a vast scale, bearing in no regard acquired rights.

(b) The characteristics private property has had in the past and the right of succession, have permitted the accumulation in the hands of a few, privileged members of society, of riches which, in a revolutionary crisis, would be opportune to distribute in an egalitarian manner, in order to eliminate parasitic classes and in order to give the workers the means of production that they need, so as to improve their economic conditions and help them reach greater independence. We can consider, that is, agrarian reform: distributing the lands directly to farmers, the number of landowners increases enormously; industrial reform which would extend ownership to the workers in sectors not nationalized, through cooperative management, employee profit sharing, etc.

(c) Youth is to be assisted with all the necessary provisions in order to reduce to a minimum starting positions in the long struggle ahead of them. In particular, the state schools ought to offer the effective possibilities of continuing studies up to the highest level to those who merit it, instead of only to the wealthy students; and it should prepare in each branch of study, trade schools, semi-professional schools for training in the liberal arts and sciences, a number of students corresponding to the market demand, so that on the average salaries are about the same for all the professional categories, even though within each category there may be differences, depending upon individual capacities.

(d) The almost unlimited potentiality of mass production of goods of prime necessity through modern technology, allow everyone to be guaranteed, at relatively low social cost, food, lodging, clothing and that minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity. Human solidarity turned towards those

who succumb in the economic battle ought not, therefore, be shown with same humiliating forms of charity that produce the very same evils it vainly attempts to remedy. Rather it must take a series of measures which unconditionally guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone, without lessening the stimulus to work and to save. In this situation, no one would any longer be forced by misery to accept unfair work contracts.

(e) The working classes can be liberated only after those conditions described above are fulfilled. These classes must not be left at the mercy of the economic policies of monopolistic trade unions which simply translate into the working world the same overpowering methods of big capital. The workers must once again be free to choose their own emissaries in collective bargaining sessions defining the conditions under which they will agree to work, and the state must give them the legal means to guarantee the observation of the terms agreed to. All monopolistic tendencies can be efficaciously opposed once these social transformations have been achieved.

These are the changes needed to create a broad group of citizens interested in the new order and willing to struggle for its preservation, and for the purpose of giving the solid stamp of liberty to political life, imbuing it with a strong sense of social solidarity. With these bases, political liberties can truly have a concrete meaning; not simply a formal one, and for everybody, since the mass of citizens will be independent, and will have sufficient knowledge to be able to exert continuous and efficacious control over the governing class.

It would be superfluous to dwell at length on the constitutional institutions; not knowing at this point, or being able to foresee, the conditions in which they will be drawn up and will have to regulate, we could do no more than repeat what has already been repeated — the need for representative bodies, the formation of the law, the independence of the magistracy that is to take the place of the present one for the impartial application of the laws handed down by higher authorities, the freedom of the press and of assembly in order that public opinion be enlightened and that all citizens have the possibility of effectively participating in the life of the state. Only two questions demand further and deeper definition because of their particular importance for our country in this moment: the relationship between Church and State; the quality of political representation.

(a) The Treaty which concluded the Vatican's alliance with Fascism in Italy must absolutely be abolished in order that the purely sectarian character of the state be asserted and defined and the supremacy of the state in civil matters be unequivocally determined. All religious faiths are to be equally respected, and the state must no longer strike the balance of religions.

(b) The house of cards that Fascism built with its corporativism will collapse together with the other aspects of the totalitarian state. There are those who hold that material for the new constitutional order can be salvaged from this wreck. We do not believe this. In totalitarian states, the corporative chambers are the crowning hoax of police control of the workers. Even if the corporative chambers were a sincere expression of the will of the various categories of producers, the representative bodies of the various professional categories could never be qualified to handle questions of general policy. In more specifically economic matters, they would become organs for the accumulation of power and privilege by the categories having stronger union representation. The unions will have broad collaboration functions with state organs which are appointed to resolve those problems which regard these categories most directly, but it is absolutely excluded that they be given any legislative power, since this would create a kind of feudal anarchy in the economic life of the country, leading to renewed political despotism. Many of those who ingenuously were attracted by the myth of corporativism, can and should be attracted by the job of renewing structures of similar purpose. But they must realize the absurdity of the solution they might vaguely desire. Corporativism can only be concretely expressed in the form it was given by totalitarian states: to regiment the workers beneath leaders who controlled their every move in the interests of the ruling class.

The revolutionary party cannot be amateurishly organized in the moment of decision. It must start now to form at least its central political philosophy, its leaders and directors, the primary actions it will take. It must not represent a heterogeneous mass of tendencies, united merely negatively and temporarily, that is, united by their anti-Fascist past and the active expectation of the fall of the totalitarian regime, ready to go each its

way once this goal has been reached. The revolutionary party knows that only then will begin its real work. It must therefore be made up of men who are in agreement on the main problems of the future.

Its methodical propaganda must penetrate everywhere where there are those oppressed by the present regime. It must use as its starting point those problems which are the source of greatest suffering to individuals and classes and show how these are connected with other problems, and what the real solution might be. But from this gradually increasing circle of sympathizers, only those who have identified and accepted the European revolution as the principle purpose of their lives are to be recruited into the movement. Day by day, with discipline, the work is to go on; its continuous and efficacious safety is to be provided secretly, even in those most dangerously illegal situations. Thus the more solid network of workers will be set up to give consistency to the more fragile sphere of sympathizers.

While not overlooking any occasion nor any sector in which to spread its cause, it must turn first and foremost to those environments which are the most important ones as centres for the circulation of ideas and as centres for the recruiting of aggressive men; primarily towards the two social groups which are most sensitive to the current situation and decisive for tomorrow's circumstances, that is, the working class and the intellectuals. The first is that which is least submitted to the totalitarian rod and that will most readily reorganize its ranks. The intellectuals, particularly the younger among them, are those who are most spiritually suffocated and repulsed by the current despotism. Other classes will gradually be drawn into the movement.

Any movement which fails its duty to ally these forces is condemned to sterility. A movement made up of intellectuals alone will not have the strength it needs to overwhelm reactionary resistance, it will distrust and be distrusted by the working class; and even though it is animated by democratic sentiment, it will be prone to losing its hold before the difficulties present in the mobilisation of all other classes against the workers; that is, before the threatened restoration of Fascism. If, instead, the movement is backed only by the proletariat it will be deprived of the clarity of thought and expression which only the intellectual classes can furnish, and that is needed so that new roads and new duties be well defined; it will remain a prisoner of the former classism, it will see everyone as a potential enemy, and will slither towards the doctrinaire Communist solution.

During the revolutionary crisis, it is up to this movement to organize and guide progressive forces, utilizing for its purposes all the popular organs which form spontaneously as ardent crucibles in which the revolutionary masses are melted, not for the drawing up of plebiscites, but rather waiting to be guided. It derives the vision and security of what must be done not from a previous consecration of what is yet to be the popular conscience, but the knowledge of representing the deepest necessities of modern society. In this way it issues the initial regulations of the new order, the first social discipline directed to the unformed masses. This dictatorship by the revolutionary party will form the new state, and, surrounding this state will grow the new, genuine democracy.

There are no grounds for fearing that a similar revolutionary regime will develop into renewed despotism. This may develop if a servile society has been formed. But if the revolutionary party continues with determination from its very first action to create the conditions necessary for individual freedom, conditions under which all citizens can really participate in the life of the state, it will evolve towards increasing comprehension of the new order, even though moving through eventual and secondary political crises, and acceptance of it by the population. It will be growing, therefore, in the direction of increasing possibility of functioning, and of free political institutions.

The moment has arrived in which we must know how to discard old burdens, how to be ready for the new world that is coming, that will be so different from what we have imagined. Among the old, the inept must be put aside; and among the young, new energies are to be stimulated. At this time those who have perceived the reasons behind the present crisis in European civilization are seeking one another, and are beginning to string the loom upon which the future will be woven. Therefore, they are gathering the inheritance left by all those movements which worked to raise and enlighten humanity, and which failed because of their miscomprehension of the purpose to be achieved or the ways to achieve it.

The road to pursue is neither easy nor certain. But it must be followed and it will be!